

Christian Initiation

In the Light of Conciliar and *Post-Conciliar* Liturgical Documents

Lit 57

Simon Peter Kyambadde

©2004 by Simon Peter Kyambadde

These notes are still in draft form. They are meant for lecture purposes only, for students of Kinyamasika National Seminary. They are not in their final form, and have not been subjected to the last proof-reading. Nor are they meant for re-distributions and multiplication, except in the context mentioned above.

Contents

INTRODUCTION 5

SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL 7

- MEANING OF THE SACRAMENTAL ECONOMY 8
- ROLE OF THE TRINITY IN THIS ECONOMY 9
- DOCTRINAL ELEMENTS COMMON TO ALL SACRAMENTS 15

INFANT BAPTISM 20

- INTRODUCTION 22
- HISTORY 24
- MINISTRIES AND ROLES IN THE CELEBRATION OF BAPTISM 25
- WHAT IS NEEDED FOR THE CELEBRATION OF BAPTISM 32
- TIME AND PLACE FOR THE BAPTISM OF CHILDREN 34
- THOSE ELIGIBLE FOR INFANT BAPTISED 36
- STRUCTURE OF THE BAPTISMAL RITE 37
- ECUMENICAL ASPECTS REGARDING THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM 50
- ADAPTATIONS AND INCULTURATION 52

CHRISTIAN INITIATION 53

- INTRODUCTION 54
- CHRISTIAN INITIATION IN GENERAL 58
- CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS 60
- CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE REACHED CATECHETICAL AGE 90
- CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES 97
- CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF A PERSON IN DANGER OF DEATH 100
- PREPARATION OF UNCATECHISED ADULTS FOR CONFIRMATION AND EUCHARIST 103
- RECEPTION OF A BAPTISED CHRISTIAN INTO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH 106

CONFIRMATION 109

- INTRODUCTION 110
- BIBLICAL FOUNDATION 110
- RELATION WITH OTHER SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION 112
- DIGNITY OF CONFIRMATION 112
- OFFICES AND MINISTRIES 113
- CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT IN GENERAL 115
- STRUCTURE AND DETAILS OF THE RITE 119
- ADAPTATIONS IN THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION 124

BIBLIOGRAPHY 127

- SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL 127

SACRAMENTS OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION 127
INFANT BAPTISM 128
CONFIRMATION 129

INTRODUCTION

The work of a priest is in some way comparable to that of a general advocate. In order to be able to defend cases of politicians, business people, doctors or clergy, the lawyer needs to some extent, besides acquiring the requisite knowledge in law, to be familiar with the world of these different areas. Similarly a priest in the modern world is prepared to serve the needs of men and women in different fields, peasants as well as politicians, traders as well as teachers. Now, while lawyers may specialise so that one finds legal representatives specifically for copyright law or computer technology, priests do not generally do so, with the exception perhaps of a few areas such as prison and military chaplains or those trained to form other priests. Adequate seminary training therefore, aims at producing priests who are “all rounded”, and who can feel comfortable in the different sectors of the ever-changing society. In working towards this end, seminary authorities have introduced, among other things affiliation to universities, local or foreign. This has in turn led to overloading of the seminary syllabus, to the bewilderment of students who have to cover so much more, as well as traditional seminary staff who must compress so much academic material within the given time, while at the same time giving enough room to the necessary spiritual and moral formation of the seminarians. The result is that in spite of the seven years of post-college training – a period which is longer than most university degrees – the time in the major seminary is hardly enough to produce an academically “well-baked” priest, not mentioning the other aspects of a priest’s training which are in no way less important.

This booklet is one in a series that emerged in the course of liturgy lectures in St. Paul’s National Seminary, at the time of affiliation to external universities. The writer realised like other fellow lecturers, that it was almost impossible to cover the material taught before the affiliation, while at the same time giving due time to the new university program. On the other hand reducing the areas covered in liturgy would have meant sending out priests who were ill-prepared for their ministry in that all-important aspect of a pastor’s life. The alternative course of action would then be to cover less in class, while giving a future priest a package of ready reference in his pastoral activity.

The series therefore is a form of liturgical companion, written particularly with a pastoral orientation. It is written with the realisation that in the modern world of fast-moving technology the most important thing is not to know all that is necessary in one's area of work, for that is absolutely impossible. Rather, it is to know where to look for the answers in case of questions. For that reason, a lot of effort has been put in referring to the basic liturgical sources that are available to pastors.

Because it is a form of "liturgical companion" it renders itself beneficial also to those priests and other pastoral workers who are already in the field. The book is not a substitution for the actual rituals. That would be both unnecessary since such rituals are available and impossible since it would imply reproducing a great bulk of material. Rather, it is a parallel to the corresponding ritual. It helps the pastor to see the rationale behind the rubrics. It brings in focus the importance of the General Introduction, Instructions or Norms, relating them to other relevant liturgical sources as well as adapting them to the present situation.

SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL

Sacraments are so important in the life of the Church that they are studied in nearly all the major seminary disciplines. One encounters them in Systematic Theology as Sacramentology. They are covered in Pastoral Theology, in Canon Law, in Catechesis and even in Church history.

Here of course they are studied from the liturgical point of view.¹ This is not to ignore the other aspects studied in different disciplines, for a well-trained pastor needs to know the various dimensions of the same reality. Rather it is that we assume that they have been or will be covered in those disciplines. It is also expected that a student make the effort to read wider on his own. Still even in this study some amount of attention is paid in the other aspects of sacraments. These include a brief history of the sacrament, its theological content, pastoral perspective, etc.

Again because the approach is liturgical the sacraments are studied here in the order of priority as given in the liturgical books. Thus the Eucharist is isolated and studied apart, although we know that it is at the same time one of the three sacraments of Christian initiation. For liturgy its prominence is such that nearly all the other sacraments are celebrated, or can be celebrated, in the context of the Eucharist (with the exception of the sacrament of Reconciliation). The sacraments contained in the Roman Ritual constitute the main part of the liturgical activity of an ordinary parish pastor. These are Baptism, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, and Matrimony. The Sacraments of the Roman Pontifical on the other hand are ordinarily the concern of the bishop or his delegates. The pastor's role with regard to these sacraments is in the preparation of the candidates, for instance of confirmation. Occasionally he too may have to carry out confirmation. For this too of course he needs preparation of the sacrament. But these are relegated to the end of the study of sacraments. They are Ordination and Confirmation.

The sacraments as instruments and vehicles of God's salvation are traceable directly or ultimately to Jesus Christ. They are enacted through visible symbols. They fall under three categories: 1: Sacraments of Christian Initiation which are Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist; 2: the

¹ Mainly with regard to their celebration in the liturgy, with the ministers and their respective roles, with the time and place of celebration, etc

Sacraments of healing which are Penance and Anointing of the Sick; and 3: Sacraments of Christian Vocation which are Ordination and Matrimony.

MEANING OF THE SACRAMENTAL ECONOMY

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) describes the “sacramental economy” in these terms: “...in age of the Church Christ now lives and acts in and with his Church, in a new way appropriate to this new age. He acts through the sacraments in what the common Tradition of the East and the West calls ‘the sacramental economy’; this is the communication (or ‘dispensation’) of the fruits of Christ’s Paschal mystery in the celebration of the Church’s ‘sacramental’ liturgy.²

This is referred to as a ‘new age’ to distinguish it from the age when Christ was physically present as a human being. Then he communicated God’s saving love through his words and actions. Now he communicates the same saving love in a different way ‘appropriate to this age’ which the analysis below explores; and that is the sacramental liturgy.

It is natural for us human beings to believe in what we can sense: what we see or hear or can touch has greater impact, it seems more real. We can think of the people who lived in the time of the earthly life of Jesus as luckier than us: because they could see his beautiful and kind face, hear his gentle voice, have the privilege to eat with him. People who can afford it make pilgrimages to the “holy land” to go through the places which are associated with the earthly life of the Lord. Others have gone to Turin to see the shroud in which his body was wrapped. Yet the same Jesus told Thomas who wanted to see and touch, that blessed are those who do have not seen yet believe. It is not easy to believe that in the sacramental economy Jesus is even more effective than he was in his earthly existence, yet it is true. Then he was limited by physical law. He could not be in two places at the same time. He could become tired and worn out. Now he is accessible to all who want him. All he wants in order to make his power effective is our faith, the same faith that he required even in those days.

² No. 1076.

ROLE OF THE TRINITY IN THIS ECONOMY

Even though our focus is on the Paschal Mystery – that is to say on Christ and the liturgy – it is important to recall that Christ never operated alone, but always in union with the Father and the Holy Spirit. And so even here we briefly look at the role of the other Persons of the Holy Trinity.

The first thing to note is that all liturgy is a response. It is a response to God who has loved us and acted first. The CCC individuates the roles of each of the divine Persons of the Trinity.³

The Father - Source and Goal of the Liturgy

St. Paul in the introduction of his letter to the Ephesians summarised well the work of God the Father in the economy of salvation, and this text is quoted at the beginning of the explanation of the role of the Father: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. He destined us before him in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”⁴

They say it is a good habit to count one’s blessings. It creates a sense of gratitude and joy. On the other hand one who does not count one’s blessings may have a spirit of discontent. We cannot count the blessings of the Father, for as the psalmist says, to complete them we would have to be eternal like him. But that does not prevent us from trying. The first amazing thing is that he called us from eternity. What Jeremiah speaks of himself is true of every human being. Before we were conceived in our mother’s womb he knew us. All our days were counted before any of them came into being. That is looking in the past. When we look into the future this is no less amazing. He destined us in love to be his children forever. We call ourselves mortal and that is what we are, but in a way we are eternal in the mind of God. The whole story of creation from Genesis to Revelation is full of God’s blessings. The nine readings of the Easter Vigil are long, and it is not easy to keep one’s attention throughout, but they narrate a few highlights which characterise the history of salvation, which

³ Here CCC presents to us the teaching of Vatican II especially as presented in SC 5-7.

⁴ Ephesians 1: 3-6.

is nothing but wonderful gifts of God. But by far the greatest gifts of God are the gifts of himself to us. He gave us the Son. Jesus told Nicodemus that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in may not perish but may have eternal life. He told the Samaritan woman that if only you knew what it is that God is offering and who it is that tells you that give me a drink. If only we fully knew what it means that God gave us his only Son. The readings of the second Sunday of Lent bring out beautifully the implication of God giving his own Son. In contrast we see him asking Abraham for his only son, the pearl of his eye. At the last moment he spares him. He does not spare his Son. In the gospel of that Sunday which is that of transfiguration, he says this is my own Son in whom I am well pleased. The Son is in the company of Moses and Elijah, discussion his coming passion from which he will not be spared. God gave us the Holy Spirit, who is the source of all gifts of God. Solomon was asked to ask for anything and he asked for wisdom to guide God's people, and that was pleasing to God, who gave him even what he had not asked for. A story is told in Greek mythology of Midas who loved gold. The oracle put the same offer to him to ask for whatever he wanted. He asked that everything that he touches may become gold, and that was granted him. For sometime he was very happy, but they came the time to eat. He touched the food and it turned into gold! Miserable and hungry he was approached by his daughter whom he loved so much. He embraced her and she turned into a pillar of gold, and then he knew the foolishness of his request. Jesus once gave the same offer to his disciples and told them that ask for anything in my name and it will be granted you. And then he told them as if to advice them to ask wisely, that how much more will the Father deny his children who ask him for the gift of his Spirit. The Spirit is the perfect gift, because he is the source of all gifts. Both the Son and Spirit help us to receive the Father. With such gifts one can confidently say that God in all his might could never have given more than he gave. What is more is that he is still willing to give when we ask him.

All liturgy is a response to this loving blessing of God. It is a response of adoration. If we fully understand these gifts we would be dumbfounded and stand gaping in adoration. It is a response of faith. To believe in God's gifts of the things we cannot see is to assert that he is not a liar, it is to appropriate to ourselves his gifts. It is a response of thanksgiving. A response of seeking to deserve those gifts, striving to attain the promises which still lie ahead.

Blessing has a double meaning. From the point of view of God the Father it is filling us his children with his goodness and gifts. It is a ‘divine life-giving action’. There is evidence of that throughout scripture in the blessing of the first parents, of the patriarchs, of the Israelites in their long and complex history. In the liturgy the divine blessing is fully revealed and communicated. Through the Father’s gift of his Son we are filled with blessings. Through his Word, he pours into our hearts the Gift that contains all gifts, the Holy Spirit.

From the point of view of human beings, blessing means adoration and surrender to our Creator in thanksgiving. In the scriptures, the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms, interwoven in the liturgy of the Chosen People, recall these divine blessings and at the same time respond to them with blessings of praise and thanksgiving. Similarly in the Church’s we bless God by responding in faith and love to his spiritual blessings. But we also respond to his goodness by asking for more blessings. ‘Until the consummation of God’s plan, the Church never ceases to present to the Father the offering of his own gifts, and to e.g. him to send the Holy Spirit upon that offering, upon herself, upon the faithful and upon the whole world...’ (no. 1083).

The introduction to the Book of Blessings, explains the Father’s blessings in similar terms, but mainly basing itself on texts found in the liturgy, particularly the Roman Missal: The Father is described as the source of blessings in the Missal, in the third solemn blessing of New Year’s Day.⁵ God is the source of all blessings because he above all is blessed forever.⁶ He who is all good has made all things good, so that he might fill his creatures with blessings.⁷ Even after the Fall of mankind, and in spite of it, he has continued his blessings as a sign of his merciful love.

Christ’s Work in the Liturgy

The role of Christ in the liturgy is summarised in the catechism with a single statement: “*Christ glorified from the time of the Church of the apostles is*

⁵ “Every good gift comes from the Father of light. May he grant you his grace and every blessing, and keep you safe throughout the coming year...”

⁶ “To [the Israelites] belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.” (Romans 9:5)

⁷ See Eucharistic Prayer Four, Preface: “”Through all eternity you live in unapproachable light. *Source of life and goodness*, you have created all things, *to fill your creatures with every blessing* and lead all men to the joyful vision of your light.”

present in the earthly liturgy which participates in the liturgy of heaven.” That in itself needs a moment of reflection on the condensed truth it conveys. CCC goes on to break it into four phrases which form headings on which is based the description of Christ’s role in the liturgy.

Christ glorified...

“Seated at the right hand of the Father” and pouring out the Holy Spirit on his Body which is the Church, Christ now acts through the sacraments he instituted to communicate his grace. The sacraments are perceptible signs (words and actions) accessible to our human nature. By the action of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit they make present efficaciously the grace that they signify.⁸ In fact, seen in a broader sense, not just to the seven sacraments, but all liturgical actions are sacramental.

What is signified in the different liturgical celebrations is an aspect of Christ’s Paschal mystery. The grace that is imparted is the merits of this action of Christ which endure through all time.

...from the time of the Church of the apostles...

Christ is at work in the liturgy also in the sense that what is done in it is by his command and authority. Just as he was sent by the Father he too sent the apostles to act in his name.⁹ A king or president may be said to have constructed a road or city when he has never even touched a spade during the construction work. A Carmelite convent may be said to have given a future to a number of young people even if they did not do the actual training. But Christ’s work is much more than this. What his apostles were to teach was what he had already taught. They were simple to transmit, elaborate and apply. The grace imparted through the words and actions was from him. The power of the Holy Spirit who was to effect the sanctification was also from Christ. The apostles passed on this duty through “apostolic succession”.

...is present in the earthly liturgy...

Quoting SC 7, the Catechism mentions the different ways in which Christ is present in the liturgy, in order to accomplish the work of dispensation or

⁸ No. 1084.

⁹ CCC 1086, SC 6.

communication of salvation: in the officiating minister, in the Eucharistic species, in the different sacraments which he performs through the instrumentality of the minister, in the word which is read, and in the gathered Church.

...which participates in the liturgy of heaven...

Quoting SC 8 and LG 50 the Catechism shows how the same Christ who is present sacramentally in the earthly liturgy is the same who is present and principle actor in the heavenly liturgy, where there is no need of use of signs. We in our liturgy we join the heavenly liturgy in faith to glorify the Lord. At the same time in our veneration of the memory of the saints we hope for some part and fellowship with them; we eagerly await the Saviour until he will appear and we too with him. This point is elaborated in greater detail further ahead.

The Holy Spirit and the Church in the Liturgy

People who belong to the charismatic movement know from experience how indispensable the Holy Spirit is in Christian prayer and in the liturgy.

In the CCC the functions of the Holy Spirit in the liturgy are fourfold. These are summarised both in the opening paragraph (no. 1092) and in the brief summary (no. 1112). The rest is elaboration. To quote the former: "In this sacramental dispensation of Christ's mystery the Holy Spirit acts in the same way as at other times in the economy of salvation: 1) he prepares the Church to encounter her Lord; 2) he recalls and makes Christ manifest to the faith of the assembly. 3) By his transforming power, he makes the mystery of Christ present here and now. 4) Finally the Spirit of communion unites the Church to the life and mission of Christ.

The Spirit Prepares for the Reception of Christ in the Liturgy. The preparation of the liturgical assembly by the Spirit is described in a double sense. In the first sense it would be more proper to say that the Spirit "prepared" than that he "prepares". In this sense reference is made to the Old Testament as it was, through the inspiration of the Spirit, a preparation for the New Testament. Since Christ's Church was 'prepared in marvellous fashion in the history of the people of Israel and in the Old Covenant' the Church's liturgy has retained certain elements of the worship of the Old Covenant as integral and irreplaceable, adopting them as her own: notably the reading of the Old Testament, the praying of the Psalms and above all, recalling the saving events and significant realities

which have found their fulfilment in the mystery of Christ (promise and covenant, Exodus and Passover, kingdom and temple, exile and return).

In the second sense the Spirit prepares the worshipping assembly to receive the Lord by becoming well-disposed. This preparation of hearts is the joint work of the spirit and the assembly, especially of its ministers. "The grace of the Holy Spirit seeks to awaken faith, conversion of heart and adherence to the Father's will. These dispositions are the precondition both for the reception of other graces conferred in the celebration itself and the fruits of new life which the celebration is intended to produce afterwards."¹⁰

The Holy Spirit recalls the mystery of Christ. It is the Spirit who elicits the response of faith to the words heard as consent and commitment. It is he who recalls to the assembly through the words and actions, all that Christ has done for us and who inspires thanksgiving and praise.

The Holy Spirit makes present the mystery of Christ. I have the habit of removing the pall off the chalice just before the words "let your Spirit come upon these gifts that they may become for us the body and blood of Christ". Not because I fear that the Spirit might be impeded by the pall and fail to enter the wine! But symbolically this acts like opening the door for him to enter. The clearest example of the transforming power of the Spirit are the sacred species. But also in the other sacraments the Spirit makes present the merits of Christ's sacrifice and available to those disposed for them.

