

1190

INSTRUCTION ON INFANT BAPTISM

Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine  
of the Faith, 20 October 1980

1191 INTRODUCTION

- #1. Pastoral work with regard to infant baptism was greatly assisted by the promulgation of the new Ritual, prepared in accordance with the directives of the Second Vatican Council. The pace of change in society, however, is making it difficult for the young to be brought up in the faith and to persevere in it, and the resulting problems encountered by Christian parents and pastors have not been completely eliminated.
- #2. Many parents are distressed to see their children abandoning the faith and no longer receiving the sacraments, in spite of their own efforts to give them a Christian upbringing, and some pastors are asking themselves whether they should not be stricter before admitting infants to baptism. Some think it better to delay the baptism of children until the completion of a catechumenate of greater or less duration, while others are asking for a re-examination of the teaching on the necessity of baptism, at least for infants, and wish the celebration of the sacrament to be put off until such an age when an individual can make a personal commitment, perhaps even until the beginning of adult life.

However, this questioning of traditional sacramental pastoral practice cannot fail to raise in the Church justified fears of jeopardizing so essential a doctrine as that of the necessity of baptism. In particular, many parents are scandalized at finding baptism refused or delayed when, with full awareness of their duty, they request it for their children.

- #3. In view of this situation and in response to the many petitions received, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in consultation with various Episcopal Conferences, has prepared the present Instruction. The purpose of the document is to recall the principal points of doctrine in this field which justify the Church's constant practice down the centuries and demonstrate its permanent value in spite of the difficulties raised today. The document will then indicate some general guidelines for pastoral action.

TRADITIONAL DOCTRINE ON INFANT BAPTISM1192.1 IMMEMORIAL PRACTICE

- #4. Both in the East and in the West the practice of baptizing infants is considered a rule of immemorial tradition. Origen, and later Saint Augustine, considered it a "tradition received from the Apostles."<sup>2</sup> When the first direct evidence of infant baptism appears in the second century, it is never presented as an innovation. Saint Irenaeus, in particular, considers it a matter of course that the baptized should include "infants and small children" as well as adolescents, young adults and older people.<sup>3</sup> The oldest known ritual, describing at the start of the third century the APOSTOLIC TRADITION, contains the following rule: "First baptize the children. Those of them who can speak for themselves should do so. The parents or someone of their family should speak for the others."<sup>4</sup> At a Synod of African Bishops Saint Cyprian stated that "God's mercy and grace should not be refused to anyone born," and the Synod recalling that "all human beings" are "equal," whatever be "their size or age," declared it lawful to baptize children "by the second or third day after their birth."<sup>5</sup>
- #5. Admittedly there was a certain decline in the practice of infant baptism during the fourth century. At that time even adults postponed their Christian initiation out of apprehension about future sins and fear of public penance, and many parents put off the baptism of their children for the same reasons. But it must also be noted that Fathers and Doctors such as Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, Jerome and Augustine, who were themselves baptized as adults on account of this state of affairs, vigorously reacted against such negligence and begged adults not to postpone baptisms, since it is necessary for salvation.<sup>6</sup> Several of them insisted that baptism should be administered to infants.<sup>7</sup>

1192.2 THE TEACHING OF THE MAGISTERIUM

- #6. Popes and Councils also often intervened to remind Christians of their duty to have their children baptized.

At the close of the fourth century the ancient custom of baptizing children as well as adults "for the forgiveness of sins" was used against the teachings of Pelagius. As Origen and Saint Cyprian had noted, before Saint Augustine,<sup>8</sup>

this custom confirmed the Church's belief in original sin, and this in turn showed still more clearly the necessity of infant baptism. There were interventions on these lines by Pope Siricius<sup>9</sup> and Pope Innocent I.<sup>10</sup> Later, the Council of Carthage in 418 condemned "whoever says that newborn infants should not be baptized," and it taught that, on account of the Church's "rule of faith" concerning original sin, "even babies, who are yet unable to commit any sin personally, are truly baptized for the forgiveness of sins, for the purpose of cleansing by rebirth what they have received by birth."<sup>11</sup>

