

**Matthew 28:19** – <sup>19</sup>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,

**Mark 16:15-16** – <sup>15</sup>And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news<sup>[d]</sup> to the whole creation. <sup>16</sup>The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned.

**John 3:5** – <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.

**Romans 6:3-4** Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

**CCC 1214** This sacrament is called *Baptism*, after the central rite by which it is carried out: to baptize (Greek *baptizein*) means to “plunge” or “immerse”; the “plunge” into the water symbolizes the catechumen's burial into Christ's death, from which he rises up by resurrection with him, as “a new creature.”

1. Visible Sign/Action: Water is poured over the head or the person is completely immersed in water.
2. Effects of Baptism
  - a. The power of Original Sin in the person is destroyed. (CCC 1263-1264) By Baptism *all sins* are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin.
  - b. Bestowal of sanctifying grace, the grace of justification. (CCC 1265-1266) Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the neophyte “a new creature,” an adopted son of God, who has become a “partaker of the divine nature,”<sup>69</sup> member of Christ and co-heir with him,<sup>70</sup> and a temple of the Holy Spirit.
  - c. Incorporation into the Church, the Body of Christ. (CCC 1267-1270) Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ: “Therefore . . . we are members one of another.”<sup>72</sup> Baptism incorporates us *into the Church*. From the baptismal fonts is born the one People of God of the New Covenant, which transcends all the natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races, and sexes: “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.” And The baptized have become “living stones” to be “built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood.” *Baptism gives a share in the common priesthood of all believers.*
  - d. Indelible Spiritual Mark – (CCC 1272-1274) Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, the person baptized is configured to Christ. Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (*character*) of his belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark, even if sin prevents Baptism from bearing the fruits of salvation.<sup>83</sup> Given once for all, Baptism cannot be repeated.
3. God's Word – NAME, I Baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
4. Appropriate Minister – Bishop, Priest, and Deacon and in an emergency situation where the baptismal candidate is near death, ANYONE can baptize who intends to do so. (CCC 1256)

**Prefigurations of Baptism in the Old Covenant**

- In creation, where water was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit (Gen.1:2)
- In the Flood of Noah, where he and his family “were saved through water” (1 Pet. 3:20).
- In the crossing of the Israelites through the Red Sea, where the people were set free from slavery and the Egyptians were washed away (Ex. 14).
- In the crossing of the Jordan River by the Israelites, where the People of God entered into the Promised Land, an image of eternal life (Jos. 3).
- The cleansing of Naaman the Syrian in the River Jordan (2 Kings 5:14).

**Christ's Baptism**

**CCC 1224** Our Lord voluntarily submitted himself to the baptism of St. John, intended for sinners, in order to "fulfill all righteousness."<sup>19</sup> Jesus' gesture is a manifestation of his self-emptying.<sup>20</sup> The Spirit who had hovered over the waters of the first creation descended then on the Christ as a prelude of the new creation, and the Father revealed Jesus as his "beloved Son."

**8 major elements in baptismal ceremony** (p 184-187 USCCA handout)

1. Sign of the Cross
2. Readings from Scripture
3. Exorcism and Anointing
4. Blessing of the Baptismal Water
5. Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith
6. The Essential Rite of the Sacrament
7. Anointing with Sacred Chrism
8. Reception of the White Garment and Candle

**Who Can Receive Baptism?**

**CCC 1246** Every person not yet baptized and only such a person is able to be baptized."

**Necessity of Baptism CCC 1257:** “The Lord Himself affirms that baptism is necessary for salvation. He also commands His disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to baptize them...The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude...”

**Baptism of Adults** – RCIA formation to bring their conversion to a greater maturity. Receive all Sacraments of Initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

**Baptism of Infants** – Infant Baptism has been practiced since apostolic times in order to free infants from Original Sin. **CCC 1251** Christian parents will recognize that this practice also accords with their role as nurturers of the life that God has entrusted to them.

**Baptism of Blood:** The Church has always held the firm conviction that those who suffer death for the sake of the faith without having received baptism are baptized by their death for and with Christ. This baptism of blood brings about the grace of the sacrament without the outward sign. This teaching comes from Christ, who said, “Everyone therefore who confesses Me before men, I will also confess Him before My Father who is in heaven” (Matt. 10:32). This is also the teaching of the Fathers (St. Cyprian: “the glorious and most sublime blood-Baptism”).

**Baptism of Desire:** For catechumens who die before their baptism, their explicit desire to receive it, together with their repentance for their sins, and charity, assures them the salvation that they were not able to receive through the sacrament. This is based in the power of love. According to Scripture, perfect love possesses justifying power: “Many sins are forgiven her because she has loved much” (Luke 7:47), “He that loves Me shall be loved by My Father” (John 14:21), “This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43).