The Spirit leads to communion. You do remember our famous example of the ant-hill, how little unintelligent insects can accomplish so much just because they are united guided by instinct. This clearly indicates how even human beings can accomplish so much when united. This year was a year of the World Cup. Musing on how many people all over the world are glued to radio and television following and supporting one team or another, I wonder how good it would be if they were ever to be so united over something of more fundamental importance, like their salvation! In every liturgical action the Holy Spirit is sent in order to bring us into communion with Christ and so to form his body. Communion is the logical consequence of co-operation with the grace received in the liturgy. If people's faith is evoked in the same mystery, if they are inspired to

¹⁰ No. 1098.

commitment to God, if they are led to a new life in Christ then they are drawn into communion.

The work of the Spirit could also be compared to a blueprint. Before beginning to build architects make an elaborate plan on paper, foreseeing every little detail, how much it will cost, what material, what measurements etc. Usually they also make a model of the edifice presenting a miniature but true reflection of the foreseen building. At every stage they monitor to see that the edifice is constructed according to plan. Usually the minor workers who ferry the sand and stones, do not think of the final product. We are minor labourers constructing a great work whose plan is masterminded by the Holy Spirit. We are so limited that we cannot see the full plan, which extends over all time and which embraces all humanity. But if like good minor workers we co-operate, we will one day see the finished product in all its beauty and the particular part we played in its construction.

DOCTRINAL ELEMENTS COMMON TO ALL SACRAMENTS

This heading coincides with the article 2 in the CCC which is ‘the Paschal Mystery in the Church’s Sacraments, (nos. 1113-1134). As stated in no. 1113, this article discusses ‘what is common to the Church’s seven sacraments from a doctrinal point of view’, hence the present sub-heading.

Sacraments of Christ

All the sacraments are of Christ in the sense that they were instituted by him. Now, left like that this statement is highly controversial and has raised heated debates in the past among different Christian denominations. The critical question is in what consists “the institution of the sacraments”. Many hold baptism and Eucharist as the only sacraments in the strict sense; in as far as they are directly traceable to Christ. One can point to the words of Christ “go out to the whole world and proclaim the good news...baptise all peoples in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.” One can also clearly point to the words of consecration “this is my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. Do this in memory of me”. The situation is different for instance with regard to the sacrament of anointing where the basic text is not one from the gospels

but from one of his apostles, who does not even feature prominently as far as writing what is now scripture is concerned, that is James.¹¹

The CCC does not define what “instituted” clearly means, but it reflects contemporary theological thinking in which ‘institution’ does not mean that Christ intended the specific matter and form for each of the seven sacraments but that the salvific words and actions of Christ are foundational and irreplaceable for the Church’s sacramental life in the power of the Holy Spirit. As St. Leo the Great asserted in his *Sermon 74*: “That which was visible in our Saviour has passed over into his sacraments.”¹²

The Catechism further affirms that “sacraments are powers that come forth from the Body of Christ, which is ever-living and life-giving...” In support of this it quotes Luke 5:17: “One day, while he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting near by (they had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem); and the power of the Lord was with him to heal.”; Luke 6:19 “And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.” and Luke 8:46 “But Jesus said, “Someone touched me; for I noticed that power had gone out from me.” This is quite enlightening for anyone who might be tempted to think that age of spectacular miracles which characterised Christ’s times is now confined to a few charismatic healers. The feeding of the millions every day with the bread of eternal life is in no way inferior to the feeding of the five thousand with bread which they ate and grew angry again. The forgiveness that he imparts through the sacrament of reconciliation is, for those who have faith, a greater miracle than when he told the paralytic to take up his stretcher and go home; that was only to prove that the Son of Man had power on earth. Now he does only what God can do, through his ministers.

A convert from the Anglican faith to Catholicism once asked me why we are called “Father” when Christ clearly told his disciples that they must not

¹¹ “Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.” James 5: 14-16.

¹² CCC 1115. Cf. Jan Michael Jonas, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church on Liturgy and Sacraments*, p. 7.

call anyone on earth, for they have one Father who is in heaven. At the moment I could not think of any good answer. But later on it occurred to me that whatever title we are addressed by is just a professional title just like a “policeman” or “lawyer” or “dentist”. The reality however, is essentially different. A priest performs his work on the basis of his formal education just like in any other profession. The essential difference however, is that he does his work not through his own power but by the power of the unique priest Jesus Christ. He alone can forgive sins, I could not have the power to forgive sins even if I had never committed any, which is not the case. I cannot by my own power bring about the mystery of rebirth in baptism. Scientists may meddle about with test tube babies, surrogate mothers and embryo cloning; they can only work on what is already given: they cannot bring about new life from non-life, not even the life of a pea, at least not so far. Much less would anyone create eternal life that is given through the sacraments.

Sacraments of the Church

In his time Christ imparted his power directly. People had to find out what his program was, where he would be on what date in order to seek his assistance. The centurion pressed him to come and heal his servant even though he knew he had a busy schedule. The father of the epileptic boy was almost desperate at the foot of the mountain of transfiguration because the disciples had failed to heal the boy the master was not available. Similarly the Phoenician woman was insistent to the point of becoming a nuisance because she saw him as her only chance to obtain healing for her daughter. But now he has passed on the administration of these divine favours to the Church.

As she has done for the canon of sacred Scripture and for the doctrine of faith, the Church by the power of the Spirit who guides her into all truth, has gradually recognised this treasure received from Christ, and, as a faithful steward of God’s mysteries, has determined its dispensation. For the Lord himself had promised that “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.” (John 16: 13). Paul too says thus of his mission: “Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries.” 1 Corinthians 4:1.

The sacraments are “of the Church” in the double sense that they are “by her” and “for her.”¹³ They are by her in the sense that she is now the instrument of Christ in dispensing them by the power of the Holy Spirit who works in her. They are for her in the sense that the beneficiaries are Church and her members. And when the Church benefits from them she is built and manifested to the world. This is really what is meant in the question we are to trying to understand that “Liturgy builds and manifests the Church.”

An example to illustrate how the sacraments or even liturgy as a whole both builds and manifests the Church may be the life of the saints in the Church, for they have excelled in benefiting from the sacraments. Because they were nourished by them they grew in faith and charity and turned from their old ways into new creatures. This transformation of life was a growth a building into a new community. At the same time the fruits of their new life were visible to the world. Their charity attracted others. Their work lived after them. Many others were drawn by their example. And so they manifested the Church. Similarly, people who lived in diverse regions of the world, diverse cultures and backgrounds were drawn together partly through the celebration of their consecration thus becoming a Carmelite community. The constant celebration of that same liturgy conserves and makes grow that bond which brought them together. The liturgical nourishment manifests them as part of the Church not just in the way they dress or in their lifestyle, but also in all the good things they do for the people around them and the invisible spiritual benefits they earn for the rest of the world.

Forming as it were, one mystical person with Christ the head, the Church acts in the sacraments as ‘an organically structured priestly community. Through Baptism and Confirmation the priestly people is enabled to celebrate the liturgy, while those of the faithful who have received Holy Orders, are appointed to nourish the Church with the word and grace of God in the name of Christ. The ordained ministry or ministerial priesthood is at the service of the baptismal priesthood. The ordained priesthood guarantees that it really is Christ who acts in the sacraments through the Holy Spirit for the Church.’¹⁴

¹³ CCC 1118.

¹⁴ CCC nos. 1119-1120.

The analogue of an organism, of a living body with different parts having different functions but all ordered to the good of the whole organism is unbeatable. The more one understands the complexity of the body and the interdependence of the parts, the more one appreciates also the complexity and beauty of the mystical body which is the Christ and his Church. In the human body we often consider the brain and the heart as the most important organs. The brain controls all our actions both conscious and subconscious, while the heart, in tirelessly pumping blood every second supplies the body with the necessary energy. The importance of the two organs is really for the service of the whole organism. But it is amazing how they in turn depend so much on the smallest of the other organs. For instance if for some reason at the beginning of this session both the nose and the mouth of anyone collaborated and decided to have a strike and not take in air the rest of the organism including the major organs would be already dead! And because life is so important to all of them they would not just die without putting up a big struggle. The legs would kick about, the hands would strike in all directions, the eyes would open wide, the lungs would pump out air under pressure to force the nose or the mouth to open. Unless the mouth and the nose were compelled by some other force beyond their control they would inevitably give in. No one can commit suicide just by holding their breath.

INFANT BAPTISM

INTRODUCTION	22
HISTORY	24
<i>In the Bible</i>	24
<i>In the Church</i>	25
MINISTRIES AND ROLES IN THE CELEBRATION OF BAPTISM	25
<i>The Faithful</i>	25
<i>God-parents</i>	26
<i>Parents</i>	28
<i>Ordinary Ministers of Baptism</i>	29
Bishop	30
Parish priest.....	30
Other priests or deacons	30
<i>Extra-ordinary Ministers</i>	31
WHAT IS NEEDED FOR THE CELEBRATION OF BAPTISM	32
TIME AND PLACE FOR THE BAPTISM OF CHILDREN	34
<i>Time of Baptism</i>	34
<i>Place of Baptism</i>	35
THOSE ELIGIBLE FOR INFANT BAPTISED	36
STRUCTURE OF THE BAPTISMAL RITE.....	37
<i>Ordinary form</i>	37
Contents of the Ordinary Form	38
<i>Extra-ordinary forms</i>	45
Rite of baptism for children by a catechist when no deacon or priest is available	45
Rite of Baptising a Child in Danger of Death when no Priest or Deacon is Available	46
Rite of Bringing a Baptised Child to the Church.....	48
ECUMENICAL ASPECTS REGARDING THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM	50
<i>Conditions for Accepting as Valid Baptism performed outside the Catholic Church</i>	50
<i>What to do where the Validity of the Baptism is Doubtful</i>	50
<i>Attitude of the Catholic Church with regard to the Baptism of Different Christian Churches</i>	51
<i>Regarding god-parents in an Ecumenical Environment</i>	51
ADAPTATIONS AND INCULTURATION	52
INTRODUCTION	54
<i>Historical Perspective of RCIA</i>	55
<i>Pastoral perspective</i>	57
CHRISTIAN INITIATION IN GENERAL	58

<i>Revision by Vatican Council II</i>	58
<i>Relation between the three sacraments of initiation</i>	58
<i>Candidates for Christian Initiation</i>	59
CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS.....	60
<i>General description</i>	60
<i>Ministries and offices</i>	62
<i>Time and place of initiation</i>	65
Proper or Usual Time	65
Outside the Usual Time.....	67
Place of celebration	67
<i>Adaptations</i>	68
Adaptations by Episcopal Conferences	68
Adaptations by the bishop	69
Adaptations by the Minister	69
<i>Elaboration</i>	70
General outline.....	70
Period of evangelisation and pre-catechumenate	71
First step: acceptance into the order of catechumenate	72
Period of the catechumenate	74
Second step: election or enrolment of names	79
Period of purification and enlightenment	82
Third step: celebration of the sacraments of initiation	85
Period of post-baptismal catechesis or mystagogy	88
CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE REACHED CATECHETICAL AGE	90
<i>Those to be initiated</i>	90
<i>Nature of the initiation</i>	90
<i>Others involved in the initiation</i>	90
<i>Time of celebration of the Christian initiation</i>	91
<i>Adaptations by Episcopal Conferences</i>	91
<i>Accommodations by the Minister</i>	92
<i>Liturgical Rites involved</i>	92
First step: acceptance into the order of catechumenate	92
Second step: Penitential rites (scrutinies).....	93
Third step: celebration of the sacraments of initiation	94
CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES	97
<i>Expanded form</i>	97
<i>Abbreviated form</i>	98
CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF A PERSON IN DANGER OF DEATH.....	100
PREPARATION OF UNCATECHISED ADULTS FOR CONFIRMATION AND EUCHARIST	103
RECEPTION OF A BAPTISED CHRISTIAN INTO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH	106

INTRODUCTION

THE PRACTICE OF INFANT BAPTISM

Alice was an earnest young woman that was a staunch member of a certain branch of the Baptist Church. For some reason she vehemently resented anything that spoke of Catholicism. Ironically, due to a combination of circumstances she and the rest of her family became great friends of mine, even though they knew that I was a Catholic priest. But very early in our friendship it was tacitly agreed that we avoid arguments regarding our different creeds, for they always ended in misunderstanding and stalemate. One day Alice came to visit me with her fiancé. To my surprise I came to learn that Alexander was not only a Catholic but also one who passionately believed and practiced his faith. He was particularly devoted to Our Lady and often went to places of pilgrimages. Alice of course would not want to hear about any of that. And yet they were deeply in love with each other, and they intended eventually to get married.

One day Alexander took me aside and told me about their predicament. Since none of the two wanted to abandon their faith, they had agreed on a mixed marriage. But they strongly felt that the question of the faith of their children and the latter's baptism had to be decided before the life-long commitment in order to avoid future quarrels. It wasn't so much a question as to which Church the children should belong. Rather, it was more of a question as to the time when children should be baptised. Alexander insisted that he wanted to have his children baptised as infants, in accordance to long Catholic tradition. Alice was convinced that this would be tantamount to a sin of presumption. God wants us to freely choose our faith. Children should be allowed to grow to the age when they can decide to be baptised. So it was in the bible; so it should be. Typical of the average pious Catholic, Alexander did not have as many biblical and theological arguments to put forward before the greater familiarity with sacred Scripture, of his fiancée. He wanted to know what advice I as a Catholic priest would give him.

One of the areas in which many Christian denominations put to task Catholics and other Christians of a similar practice is that of infant baptism. They consider it improper and non-biblical to baptise children in their infancy. Improper because, they argue, baptism should mark

conversion, a personal decision and option for Christ. Infants have not yet come to the age of decision so why should they be baptised? It is considered non-biblical, because the baptism that is found in the bible is only of adults. After all, the Lord told his disciples, that after their teaching, those who will believe will be baptised. In a way infant baptism would seem to violate the rights of the child, to accept God's invitation of salvation or not to receive it. God, however much he loves us, makes us free to accept or reject his love. Why should the Church impose that love on the children?

Baptism of infants is a later development in the Church.¹⁵ The earliest baptisms were of adults that had converted to the faith. That is quite understandable since Christianity was a new faith. No one would have expected children below the age of reason to have come to ask for baptism. But then with time the converts bore children. The question comes up whether parents should wait until their children become adults and decide for themselves whether to embrace the faith or not. After all, parents wish the best for their children. They give them the best nourishment, the best clothing, the best shelter. They try to raise them as good and responsible people, passing on to them the values which they uphold. Naturally if they are believers in the promise of salvation they should want their children too to attain to that promise. In the same way that they do not wait until a child is grown into an adult before teaching him or her the morals they uphold, so also they do not wait before having them baptised. The Lord had said to Nicodemus that "unless a man is reborn in water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." (John 3: 5). That was not easy for Nicodemus to understand, but it was not expected of him to comprehend either. Now death does not always wait until a child has grown to adulthood and the age of personal decision.

The necessity of baptism for salvation is a mystery. Nicodemus could not understand that, anymore that we could today. The Lord comprehended the limitation of his knowledge, and told him that that is natural. In the same way that he could not understand where the wind came from and where it went, so also could he not understand the divine mysteries. Only he who came from above could fully understand the things from above.

¹⁵ *Rite of Baptism for Children, 1-2.*

The case for infant baptism can also be argued on the basis of the Jewish practice of circumcision of babies 8 days old. These babies did not understand what was performed on them, yet it was performed on them all the same. The Lord showed his approval of the custom by undergoing it himself.

None of us is personally responsible for the original sin which we are born with and which baptism wipes away from us. It stands to reason that if we inherit it through no personal fault we can also have it removed without our own merit or conscious decision.

And so it is that a child has a right to receive what its parents believe to be the best for it. Faith is one of those things a child needs to acquire already in infancy. The parents on their part have both the right and the duty to impart what is best for the child. Infant baptism does not remove the child's right to choose its faith later. In fact the whole process of Christian initiation of adults is geared towards a personal decision of those who already received baptism in infancy. Baptism is only the first stage of this long process that is completed with the sacrament of Confirmation and the reception of the Eucharist.

HISTORY

*In the Bible*¹⁶

Entry into the faith of Christ was effected with the same rite with which he himself began his public ministry, namely that of baptism. Even in the present rite we recognise the chief elements in the baptism of the Lord: the pouring of water, the descent of the Holy Spirit on the candidate, the claiming of the candidate as a child of God, and the beginning of a new mission. But Jesus did not just receive baptism, he dispensed it. We are baptised because he commanded that so would new members be brought to the faith.

¹⁶ J. Mueller, *Baptism in the Bible*, in the Catholic Encyclopaedia, vol. 2, p. 54-58, (1967).

*In the Church*¹⁷

Outside of the bible the Didache is the most ancient document from which we gather baptismal practice of the Church of antiquity. It is a small document of Syrian origin, regarding a variety of subjects. From it we gather that before the actual baptism there was an explanation to the candidate about the “Two Ways”; that the material used for baptism was water, whether cold or warm, running or still; that baptism was carried out by immersion, but when this was not possible it was permissible to do it by pouring three times, in the name of the Persons of the Holy Trinity. We also learn that baptism was preceded by fasting of at least a day for the baptiser and any other around that were capable of doing so; and for two or three days for the baptismal candidates.

Another ancient source are the writings of St. Justin Martyr, around the middle of the second century. From him we learn that prayer and fasting accompanied baptism. This was intended for the forgiveness of past sins of the baptismal candidate. Moreover, baptism was preceded by the profession of faith of the baptismal candidate, which was intended as an affirmation that the candidate believed what he or she had learnt of the Christian faith.

Up to this stage there was no definite baptismal ritual. But with the increase of the conversions, as well as of the heresies it became necessary to have a concrete form of Christian initiation, and hence the development of the catechumenate.

MINISTRIES AND ROLES IN THE CELEBRATION OF BAPTISM

*The Faithful*¹⁸

Baptism makes one become a member of the Church. Therefore the acquisition of a new member should be an occasion of celebration for the Christian community. The community shares the joy of the parents and the godparents by participating in the celebration of baptism. They provide an ambient of love into which the new member is born. Members of the Christian community who are more practising of their faith can urge the weaker ones not to delay the baptism of their children. They can lead the

¹⁷ J. A. Jugmann, *Baptism, Liturgy of*, in the Catholic Encyclopaedia, vol. 2, p. 58-62, (1967).

¹⁸ *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 4.

timid to the pastors. They can help to explain to them some of the things the parents do not know about baptism. Now and then a family may be too poor to afford the required stole fees. This becomes an opportunity of those that are financially more capable to perform an act of charity towards the needy. Within the liturgy they make their consent at the profession of after the creed. This goes to show that the child's baptism is based not only on the faith of the parents, but of the entire Christian community.

God-parents¹⁹

I once asked a class of twenty seminarians how many knew their godparents. Eight of them did. They I asked them how many of these godparents could be said to have played a role in their spiritual growth. Only one raised the hand. In fact another explained that he was a kind of spiritual guide to his godfather. This kind of situation in which godparents play a minimum role in the spiritual development of their godchildren is unfortunately quite widespread.