- #7. This teaching was constantly reaffirmed and defended during the Middle Ages. In particular, the Council of Vienne in 1312 stressed that the sacrament of baptism has for its effect, in the case of infants, not just the forgiveness of sins but also the granting of grace and the virtues.<sup>12</sup> The Council of Florence in 1442 rebuked those who wanted baptism postponed and declared that infants should receive "as soon as is convenient" (*quam primum commode*) the sacrament "through which they are rescued from the devil's power and adopted as God's children."<sup>13</sup>

The Council of Trent repeated the Council of Carthage's condemnation,<sup>14</sup> and, referring to the words of Jesus to Nicodemus, it declared that "since the promulgation of the Gospel" nobody can be justified "without being washed for rebirth or wishing to be."<sup>15</sup> One of the errors anathematized by the Council is the Anabaptist view that "it is better that the baptism (of children) be omitted than to baptize in the faith of the Church alone those who do not believe by their own act."<sup>16</sup>

- #8. The various regional councils and synods held after the Council of Trent taught with equal firmness the necessity of baptizing children. Pope Paul VI also solemnly recalled the centuries-old teaching on this matter, declaring that "baptism should be conferred even on infants who are yet unable to commit any sin personally, in order that, having been born without supernatural grace, they may be born again of water and the Holy Spirit to divine life in Christ Jesus."<sup>17</sup>
- #9. The texts of the Magisterium quoted above were chiefly concerned with refuting errors. They are far from exhausting the riches of the doctrine on baptism expressed in the New Testament, the catechesis of the Fathers, and the teaching of the Doctors of the Church: baptism is a manifestation of the Father's prevenient love, a sharing in

the Son's Paschal Mystery, and a communication of new life in the Spirit; it brings people into the inheritance of God and joins them to the Body of Christ, the Church.

- #10. In view of this, Christ's warning in Saint John's Gospel, "unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God," must be taken as an invitation of universal and limitless love, the words of a Father calling all his children and wishing them to have the greatest of blessings. This pressing and irrevocable call cannot leave us indifferent or neutral, since its acceptance is a condition for achieving our destiny.
- #11. The Church must respond to the mission that Christ gave to the Apostles after his Resurrection. Saint Matthew's Gospel reports it in a particularly solemn form: "all authority in heaven and on earth has been give to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."<sup>19</sup> Transmitting the faith and administering baptism are closely linked in this command of the Lord, and they are an integral part of the Church's mission, which is universal and cannot cease to be universal.
- #12. This is how the Church has understood her mission from the beginning, and not only with regard to adults. She has always understood the words of Jesus to Nicodemus to mean that "children should not be deprived of baptism."<sup>20</sup> Jesus' words are so universal and absolute in form that the Fathers employed them to establish the necessity of baptism, and the Magisterium applied them expressly to infants:<sup>21</sup>the sacrament is for them too entry into the people of God<sup>22</sup>and the gateway to personal salvation.
- #13. The Church has thus shown by her teaching and practice that she knows no other way apart from baptism for ensuring children's entry into eternal happiness. Accordingly, she takes care not to neglect the mission that the Lord has given her of providing rebirth "of water and Spirit" for all those who can be baptized. As for children who die without baptism, the Church can only entrust them to God's mercy, as she does in the funeral rite provided for them.<sup>23</sup>
- #14. The fact that infants cannot yet profess personal faith does not prevent the Church from conferring this sacrament on them, since in reality it is in her own faith that she baptizes them. This point of doctrine was clearly defined by Saint Augustine: "When children are presented to be given spiritual grace," he wrote, "it is not so much those holding them in their arms who present them - although, if these

people are good Christians, they are included among those who present the children - as the whole company of saints and faithful christians...It is done by the whole of Mother Church which is in the saints, since it is as a whole that she gives birth to each and every one of them."<sup>24</sup> This teaching is repeated by Saint Thomas Aquinas and all the theologians after him: the child who is baptized believes not on its own account, by a personal act, but through others, "through the Church's faith communicated to it."<sup>25</sup> This same teaching is also expressed in the new Rite of Baptism, when the celebrant asks the parents and godparents to profess the faith of the Church, the faith in which the children are baptized.<sup>26</sup>