**CCC 1260** "Since Christ died for all, and since all men are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partakers, in a way known to God, of the Paschal mystery."<sup>63</sup> Every man who is ignorant of the Gospel of Christ and of his Church, but seeks the truth and does the will of God in accordance with his understanding of it, can be saved. It may be supposed that such persons would have *desired Baptism explicitly* if they had known its necessity.

**Children without Baptism CCC 1261** As regards *children who have died without Baptism*, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God, as she does in her funeral rites for them. Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all men should be saved, and Jesus' tenderness toward children which caused him to say: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them,"<sup>64</sup> allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for children who have died without Baptism. All the more urgent is the Church's call not to prevent little children coming to Christ through the gift of holy Baptism.

### **Confirmation (Biblical References)**

**John 14: 16-17** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate,<sup>[6]</sup> to be with you forever. <sup>17</sup>This is the Spirit of truth.

**John 16:13** When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.

**Luke 24:49** I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.

**Acts 8:14-17:** after the Samaritan converts had been baptized by Philip the deacon, the Apostles "sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost..."

**Acts 19:1-6:** St. Paul "came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples; and he said to them: Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed...Having heard these things, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had imposed his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them..."

1. **Visible Sign/Action** The Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred through anointing with Chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of hands, and through the words: Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit. (CCC 1300)
2. **The Effects of Confirmation (CCC 1302-1305)**  
Confirmation grants to us an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a special way. From this fact, Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace:
  - It roots us more deeply in the Divine Sonship.
  - It unites us more firmly to Christ.

- It increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us. (Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Wonder & Awe, Reverence, Right Judgment, Courage)
  - It renders our bond with the Church more perfect.
  - It gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the Faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the cross.
  - Like Baptism, it confers an indelible spiritual mark, the “character,” or sign that a person is marked with the Holy Spirit by Jesus Christ.
  - It perfects the common priesthood of the faithful.
3. **God’s Word** “NAME Be Sealed with the Holy Spirit.”
  4. **Appropriate Minister** A Bishop or at times a Priest delegated.

The Person Confirmed chooses a sponsor and can choose a new name too. The new name is an indication of the permanent change that occurs in the one who is confirmed.

Who Can receive Confirmation?

**CCC 1306** Every baptized person not yet confirmed can and should receive the sacrament of Confirmation.<sup>123</sup> Since Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist form a unity, it follows that “the faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the appropriate time,”<sup>124</sup> for without Confirmation and Eucharist, Baptism is certainly valid and efficacious, but Christian initiation remains incomplete.

**CCC 1310** To receive Confirmation one must be in a state of grace. One should receive the sacrament of Penance in order to be cleansed for the gift of the Holy Spirit. More intense prayer should prepare one to receive the strength and graces of the Holy Spirit with docility and readiness to act.<sup>128</sup>

**CCC 1311** Candidates for Confirmation, as for Baptism, fittingly seek the spiritual help of a *sponsor*. To emphasize the unity of the two sacraments, it is appropriate that this be one of the baptismal godparents.<sup>129</sup>

**Who can be a Sponsor (Godparent) for Baptism or Confirmation?**

The rules of the Church in these matters are very clear. At least one Catholic Sponsor is required at a Catholic Baptism. The requirements are:

1. Be mature enough to take the responsibility to testify to the faith of an adult convert, or to profess with the parents the Church’s faith when a child is being baptized and assist in bringing the child up as a good Christian.
2. Be at least 16 years old.
3. Have received all the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist)
4. Must be living in a way that demonstrates that one’s faith is strong enough to be able to fulfill the responsibilities involved with being a sponsor.
5. A sponsor who is married must be married in accord with the laws of the Church.
6. Not be the father or the mother of the one being baptized.
7. If there is only one sponsor, can be a man or woman, if two should be one of each sex.
8. When only one, there can be a non-Catholic “Christian Witness” to the baptism.

The origin and foundation of Christian Baptism is Jesus. Before starting his public ministry, Jesus submitted himself to the baptism given by John the Baptist. The waters did not purify him; he cleansed the waters. "He comes to sanctify the Jordan for our sake . . . to begin a new creation through the Spirit and water" (St. Gregory Nazianzen, *Liturgy of the Hours*, I, 634). Jesus' immersion in the water is a sign for all human beings of the need to die to themselves to do God's will. Jesus did not need to be baptized because he was totally faithful to the will of his Father and free from sin. However, he wanted to show his solidarity with human beings in order to reconcile them to the Father. By commanding his disciples to baptize all nations, he established the means by which people would die to sin—Original and actual—and begin to live a new life with God.