To make sure that the child grows in the faith in which it is baptised the Church requires that in normal circumstances every child should have a godparent. This is to ensure that every child, even that born of weak parents in terms of Christian faith, has a chance to be raised in the faith in which they are baptised. It is in fact permissible to have both a godfather and godmother for the same child. The role of the godparents is explained in canon 872: "In so far as possible, a person being baptised is to be assigned a sponsor. In the case of an adult baptism, the sponsor's role is to assist the person in Christian initiation. In the case of an infant baptism, the role is together with the parents to present the child for baptism, and to help it to live a Christian life befitting the baptised and faithfully to fulfil duties inherent in baptism." Godparents should also take time to pray for the children they have sponsored. It is laudable also make sacrifices for their children's spiritual welfare. In the liturgy the godparents promise to assist the child in its journey of faith. Part of their pre-baptismal instruction should be to make them understand that their promises in the liturgy is a serious undertaking.

¹⁹ *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 6; *Rite of Christian Initiation* 8, 10; *Pastoral Companion* (Revised Edition), 52. Cf. SC, 67.

Normally the godparents are designated by the parents or guardians of the child. If neither parents nor guardians are available, then the pastor or minister of baptism designates the godparents. Those chosen should be mature enough to undertake the responsibility attached to this role. The minimum age prescribed for a godparent is sixteen years. However, Episcopal Conferences may decide on another suitable age. With a just cause a pastor may allow one who is younger than the prescribed age to be a godparent. This can be the case for instance in the case of a young member of the faithful with outstanding faith and uprightness.

One who acts as godparent should have the intention of carrying out the duty undertaken. In addition he or she ought to have received the three sacraments of Christian initiation. He or she should be a Catholic, legally free to take on that task. The godparent should live a life of faith in harmony with their undertaking. It is unsuitable for instance that those who are in polygamous marriages or those who have divorced should act as godparents. However, circumstances may be such that people of exemplary lives and in short supply. In such a case it is better to have a less-than-perfect godparent than not to have one at all, or to have the same godparent for more children than they can look after. The godparent should neither be the father nor the mother of the child. In some areas the diocese may exclude close relatives as godparents as well. However, these may even be more suitable since they usually have easier access to their godchildren than outsiders.

A baptised person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community may be admitted only in company with a Catholic sponsor, and then simply as a witness to the baptism. (Canon 874 §2).

Members of the clergy should not act as godparents. Their vocation already makes them “godparents” to the rest of the Christian community. In the same way candidates to the priesthood should refrain from accepting to act as godparents, in view of their future ministry. The religious would do better to leave the role of “god parenting” to the lay faithful. Not infrequently do they with the best of intentions but erroneously bias those under their charge towards the vocation they have chosen for themselves. Moreover a healthy Christian community should have enough members to act as godparents without resort to those who have chosen to follow Christ in a consecrated life. Good family friends are usually suitable godparents in so far as they have ready access to the homes of their godchildren.

Occasionally it may happen that at the actual day of baptism the godparent cannot for some reason attend the ceremony. It is permissible under those circumstances for the godparent to appoint someone else to replace them. He or she must in this case make it clear whether the appointed person is an actual replacement or proxy. In the case of the latter the names of the original godparent are the ones to appear on the baptismal ticket of the child. Moreover the original godparent actually undertakes the responsibilities which the proxy makes on his or her behalf during the celebration of the baptism.

*Parents*²⁰

A child's parents play an irreplaceable role in its early development. Even when it is required that each child that is baptised should have a godparent to ensure its Christian upbringing, still the role of the godparent is far inferior to that of the parent. In the first place under normal circumstances the parent lives with the child and has a daily influence on him or her. It is the parent and not the godparent who lulls the child to sleep, and who therefore is better placed to teach it the habit of praying before going to bed. Secondly, what the child hears from its father or mother, or what it sees them doing has a far greater impact than from those outside the family. Parents therefore have a more important role in the spiritual life of the child than anybody else.

Before taking their child to baptism the parents should seek to understand the meaning of the sacrament of baptism. This they can do through the information of friends who are more church-going. Or they can become informed through reading, for those who can do so and who have access to the relevant literature. The practice of having a Catholic Catechism in the family is a recommendable one. It does not shade light on this sacrament alone, but also on any other moral or dogmatic question that may rise in the course of daily life. It is a similar practice to that of having a dictionary or a set of encyclopaedias in the bookshelf. Parents can above all get informed through attending pre-baptismal instruction. Even those that have attended before – for instance on the occasion of the baptism of others of their children – are required to attend again. This serves as an occasion to be reminded of duties they may have forgotten or neglected. It is also a manifestation of a spirit of solidarity with the Christian

²⁰ *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 5.

community and of oneness in the requirements set down for the betterment of that community. A pastor can of course make exceptions in the instruction of those parents that he knows are well informed of what the course entails.

Parents in particular should strive to attend in person the actual occasion of baptism of their children. By this they not only demonstrate the importance they attach to this sacrament, they also do so because they have a specific role to play in the baptismal liturgy. It is the parents who publicly ask to have their child baptised. They make a sign of the cross on the child's forehead after the minister has done the same. They renounce Satan and profess the faith on the child's behalf. It is the parents who take the child to the baptismal font where this is used, or who hold it when the minister pours on it the water of baptism. Parents (and/or godparents) hold the lighted candle, to signify that they promise to keep the child's faith burning at least until the child is of age to be responsible for its own actions. The rite of baptism has a special blessing intended for parents, that they may take proper care for the spiritual growth of their children. All this means that the occasion of baptism is the beginning of another set of obligations towards the spiritual good of their children.

Ordinary Ministers of Baptism²¹

The ordinary ministers of baptism are ordained ministers, that is bishops, priests and deacons. In baptising they act in the person of Christ who alone has instituted this sacrament through his passion death and resurrection, and by sending the Holy Spirit. Because what they receive and impart is a free gift of God, and because all people are created in the image of God and have therefore equal rights to his generosity, ministers of baptism should in this and any other sacrament avoid anything that might be or even appear to be favouritism.²² This includes for instance the preferential baptism of relatives and the easy exemption of some people from the attendance of pre-baptismal instructions. We now look at each of these categories of ministers individually.

²¹ ; *Rite of Christian Initiation 11-15; Rite of Baptism for Children, 7.*

²² Cf SC, 32, GS, 29.

Bishop

It is not often that one sees a bishop baptising children. In fact this can make some of the faithful to think that baptism is a sacrament that is too low for a bishop to administer, one that is left to “lower ranks” of priests and deacons. This of course is a mistake, for baptism is the primary sacrament that transforms us into adopted children of God and members of the Church. It is by no means minor. If the bishop does not baptise too often it is perhaps due to the numbers of children that need baptism. All the same it is good practice that the bishop baptises once in a while. A suitable moment is the Easter Vigil Mass that he celebrates. Incidentally, it is the practice of the Holy Father also to carry out some baptisms on the night of the Easter Vigil. This imprints in the mind of the faithful the fundamental importance of baptism.

Even when the bishop does not baptise too often, still he is the principle dispenser of God’s mysteries in his diocese and as such he is responsible for the liturgical life in the diocese. This includes the administration of baptism. Many pastoral and liturgical matters regarding infant baptism are ultimately referred to the Ordinary.

Parish priest

The parish priest sees to the instruction of the parents and godparents before baptism. This he need not carry out himself. All that is required of him is that under his administration it is carried out adequately. He also sees to it that baptism is celebrated with dignity. He is responsible for the preparation of the catechists and other ministers who assist him. He also sees to it that the children baptised are entered in the baptismal registers, and that they are issued with baptismal tickets.

Other priests or deacons

In the mind of many of the faithful any priest or even deacon can carry out baptism at any time. It is incumbent on these ordinary ministers, if requested for baptism, to explain to the faithful the requirement to have the permission of the parish priest or pastor, or at least the knowledge and assumed consent, in order to carry out baptism. Baptism has a pastoral aspect that necessitates that each baptised is registered, and a baptismal card issued. And since some priests and deacons, even if ordinary ministers, do not have pastoral charge of those who request them for

baptism, they must refer them to their pastors, or obtain the permission to administer the sacrament. The parish priest may delegate other ordinary ministers to carry out all that he normally does with regard to baptism. When thus delegated they too are required to carry out the rites with exactness and reverence. They ought also to see to it that the children they baptised are recorded in the parish register and that the baptismal certificate is issued. Such baptisms are neither exempted from the payment of stole fees nor from the pre-baptismal catechesis. Priests and deacons who are not pastors of the place may also assist in the actual rite of baptism when the candidates are many.

In certain areas where there is an acute shortage of ordained ministers, lay ministers in charge of parishes also act as ordinary ministers of baptism. They are officially mandated by the bishop to carry out sacraments and sacramentals within their competence, and baptism is one of them. However, in the presence of an ordained minister it appears appropriate that they defer to these.

Extra-ordinary Ministers²³

Anyone in the absence of an ordinary minister can baptise provided: 1) there is necessity such as danger of death, 2) he or she has the intention of doing what is right, in this case, of conferring the sacrament of baptism, 3) he or she knows how to perform the rite. Certain people, by virtue of their profession, especially should know how to carry out baptism in danger of death. These include parents, midwives, catechists, obstetricians, women social workers, nurses and surgeons. Although many Catholics know from their catechism that they can baptise in danger of death, they may no longer remember exactly what they are required to do. And so in danger they may run around to look for the “proper” person such as a catechist, seminarian or Eucharistic minister. If these people are easily accessible it is fine for them to carry out the baptism. still it is the duty of pastors (parish priests, hospital chaplains, etc), to impart that knowledge to these peoples. Children thus baptised, if later they overcome the danger of death, should be presented at an occasion of baptism to receive the rest of the baptismal rites which were not performed on them (the anointing with the oils, the white garment, the burning candle, etc).

²³ *Rite of Christian Initiation 16-17.*

WHAT IS NEEDED FOR THE CELEBRATION OF BAPTISM²⁴

The basic requirement for baptism is water. One may add to that the baptismal font or container which may be used to draw the baptismal water, pre- and post-baptismal oils for anointing, the white garment, and the candle.

The water used should be natural and clean: natural for the authenticity of the sacrament and clean for hygienic purposes. Gaseous water would not be considered natural, nor would any liquid on the pretext that it contains water anyway. It has been suggested that for a pastoral people for whom milk means so much, milk would be a substitute for water at baptism. In the first place this would amount to substitution of a symbol that is of divine institution: “unless a man is reborn in water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.”²⁵ Secondly, even for such people water is more basic than milk, for all the worth they attach to the latter. Except in the case of necessity the water for baptism must be blessed first. Where this is not possible then ordinary unblessed water may be used. There is no need to simulate a blessing such as when one deeps a rosary in water to “bless it by contact”, or when one takes a few drops of blessed water and mixes it into a large quantity of unblessed water. In fact a Catholic who has been given official commissioning to carry out baptism in the absence of a priest or a deacon also receives the mandate to bless the baptism water.²⁶

The water blessed at the Easter Vigil should be used in the Easter season as long as this is possible. This is because of its relation to the commemoration of the resurrection, which puts in particular light the relation between baptism and the death and resurrection of Christ. However, for hygienic reasons it may not be good to keep the water blessed at the Easter Vigil for too long. Mosquitoes and dangerous water bacteria have no scruples about breeding in holy water. Outside of the Easter season the water should be blessed during the rite of baptism.

²⁴ *Rite of Christian Initiation 18-21*

²⁵ John 3: 5. See also can. 849.

²⁶ The Rite for Children no. 141 regarding unblessed water states: “Catechist [says]: Come and bless this water in which your servants are to be baptised. You have called them to the washing of new life in the faith of your Church, so that they may have eternal life. (We ask this) through Christ our Lord.”

There are appropriate formulas provided where the water is already blessed and when it is to be blessed.

In churches where there is a font this should be utilised at baptism. If the water of the font is running water it should be blessed as it flows. There is no need to barricade it and “capture” it for blessing. The font or vessel used for baptism should be spotlessly clean. Where there is no font the container used to draw the baptismal water should be set apart just for that purpose. It is not good to use any container such as cups, mugs, etc., for the occasion, which is then used for other purposes. A natural and precious container such as a particularly well-formed and large shell may be set apart for baptism.

Besides these requirements for the minister there are those necessary preparations by the parents/guardians of the child. Again it is incumbent on the minister to make the parents/guardians aware of these requirements. In “We Pray and Sing to God” a Complete Catholic Book on Prayers and Hymns, edited by Joseph Bragotti MCCJ and others, (revised edition, 1991) these requirements are:

- Choose a name that shows your Christian faith, usually the name of a saint.
- Choose suitable godparents. They should be good Catholics who can help the child grow in faith and Christian practice.
- Make arrangements with your parish priest in advance and follow his instructions.
- If possible, prepare a candle and a white cloth to be used at the ceremony.
- Having a small family celebration is a good custom. Make sure that it is not beyond your financial means.
- Prepare the older children for the baptism of the new born by explaining what will happen and by praying daily for the baby.

TIME AND PLACE FOR THE BAPTISM OF CHILDREN²⁷

*Time of Baptism*²⁸

The first factor that ought to be considered in deciding when to baptise a child is its spiritual welfare. The Church believes the words of its master that indicate that baptism is necessary for salvation.²⁹ It is true that God cannot fail to save those who for no fault of theirs have never been baptised. But the task of the Church is to baptise as many as possible as if their salvation entirely depends on it. The children must therefore be baptised without unnecessary delay.

The second factor to consider is the health of the mother. She should be given the opportunity to share in the joy of her child's baptism. Moreover she too has a role to play during the liturgy.

Other factors include various pastoral considerations. Since baptism has to be preceded by catechesis to the parents and god-parents, the pastor has to see when that can be fitted within the pastoral program, while giving room to other pastoral duties. It is also usual that parents who register for baptism of the children have to pay stole fees. Quite often pastors use the occasion of baptism to make those of their faithful who do not pay tithes pay it, as a condition for the baptism. Pastors have a right to find appropriate means to remind the faithful of their duty to sustain them materially. Yet they also have to take into account the economic condition of some of their parishioners. Jewish parents were supposed to "redeem" their first born sons with a lamb one year old. But there was concession to poor families who could not meet that. They could offer turtle doves instead. In the same way means should be sought to help poor families meet their pastoral requirements without too much cost on themselves.

It also often happens in some places and cultures, that one of the parents, in most cases the father, does not avail himself for the pre-baptismal catechesis. A pastor may decide to exclude the child from the baptismal

²⁷ *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 8-14

²⁸ *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 8-9.

²⁹ John 3: 3. Also can. 849 states: "Baptism, the gateway to the sacraments, is necessary for salvation, either by actual reception or at least by desire. By it people are freed from sins, are born again as children of God and, made like to Christ by an indelible character, are incorporated into the Church. It is validly conferred only by a washing in real water with the proper form of words."

candidates to the distress of the mother, who often is not at fault. It is true that the child needs both father and mother for its spiritual growth. It is also true that this penalty may sometimes bring out lazy fathers. Yet the pastor must act always with charity and understanding. He should avoid making rigid laws if not absolutely required. A dedicated mother may often supply for the father's deficiency.

All these factors boil down to this: in danger of death baptism should be carried out at once³⁰ for the good of the child. Under normal circumstances it should be as soon as possible after birth, possibly in the first weeks after birth.³¹ One should also seek to be informed of diocesan regulations, if existent, regarding the time for infant baptism.

It may also be that due to the number of children to be baptised and the scarcity of ministers, baptism has to be deferred and carried out at specific times to a large number of children.³² In this regard the most suitable time is the Easter Vigil. It can also be carried out on Sundays which also is the commemoration of the Lord's resurrection.³³ Baptism may be conducted during Mass; only then the readings of Sunday take precedence. If it is conducted after the Sunday Mass then one may take the appropriate readings of the ritual Mass for baptism.

Place of Baptism³⁴

"As a rule and unless a just reason suggests otherwise, an adult is to be baptised in his or her proper parish church, and an infant in the proper parish church of the parents."³⁵ The place of baptism should also be such as to bring out the ecclesial nature of the sacrament. The child becomes an adopted child of God as well as the Church. It is therefore appropriate that the Christian community is gathered to celebrate the sacrament. One must also guard against favouritism. That is why baptism is not to be conducted in a private home except in case of necessity unless the Ordinary grants the

³⁰ Can 867 §2: "In the infant is in danger of death, it is to be baptised without any delay."

³¹ Can 867 §1: "parents are obliged to see that their infants are baptised within the first few weeks. As soon as possible after the birth, indeed even before it, they are to approach the parish priest to ask for the sacrament for their child, and to be themselves duly prepared for it."

³² Cf. *Rite of Christian Initiation*, 27.

³³ Can. 856.

³⁴ *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 10-14.

³⁵ Can 857 §2.

permission for grave reasons,³⁶ even though this is a widespread practice in some parts of the world. Even where it is carried out in a home it can have an ecclesial nature when for instance in a Small Christian Community the members of that community have agreed to have Mass in the home of one of them. In such a case all those that are interested are welcome to attend.

Normally baptism is to be carried out in a church or an oratory.³⁷ It can also be carried out in a sub-parish. In danger of death baptism can be carried out anywhere.

THOSE ELIGIBLE FOR INFANT BAPTISED³⁸

Every unbaptised person and only such a person can be baptised.³⁹ This is a reminder that baptism is to be carried out once. An abandoned infant or foundling is to be baptised unless diligent enquiry establishes that it has already been baptised.⁴⁰ Aborted foetuses, if they are alive, are to be baptised, in so far as this is possible.⁴¹

³⁶ Can. 860 §1.

³⁷ Can 857 §1.

³⁸ Can. 864-871.

³⁹ Can. 864.

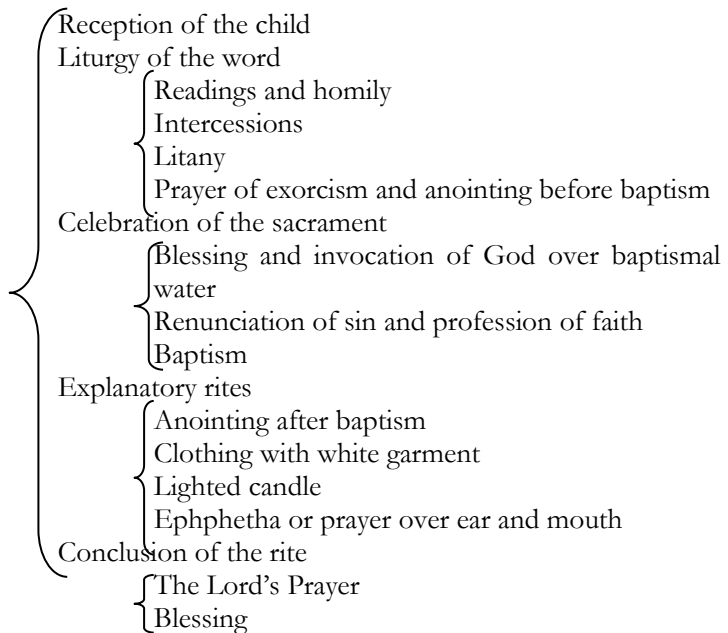
⁴⁰ Can 870.