- #15. Although the Church is truly aware of the efficacy of her faith operating in the baptism of children, and aware of the validity of the sacrament that she confers on them, she recognizes limits to her practice, since, apart from cases of danger of death, she does not admit a child to baptism without its parents' consent and a serious assurance that after baptism it will be given a Catholic upbringing.<sup>27</sup> This is because she is concerned both for the natural rights of the parents and for the requirements of the development of faith in the child.

## PART TWO

### 1193      ANSWERS TO DIFFICULTIES BEING RAISED TODAY

- #16. It is in the light of the teaching recalled above that we must judge certain views which are expressed today about infant baptism and which question its legitimacy as a general rule.

#### 1193.1 LINK BETWEEN BAPTISM AND ACT OF FAITH

- #17. Noting that in the New Testament writings baptism follows the preaching of the Gospel, presupposes conversion and goes with a profession of faith, and furthermore that the effects of grace (forgiveness of sins, justification, rebirth and sharing in divine life) are generally linked with faith rather than with the sacrament,<sup>28</sup> some people propose that the order "preaching, faith, sacrament" should become the rule. Apart from cases of danger of death, they would apply this rule to children, and would institute an obligatory catechumenate for them.
- #18. It is beyond doubt that the preaching of the Apostles was normally directed to adults, and the first to be baptized were people converted to the Christian faith. As these

facts are related in the books of the New Testament, they could give rise to the opinion that it is only the faith of adults that is considered in these texts. However, as was mentioned above, the practice of baptizing children rests on an immemorial tradition originating from the Apostles, the importance of which cannot be ignored; besides, baptism is never administered without faith: in the case of infants, it is the faith of the Church.

Furthermore, in accordance with the teaching of the Council of Trent on the sacraments, baptism is not just a sign of faith but also a cause of faith.<sup>29</sup> It produces in the baptized "interior enlightenment," and so the Byzantine liturgy is right to call it the sacrament of enlightenment, or simply enlightenment, meaning that the faith received pervades the soul and causes the veil of blindness to fall before the brightness of Christ.<sup>30</sup>

#### 1193.2 HARMONY BETWEEN BAPTISM AND PERSONAL RECEPTION OF GRACE

- #19. It is also said that, since every grace is intended for a person, it should be consciously accepted and appropriated by the person who receives it, something that an infant is quite incapable of doing.
- #20. But in reality the child is a person long before it can show it by acts of consciousness and freedom. As a person, the child is already capable of becoming, through the sacrament of baptism, a child of God and a coheir with Christ. Later, when consciousness and freedom awake, these will have at their disposal the powers placed in the child's soul by the grace of baptism.

#### 1193.3 HARMONY BETWEEN BAPTISM AND THE CHILD'S FREEDOM

- #21 Some people also object that baptizing infants is a restriction of their freedom. They say that it is contrary to the dignity of the children as persons to impose on them future religious obligations that they may perhaps later be let to reject. In this view it would be better to confer the sacrament only at an age when free commitment has become possible; until then parents and teachers should restrain themselves and avoid exercising any pressure.
- #22. Such an attitude is simply an illusion: there is no such thing as pure human freedom, immune from being influenced in any way. Even on the natural level, parents make choices for their child that are essential for its life and for its orientation towards true values. A so-called neutral attitude on the part of the family with regard to the child's religious life would in fact be a negative choice that would

deprive the child of an essential good.