## THE LITURGY OF BAPTISM

*The meaning and grace of the sacrament of Baptism are clearly seen in the rites of its celebration.*

—CCC, no. 1234

The eight major elements in the baptismal ceremony teach us the meaning of this Sacrament of Initiation and help us appreciate our life in Christ. Signs and symbols have their own capacity to communicate their meaning. Of course, the Sacrament is more than an instructive symbol; it accomplishes what it signifies.

### The Sign of the Cross

At the beginning of the celebration, the celebrant traces the Sign of the Cross on the forehead of the one being baptized. This recalls Christ's saving death and the redemption it brought. Baptism is a Sacrament of salvation.

## Readings from Scripture

Proclaiming the Word of God in the midst of the community sheds divine light on the celebration and is meant to build the faith of all the participants. One of the traditional names for Baptism is "Illumination." The Holy Spirit fills the heart and mind with the light of revealed truth and enables the response of faith.

## Exorcism and Anointing

Baptism liberates us from sin. An exorcism prayer is recited over the one being baptized, preparing the person to renounce sin and be released from evil. The celebrant anoints the person to be baptized with the Oil of Catechumens (an oil that has been blessed by the bishop for the candidate for Baptism) or imposes hands on the person. In this way, the person is being called to renounce sin and to leave behind the domination of the power of evil.

## Blessing the Baptismal Water

Baptismal water is blessed at the Easter Vigil. Outside the Easter Season, the water used for Baptism can also be blessed at each celebration of the Sacrament. The blessing prayer asks the Father "that through his Son the power of the Holy Spirit may be sent upon the water, so that those who will be baptized may be 'born of water and the Spirit'" (CCC, no. 1238).

## Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith

Those being baptized are asked to reject sin and Satan, and to profess their faith in the Triune God. In the case of infants, parents, godparents, and the entire community present for the liturgy do this on behalf of those who cannot yet speak for themselves.

## The Essential Rite of the Sacrament

The bishop, priest, or deacon either pours water three times on the person's head or immerses the candidate in water three times. In the Latin Church, he accompanies the act with the words, "[Name], I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The celebrant matches each pouring or immersion with the invocation of each of the Divine Persons. The ritual of immersion or washing helps us understand that our sins are buried and washed away as we die with Jesus, and we are filled with divine light and life as we rise from immersion in the water or are cleansed by the pouring.

In the Eastern liturgies the catechumen turns toward the East and the priest says: "The servant of God, [Name], is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." At the invocation of each person of the Most Holy Trinity, the priest immerses the candidate in the water and raises him up again. (CCC, no. 1240)

"Today in all the rites, Latin and Eastern, the Christian initiation of adults begins with their entry into the catechumenate and reaches its culmination in a single celebration of the three Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist" (CCC, no. 1233). After the completion of initiation, the neophytes or new members begin the period of continued learning and formation in Christian life called *Mystagogy*.

With regard to infants, in the Latin Church, the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist are received at a later time after Baptism. This is partly because of the emphasis on the bishop as the ordinary minister of Confirmation. Though the bishop cannot baptize everyone, he has a role in everyone's initiation into the Church by confirming them. In the Eastern Churches, the Baptism of infants is followed in the same ceremony by Confirmation (Chrismation) and Eucharist.

## The Anointing with Sacred Chrism

The celebrant anoints the newly baptized with the sacred Chrism (perfumed oil signifying the gift of the Holy Spirit), so that united with

God's people the person may remain forever a member of Christ, who is Priest, Prophet, and King. In the liturgy of the Eastern Churches, this anointing is the Chrismation, or the Sacrament of Confirmation, and is done immediately after Baptism. At the initiation of adults into the Church at the Easter Vigil, Confirmation follows Baptism.

## Reception of the White Garment and the Candle

Following the Anointing with Chrism, the minister of Baptism presents the newly baptized with a white garment and a candle. The white garment shows that the newly baptized have put on Christ and have risen with him. To be clothed in the baptismal white garment is to be clothed in Christ's protective love. Included in this ceremony is the admonition to keep the garment unstained by sin. The Book of Revelation describes the significance of the white robe: "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev 7:14).

The candle is lit from the Paschal Candle, which represents the Risen Christ. The lighted candle reminds the newly baptized of the light of Christ they have received. It also reminds us that all those baptized in Christ are to be lights for the world.

These two symbols used at Baptism appear again in the Latin Church's funeral liturgy in the forms of the white pall covering the casket and the lighted Paschal Candle, which ordinarily stands near the casket. This is to remind us that the salvation and new life promised at Baptism can now be experienced fully by the one who has gone to God.

## THE NECESSITY OF BAPTISM

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation. "No one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit" (Jn 3:5). Christ commanded his disciples to preach the Gospel, draw people to faith in him, and baptize those who come to conversion. The Church does not neglect the mission she has received from Christ to ensure that all be baptized and reborn of water and the Spirit.