⁴¹ Can. 871.

STRUCTURE OF THE BAPTISMAL RITE

*Ordinary form*⁴²

The Rite of Baptism for Children consists of the following different rites: The Rite of Baptism for Several Children, the Rite of Baptism for One Child, the Rite of Baptism for a Large Number of Children, the Rite of Baptism for Children Administered by a Catechist when No Priest or Deacon is Available, the Rite of Baptism for Children in Danger of Death when No Priest or Deacon is Available.⁴³ The Ordinary form is the order of baptism celebrated by the Ordinary Minister.⁴⁴ Baptism, whether for one child, or for several, or even for a larger number, should be celebrated by the ordinary minister and with the full rite when there is no immediate danger of death. The following is the basic structure of the ordinary form of the rite of baptism in summary form.



⁴² To be performed in its entirety (RBC, 15; Can. 850)

⁴³ Cf. SC, 68.

⁴⁴ *Rite of Baptism for Children, 15-19.*

Contents of the Ordinary Form

Reception of the child

The rite begins with the reception of the children. This is to indicate the desire of the parents and godparents, as well as the intention of the Church, concerning the celebration of the sacrament of baptism. These purposes are expressed in action when the parents and the celebrant trace the sign of the cross on the foreheads of the children.

The parents, god-parents and children wait at the entrance of the church or some other suitable place. The priest and ministers go to the waiting group. The celebrant greets them using the words in the rite or his own. He questions the parents on what name they wish for their child, and what they ask the Church for their child. The parents who have already been instructed give the appropriate answers.

Regarding the name to be given to the child, Liturgical law does not require that this name necessarily be a name of a saint. What is required is that it is not “foreign” to Christian sentiments.⁴⁵ Many would wish for the purpose of inculturation to give to their children an African name that has meaning for them. The pastor should make it clear to them that they are free to do that, as long as the name is acceptable to Christian sentiment. A name of a local god might for instance be considered “foreign” to Christian sentiment.

On the other hand it is also good that parents get to understand and appreciate the value of giving a Christian name at baptism. They should know that they are free to give as many cultural names as they want to their children, but they do not have to do this on the day of baptism. They could do that at the cultural naming ceremony. On the day of entrance to into the Christian family it would be appropriate that someone takes on a name that identifies them as belonging to that new family. In the Scriptures there are many occasions when a new name meant a new vocation, a turning point. The Christian vocation also would also require a new name. Secondly, just as the child receives a god-parent to assist it on its journey of faith, it is also in order that it receives a heavenly one; one who has fought the good struggle of faith and conquered, and one who can now intercede for this new member. The earthly god-parent may

⁴⁵ can. 855.

forget and neglect his or her duty, but the heavenly one does not. True, each of us has received a guardian angel, but it does no harm to employ extra help in this singular struggle of eternal life or death. To deny the child a Christian name means also that its patron saint cannot be mentioned during the litany of saints, nor can it have a feast day to celebrate in the course of liturgical calendar, apart from All Saints' Day!

The pastor welcomes the children in the name of the Church and claims them for Christ, marking them with the sign of the cross. There may then follow a procession into the church to their places while the pastor and ministers proceed to the altar.

Liturgy of the word

The liturgy of the word is directed toward stirring up the faith of the parents, godparents and congregation, and praying in common for the fruits of baptism before the sacrament itself. This part of the celebration consists of the readings of one or more passages from holy scripture; a homily, followed by a period of silence; the prayer of the faithful; and finally a prayer, drawn up in the style of an exorcism, to introduce either the anointing with the oil of catechumens or the laying on of hands.⁴⁶

Within Mass the readings may be proper to the occasion, i.e. taken from the lectionary for ritual Masses for baptism; or they may be of the day, according to the regulation of the calendar. Quite often a preacher may draw a useful message from readings of the day, and relate it to baptism, without either forcing the application or substituting the day's readings. Outside Mass one or even two gospel readings are taken from among the following: The meeting with Nicodemus (John 3: 1-6), the Apostles are sent to preach the gospel and to baptise Matthew 28: 18-20; The baptism of Jesus Mark 1: 9-11; Let Little children come to me Mark 10: 13-16.⁴⁷ Other alternative readings may be chosen from the appendix of the ritual.

After the readings, the celebrant gives a short homily, explaining to those present the significance of what has been read. His purpose will be to lead them to a deeper understanding of the mystery of baptism and to encourage the parents and godparents to a ready acceptance of the responsibilities which arise from the sacrament. The homily may also serve to catechise the invited guests, who will not have attended the baptism

⁴⁶ *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 17.

⁴⁷ *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 44.

instruction and who in actual fact may be far removed from Christian practice. Occasions like baptism bring to Church many individuals cut off from active Church life, and therefore serve as rare opportunities for the Church to reach these people. However, the pastor must resist the temptation to preach in a “God-has-given-you-to-me” fashion, striving to teach them all he knows about the sacrament and thus alienating them further, rather than bringing them close.

The homily is followed by a short silence. The silence may also be placed in the course of or after the litany.

The silence is followed by the intercessions or Prayers of the Faithful.⁴⁸ The celebrant is free to take the ones given in the rite (no. 47, or from other alternative provided in nos. 217-220; or even to formulate others.

Without a closing prayer to the intercessions the celebrant adjoins with the Litany. The litany or part of it may be drawn from the Appendix of the ritual. The names of some saints may be added in the proper place such as the patron saint, title of the church, name of the founder. Some petitions adapted to the place and need may be added to the petitions for various needs. The Litany concludes with “All you saints of God, pray for us”.

Next follows the Prayer of Exorcism and Anointing before Baptism. There are alternatives from which the minister may choose. However, basically this prayer asks for freedom of the child from original sin and for protection against future struggles with the evil one. The prayer is followed with anointing with the oil of catechumens of the chest. Episcopal Conferences may decide to have the pre-baptismal anointing omitted.

Celebration of the Sacrament⁴⁹

The celebration of the sacrament is immediately preceded by a) the solemn prayer of the celebrant, who, by invoking God and recalling his plan of salvation, blesses the water of baptism or commemorates its previous blessing; b) the renunciation of Satan on the part of parents and godparents, and their profession of faith, to which is added the assent of the celebrant and the community; and the final interrogation of the parents and godparents. It is performed by washing in water, by way of immersion

⁴⁸ *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 47.

⁴⁹ *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 18-19; 53-66.

or infusion, according to local custom, and by the invocation of the blessed Trinity. It is completed, first by the anointing with Chrism, which signifies the royal priesthood of the baptised and enrolment in the fellowship of God's People; then by the ceremonies of the white garment, lighted candle and Ephphetha (the last of which is optional).

The celebration of the sacrament begins with a procession to the font. Where there is no font those who bear the children to be baptised are arranged in such a way that the celebrant can easily reach them. Where there are a large number of children they may stand in a row facing the sanctuary. Alternatively they may stand in two lines in the central isle facing each other, if there is enough space for the celebrant to walk through and to perform baptism; or in one row facing the celebrant as he passes from one child to another. The celebrant briefly reminds the congregation of the wonderful work of God whose plan it is to sanctify humanity, body and soul, through water. He may use his own words or those given in the rite.

This is followed by the invocation of God over the water.⁵⁰ At the end of the anamnetical part that recalls what God has done for mankind through water, comes the blessing or an alternative formula depending on whether the water is already blessed or not. At the actual blessing of the water the celebrant touches the water with his right hand. In alternative formulas he makes the sign of the cross over the water he is blessing. One of the anamnetical formulas mentions the Spirit of God that hovered over the waters of creation, the waters of the great flood through which Noah was saved; the waters of the Red Sea and the saving of Israel; the waters of the Jordan and the baptism of Jesus; the water and blood that flowed from Christ's wounded side giving birth to the Church, and Christ's mandate to his disciples to go out to the whole world and baptise in the name of the Trinity.

During the Easter season, if there is baptismal water which was consecrated at the Easter Vigil, the blessing and invocation of God over the water are nevertheless included, so that this theme of thanksgiving and petition may find a place in the baptism. The forms of this blessing and invocation are those found in the Rite of the Baptism of Children,

⁵⁰ Cf. SC, 70.

numbers 223-224 of the Rite, with the variation indicated at the end of each text.⁵¹

Next follows the Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith. The parents and godparents renounce sin as a sign of their readiness to bring up the children in the practice of the faith in which they are baptised. They are to see that the divine life which God gives their children or god-children is kept safe from the poison of sin, to grow always stronger in their hearts. Whether or not this renunciation and profession has meaning depends to a large extent on the prior catechesis of the parents and god-parents and their own faith. Otherwise it may just be an empty ritual. The parents give their response to the interrogation of the celebrant in the singular; since sin and faith are basically individual.

At the end of the profession of faith the rest of the congregation also gives its assent, using the formula provided or some other, according to local custom.

Next follows the actual baptism of the children. The celebrant invites the families one by one. Using the name of the individual child, he questions the parents and godparents. He then baptises the children first addressing them by their baptismal name and then pronouncing the Trinitarian formula. If baptism is by immersion then the celebrant takes the child in his hands and immerses it three times, pronouncing the formula. If it is by pouring, then the father or mother holds the child while the celebrant baptises it. According to custom the god-parent may hold the child instead of the parent.

What follows after the baptism are the explanatory rites: they elucidate the full meaning of baptism. The anointing with Chrism shows how the new Christian assumes the three-fold ministry of Christ: priestly, kingly and prophetic. The priestly ministry gives each member of the faithful a duty to pray and to be an instrument of sanctification for others. The kingly ministry is a ministry of service, after the example of Christ who came not to be served but to serve. The prophetic ministry gives the Christian the duty of witness both by word of mouth and by example.

⁵¹ The formula with the anamnetical part mentioned above is not used in the Easter season since it will have already been used at the Easter Vigil.

Having read the formula that explains these three ministries the minister then anoints the children at the crown of the head.⁵² The anointing is carried out in silence. If the number of children is large and other priests or deacons are present, these may anoint some of the children with Chrism.

Next the children are dressed with the white garment. The garment signifies that the child has become a new creation and has clothed itself in Christ. It is the outward sign of its Christian dignity. With the help of the family and friends by word and their example, the child receives the responsibility to bring that dignity unstained into the everlasting life of heaven. After the words that bring out the symbolism of the garment it is placed on the child by the minister. A different colour is not permitted unless demanded by local custom. Nor should the garment bear decorations or be stained, if it is to have its full symbolism. It is desirable that the families provide the garments. That way the garments have more meaning for them. In the pre-baptismal catechesis parents might be advised to preserve this garment for the children as a reminder of their baptism. It would be beautiful for anyone in later adult life to still have their baptismal garment. On the other hand the celebrant would be well advised to keep a white garment just in case some parent has forgotten or has one that is clearly unsuitable. It is not proper that the celebrant uses a corporal or pulls out the amice from under his alb to serve as the white garment. Nor is it good to use the garment intended for one child on those who do not have their own.

It is not enough that the child is wearing a white dress. Even those wearing white should have a white garment over and above that.

Next the celebrant takes the Easter candle and says: "Receive the light of Christ." The father or the mother, or even god-parent lights the child's candle from the Easter candle. When the candles are lit then the celebrant says the words that explain its symbolism. The light which is symbolic of

⁵² It is the practice in many places to anoint on the forehead. Probably this was originally made for practical reasons since on the forehead there is no hair as on the crown of the head. Indeed some vernacular translations require anointing on the forehead. (e.g. the Luganda translation in Ekitabo ky'Omukristu says: "Asiiga buli mwaana Chrisma mu kyenyi" p. 703). However, the prescribed practice requires anointing on the crown of the head. The ICEL translation in The Rites states: "next, the celebrant anoints each child on the crown of the head with Chrism, in silence." This is the translation of the typical Latin edition which says: "*postea celebrans singulos baptizatos sacro chrismate in vertice capitis linit, nihil dicens.*"

faith in Jesus Christ is entrusted to the parents and god-parents to be kept burning bright. They are to strive to see that their children walk always as children of the light, that they keep the flame of faith alive in their hearts, so that when the Lord comes, they may go out to meet him with all the saints in the heavenly kingdom.

It is not necessary that the candle is placed in the hands of the child. After all the faith is not entrusted to it, since it is too young to understand. Rather those to whom the faith is entrusted should bear the candle. Moreover, it is easy to be careless and to burn the tender skin of the child with burning wax or the candle itself. Again as with regard to the white garment it would be desirable that the parents bring their own candles and that they preserve them after the baptism. It would be meaningful if in adult life one would renew the baptismal promises on Easter Vigil using his or her baptismal candle, and afterwards preserve it for the next year. For that reason it would be useful to use a sizeable candle at baptism if one desires that his or her child lives for a long time!

The rite of Ephphetha or prayer over ears and mouth is an optional ritual. If the conference of bishops decides to preserve the practice, the rite follows after that of the burning candle. It recalls the deaf and dumb man whose mouth and ears the Lord touched healing him. The mouth and ears are in this case given a spiritual meaning: that the child's ears may be opened to hear and understand the gospel and that it may proclaim to others what it has understood. Where there is a large number of children to be baptised, it may be advisable for hygienic purposes not to carry out this rite, touching the mouth and ears of each child. One may indeed use the words over the children without applying the gesture of touching them.

If baptism is taking place within Mass, after this rite each assumes their places and the Mass continues as usual.

Conclusion of the rite

The concluding rite includes the Lord's Prayer and the Blessing. When baptism is conducted within Mass then the Our Father is said at its proper place in the order of Mass. The only thing that changes is its introduction. The Lord who not only taught his disciples to address God as Father also gave them a share in that divine sonship through baptism. and now that there are new members that have just assumed that sonship it is appropriate that something is said to that effect before the recitation of the

Lord's prayer. The celebrant substitutes the usual introduction to the our Father with one given in the baptismal rite.

When baptism is conducted outside Mass the Our Father follows immediately after. There is then a procession to the altar, unless baptism was performed in the sanctuary. The lighted candles are carried for the children. At the altar the celebrant introduces the Our Father.

Again where baptism is conducted within Mass the special blessing is given in the place of the normal final blessing. The celebrant first blesses the mothers, who hold the children in their arms, then the fathers, and lastly the entire assembly. There is no point in reserving the blessing of the parents only to those who are married in Church. The wording of the blessing does not exclude those who are not married in Church. If a pastor wants to persuade them to embrace Christian marriage it is better for him to find some other means of doing that. Where baptism is conducted outside of Mass (or Communion Service) the blessing follows immediately after the Our Father.

Extra-ordinary forms

Rite of baptism for children by a catechist when
no deacon or priest is available⁵³

In areas where there is shortage of ordained ministers it is permissible with special permission from the ordinary for catechists to baptise. In the shorter rite of baptism designed for the use of catechists,⁵⁴ the reception of the children, the celebration of the word of God, or the instruction by the minister, and the prayer of the faithful are retained. Before the font, the minister offers a prayer invoking God and recalling the history of salvation as it relates to baptism. after the baptismal washing, an adapted formula is recited in place of the anointing with Chrism, and the whole rite concludes in the customary way. The omissions, therefore, are the exorcism, the anointing with oil of catechumens and with Chrism, and the *Ephphetha*.

⁵³ *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 20, 132-156.

⁵⁴ "The baptismal rite should contain variants, to be used at the discretion of the local ordinary when a large number are to be baptised. Likewise a shorter rite is to be drawn up, especially for mission countries which catechists, and also the faithful in general, may use when there is danger of death and neither priest nor deacon is available." SC, 68.

With regard to the readings the first option given is Matthew 28: 18-20 which tells how the apostles were sent to preach the gospel and to baptise. Other passages may also be selected from the index nos. 186-194.

A catechist who is authorised may give a homily on the readings. In the place of the scripture readings and the homily, the catechist can, if necessary, give a talk provided in the rite, which explains what the children receive through baptism and prepares the assembly to pray for those gifts.

The Rite also gives provision for a catechist to say the words of blessing over the water, without, however, touching the water or making the sign of the cross over it. Similarly, if the water is already blessed he says the words of invocation that recall God's activity on behalf of mankind through water.

While omitting the anointing with Chrism the catechist says the words that explain the three-fold ministry of Jesus which the child receives through baptism saying: *"God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, and has given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit. He has made you Christians now, and has welcomed you into his holy people. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as members of his body, sharing everlasting life."*⁵⁵

The final blessing which the catechist is adapted to be given in the form of a commendation in these words: *"My brothers and sisters, we commend you to the mercy and grace of God our almighty Father, of his only Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May he protect your paths, so that walking in the light of faith, you may come to the good things he has promised us. Go in peace."*⁵⁶ The catechist does not make the sign of the cross over the people.

Rite of Baptising a Child in Danger of Death when no Priest or Deacon is Available⁵⁷

The shorter rite for baptising a child in danger of death and in the absence of the ordinary minister has a twofold structure: 1) At the moment of death or when there is urgency because of imminent danger of death, the minister, omitting all other ceremonies, pours water (not necessarily

⁵⁵ *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 151.

⁵⁶ *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 155.

⁵⁷ *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 21-22; 157-164.

blessed but real and natural water), on the head of the child, and pronounces the customary formula. 2) if it is prudently judged that there is sufficient time; several of the faithful may be gathered together, and, if one of them is able to lead the others in a short prayer, the following rite may be used: an explanation by the minister of the sacrament, a short common prayer, the profession of faith by the parents or one godparent, and the pouring of the water with the customary words.⁵⁸ But if those present are uneducated, the minister of the sacrament should recite the profession of faith aloud and baptise according to the rite for use at the moment of death.

In danger of death, the priest or deacon may also use this shorter form if necessary. If there is time and he has the sacred Chrism, the parish priest or other priest enjoying the same faculty should not fail to confer confirmation after baptism. In this case he omits the post baptismal anointing with Chrism.⁵⁹

The structure of the longer form of baptism in danger of death is the following:

Intercessions

Profession of faith

Baptism

White garment (if possible)

The Lord's Prayer

In the case where death is not imminent the parents, godparents, and if possible, some friends and neighbours of the family gather around the sick child. The minister, who is any suitable member of the Church, begins with a brief prayer of the faithful asking for the grace of baptism for the

⁵⁸ The fact that an alternative form of baptism that can be given even when death is not imminent means that the faithful need not wait until the very moment of death in order to ask for baptism for their children. Quite often they may wait until it is too late or they are too much in hysteria to conduct baptism to a dying child. The wording of this alternative is made in such a way that it does not imply that the child is necessarily going to die.

⁵⁹ *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 22. This implies that in danger of death a child may be confirmed, even though ordinarily confirmation is waived until the age of reason.

child and its renewal in those present, at which those present answer: “Lord, hear our prayer”. This is concluded with a longer prayer.