Above all, those who claim that the sacrament of baptism compromises a child's freedom forget that every individual, baptized or not, as a creature, bound by indefeasible duties to God, duties which baptism ratifies and ennobles through the adoption as a child of God. They also forget that the New Testament presents entry into the Christian life not as a form of slavery or constraint but as admittance to true freedom.<sup>31</sup>

It can happen that, when a child grows up, it will reject the obligations derived from its baptism. Although its parents may be hurt as a result, they should not reproach themselves for having had the child baptized and giving it a Christian upbringing, as was their right and their duty.<sup>32</sup> In spite of appearances, the seeds of faith sown in the child's soul may one day come to life again, and the parents will contribute to this by their patience and love, by their prayers and by the authentic witness of their own faith.

#### 1193.4 BAPTISM IN THE PRESENT SOCIOLOGICAL SITUATION

- #23. In view of the link between the person and society, some people hold that infant baptism is still suitable in a homogeneous type of society, in which values, judgments and customs form a coherent system; but they hold that it is inappropriate in today's pluralistic societies, which are characterized by instability of values and conflicts of ideas. In the present situation, they say baptism should be delayed until the candidate's personality has sufficiently matured.
- #24. The Church is well aware that she must take the social reality into account. But the criteria of homogeneity and pluralism are merely pointers and cannot be set up as normative principles; they are inadequate for settling a strictly religious question, which by its nature is a matter for the Church and the Christian family.

While the criterion of the homogeneous society would legitimize infant baptism if the society is Christian, it would also lead one to consider it as illegitimate when Christian families are in a minority, whether within an ethnic group that is still predominantly pagan or in a militantly atheistic regime. This obviously cannot be admitted.

The criterion of the pluralistic society is no more valid than the preceding criterion, since in this type of society the family and the Church can act freely and accordingly provide a Christian education.

Besides, a study of history clearly shows that if these "sociological" criteria had been applied in the first centuries of the Church they would have paralyzed all her missionary expansion. It is worth adding that all too often pluralism is being invoked in a paradoxical way, in order to impose on the faithful behaviour patterns that in reality are an obstacle to the exercise of their Christian freedom.

In a society whose mentality, customs and laws are no longer inspired by the Gospel it is therefore of great importance that in questions connected with infant baptism the Church's own nature and mission should be taken into consideration before all else.

In spite of being intermingled with human society and in spite of being made up of different nationalities and cultures, the People of God has its own identity, characterized by unity of faith and sacraments. Animated as it is by a single spirit and a single hope, it is an organic whole, capable of producing within the various groups of humanity the structures necessary for its growth. It is in this context that the Church's sacramental pastoral practice, in particular with regard to infant baptism, must be placed; her practice must not depend only on criteria borrowed from the human sciences.

#### 1193.5 INFANT BAPTISM AND SACRAMENTAL PASTORAL PRACTICE

- #25. A final criticism of infant baptism would have it that the practice comes from a pastoral usage lacking missionary impetus and concerned more with administering a sacrament than with stirring up faith and fostering commitment to spreading the Gospel. It is asserted that, by retaining infant baptism, the Church is yielding to the temptation of numbers and social establishment, and that she is encouraging the maintenance of a magical concept of the sacraments, while she really ought to engage in missionary activity, bring the faith of Christians to maturity, foster their free conscious commitment, and consequently admit a number of stages in her sacramental pastoral practice.
- #26. Undoubtedly, the Church's apostolate should aim at stirring up lively faith and fostering a truly Christian life; but the requirements of pastoral practice with regard to administering the sacraments to adults cannot be applied unchanged to children who, as mentioned above, are baptized "in the faith of the Church." Besides, we must not treat lightly the necessity of the sacrament: it is a necessity that has lost none of its importance and urgency, especially when what is at stake is ensuring that the child receives the infinite blessing of eternal life.



With regard to preoccupation with numbers, if this preoccupation is properly understood it is not a temptation or an evil for the Church but a duty and a blessing. The Church, described by Saint Paul as Christ's "body" and his "fullness,"<sup>33</sup> is the visible sacrament of Christ in the world, with the mission of extending to everyone the sacramental link between her and her glorified Saviour. Accordingly, she cannot fail to wish to give to everyone, children no less than adults, the first and basic sacrament of baptism.