After the intercession follows the prayer of the faithful. Either the minister interrogates the parents and godparents in the three-fold form, all they recite the Apostolic Creed. If no one there is capable of directing the prayer, any member of the Church may

N. I baptise you in the name of the Father

Pours water upon the child

And of the Son,

Pours water upon the child a second time

And of the Holy Spirit

even when its parents are against the idea.⁶⁰ If the child baptised in danger of death should recover it may be received into the Church with the rite that follows, without having to wait until it is of catechetical age.

Rite of Bringing a Baptised Child to the Church⁶¹

A child that has been baptised in danger of death and then later overcome the danger should be received in the Church at the next opportunity. It is not that the baptism obtained in danger of death does not introduce one into the Church. It does. Rather, this ceremony is carried out in order that the whole community knows and bears witness to the fact that the child has been received into the Church.⁶² Besides, the parents and god-parents are given the pre-baptismal catechesis that they did not receive when the child was baptised in danger. When they bring the child to Church the parents and god-parents solemnly and formally take on the duties of raising that child in the faith they profess. Any of the ceremonies that belong to the ordinary form of giving baptism and that were not done on the child may now be performed on it, such as: the giving of a baptismal name, the intercession of the saints in the litany, the post-baptismal anointing, the white garment, the burning candle.

⁶⁰ (can 868 § 2)

⁶¹ *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 165-185.

⁶² *Rite of Baptism for Children*, 167.

The rite is followed even when the baptised child is brought to the church after other difficulties (such as persecution, disagreement between parents) which prevented the celebration of baptism in the church. In such cases, the celebrant adapts the explanations, readings, intentions in the prayer of the faithful and other parts of the rite to the child's circumstances.

The people may sing a psalm or song suitable for the occasion. Meanwhile the celebrating minister, vested in alb and surplice, with a stole of festive colour, and accompanied by the ministers, goes to the entrance of the church where the parents and godparents are waiting with the child. The celebrant greets all present, and especially the parents and godparents. He praises them for having had the child baptised without delay, and thanks God and congratulates the parents on the child's return to health.

He questions the parents on the name they wish to give (or have given) their child. He asks them whether they accept the duty to bring up the child in the faith in which it was baptised. Next he signs the child on the forehead as an indication that the Christian community welcomes it. He invites the parents and god-parents to do the same. The procession to the church follows, followed by the liturgy of the word and the homily. The prayers of the faithful may include an indication of the child's recovery to health.

Instead of the prayer of exorcism there is another prayer that indicates that the child has already been brought from the kingdom of darkness, as well as from physical danger to health. The pre-baptismal anointing is omitted.

The anointing with Chrism together with the words that accompany it are performed in the same way as in the ordinary form of baptism. The same applies to the white garment and the lighted candle. The ritual does not include the optional rite of Ephphetha. Again the concluding rite which includes the Our Father and the blessing is performed as in the ordinary form, its variation depending on whether the reception is done within or outside Mass.

ECUMENICAL ASPECTS REGARDING THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM⁶³

Conditions for Accepting as Valid Baptism performed outside the Catholic Church

The valid matter of the sacrament is natural water. Use of another matter renders the sacrament invalid. Although baptism by sprinkling is not accepted in the Catholic it does not invalidate the sacrament in a Church in which it is an accepted way of baptising. When doubt regarding whether or not a baptism received in another Church was valid, serious investigation should first be made out of respect for the other Church and out of reverence for the sacrament. The valid form is the Trinitarian Formula: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of The Holy Spirit."⁶⁴

With regard to the faith and intention of the baptiser, insufficient faith on the part of the baptiser never of itself invalidates baptism. The intention is to be presumed unless there is sufficient reason for doubt.

What to do where the Validity of the Baptism is Doubtful

One should in the first place make a thorough investigation as far as possible. If after such an investigation one is still in doubt then one may baptism conditionally. Indiscriminate conditional baptism is not permissible. The reasons for doubting the validity of baptism should be explained to the person if he is an adult and to the parents in the case of an infant.⁶⁵ The formula for administering conditional baptism is "N. If you are not baptised, I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

⁶³ John H. Huels, *The Pastoral Companion* (ed. 1995), p. 339-343.

⁶⁴ A Church may omit some of the articles and prepositions, that would not invalidate the sacrament.

⁶⁵ Can. 869, §3: "if... a doubt remains about the conferring of the baptism or its validity, baptism is not to be conferred until the doctrine of the sacrament of baptism is explained to the person to be baptised, if that person is adult. Moreover, the reasons for doubting the validity of the earlier baptism should be given to the person, or where an infant is concerned, to the parents."

Attitude of the Catholic Church with regard to the Baptism of Different Christian Churches

The baptism of Eastern Orthodox Churches⁶⁶ is accepted without reservation.⁶⁷ Other non-Catholic Christian Churches with valid baptism are: Adventists, African Methodist Episcopal, Amish, Anglican, Assembly of God, Baptists, Balokole, Evangelical United Brethren, Church of the Brethren, Church of God, Church of Uganda, Congregational Church, Disciples of Christ, Episcopalians, Evangelical Churches, Lutherans, Methodists, Liberal Catholic Church, Old Catholics, Old Roman Catholics, Church of the Nazarene, Polish National Church, Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Church. Reformed Churches, United Church of Christ, Church of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons).

Some non-Catholic Christian Churches with invalid baptism are: Apostolic Church, Bohemian Free Thinkers, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Christian Scientists, Church of Divine Science, Masons (no baptism at all), People's Church of Chicago, Quakers, Salvation Army, Pentecostal Churches, Christadelphians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Unitarians.

Regarding god-parents in an Ecumenical Environment

A member of the Eastern Rite may be god-parent to a Catholic person if he or she acts in conjunction with a Catholic god-parent, if there is a sufficient just cause, if there is provision of a Catholic education for the person being baptised and if it is clear that the godparent is a suitable one. A Catholic may act as godparent to a member of the Eastern Rite if he or she is invited to do so and if he or she abides by the conditions of the other Church regarding education of the child.

With regard to other Churches a baptised person may not be godparent to a Catholic. They are, however, allowed to act as witnesses to baptism.⁶⁸ Similarly a Catholic is not permitted to be a godparent in their Church. But he or she may act as witness, for instance due to ties of blood or friendship.

⁶⁶ For further information on Eastern Orthodox Churches see DE 98-100, 111,125, 122-128, 150, 152-153, 159; IRL 17.

⁶⁷ It is sufficient to establish that baptism was administered

⁶⁸ With a Catholic godparent (can. 874, §2)

ADAPTATIONS AND INCULTURATION

The Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy (no. 63b), gives a list of measures that are within the competence of conferences of bishops to make with regard to rituals in order to adapt them to local conditions. Among the possibilities is the careful consideration of elements from a country's distinctive culture that can be suitably admitted into divine worship. Numbers 37-40 specifically mention the possibility of adapting certain initiation ceremonies used among some peoples into the rite of Christian baptism. The same constitution mentions the areas that are within the jurisdiction of the local Ordinary, as well as the accommodations which a celebrating minister can make in order to make the celebration more meaningful to the people.

One can think of examples of areas in which inculturation and adaptation may play a part in the realm of infant baptism. Many African cultures had elaborate ceremonies with regard to the naming of children: who to give the name, the meaning of the name or names: as identification in the family, in the clan or tribe, as memorial of the venerable ancestors, or as a form of prayer. Another important element was the preservation of the umbilical code of the child in some. A third was the many rites and ceremonies which took place and still take place in the initiation of twins. Some of the taboos and customs unacceptable to Christianity. These are areas of possible study in conjunction with the rite of baptism; to see which areas can be enhanced, which to discard and which are indifferent.

CHRISTIAN INITIATION⁶⁹

<i>Historical Perspective of RCIA</i>	55
<i>Pastoral perspective</i>	57
<i>Revision by Vatican Council II</i>	58
<i>Relation between the three sacraments of initiation</i>	58
<i>Candidates for Christian Initiation</i>	59
<i>General description</i>	60
<i>Ministries and offices</i>	62
<i>Time and place of initiation</i>	65
Proper or Usual Time.....	65
Outside the Usual Time.....	67
Place of celebration.....	67
<i>Adaptations</i>	68
Adaptations by Episcopal Conferences.....	68
Adaptations by the bishop.....	69
Adaptations by the Minister.....	69
<i>Elaboration</i>	70
General outline.....	70
Period of evangelisation and pre-catechumenate.....	71
First step: acceptance into the order of catechumenate.....	72
Period of the catechumenate.....	74
Second step: election or enrolment of names.....	79
Period of purification and enlightenment.....	82
Third step: celebration of the sacraments of initiation.....	85
Period of post-baptismal catechesis or mystagogy.....	88
<i>Those to be initiated</i>	90
<i>Nature of the initiation</i>	90
<i>Others involved in the initiation</i>	90
<i>Time of celebration of the Christian initiation</i>	91
<i>Adaptations by Episcopal Conferences</i>	91
<i>Accommodations by the Minister</i>	92
<i>Liturgical Rites involved</i>	92
First step: acceptance into the order of catechumenate.....	92
Second step: Penitential rites (scrutinies).....	93
Third step: celebration of the sacraments of initiation.....	94
<i>Expanded form</i>	97
<i>Abbreviated form</i>	98

⁶⁹ On the unity of the three sacraments of Christian initiation see can. 842 §2.

INTRODUCTION

Initiation is a necessary part of growth. Every person newly born has to be initiated in order to learn to live in the surrounding environment of culture or society. One has to learn the language and the different ways of interacting with others. One has also to learn what is considered good or bad, what is polite and what is offensive, what is acceptable and what is out of place. Besides this basic initiation which for the greater part is learnt from day to day, each culture has also key moments in which major stages in the growth of the individual are marked. These are the initiation rites such as those that introduce one to a life of manhood or womanhood.

There is also the initiation that is concerned with the learning of a particular skill or trade. A son of a black smith or carpenter would slowly be initiated in that school, first through apprenticeship. Eventually he would have learnt enough skills to take over the workshop. Fighters whether traditional or modern have to go through rigorous initiation. Athletes of every kind to have to undergo strict training before they become fully accomplished.

Christianity too is not just a doctrine but a way of life. At least that is what it is meant to be. For that reason those who are to live this way of life have to go through the appropriate initiation. The result should be, not simply people who know about the teaching of Christ, but who live according to that teaching. Unlike a skill or a profession Christianity does not engage a person just for a time, but all the time throughout one's life. Moreover its claim on the individual is unlimited. One may retire from boxing after several losses or die to some bodily injury. One may change trades if one trade becomes too competitive or unproductive. But one is not meant to stop being a Catholic after sometime. People of course do get converted to other denomination or even other religions. But unlike the change from one skill to another, such a change will always be considered a betrayal by the original religion. The initiation into Christianity therefore, should be correspondingly serious to ensure the necessary continuity and endurance to the end. Secondly, it should be appropriate: calculated to produce the desired results; giving the initiate no illusion on the life expected of them, giving them the freedom to quit if they so wish before their total commitment to the faith.

The ideal of such an initiation that gives fully mature Christians is beset in the modern world with several problems. The magnitude of numbers of

those to be initiated, the variety of other activities in which they are engaged, the competition with other Christian denominations which attract with a minimum of requirement for initiation, the lack of depth of Christian faith in those who are charged with the work of initiating others and the poor example of those who are supposed to be fully initiated are some of the factors that hinder an appropriate Christian initiation.

The total enterprise of Christian initiation is the subject matter of catechesis. Liturgy is concerned only with the key stages, the rites that make these stages of Christian initiation. Basically they are the three sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

An enterprise so important as Christian Initiation must have an elaborate methodology. Right from the beginning of the Church there has been some way of introducing new members to the faith. This methodology has changed over the centuries and in different places leading to the revised Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults of Vatican Council II. This rite too is a typical edition that needs to be adapted by the different Churches in their different circumstances. The Catholic Church in the United States is one of those that have taken RCIA⁷⁰ very seriously and published their own adapted rite which received approval for use within their own territory.

Historical Perspective of RCIA⁷¹

the restoration of the RCIA recovers a long history of initiation theology and praxis within the Christian community. Although there is no explicit model of initiation in the Christian scriptures (such as the periods and stages of the RCIA), there are some biblical themes that are central for initiation and that suggest a model for initiation in the first centuries: the proclamation of the Kerygma (i.e. the saving events of God in Christ), the call to repentance and conversion, the response of faith, the immersion in water as the central symbol for baptism, and the presence of the Spirit. Except in the case of households coming to baptism, the baptism into the death and resurrection of Jesus was for adults.

During the second century, as a theology of baptism became more developed, private catechetical schools emerged for the instruction of

⁷⁰ SC 64-71; GNLY 27; CB 249; MCW 80; LMT 22-26; PS 7-10, 102-103; DE 99-100; IRL 56; GSPD 12.

⁷¹ Thomas H. Morris, *The RCIA, Transforming the Church: A Resource for Pastoral Implementation*, pp. 9-12.

adults, such as the one founded by Justin Martyr. However, since there was often a lack of time for these adults to reflect on the implications of accepting the Christian faith, we see a high level of apostasy and heresy later emerging from some members of the community. Because of this, communities began to establish basic criteria for access to baptism: sorrow for sins, faith in the Church and conversion or transformation of life. The period of formation began to be extended.

The writings of Hippolytus (ca. 215) - which tend to reflect the larger tradition of the time - give us a more complex picture of the process of initiation. By this point there were stages of initiation: a period of inquiry with a preliminary examination to determine if the individual was capable of hearing the word, an extended catechumenate (three years), another examination to determine readiness to be chosen for baptism, the period of election as a time of retreat, baptism through water immersion at the vigil of East, and, finally, a period of reflection on the mysteries celebrated (mystagogy).

Throughout this period, as reflected in the writings of people like Clement and Origen, the process of initiation into the saving death of the Lord was a prolonged process of conversion and repentance, marked ritually within the community. The expectation was one of lifetime fidelity and commitment to the demands of the gospel.

A dramatic shift occurred in the Christian community in 313 AD - a shift that would affect the initiation practice of the community. With the peace of Constantine, Christianity moved from being an underground church to being the preferred church of the state. It became politically advantageous to enter the Christian faith, and so there were mass conversions and baptisms that began to break down the process of the catechumenate, resulting in a decline of people strongly committed to the radical message of the gospel. By the ninth century, there were hardly any signs of the catechumenate, though as late as the twelfth century, something like the catechumenate was still going on in Rome.

Eventually there was the breakdown of the initiation sacrament into three separate sacraments in the Church in the West. Previously, the sacramental initiation was celebrated in the presence of the bishop. As the community grew, the presbyters were appointed to preside at the water rite, leaving the second anointing to the bishop. The separation in time between the water bath and the second anointing became larger and larger. As a corollary to

this, the practice of infant baptism as soon as possible increased with the teaching on original sin.

With the disintegration of the catechumenate process, we see the rise of regulations and legislation surrounding sacramental initiation, culminating with the Council of Trent (1563-1563). This legislation is further strengthened with the affirmation by Trent, of the list of seven sacraments largely promoted by the study of Peter Lombard.

From the sixteenth century forward, the growth of missionary activity resulted in large numbers of baptisms. Eventually, the missionaries became concerned about the preparation for baptism and started to develop models of initiation that began to bear a resemblance to the initiation practice of the early Christian community. Renewed interest in the process of sacramental initiation became heightened with the liturgical movement of the twentieth century, coupled with the recovery of ancient texts such as the *Didache* and Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition*. These influences, alongside the great strides in the catechetical movement, contributed to the mandate to restore the catechumenate process at Vatican Council II.

Pastoral perspective

Initiation being a rigorous and time-consuming activities, was relegated to particular times in many cultures. The Gisu tribe in Eastern Uganda carried out their circumcision every other year. Schools programs follow definite time arrangements patterned on the civil year, with peak periods of examinations and graduations. In the history of the Church initiation was particularly relegated to the period of Lent, having as examination time, the period close to the Triduum and as "graduation day" the Easter vigil. In the first days of Lent was the writing of names, followed by scrutinies in the subsequent weeks. At the Easter Vigil was given the sacraments of Christian initiation. Sometimes however, Confirmation was given at Pentecost. Thus one sees that following the liturgical year drove home to the initiates the point that becoming a Christian was getting inserted in the life of Christ who lived, suffered, died and rose to life, and sent the Holy Spirit to continue his work in the Church.

There are many pastoral difficulties, however, which hinder the sticking to this ideal arrangement. There is the conflict with the school year. Schools cannot grant to children who are catechumens all the required time to follow the Christian initiation within Lent while at the same time they keep pace with other students who follow the normal school timetable. Even

where time is available it often happens that catechists are not all capable of executing the Christian instruction within the time allocated to the catechumenate. In many areas in Africa, catechists are generally people of low education. They find themselves or consider themselves not capable of giving catechises to school-going children. At the same time within the schools, even Catholic schools, where Christian religion is taught, this is taught with a purely academic approach, not from the point of view of initiating into faith. There is a big difference between the CRE (Christian Religious Education) syllabus and the Catholic RCIA for instance. Often there are not enough priests to attend to the spiritual needs of the neophytes as well as to all the other pastoral duties. There are also cases where a priest forms other priorities apart from initiating others into the faith. In seminary training sometimes, catechesis is not given the importance it deserves.

CHRISTIAN INITIATION IN GENERAL

Revision by Vatican Council II

The Second Vatican Council prescribed the revision of the rite of baptism of adults and decreed that the catechumenate for adults, divided into several steps, should be restored. By this means the time of the catechumenate, which is intended as a period of well-suited instruction, would be sanctified by liturgical rites to be celebrated at successive intervals of time.⁷²

Relation between the three sacraments of initiation

In the sacraments of Christian initiation we are freed from the power of darkness and joined to Christ's death, burial and resurrection. We receive the Spirit of filial adoption and are part of the entire people of God in the celebration of the memorial of the Lord's death and resurrection.⁷³

Baptism incorporates us into Christ and forms us into God's people. This first sacrament pardons all our sins, rescues us from the power of

⁷² Congregation for Divine Worship, Decree at the inauguration of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, 6 January 1972.

⁷³ Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity *Ad gentes*, no. 14.

darkness, and brings us to the dignity of adopted children,⁷⁴ a new creation through water and the Holy Spirit. Hence we are called and are indeed the children of God.⁷⁵

By signing us with the gift of the Spirit, confirmation makes us more completely the image of the Lord and fills us with the Holy Spirit, so that we may bear witness to him before all the world and work to bring the Body of Christ to its fullness as soon as possible.⁷⁶

Finally, coming to the table of the Eucharist, we eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man so that we may have eternal life⁷⁷ and show forth the unity of God's people. By offering ourselves with Christ, we share in the universal sacrifice, that is, the entire community of the redeemed offered to God by their High Priest,⁷⁸ and we pray for a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit, so that the whole human race may be brought into the unity of God's family.⁷⁹

Thus the three sacraments of Christian initiation closely combine to bring us, the faithful of Christ, to his full stature and to enable us to carry out the mission of the entire people of God in the Church and in the world.

Candidates for Christian Initiation

The candidates for Christian initiation include the unbaptised adults, the baptised adult from another Christian denomination, the baptised Catholic adults who are uncatechised, the baptised catholic adults who have been alienated from the community and seek to return, the baptised Catholic adults who are looking for some updating and spiritual support, as well as children who have reached the use of reason⁸⁰ and adolescents who are to be initiated; whether these were baptised in infancy or not.⁸¹

⁷⁴ Colossians 1:13; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4: 5. Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 6.

⁷⁵ 1 John 3:1.

⁷⁶ *Ad gentes*, no. 36.

⁷⁷ John 6: 55.

⁷⁸ *Lumen Gentium* no. 11, *Presbyterom Ordinis*, no. 2.

⁷⁹ *Lumen Gentium*, no. 28.

⁸⁰ "The provisions of the canons on adult baptism apply to all those who, being no longer infants, have reached the use of reason. (Can 852 § 1).

⁸¹ Thomas H. Morris, *The RCLIA, Transforming the Church: A Resource for Pastoral Implementation*, New York, p. 26-31. Morris describes in details each of these categories of candidates to the RCIA.

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

General description

The rite of Christian initiation presented here is designed for adults who, after hearing the mystery of Christ proclaimed, consciously and freely seek the living God and enter the way of faith and conversion as the Holy Spirit opens their hearts. By God's help they will be strengthened spiritually during their preparation and at the proper time will receive the sacraments fruitfully.

This rite includes not simply the celebration of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist, but also all the rites belonging to the catechumenate. Endorsed by the ancient practice of the Church, a catechumenate that would be suited to contemporary missionary activity in all regions was so widely requested that the Second Vatican Council decreed its restoration, revision and adaptation to local tradition.⁸²

The initiation of catechumens is a gradual process that takes place within the community of the faithful. By joining the catechumens in reflecting on the value of the paschal mystery and by renewing their own conversion, the faithful provide an example that will help the catechumens to obey the Holy Spirit more generously.

The rite of initiation is suited to a spiritual journey of adults that varies according to the many forms of God's grace, the free co-operation of the individuals, the action of the Church and the circumstances of time and place.

This journey includes not only the periods for making inquiry and for maturing, but also the steps marking the catechumens' progress, as they pass, so to speak, through another doorway or ascend to the next level.

The first step: reaching the point of initial conversion and wishing to become Christians, they are accepted as catechumens by the Church.

⁸² SC 64-66; Ad gentes 14; Christus Dominus 14.

The second step: having progressed in faith and nearly completed the catechumenate they are accepted into a more intense preparation for the sacraments of initiation.

The third step: having completed their spiritual preparation, they receive the sacraments of Christian initiation.

These three steps are to be regarded as the major, more intense moments of initiation and are marked by three liturgical rites. The first by the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens; the second by the rite of election or enrolment of names; and the third by the celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation.

The steps lead to periods of inquiry and growth; alternatively the periods may also be seen as preparation for the ensuing step.

The first period consists of inquiry on the part of the candidates and of evangelisation and the precatechumenate on the part of the Church. It ends with the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens.

The second period, which begins with the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens and may last for several years, includes catechesis and the rites connected with catechesis. It comes to an end on the day of election.

The third and much shorter period, which follows the rite of election, ordinarily coincides with the Lenten preparation for the Easter celebration and the sacraments of initiation. It is a time of purification and enlightenment and includes the celebration of the rites belonging to this period.

The final period extends through the whole Easter season and is devoted to the post-baptismal catechesis or mystagogy. It is a time for deepening the Christian experience, for spiritual growth, and for entering more fully into the life and unity of the community.

The whole initiation must bear a markedly paschal character, since the initiation of Christians is the first sacramental sharing in Christ's dying and rising and since, in addition, the period of purification and enlightenment ordinarily coincides with Lent⁸³ and the period of post-baptismal catechesis or mystagogy with the Easter season. All the resources of Lent should be

⁸³ SC, 109.

brought to bear as a more intense preparation of the elect and the Easter Vigil should be regarded as the proper time for the sacraments of initiation. Because of pastoral needs, however, the sacraments of initiation may be celebrated at other times.

Ministries and offices

The people of God, as represented by the local Church, should understand and show by their concern that the initiation of adults is the responsibility of all the baptised.⁸⁴ Therefore the community must always be fully prepared in the pursuit of its apostolic vocation to give help to those who are searching for Christ. In the various circumstances of daily life, even as in the apostolate, all the followers of Christ have the obligation of spreading the faith according to their abilities. Hence, the entire community must help the candidates and the catechumens throughout the process of initiation: during the period of the pre-catechumenate, the period of the catechumenate, the period of purification and enlightenment and the period of post baptismal catechesis or mystagogy. In particular:

During the period of evangelisation and pre-catechumenate, the faithful should remember that for the Church and its members the supreme purpose of the apostolate is that Christ's message is made known to the world by word and deed and that his grace is communicated.⁸⁵ They should therefore show themselves ready to give the candidates evidence of the spirit of the Christian community and to welcome them into their homes, into personal conversation and into community gatherings.

At the celebration belonging to the period of the catechumenate, the faithful should seek to be present whenever possible and should take an active part in the responses, prayers, singing, and acclamations.

On the day of election, because it is a day of growth for the community, the faithful, when called upon, should be sure to give honest and carefully considered testimony about the catechumenate.

During Lent, the period of purification and enlightenment, the faithful should take care to participate in the rites of the scrutinies

⁸⁴ Ad gentes, 14.

⁸⁵ Vatican Council II, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity *Apostolicam actuositatem*, 6.

and presentations and give the elect the example of their own renewal in the spirit of penance, faith, and charity. At the Easter Vigil, they should attach great importance to renewing their own baptismal promises.

During the period immediately after baptism, the faithful should take part in the Masses for neophytes, that is, the Sunday Masses of the Easter season, welcome the neophytes with open arms in charity, and help them to feel more at home in the community of the baptised.

A sponsor accompanies any candidate seeking admission as a catechumen. Sponsors are persons who have known and assisted the candidates and stand as witnesses to the candidates' moral character, faith, and intention. It may happen that it is not the sponsor for the rite of acceptance and the period of the catechuminate but another person who serves as god-parent for the periods of purification and enlightenment and of mystagogue.

Their godparents (for each a godmother or godfather, or both) accompany the candidates on the day of election, at the celebration of the sacraments of initiation, and during the period of mystagogue.⁸⁶ Godparents are persons chosen by the candidates on the basis of example, good qualities, and friendship, delegated by the local Christian community, and approved by the priest. It is the responsibility of godparents to show the candidates how to practice the Gospel in personal and social life, to sustain the candidates in moments of hesitancy and anxiety, to bear witness, and to guide the candidates' progress in the baptismal life. Chosen before the candidates' election, godparents fulfil this office publicly from the day of the rite of election, when they give testimony to the community about the candidate. They continue to be important during the time after reception of the sacraments when the neophytes need to be assisted so that they remain true to their baptismal promises.

The bishop, in person or through his delegate, sets up, regulates, and promotes the program of pastoral formation for catechumens and admits the candidates to their election and to the sacraments. It is hoped that, presiding if possible at the Lenten liturgy, he will himself celebrate the rite of election and, at the Easter Vigil, the sacraments of initiation, at least for the initiation of those who are fourteen years old or older. Finally, when pastoral care requires, the bishop should depute catechists, truly worthy

⁸⁶ See *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, nos. 8 and 10.

and properly prepared, to celebrate the minor exorcisms and the blessings of the catechumens.

Priests, in addition to their usual ministry for any celebration of baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist,⁸⁷ have the responsibility of attending to the pastoral and personal care of the catechumens,⁸⁸ especially those who seem hesitant and discouraged. With the help of deacons and catechists, they are to provide instruction for the catechumens; they are also to approve the choice of godparents and willingly listen to and help them; they are to be diligent in the correct celebration and adaptation of the rite throughout the entire course of Christian initiation.

The priest who baptises an adult or a child of catechetical age should, when the bishop is absent, also confer confirmation,⁸⁹ unless this sacrament is to be given at another time. When there are a large number of candidates to be confirmed, the minister of confirmation may associate priests with himself to administer the sacrament. It is preferable that the priests who are so invited:

Either have a particular function or office in the diocese, being namely, either vicars general, Episcopal vicars, or district or regional vicars;

Or be the parish priests (pastors) of the place where confirmation is conferred, parish priests (pastors) of the places where the candidates belong, or priests who have had a special part in the catechetical preparation of the candidates.⁹⁰

Deacons should be ready to assist in the ministry to catechumens. Conferences of bishops that have decided in favour of the permanent diaconate should ensure that the number and distribution of permanent deacons are adequate for the carrying out of the steps, periods, and formation programs of the catechumenate wherever pastoral needs require.⁹¹

⁸⁷ *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, nos. 13-15.

⁸⁸ *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 6.

⁸⁹ See *Rite of Confirmation*, Introduction, no. 7.b.

⁹⁰ *Rite of Confirmation*, Introduction, no. 8.

⁹¹ *Lumen Gentium*, 26, Ad gentes 16.

Catechists, who have an important office for the progress of the catechumens and for the growth of the community, should, whenever possible, have an active part in the rites. When deputed by the bishop, they may perform the minor exorcisms and blessings contained in the ritual.⁹² When they are teaching, catechists should see that their instruction is filled with the spirit of the gospel, adapted to the liturgical signs and the cycle of the Church's year, suited to the needs of the catechumens and as far as possible enriched by local tradition.

Time and place of initiation

As a general rule, parish priests should make use of the rite of initiation in such a way that the sacraments themselves are celebrated at the Easter Vigil and the rite of election takes place on the First Sunday of Lent. The rest of the rites are spaced on the basis of the structure and arrangement of the catechumenate as described previously. For pastoral needs of a more serious nature, however, it is lawful to arrange the schedule for the entire rite of initiation differently.

Proper or Usual Time

The following should be noted about the time of celebrating the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens:

It should not be too early, but should be delayed until the candidates, according to their own dispositions and situation, have had sufficient time to conceive an initial faith and to show the first sign of conversion.

In places where the number of candidates is smaller than usual, the rite of acceptance should be delayed until a group is formed that is sufficiently large for catechesis and the liturgical rites.

Two dates in the year, or three if necessary, are to be fixed as the usual times for carrying out this rite.

The rite of election or enrolment of names should as a rule be celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent. As circumstances suggest or require, it may anticipated somewhat or even celebrated on a weekday.

⁹² SC, 79.

The scrutinies should take place on the third, Fourth and Fifth Sundays of Lent, or, if necessary, on the other Sundays of Lent, or even on convenient weekdays. Three scrutinies should be celebrated. The bishop may dispense from one of them for serious reasons or, in extraordinary circumstances, even from two. When, for lack of time, the election is held early, the first scrutiny is also to be held early; but in this case care is to be taken not to prolong the period of purification and enlightenment beyond eight weeks

By ancient usage, the presentations, since they take place after the scrutinies, are part of the same period of purification and enlightenment. They are celebrated during the week. The presentation of the Creed to the catechumens takes place during the week after the first scrutiny; the presentation of the Lord's Prayer during the week after the third scrutiny. For pastoral reasons, however, to enrich the liturgy in the period of the catechumenate, each presentation may be transferred and celebrated during the period of the catechumenate as a kind of "rite of passage".

On Holy Saturday, when the elect refrain from work and spend their time in recollection, the various preparation rites may be celebrated: the recitation or "return" of the Creed by the elect, the Ephphetha rite, and the choosing of a Christian name.

The celebration of the sacraments of Christian initiation should take place at the Easter Vigil. But if there are a great many catechumens, the sacraments are given to the majority that night and reception of the sacraments by the rest may be transferred to days within the Easter octave, whether at the principal church or at a mission station. In this case either the Mass of the day or one of the ritual Masses "Christian Initiation: Baptism" may be used and the readings are chosen from those of the Easter Vigil.

In certain cases when there is serious reason, confirmation may be postponed until near the end of the period of post-baptismal catechesis, for example, Pentecost Sunday.

On all the Sundays of the Easter season after Easter Sunday, the so-called Masses for neophytes are to be scheduled. The entire community and the newly baptised with their godparents should be encouraged to participate.

Outside the Usual Time

Because of unusual circumstances and pastoral needs, the rite of election and the rites belonging to the period of purification and enlightenment may be held outside Lent and the sacraments of initiation may be celebrated at time other than the Easter Vigil or Easter Sunday.

Even when the usual time has otherwise been observed, it is permissible, but only for serious pastoral needs (for example if there are a great number of people to be baptised), to choose a day other than the Easter Vigil or Easter Sunday, but preferably one during the Easter season, to celebrate the sacraments of initiation; the program of initiation during Lent, however, must be maintained.

When the time is changed in either way, even though the rite of Christian initiation occurs at a different point in the liturgical year, the structure of the entire rite, with its properly spaced intervals, remains the same. But the following adjustments are made.

As far as possible, the sacraments of initiation are to be celebrated on a Sunday, using, as occasion suggests, the Sunday Mass or one of the ritual Masses "Christian Initiation: Baptism".

The rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens is to take place when the time is right.

The rite of election is to be celebrated about six weeks before the sacraments of initiation, so that there is sufficient time for the scrutinies and the presentations. Care should be taken not to schedule the celebration of the rite of election on a solemnity of the liturgical year.

The scrutinies should not be celebrated on solemnities, but on Sundays or even on weekdays, with the usual intervals.

Place of celebration

The rites should be celebrated in the places appropriate to them as indicated in the ritual. Consideration should be given to special needs that arise in secondary stations of mission territory.

Adaptations

Adaptations by Episcopal Conferences

In addition to the adaptations envisioned in Christian Initiation, General Introduction (nos. 30-33), the rite of Christian initiation of adults allows for other adaptations to be decided by the conference of bishops. The conference of bishops has discretionary power to make the following decisions:

- To establish for the precatechumenate, where it seems advisable, some way of receiving inquirers who are interested in the catechumenate.
- To insert into the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens a first exorcism and a renunciation of false worship, in regions where paganism is widespread.
- To decide that in the same rite the tracing of the sign of the cross upon the forehead be replaced by making that sign in front of the forehead, in regions where the act of touching may not seem proper.
- To decide that in the same rite candidates receive a new name in regions where it is the practice of non-Christian religions to give a new name to initiate immediately.
- To allow within the same rite, according to local customs, additional rites that symbolise reception into the community.
- To establish during the period of the catechumenate, in addition to the usual rites, "rites of passage": for example, early celebration of the presentations, the Ephphetha rite, the catechumens' recitation of the Creed, or even an anointing of the catechumens.
- To decide on the omission of the anointing with the oil of catechumens or its transferral to the preparation rites for Holy Saturday or its use during the period of the catechumenate as a kind of "rite of passage".

To make more specific and the detailed formularies of renunciation for the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens and for the celebration of baptism.

Adaptations by the bishop

It pertains to the bishop for his own diocese:

To set up the formation program of the catechumenate and to lay down norms according to local needs.

To decide whether and when, as circumstances warrant, the entire rite of Christian initiation may be celebrated outside the usual times.

To dispense, on the basis of some serious obstacle, from one scrutiny or, in extraordinary circumstances, even from two.

To permit the simple rite to be used in whole or in part.

To depute catechists, truly worthy and properly prepared, to give the exorcisms and blessings.

To preside at the rite of election and to ratify, personally or through a delegate, the admission of the elect.

In keeping with the provisions of law, to stipulate the requisite age for sponsors.⁹³

Adaptations by the Minister

Celebrants should make full and intelligent use of the freedom given to them either in *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction (no. 34) or in the rubrics of the rite itself. In many places the manner of acting or praying is intentionally left undetermined or two alternatives are offered, so that ministers, according to their prudent pastoral judgement, may accommodate the rite to the circumstances of the candidates and others that are present. In all the rites the greatest freedom is left in the invitations and instructions, and the intercessions may always be shortened, changed, or even expanded with new intentions, in order to fit the circumstances or special situations of the candidates (for example, a sad or joyful event occurring in a family) or of the others present (for example, sorrow or joy

⁹³ See *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, no. 10.2.

common to the parish or civic community). The minister also adapts the text by changing the gender and number where and as required.

Elaboration

Below is an outline of the steps and periods of the Christian initiation of adults. These steps and periods are then subsequently analysed in greater detail.

General outline

Period of evangelisation and pre-catechumenate

This is a time, of no fixed duration or structure, for inquiry and introduction to gospel values, an opportunity for the beginnings of faith.

First step: acceptance into the order of catechumenate

This is the liturgical rite, usually celebrated on some annual date or dates, marking the beginning of the catechumenate proper, as the candidates express and the Church accepts their intention to respond to God's call to follow the way of Christ.

Period of the catechumenate

This is the time, in duration corresponding to the progress of the individual, for the nurturing and growth of the catechumen's faith and conversion to God; celebrations of the word and prayers of exorcism and blessing are meant to assist the progress.

Second step: election or enrolment of names

This is the liturgical rite, usually celebrated on the First Sunday of Lent, by which the Church formally ratifies the catechumens' readiness for the sacraments of initiation and the catechumens' now the elect, express the will to receive these sacraments.

Period of purification and enlightenment

This is the time immediately preceding the elects' initiation, usually the Lenten season preceding the celebration of this initiation at the Easter Vigil; it is a time of reflection, intensely centred on conversion, marked by

celebration of the scrutinies and presentations and of the preparation rites on Holy Saturday.

Third step: celebration of the sacraments of initiation

This is the liturgical rite, usually integrated into the Easter Vigil, by which the elect are initiated through baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist.

Period of post-baptismal catechesis or mystagogy

This is the time, usually the Easter season, following the celebration of initiation, during which the newly initiated experience being fully a part of the Christian community by means of pertinent catechesis and particularly by participation with all the faithful in the Sunday eucharistic celebration.

Period of evangelisation and pre-catechumenate

Although the rite of initiation begins with admission to the catechumenate, the preceding period or precatechumenate is of great importance and as a rule should not be omitted. It is a time of evangelisation: faithfully and constantly the living God is proclaimed and Jesus Christ whom he has sent for the salvation of all. Thus those who are not yet Christians, their hearts opened by the Holy Spirit, may believe and be freely converted to the Lord and commit themselves sincerely to him. For he who is the way, the truth, and the life fulfils all their spiritual expectations, indeed infinitely surpasses them.⁹⁴

From evangelisation, completed with the help of God, come the faith and initial conversion that cause a person to feel called away from sin and drawn into the mystery of God's love. The whole period of the precatechumenate is set aside for this evangelisation, so that the genuine will to follow Christ and seek baptism may mature.

During this period, priests and deacons, catechists and other lay persons are to give the candidates a suitable explanation of the Gospel. The candidates are to receive help and attention so that with a purified and clearer intention they may co-operate with God's grace. Opportunities should be provided for them to meet families and other groups of Christians.

⁹⁴ Ad gentes, 13.

It belongs to the conference of bishops to provide for the evangelisation proper to this period. The conference may also provide, if circumstances suggest and in keeping with local custom, a preliminary manner of receiving those interested in the precatechumenate, that is, those inquirers who, even though they do not fully believe, show some leaning toward the Christian faith (and who may be called "sympathisers").