If it is understood in this way, the practice of infant baptism is truly evangelical, since it has the force of witness, manifesting God's initiative and the gratuitous character of the love with which he surrounds our lives: "not that we loved God but that he loved us...We love, because he first loved us."<sup>34</sup> Even in the case of adults, the demands that the reception of baptism involves<sup>35</sup> should not make us forget that "he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit."<sup>36</sup>

### PART III

1194

#### SOME PASTORAL DIRECTIVES

- #27. While certain suggestions being put forward today cannot be accepted - suggestions such as the definitive abandonment of infant baptism and freedom to choose, whatever the reasons, between immediate baptism and deferred baptism - one cannot deny the need for a pastoral effort pursued in greater depth and renewed in certain aspects. It is appropriate to indicate the principles and fundamental guidelines at this point.

#### 1194.1 THE PRINCIPLES OF THIS PASTORAL PRACTICE

- #28. In the first place it is important to recall that the baptism of infants must be considered a serious duty. The questions which it poses to pastors can be settled only by faithful attention to the teaching and constant practice of the Church.

Concretely, pastoral practice regarding infant baptism must be governed by two great principles, the second of which is subordinate to the first.

- 1194.11 Baptism which is necessary for salvation, is the sign and the means of God's prevenient love, which frees us from original sin and communicates to us a share in divine life. Considered in itself, the gift of these blessings to infants must not be delayed.

1194.12 Assurances must be given that the gift thus granted can grow by an authentic education in the faith and Christian life, in order to fulfill the true meaning of the sacrament.<sup>37</sup> As a rule, these assurances are to be given by the parents or close relatives, although various substitutions are possible within the Christian community. But if these assurances are not really serious there can be grounds for delaying the sacrament; and if they are certainly non-existent the sacrament should even be refused.

## 1194.2 DIALOGUE BETWEEN PASTORS AND BELIEVING FAMILIES

#29. On the basis of these two principles, concrete cases will be examined in a pastoral dialogue between the priest and the family. The rules for dialogue with parents who are practising Christians are given in the Introduction to the Ritual. It is sufficient to recall here two of the more significant points.

In the first place, much importance is given to the presence and active participation of the parents in the celebration. The parents now have priority over the godparents, although the presence of the latter continues to be required, since their assistance in the child's education is valuable and can sometimes be essential.

Secondly, preparation for the baptism has an important place. The parents must give thought to the baptism; they should inform their pastors of the coming birth and prepare themselves spiritually. The pastors, for their part, will visit the families or gather them together and give them catechesis and appropriate advice. They will also urge the families to pray for the children that they are expecting.<sup>38</sup>

As for the time of the actual celebration, the indications in the Ritual should be followed: "The first consideration is the welfare of the child, that it may not be deprived of the benefit of the sacrament; then the health of the mother must be considered, so that, as far as possible she too may be present. Then, as long as they do not interfere with the greater good of the child, there are pastoral considerations such as allowing sufficient time to prepare the parents for planning the actual celebration to bring out its paschal character." Accordingly, "if the child is in danger of death, it is to be baptized without delay;" otherwise, as a rule "an infant should be baptized within the first weeks after birth."<sup>39</sup>

1194.3 DIALOGUE BETWEEN PASTORS AND FAMILIES WITH LITTLE FAITH OR NON-CHRISTIAN FAMILIES

- #30. It sometimes happens that pastors are approached by parents who have little faith and practise their religion only occasionally, or even by non-Christian parents who request baptism for their children for reasons that deserve consideration.

In this case the pastor will endeavor by means of a clear-sighted and understanding dialogue to arouse the parents' interest in the sacrament they are requesting and make them aware of the responsibility that they are assuming.