Such a reception, if it takes place, will be carried out without any ritual celebration; it is the expression not yet of faith, but of a right intention.

The reception will be adapted to local conditions and to the pastoral situation. Some candidates may need to see evidence of the spirit of Christians that they are striving to understand and experience. For others, however, whose catechumenate will be delayed for one reason or another, some initial act of the candidates or the community that expresses their reception may be appropriate.

The reception will be held at a meeting or gathering of the local community, on an occasion that will permit friendly conversion. An inquirer or "sympathiser" is introduced by a friend and then welcomed and received by the priest or some other representative member of the community.

During the pre-catechumenate period, parish priests (pastors) should help those taking part in it with prayers suited to them, for example, by celebrating for their spiritual well-being the prayers of exorcism and the blessings given in the ritual.

First step: acceptance into the order of catechumenate

The rite that is called the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens is of the utmost importance. Assembling publicly for the first time, the candidates who have completed the period of the precatechumenate declare their intention to the Church and the church in turn, carrying out its apostolic mission, accepts them as persons who intend to become its members. God showers his grace on the candidates, since the celebration manifests their desire publicly and marks their reception and first consecration by the Church.

The prerequisite for making this first step is that the beginnings of the spiritual life and the fundamentals of Christian teaching have taken root in the candidate.⁹⁵ Thus there must be evidence of the first faith that was conceived during the period of evangelisation and pre-catechumenate and of an initial conversion and intention to change their lives and to enter into a relationship with God in Christ. Consequently, there must also be evidence of the first stirrings of repentance, a start to the practice of calling upon God in prayer, a sense of the Church, and some experience of the company and spirit of Christian through contact with a priest or with members of the community. The candidates should also be instructed about the celebration of the liturgical rite of acceptance.

Before the rite is celebrated, therefore, sufficient and necessary time, as required in each case, should be set aside to evaluate and, if necessary, to purify the candidate's motives and dispositions. With the help of the sponsors, catechists, and deacons, parish priests (pastors) have the responsibility for judging the outward indications of such dispositions.⁹⁶ Because of the effect of baptism once validly received (see *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, no. 4), it is the duty of parish priests to see to it that no baptised person seeks for any reason whatever to be baptised a second time.

The rite takes place on specified days during the year that are suited to local conditions. The rite consists in the reception of the candidates, the celebration of the word of God, and the dismissal of the candidates; celebration of the Eucharist follows.

By the decision of bishops, the following may be incorporated into this rite: a first exorcism and renunciation of false worship, the giving of a new name, and additional rites signifying reception into the community.

It is desirable that the entire Christian community or some part of it, consisting of friends and acquaintances, catechists and priests, take an active part in the celebration. The presiding celebrant is a priest or a deacon. The sponsors should also attend in order to present to the Church the candidates they have brought.

After the celebration of the rite of acceptance, the names of the catechumens are to be duly inscribed in the register of catechumens, along

⁹⁵ Ad gentes, 14.

⁹⁶ Ad gentes, 13.

with the names of the sponsors and the minister and the date and place of the celebration.

From this time on the Church embraces the catechumens as its own with a mother's love and concern. Joined to the Church, the catechumens are now part of the household of Christ,⁹⁷ since the Church nourishes them with the word of God and sustains them by means of liturgical celebrations. The catechumens should be eager, then, to take part in celebrations of the word of God and to receive blessings and other sacramentals. When two catechumens marry or when a catechumen marries an unbaptised person, the appropriate rite is to be used.⁹⁸ One who dies during the catechumenate receives a Christian burial.

Period of the catechumenate

The catechumenate is an extended period during which the candidates are given suitable pastoral formation and guidance, aimed at training them in the Christian life.⁹⁹ In this way, the dispositions manifested at their acceptance into the catechumenate are brought to maturity. This is achieved in four ways.

A suitable catechesis is provided by priests or deacons, or by catechists and others of the faithful, planned to be gradual and complete in its coverage, accommodated to the liturgical year, and solidly supported by celebrations of the word. This catechesis leads the catechumens not only to an appropriate acquaintance with dogmas and precepts but also to a profound sense of the mystery of salvation in which they desire to participate.

As they become familiar with the Christian way of life and are helped by the example and support of sponsors, godparents, and the entire Christian community, the catechumens learn to turn more readily to God in prayer, to bear witness to the faith, in all things to keep their hopes set on Christ, to follow supernatural inspiration in their deeds, and to practice love of neighbour, even at the cost of self-renunciation. Thus formed,

⁹⁷ Lumen Gentium, 14 Ad gentes 14.

⁹⁸ See *Rite of Marriage*, nos. 55-66.

⁹⁹ Ad gentes, 14.

"the newly converted set out on a spiritual journey. Already sharing though faith in the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, they pass from the old to a new nature made perfect in Christ. Since this transition brings with it a progressive change of outlook and conduct, it should become manifest by means of its social consequences and it should develop gradually during the period of the catechumenate. Since the Lord in whom they believe is a sign of contradiction, the newly converted often experience divisions and separations, but they also taste the joy that God gives without measure."¹⁰⁰

The Church, like a mother, helps the catechumens on their journey by means of suitable liturgical rites, which purify the catechumens little by little and strengthen them with God's blessing. Celebrations of the word of God are arranged for their benefit, and at Mass they may also take part with the faithful in the liturgy of the word, thus better preparing themselves for their eventual participation in the liturgy of the Eucharist. Ordinarily, however, when they are present in the assembly of the faithful they should be kindly dismissed before the liturgy of the Eucharist begins (unless their dismissal would present practical or pastoral problems). For they must await their baptism, which will join them to God's priestly people and empower them to participate in Christ's new worship.

Since the Church's life is apostolic, catechumens should also learn how to work actively with others to spread the gospel and build up the Church by the witness of their lives and by professing their faith.

The duration of the catechumenate will depend on the grace of God and on various circumstances, such as the program of instruction for the catechumenate, the number of catechists, deacons, and priests, the cooperation of the individual catechumens, the means necessary for them to come to the site of the catechumenate and spend time there, the help of the local community. Nothing, therefore, can be settled a priori.

¹⁰⁰ Ad gentes, 13.

The time spent in the catechumenate should be long enough - several years if necessary - for the conversion and faith of the catechumens to become strong. By their formation in the entire Christian life and a sufficiently prolonged probation the catechumens are properly initiated into the mysteries of salvation and the practice of an evangelical way of life. By means of sacred rites celebrated at successive times they are led into the life of faith, worship, and charity belonging to the people of God.

The instruction that the catechumens receive during this period should be of a kind that while presenting Catholic teaching in its entirety also enlightens faith, directs the heart toward God, fosters participation in the liturgy, inspires apostolic activity, and nurtures a life completely in accord with the spirit of Christ.

Among the rites belonging to the period to the period of the catechumenate, then, celebrations of the word of God are foremost. The minor exorcisms and the blessings of the catechumens are ordinarily celebrated in conjunction with the celebration of the word. In addition, other rites may be celebrated to mark the passage of the catechumens from one level of catechesis to another: for example, an anointing of the catechumens may be celebrated and the presentation of the creed and the Lord's Prayer may be anticipated. During the period of catechumenate, the catechumens should give thought to choosing the godparents who will present them to the Church on the day of their election.

Provision should also be made for the entire community involved in the formation of the catechumens - priests, deacons, catechists, sponsors, godparents, friends and neighbours - to participate in some of the celebrations belonging to the catechumenate, including any of the optional rites of passage.

Celebration of the word of God

During the period of the catechumenate there should be celebration of the word of God that accord with the liturgical season and that contribute to the instruction of the catechumens and the needs of the community. These celebrations of the word are: first, celebrations held specially for the catechumens; second, participation in the liturgy of the word at the Sunday Mass; third, celebrations held in connection with catechetical instruction.

The special celebrations of the word of God arranged for the benefit of the catechumens have as their main purpose:

To implant in their hearts the teaching they are receiving: for example, the morality characteristic of the New Testament, the forgiving of injuries and insults, a sense of sin and repentance, the duties Christians must carry out in the world.

To give them instruction and experience in the different aspects and ways of prayer.

To explain to them the signs, celebrations and seasons of the liturgy;

To prepare them gradually to enter the worship assembly of the entire community.

From the very beginning of the period of the catechuminate the catechumens should be taught to keep holy the Lord's Day.

Care should be taken that some of the special celebrations of the word just mentioned are held on Sunday, so that the catechumens will become accustomed to taking an active and practised part in these celebrations.

Gradually the catechumens should be admitted to the first part of the celebration of the Sunday Mass. After the liturgy of the word they should, if possible, be dismissed, but an intention for them is included in the general intercessions.

Celebration of the word may also be held in connection with catechetical or instructional meetings of the catechumens, so that these will occur in a context of prayer.

For the celebrations of the word of God that are held especially for the benefit of the catechumens, the following structure may be used as a model.

Song: an appropriate song may be sung to open the celebration.

Readings and responsorial psalm: one or more readings from Scripture, chosen for their relevance to the formation of the catechumens, are proclaimed by a baptised member of the community. A sung responsorial psalm should ordinarily follow each reading.

Homily: a brief homily that explains and applies the readings should be given.

Concluding rite: the celebration of the word may conclude with a minor exorcism or with a blessing of the catechumens. When a minor exorcism is used, it may be followed by one of the blessings or, on occasion, by the rite of anointing.

Minor Exorcisms

The first of minor exorcisms have been composed in the form of petitions directly addressed to God. They draw the attention of the catechumens to the real nature of Christian life, the struggle between flesh and spirit, the importance of self-denial for reaching the blessedness of God's kingdom, and the unending need for God's help.

The presiding celebrant for the minor exorcisms is a priest, a deacon, or a qualified catechist appointed by the bishop for this ministry.

The minor exorcisms take place within a celebration of the word of God held in a church, a chapel, or in a centre for the catechumenate. A minor exorcism may also be held at the beginning or end of a meeting for catechesis. When there is some special need, one of these prayers of exorcism may be said privately for individual catechumens.

The formularies for the minor exorcisms may be used on several occasions, as different situations may suggest.

Blessings of the Catechumens

The blessings of the catechumens are a sign of God's love and of the Church's tender care. They are bestowed on the catechumens so that, even though they do not as yet have the grace of the sacraments, they may still receive from the Church courage, joy, and peace as they proceed along the difficult journey they have begun.

The blessings may be given by a priest, a deacon, or a qualified catechist appointed by the bishop. The blessings are usually given at the end of a celebration of the word; they may also be given at the end of a meeting for catechesis. When there is some special need, the blessings may be given privately to individual catechumens.

Anointing of the Catechumens

During the period of the catechumenate, a rite of anointing the catechumens, through use of the oil of catechumens, may be celebrated

wherever this seems beneficial or desirable. The presiding celebrant for such a first anointing of the catechumens is a priest or a deacon.

Care is to be taken that the catechumens understand the significance of the anointing with oil. The anointing with oil symbolises their need for God's help and strength so that, undeterred by the bonds of the past and overcoming the opposition of the devil, they will forthrightly take the step of professing their faith and will hold fast to it unfalteringly throughout their lives.

The anointing ordinarily takes place after the homily in a celebration of the word of God, and is conferred on each of the catechumens; this rite of anointing may be celebrated several times during the course of the catechumenate. Further, for particular reasons, a priest or a deacon may confer the anointing privately on individual catechumens.

The oil used for this rite is to be the oil blessed by the bishop at the Chrism Mass, but for pastoral reasons a priest celebrant may bless oil for the rite immediately before the anointing.¹⁰¹

Second step: election or enrolment of names

The second step in Christian initiation is the liturgical rite called both election and the enrolment of names, which closes the period of the catechumenate proper, that is, the lengthy period of formation of the catechumens' minds and hearts. The celebration of the rite of election, which usually coincides with the opening of Lent, also marks the beginning of the period of final, or more intense preparation for the sacraments of initiating, during which the elect will be encouraged to follow Christ with greater generosity.

At this second step, on the basis of the testimony of godparents and catechists and of the catechumens' reaffirmation of their intention, the Church judges their state of readiness and decides on their advancement toward the sacraments of initiation. Thus the Church makes its "election", that is, the choice and admission of those catechumens who have the dispositions that make them fit to take part, at the next major celebration, in the sacraments of initiation.

This step is called election because the acceptance made by the Church is founded on the election by God, in whose name the Church acts. The step

¹⁰¹ See Rite of the Blessing of Oils, Rite of Consecrating the Chrism, Introduction no. 7.

is also called the enrolment of names because as a pledge of fidelity the candidates inscribe their names in the book that lists those who have been chosen for initiation.

Before the rite of election is celebrated, the catechumens are expected to have undergone a conversion in mind and action and to have developed a sufficient acquaintance with Christian teaching as well as a spirit of faith and charity. With deliberate will and an enlightened faith they must have the intention to receive the sacraments of the Church, a resolve they will express publicly in the actual celebration of the rite.

The election, marked with a rite of such solemnity, is the focal point of the Church's concern for the catechumens. Admission to election therefore belongs to the bishop, and the presiding celebrant for the rite of election is the bishop himself or a priest or a deacon who acts as the bishop's delegate.

Before the rite of election the bishop, priests, deacons, catechists, godparents, and the entire community, in accord with their respective responsibilities and in their own way, should, after considering the matter carefully, arrive at a judgement about the catechumens' state of formation and progress. After the election, they should surround the elect with prayer, so that the entire Church will accompany and lead them to encounter Christ.

Within the rite of election the bishop celebrant or his delegate declares in the presence of the community the Church's approval of the candidates. Therefore to exclude any semblance of mere formality from the rite, there should be a deliberation prior to its celebration to decide on the catechumen's suitability. This deliberation is carried out by the priests, deacons, and catechists involved in the formation of the catechumens and by the godparents and representatives of the local community. If circumstances suggest, the group of catechumens may also take part. The deliberation may take various forms, depending on local conditions and pastoral needs. During the celebration of election, the assembly is informed of the decision approving the catechumens.

Before the rite of election godparents are chosen by the catechumens; the choice should be made with the consent of the priest, and the persons chosen should, as far as possible, be approved for their role by the local community. In the rite of election the godparents exercise their ministry

publicly for the first time. They are called by name at the beginning of the rite to come forward with the catechumens; they give testimony on behalf of the catechumens before the community; they may also write their names along with the catechumens in the book of the elect.

From the day of their election and admission, the catechumens are called "the elect." They are also described as *compentes* (co-petitions), because they are joined together in asking for and aspiring to receive the three sacraments of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit. They are also called *illuminandi* (those who will be enlightened), because baptism itself has been called *illuminatio* (enlightenment) and it fills the newly baptised with the light of faith. In our own time, other names may be applied to the elect that, depending on regions and cultures, are better suited to the people's understanding and the idiom of the language.

The bishop celebrant or his delegate, however much or little he was involved in the deliberation prior to the rite, has the responsibility of showing in the homily or elsewhere during the celebration the religious and ecclesial significance of the election. The celebrant also declares before all present the Church's decision and, if appropriate in the circumstances, asks the community to express its approval of the candidates. He also asks the catechumens to give a personal expression of their intention and, in the name of the Church, he carries out the act of admitting them as elect. The celebrant should open to the entire divine mystery expressed in the call of the Church and in the liturgical celebration of this mystery. He should remind the faithful to give good example to the elect and along with the elect to prepare themselves for the Easter solemnities.

The sacraments of initiation are celebrated during the Easter solemnities, and preparation for these sacraments is part of the distinctive character of Lent. Accordingly, the rite of election should normally take place on the First Sunday of Lent and the period of final preparation of the elect should coincide with the Lenten season. The plan arranged for the Lenten season will benefit the elect by reason of both its liturgical structure and the participation of the community. For urgent pastoral reasons it is permitted to celebrate the rite of election during the week preceding or following the First Sunday of Lent.

When, because of unusual circumstances and pastoral needs, the rite of election is celebrated outside Lent, it is to be celebrated about six weeks before the sacraments of initiation, in order to allow sufficient time for the

scrutinies and presentations. The rite is not to be celebrated on a solemnity of the liturgical year.

The rite should take place in the cathedral church, in a parish church or, if necessary, in some other suitable and fitting place.

The rite is celebrated within Mass, after the homily, and should be celebrated within the Mass of the First Sunday of Lent. If, for pastoral reasons, the rite is celebrated on a different day, the texts and the readings of the ritual Mass "Christian Initiation: Election or Enrolment of Names" may always be used. When the Mass of the day is celebrated and its readings are not suitable, the readings are those given for the First Sunday of Lent or others may be chosen from elsewhere in the Lectionary.

When celebrated outside Mass, the rite takes place after the readings and the homily and is concluded with the dismissal of both the elect and the faithful.

Period of purification and enlightenment

The period of purification and enlightenment, which the rite of election begins, customarily coincides with Lent. In the liturgy and liturgical catechesis of Lent the reminder of baptism already received or the preparation for its reception, as well as the theme of repentance, renew the entire community along with those being prepared to celebrate the paschal mystery, in which each of the elect will share through the sacraments of initiation. For both the elect and the local community, therefore, the Lenten season is a time for spiritual recollection in preparation for the celebration of the paschal mystery.

This is a period of more intense spiritual preparation, consisting more in interior reflection than in catechetical instruction, and is intended to purify the minds and hearts of the elect as they search their own consciences and do penance. This period is intended as well to enlighten the minds and hearts of the elect with a deeper knowledge of Christ the Saviour. The celebration of certain rites, particularly the scrutinies and the presentations bring about this process of purification and enlightenment and extends it over the course of the entire Lenten season.

Holy Saturday is the day of proximate preparation for the celebration of the sacraments of initiation and on that day the rites of preparation may be celebrated.

The liturgical rites belonging to this period of purification and enlightenment are the scrutinies and the Presentations.

Scrutinies

The scrutinies, which are solemnly celebrated on Sundays and are reinforced by an exorcism, are rites for self-searching and repentance and have above all a spiritual purpose. The scrutinies are meant to uncover, then heal all that is weak, defective, or sinful in the hearts of the elect; to bring out, then strengthen all that is upright, strong and good. For the scrutinies are celebrated in order to deliver the elect from the power of sin and Satan, to protect them against temptation, and to give them strength in Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life. These rites, therefore, should complete the conversion of the elect and deepen their resolve to hold fast to Christ and to carry out their decision to love God above all.

Because they are asking for the three sacraments of initiation, the elect must have the intention of achieving an intimate knowledge of Christ and his Church, and they are expected particularly to progress in genuine self-knowledge through serious examination of their lives and true repentance.

In order to inspire in the elect a desire for purification and redemption by Christ, three scrutinies are celebrated. By this means, first of all, the elect are instructed gradually about the mystery of sin, from which the whole world and very person longs to be delivered and thus saved from its present and future consequences. Second, their spirit is filled with Christ the Redeemer, who is the living water (gospel of the Samaritan woman in the first scrutiny), the light of the world (gospel of the man born blind in the second scrutiny), the resurrection and the life (gospel of Lazarus in the third scrutiny). From the first to the final scrutiny the elect should progress in their perception of sin and their desire for salvation.