In fact the Church can only accede to the desire of these parents if they give an assurance that, once the child is baptized, it will be given the benefit of the Christian upbringing required by the sacrament. The Church must have a well-founded hope that the baptism will bear fruit.<sup>40</sup>

If the assurances given - for example, the choice of godparents who will take sincere care of the child, or the support of the community of the faithful - are sufficient, the priest cannot refuse to celebrate the sacrament without delay, as in the case of children of Christian families. If on the other hand they are insufficient, it will be prudent to delay baptism. However the pastors should keep in contact with the parents so as to secure, if possible, the conditions required on their part for the celebration of the sacrament. If even this solution fails, it can be suggested, as a last recourse, that the child be enrolled in a catechumenate to be given when the child reaches school age.

- #31. These rules have already been made and are already in force,<sup>41</sup> but they require some clarifications.

In the first place it must be clear that the refusal of baptism is not a means of exercising pressure. Nor can one speak of refusal, still less of discrimination, but rather of educational delay, according to individual cases, aimed at helping the family to grow in faith or to become more aware of its responsibilities.

With regard to the assurances, any pledge giving a well-founded hope for the Christian upbringing of the children deserves to be considered as sufficient.

Enrollment for a future catechumenate should not be accompanied by a specially created rite which would easily be taken as an equivalent of the sacrament itself. It should also be clear

that this enrollment is not admittance to the catechumenate and that the infants enrolled cannot be considered catechumens with all the prerogatives attached to being such. They must be presented later on for a catechumenate suited to their age. In this regard, it must be stated clearly that the existence in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults of a Rite of Initiation for Children of Catechetical Age<sup>42</sup> in no way means that the Church considers it preferable or normal to delay baptism until that age.

Finally, in areas where families of little faith or non-Christian families make up the majority, so as to justify the local setting up by the Bishops' Conference of a joint pastoral plan which provides for postponing baptism beyond the time fixed by the general law,<sup>43</sup> Christian families living in these areas retain the full right to have their children baptized earlier. The sacrament is therefore to be administered in accordance with the Church's will and as the faith and generosity of these families deserve.

#### 1194.4 THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY AND OF THE PARISH COMMUNITY

- #32. The pastoral effort brought into play on the occasion of the baptism of infants should be part of a broader activity extending to the families and to the whole of the Christian community.

From this viewpoint it is important to intensify pastoral care of engaged couples at meetings in preparation for marriage, and likewise the pastoral care of young couples. The whole ecclesial community must be called upon as circumstances demand, especially teachers, married couples, family action movements, religious congregations and secular institutes. Priests must give this apostolate an important place in their ministry. In particular, they will remind parents of their responsibilities in awakening their children's faith and educating it. It is in fact for parents to begin the religious initiation of the child, to teach it to love Christ as a close friend and to form its conscience. This task will be all the more fruitful and easy if it builds on the grace of baptism present in the child's heart.

- #33. As is clearly indicated in the Ritual, the parish community, especially the group of Christians that constitute the family's human environment, should play a part in the pastoral practice regarding baptism. "Christian instruction and the preparation for baptism are a vital concern of God's people, the Church, which hands on and nourishes the faith it has received from the Apostles."<sup>44</sup> This active participation by the Christian people, which has already come into use in the case of adults, is also

required for the baptism of infants, in which "the People of God, that is the Church, make present in the local community, has an important part to play."<sup>45</sup>In addition, the community itself will as a rule draw great profit, both spiritual and apostolic, from the baptism ceremony. Finally, the community's work will continue, after the liturgical celebration, through the contribution of the adults to the education of the young in faith, both by the witness of their own Christian lives and by their participation in various catechetical activities.

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CONCLUSION

- #34. In addressing the Bishops, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is fully confident that, as part of the mission that they have received from the Lord, they will take care to recall the Church's teaching on the necessity of infant baptism, promote an appropriate pastoral practice, and bring back to the traditional practice those who, perhaps under the pressure of comprehensible pastoral concerns, have departed from it. The Congregation also hopes that the teaching and guidelines contained in this Instruction will reach all pastors, Christian parents and the ecclesial community, so that all will become aware of their responsibilities and make their contribution, through the baptism of children and their Christian education, to the growth of the Church, the Body of Christ.

This instruction was adopted at an Ordinary Meeting of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and was approved at an audience granted to the undersigned Cardinal Prefect by His Holiness Pope John Paul II, who ordered its publication.

Rome, at the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 20 October 1980.

FRANJO Card. SEPER  
 Prefect  
 Fr. JEROME HAMER, O.P.  
 Titular Archbishop of Lorium  
 Secretary

## FOOTNOTES

1. Ordo baptismi parvulorum, ed. tupica, Romae, 16 May 1969.
2. Origen, In Romanis, V.9: PG 14, 1047; cf. Saint Augustine, De Genesi ad litteram, X, 23, 39; PL 34, 426; De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvulorum ad Marcellinum, I, 26, 39; PL 44, 131. In fact, three passages of the Acts of the Apostles (16:15, 16:33, 18:8) speak of the baptism of a whole household or family.
3. Adv. Haereses II, 22,4: PG 7, 784; Harvey I, 330. Many inscriptions from as early as the second century give little children the title of "children of God," a title given only to the baptized, or explicitly mention that they were baptized: cf., for example, Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum 9727, 9801, 9817; E. Diehl, Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres (Berlin 1961) nn 1523 (3), 4429 A.
4. La Tradition apostolique de saint Hippolyte, edited and translated by B. Botte, Munster, Aschendorff, 1963 (Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen 39) p.44.
5. Epist LXIV, Cyprianus et coeteri collegae, qui in concilio adfuerunt numero LXVI, Fido fratri, PL 3, 1013-1019; ed Hartel (CSEL 3), pp 717-721. This practice was particularly strong in the Church in Africa, in spite of the position taken by Tertullian, who advised that baptism of children should be delayed in view of the innocence associated with their age and the fear of possible lapses in young adulthood. Cf. De baptismo XVIII, 3-XIX, 1: PL 1, 1220-1222; De anima, 39-41: PL 2, 719ff.
6. Cf. Saint Basil, Homilia XIII exhortatoria ad sanctum baptismum: PG 424-436; Saint Gregory of Nyssa, Adversus eos qui differunt baptismum oratio: PG 46, 424; Saint Augustine, In Ioannem Tractatus XIII, 7: PL 35, 1496; CCL 36, p. 134.
7. Cf. Saint Ambrose, De Abraham II, 11, 81-84: PL 14, 495-497: CSEL 32, 1, pp. 632-635; Saint John Chrysostom, Catechesis, III, 5-6, ed. A. Wenger, SC 50, pp. 153-154; Saint Jerome, Epist. 107, 6: PL 22, 873, ed. J. Labourt (Bude), vol 5, pp. 151-152. However, while Gregory of Nazianzus urged mothers to have their children baptized at the earliest possible age, he was content to fix that age as the first three years; cf. Oratio XL in sanctum baptismum, 17 and 28: PL 380 399.
8. Origen, In Leviticum hom. VIII,3: PG 12, 496; In Lucam Hom. XIV, 5: PG 13, 1835; Saint Cyprian, Epist. 64, 5: PL 3, 1018; ed. Hartel, CSEL, p. 720; Saint Augustine, De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvulorum, I, XVII-XIX,

- 22-24: PL 44, 121-122; De gratia Christi et de peccato originali, I, XXX-11, 35; ibid, 377; De praedestinatione sanctorum, XIII, 25: ibid, 978; Opus imperfectum contra Iulianum, V, 9: PL 45, 1439.
9. Epist. "Directa ad decessorem" ad Himerium episc. Tarraconensem, 10 febr. 385, 2: DS (Denzinger-Schonmetzer, Enchiridion symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum, Herder 1965) 184.
  10. Epist. "Inter ceteras Ecclesiae Romanae" ad Silvanum et ceteros Synodi Milevitanae Patres, 27 ian. 417, 5: DS 219.
  11. Canon 2: Mansi, III, 811-814 and IV, 327 A-B: DS 223.
  12. Council of Vienne: Mansi, XXV, 411 C-D: DS 903-904
  13. Council of Florence, sessio XI: DS 1349.
  14. Sessio V, can. 4: DS 1514; cf. the 418 Council of Carthage, note 11 above.
  15. Sessio VI, cap. IV: DS 1524.
  16. Sessio VII, can 13: DS 1626.
  17. Sollemnis Professio Fidei, 18: AAS 60 (1968), p.440.
  18. JN 3:5.
  19. Mt 28:19: cf. Mk 16:15-16.
  20. Ordo baptismi parvulorum, Praenotanda, n.2.p. 15.
  21. Cf. note 8 above for the patristic texts, and notes 9 to 13 for the Councils. Another text is the Profession of Faith of Patriarch Dositheus of Jerusalem in 1672: Mansi XXXIV, 1746.
  22. "What is done when children are baptized" wrote Saint Augustine, "is to incorporate them into the Church, that is to say to associate them with Christ's body and members" (De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvulorum, III, 4, 7: PL 44, 189: cf. I, 26, 39: ibid, 131).
  23. Ordo exsequiarum, ed. tupica, Romae, 15 August 1969, nn 82, 231-237.
  24. Epist. 98, 5: PL 33, 362; cf Sermo 176, 2,2: PL 38, 950.

25. Summa Theologica, III<sup>a</sup>, q.69, a.6, ad 3; cf. q. 68. a.9, ad 3.
26. Ordo baptismi parvulorum, Praenotanda, n. 2: cf. n. 56.
27. There is a long-standing tradition, appealed to by Saint Thomas Aquinas (Summa Theologica, II<sup>a</sup>-II<sup>ae</sup>, q.10. a. 12, in c.) and Pope Benedict XIV (Instruction Postremo Mense of 28 February 1747, 4-5: DS 2552-2553), against baptizing a child of unbelieving or Jewish parents, except in danger of death (CIC, can. 750, Sec. 2), against the parents wishes, that is unless the parents ask for it and give guarantees.
28. Cf. Mt 28:19; MK 16:16; Ac 2:37-41, 8:35-38; Rom 3:22, 26; Gal 3:26.
29. Council of Trent, sessio VII, Decr. de sacramentis, can 6: DS 1606.
30. Cf. 2 Cor 3:15-16.
31. JN 8:36; Rom 6:17-22, 8:21; Gal 4:31, 5:1, 13:1 Pt 2:16, etc.
32. This right and duty, specified in detail by the Second Vatican Council in the Declaration Dignitatis Humanae, 5, has been given international recognition in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, art. 26 (3).
33. Eph 1:23.
34. 1 JN 4:10, 19.
35. Cf. Council of Trent, sessio VI, De justificatione, capp.5-6, can. 4 and 9: DS 1525-1526, 1554, 1559.
36. Tit 3:5.
37. Cf. Ordo baptismi parvulorum, Praenotanda, n.3, p. 15.
38. Cf. ibid, n. 8, Sec. 2, p. 17; n.5, Secs 1 and 5, p. 16.
39. Ibid., 8, Sec. 1, p. 17.
40. Cf. ibid., n.3, p.15.
41. These rules were first given in a Letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith replying to a request by the Most Reverend Barthelemy Hanrion, Bishop of Dapango, Togo, and they were published, together with the Bishop's request, in Notitiae No. 61 (volume 7, year 1971) pp. 64-70.



42. Cf. Ordo initiationis christianae adultorum, ed. typica, Romae, 6 Jan. 1972, cap. 5, pp. 125-149.
43. Cf. Ordo baptismi parvulorum, Praenotanda, n. 8, Secs. 3-4, p. 17.
44. Ibid., De initiatione christiana, Praenotanda generalia, n. 7, p. 9.
45. Ibid, Praenotanda, n. 4, p. 15.