In the rite of exorcism, which is celebrated by a priest or a deacon, the elect, who have already learned from the Church as their mother the mystery of deliverance from sin by Christ, are freed from the effects of sin and from the influence of the devil. They receive new strength in the midst of their spiritual journey and they open their hearts to receive the gifts of the Saviour.

The priest or deacon who is the presiding celebrant should carry out the celebration in such a way that the faithful in the assembly will also derive benefit from the liturgy of the scrutinies and join in the intercessions for the elect.

The scrutinies should take place within the ritual Masses "Christian Initiation: the Scrutinies," which are celebrated on the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent; the readings with their chants are those given for these Sundays in the Lectionary for Mass, year A. when, for pastoral reasons, these ritual Masses cannot be celebrated on their proper Sundays, they are celebrated on other Sundays of Lent or even convenient days during the week.

When, because of unusual circumstances and pastoral needs, the period of purification and enlightenment takes place outside Lent, the scrutinies are celebrated on Sundays or even on weekdays, with the usual intervals between celebrations. They are not celebrated on solemnities of the liturgical year.

In every case the ritual Masses "Christian Initiation: the Scrutinies" are celebrated and in this sequence: for the first scrutiny the Mass with the gospel of the Samaritan woman; for the second, the Mass with the gospel of the man born blind; for the third, the Mass with the gospel of Lazarus.

Presentations

The presentation takes place after the celebration of the scrutinies, unless, for pastoral reasons, they have been anticipated during the period of the catechumenate. Thus, with the catechumenal formation of the elect completed, the Church entrusts to them the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, the ancient texts that have always been regarded as expressing the heart of the Church's faith and prayer. These texts are presented in order to enlighten the elect. The Creed, as it recalls the wonderful deeds of God for the salvation of the human race, suffuses the vision of the elect with the sure light of faith. The Lord's Prayer fills them with a deeper realisation of the new spirit of adoption by which they will call God their Father, especially in the midst of the eucharistic assembly.

The first presentation to the elect is the presentation of the Creed, during the week following the first scrutiny. The elect are to commit the Creed to memory and they will recite it publicly prior to professing their faith in accordance with that Creed on the day of their baptism.

The second presentation to the elect is the presentation of the Lord's Prayer, during the week following the third scrutiny (but, if necessary, this presentation may be deferred for inclusion in the preparation rites of Holy Saturday). From antiquity the Lord's Prayer has been the prayer proper to

those who in baptism have received the spirit of adoption. When the elect have been baptised and take part in their first celebration of the Eucharist, they will join the rest of the faithful in saying the Lord's Prayer.

Third step: celebration of the sacraments of initiation

The third step in the Christian initiation of adults is the celebration of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist. Through this final step the elect, receiving pardon for their sins, are admitted into the people of God. They are graced with adoption as children of God and are led by the Holy Spirit into the promised fullness of time begun in Christ and, as they share in the eucharistic sacrifice and meal, even to a foretaste of the kingdom of God.

The usual time for the celebration of the sacraments of initiation is Easter Vigil, at which preferably the bishop himself presides as celebrant, at least for the initiation of those who are fourteen years old or older. As indicated in the Roman Missal, "Easter Vigil", the conferral of the sacraments follows the blessing of the water.

When the celebration takes place outside the usual time, care should be taken to ensure that it has a markedly paschal character. Thus the texts for one of the ritual Masses "Christian Initiation: Baptism" given in the Roman Missal are used, and the readings are chosen from those given in the Lectionary for Mass, "Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation apart from the Easter Vigil".

Celebration of baptism

The celebration of baptism has as its centre and high point the baptismal washing and the invocation of the Holy Trinity. Beforehand there are rites that have an inherent relationship to the baptismal washing: first, the blessing of water, then the renunciation of sin by the elect, and their profession of faith. Following the baptismal washing, the effects received through this sacrament are given expression in the explanatory rites: the anointing with Chrism (when confirmation does not immediately follow baptism), the clothing with a white garment, and the presentation of a lighted candle.

PRAYER OVER THE WATER: The celebration of baptism begins with the blessing of water, even when the sacraments of initiation are received outside the Easter season. Should the sacraments be celebrated outside the

Easter Vigil but during the Easter season, the water blessed at the Vigil is used, but a prayer of thanksgiving, having the same themes as the blessing, is included. The blessing declares the religious meaning of water as God's creation and the sacramental use of water in the unfolding of the paschal mystery, and the blessing is also a remembrance of God's wonderful works in the history of salvation.

The blessing thus introduces an invocation of the Trinity at the very outset of the celebration of baptism. For it calls to mind the mystery of God's love from the beginning of the world and the creation of the human race; by invoking the Holy Spirit and proclaiming Christ's death and resurrection, it impresses on the mind the newness of Christian baptism, by which we share in his won death and resurrection and receive the holiness of God himself.

RENUNCIATION OF SIN AND PROFESSION OF FAITH: In their renunciation of sin and profession of faith those to be baptised express their explicit faith in the paschal mystery that has already been recalled in the blessing of water that will be connoted by the words of the sacrament soon to be spoken by the baptising minister. Adults are not saved unless they come forward of their own accord and with the will to accept God's gift through their own belief. The faith of those to be baptised is not simply the faith of the Church, but the personal faith of each one of them and each one of them is expected to keep it a living faith.

Therefore the renunciation of sin and the profession of faith are an apt prelude to baptism, the sacrament of that faith by which the elect hold fast to God and receive new birth from him. Because of the renunciation of sin and the profession of faith, which form the one rite, the elect will not be baptised merely passively but will receive this great sacrament with the active resolve to renounce error and to hold fast to God. By their own personal act in the rite of renouncing sin and professing their faith, the elect, as was prefigured in the first covenant with the patriarchs, renounce sin and Satan in order to commit themselves for ever to the promise of the Saviour and to the mystery of the Trinity. By professing their faith before the celebrant and the entire community, the elect express the intention, developed to maturity during the preceding periods of initiation, to enter into a new covenant with Christ. Thus these adults embrace the faith that through divine help the Church has handed down, and are baptised in that faith.

BAPTISM: Immediately after their profession of living faith in Christ's paschal mystery, the elect come forward and receive that mystery as expressed in the washing with water; thus once the elect have professed faith in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, invoked by the celebrant, the divine persons act so that those they have chosen receive divine adoption and become members of the people of God.

Therefore in the celebration of baptism the washing with water should take on its full importance as the sign of that mystical sharing in Christ's death and resurrection through which those who believe in his name die to sin and rise to eternal life. Either immersion or the pouring of water should be chosen for the rite, whichever will serve in individual cases and in the various traditions and circumstances to ensure the clear understanding that this washing is not a mere purification rite but the sacrament of being joined to Christ.

EXPLANATORY RITES: The baptismal washing is followed by rites that give expression to the effects of the sacrament just received. The anointing with Chrism is a sign of the royal priesthood of the baptised and that they are now numbered in the company of the people of God. The clothing with the baptismal garment signifies the new dignity they have received. The presentation of a lighted candle shows that they are called to walk as befits the children of the light.

Celebration of Confirmation

In accord with the ancient practice followed in the Roman liturgy, adults are not to be baptised without receiving confirmation immediately afterwards, unless some serious reason stands in the way. The conjunction of the two celebrations signifies the unity of the paschal mystery, the close link between the mission of the Son and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the connection between the two sacraments through which the Son and the Holy Spirit come with the Father to those who are baptised.

Accordingly, confirmation is conferred after the explanatory rites of baptism, the anointing after baptism being omitted.

The Neophytes' First Sharing in the Eucharist

Finally in the celebration of the Eucharist, as they take part for the first time and with full right, the newly baptised reach the culminating point in their Christian initiation. In this Eucharist the neophytes, now raised to the ranks of the royal priesthood, have an active part both in the general

intercessions and, to the extent possible, in bringing the gifts to the altar. With the entire community they share in the offering of the sacrifice and say the Lord's Prayer, giving expression to the spirit of adoption as God's children that they have received in baptism. When in communion they receive the body that was given for us and the blood that was shed, the neophytes are strengthened in the gifts they have already received and are given a foretaste of the eternal banquet.

Period of post-baptismal catechesis or mystagogy

The third step of Christian initiation, the celebration of the sacraments, is followed by the final period, the period of post-baptismal catechesis or mystagogy. This is a time for the community and the neophytes together to grow in deepening their grasp of the paschal mystery and in making it part of their lives through meditation on the gospel, sharing in the Eucharist, and doing the works of charity. To strengthen the neophytes as they begin to walk in newness of life, the community of the faithful, their godparents and their parish priests (pastors) should give them thoughtful and friendly help.

The neophytes are, as the term "mystagogue" suggests, introduced into a fuller and more affective understanding of mysteries through the Gospel message they have learned and above all through their experience of the sacraments they have received. For they have truly been renewed in mind, tasted more deeply the sweetness of God's word, received the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, and grown to know the goodness of the Lord. Out of this experience, which belongs to Christians and increases as it is lived, they derive a new perception of the faith, of the Church and of the world.

Just as their new participation in the sacraments enlightens the neophytes' understanding of the Scriptures, so too it increases their contact with the rest of the faithful and has an impact on the experience of the community. As a result, interaction between the neophytes and the faithful is made easier and more beneficial. The period of post-baptismal catechesis is of great significance for both the neophytes and the rest of the faithful. Through it the neophytes, with the help of their godparents, should experience a full and joyful welcome into the community and enter into closer ties with the other faithful. The faithful, in turn, should derive from it a renewal of inspiration and of outlook.

Since the distinctive spirit and power of the period of post-baptismal catechesis or mystagogue derive from the new, personal experience of the sacraments and of the community, its main setting is the so-called Masses for neophytes, that is, the Sunday Masses of the Easter season. Besides being occasions for the newly baptised to gather with the community and share in the mysteries, these celebrations include particularly suitable readings from the Lectionary, especially the readings for year A. even when Christian initiation has been celebrated outside the usual times, the texts for these Sunday Masses of the Easter season may be used.

All the neophytes and their godparents should make an effort to take part in the Masses for the neophytes and the entire local community should be invited to participate with them. Special places in the congregation are to be reserved for the neophytes and their godparents. The homily and, as circumstances suggest, the general intercessions should take into account the presence and needs of the neophytes.

To close the period of post-baptismal catechesis, some sort of celebration should be held at the end of the Easter season near Pentecost Sunday; festivities in keeping with local custom may accompany the occasion.

On the anniversary of their baptism the neophytes should be brought together in order to give thanks to God, to share with one another their spiritual experiences, and to renew their commitment.

To show his pastoral concern for these new members of the Church, the bishop, particularly if he was unable to preside at the sacraments of initiation himself, should arrange, if possible, to meet the recently baptised at least once in the year and to preside at a celebration of the Eucharist with them. At this Mass they may receive Holy Communion under both kinds.

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF CHILDREN WHO HAVE REACHED CATECHETICAL AGE

Those to be initiated

This form of the rite of Christian initiation is intended for children, not baptised as infants, who have attained the use of reason and are of catechetical age. They seek Christian initiation either at the direction of their parents or guardians or, with parental permission, on their own initiative. Such children are capable of receiving and nurturing a personal faith and of recognising an obligation in conscience. But they cannot yet be treated as adults because, at this stage of their lives, they are dependent on their parents or guardians and are still strongly influenced by their companions and their social surroundings.

Nature of the initiation

The Christian initiation of these children requires both a conversion that is personal and somewhat developed, in proportion to their age, and the assistance of the education they need. The process of initiation thus must be adapted both to their spiritual progress, that is, to the children's growth in faith, and to the catechetical instruction they receive. Accordingly, as with adults, their initiation is to be extended over several years, if need be, before they receive the sacraments. Also as with adults, several steps mark their initiation. These are the liturgical rites of acceptance into the order of catechumens, the optional rite of election, penitential rites or scrutinies and celebration of the sacraments of initiation. Corresponding to the periods of adult initiation are the periods of children's catechetical formation that lead up to and follow the steps of their initiation.

Others involved in the initiation

The children's progress in the formation they receive depends on the help and example of their companions and on the influence of their parents. Both these factors should therefore be taken into account.

Since the children to be initiated often belong to a group of children of the same age who are already baptised and are preparing for

confirmation and Eucharist, their initiation progresses gradually and within the supportive setting of this group of companions.

It is to be hoped that the children will also receive as much help and example as possible from the parents, whose permission is required for the children to be initiated and to live the Christian life. The period of initiation will also provide a good opportunity for the family to have contact with priests and catechists.

For the celebrations proper to this form of Christian initiation, it is advantageous, as circumstances allow, to form a group of several children who are in this same situation, in order that by example they may help one another in their progress as catechumens.

Time of celebration of the Christian initiation

In regard to the time for the celebration of the steps of initiation, it is preferable that, if possible, the final period of preparation, begun by the second step, the penitential rite, coincide with Lent and that the final step, celebration of the sacraments of initiation, take place at the Easter Vigil. Nevertheless before the children are admitted to the sacraments at Easter, it should be established that they are ready for the sacraments. Celebration at this time must also be consistent with the program of catechetical instruction they are receiving, since the candidates should, if possible, come to the sacraments of initiation at the time that their baptised companions are to receive confirmation or Eucharist.

For children of this age, at the rites during the process of initiation, it is generally preferable not to have the whole parish community present, but simply represented. Thus these rites should be celebrated with the active participation of a congregation that consists of a suitable number of the faithful, the parents, family, members of the catechetical group, and a few adult friends.

First Holy Communion

The First Communion of Children must always be preceded by sacramental confession and absolution. Moreover First Communion should always be administered by a priest and never outside the celebration of Mass. Apart from exceptional cases, it is not particularly appropriate for First Communion to be administered on Holy Thursday of the Lord's Supper. Another day should be chosen instead, such as a Sunday between the Second and the Sixth Sunday of Easter, or the Solemnity of the Body

and Blood of Christ, or the Sundays of Ordinary Time, since Sunday is rightly regarded as the day of the Eucharist. Children who have not attained the age of reason or those whom the parish priest has determined to be insufficiently prepared should not come forward to receive the Holy Eucharist. Where it happens, however, that a child who is exceptionally mature for his age is judged to be ready for receiving the sacrament, the child must not be denied. First Communion provided he has received sufficient instruction.¹⁰²

Adaptations by Episcopal Conferences

Each conference of bishops may adapt and add to the form of the rite given here in order that the rite will more effectively satisfy local needs, conditions and pastoral requirements. The rite for the presentation of the creed and the Lord's Prayer, adapted to the age of the children, may be incorporated. When the form of the rite of initiation for children is translated, the instructions and prayers should be adapted to their understanding. Furthermore, in addition to any liturgical text translated from the Latin *editio typica*, the conference of bishops may also approve an original, alternative text that says the same things in a way more suited to children.

Accommodations by the Minister

In following this form of the rite of Christian initiation the celebrant should make full and wise use of the options mentioned in *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction (no. 34-35), in the *Rite of Baptism for Children*, Introduction (no. 31) and in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, Introduction (no. 35).

Liturgical Rites involved

First step: acceptance into the order of catechumenate

It is important that this rite be celebrated with an actively participating but small congregation., since the presence of a large group might make the children uncomfortable. When possible, the children's parents or guardians

¹⁰² *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, no. 87.

should be present. If they cannot come, they should indicate that they have given consent to their children and their place should be taken by "sponsors", that is, suitable members of the church who act on this occasion for the parents and present the children. The presiding celebrant is a priest or a deacon.

The celebration takes place in the church or in a place that, according to the age and understanding of the children, can help them to experience a warm welcome. As circumstances suggest, the first part of the rite, "Receiving the children", is carried out at the entrance of the place chosen for the celebration, and the second part of the rite, "Liturgy of the Word," takes place inside.

The celebration is not normally combined with the celebration of the Eucharist.

Second step: Penitential rites (scrutinies)

These penitential rites, which mark the second step in the children's Christian initiation, are major occasions in their catechumenate. They are held within a celebration of the word of God as a kind of scrutiny, similar to the scrutinies in the adult rite. Thus the guidelines given for the adult rite may be followed and adapted, since the children's penitential rites have a similar purpose.

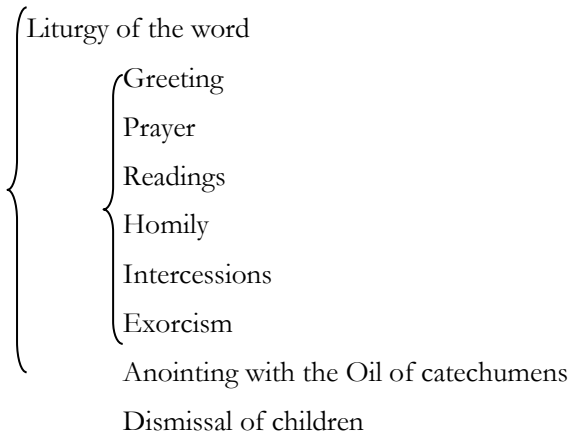
Because the penitential rites normally belong to the period of final preparation for baptism, the condition for their celebration is that the children are approaching the maturity of faith and understanding requisite for baptism.

Along with the children, their godparents and their baptised companions from the catechetical group participate in the celebration of these penitential rites. Therefore the rites are to be adapted in such a way that they also benefit the participants who are not catechumens. In particular, these penitential rites are proper occasion for baptised children of the catechetical group to celebrate the sacrament of penance for the first time. When this is the case, care should be taken to include explanations, prayers and ritual acts that relate to the celebration of the sacrament with these children.

The penitential rites are celebrated during Lent, if the catechumens are to be initiated at Easter; if not, at the most suitable time. At least one penitential rite is to be celebrated, and, if this can be arranged

conveniently, a second should follow after an appropriate interval. The texts for a second celebration are to be composed on the model of the first given here, but the texts for the intercessions and prayer of exorcism given in the adult rite are used, with the requisite modifications.

The structure of the rite is as follows.



Liturgy of penance (for baptised children of the catechumenate).

Third step: celebration of the sacraments of initiation

In order to bring out the paschal character of baptism, celebration of the sacraments of initiation should preferably take place at the Easter or on a Sunday, the day that the church devotes to the remembrance of Christ's resurrection.¹⁰³

At this third step of their Christian initiation, the children will receive the sacrament of baptism, the bishop or priest who baptises them will also confer confirmation, and the children will for the first time participate in the liturgy of the Eucharist.

¹⁰³ See *Rite of Baptism for Children*, Introduction, no. 9.

If the sacraments of initiation are celebrated at a time other than the Easter Vigil or Easter Sunday, the Mass of the day or one of the ritual Masses in the Roman Missa, "Christian Initiation: Baptism" is used. The readings are chosen from those given in the Lectionary for Mass, "Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation apart from the Easter Vigil"; but the readings for the Sunday or feast on which the celebration takes place may be used instead.

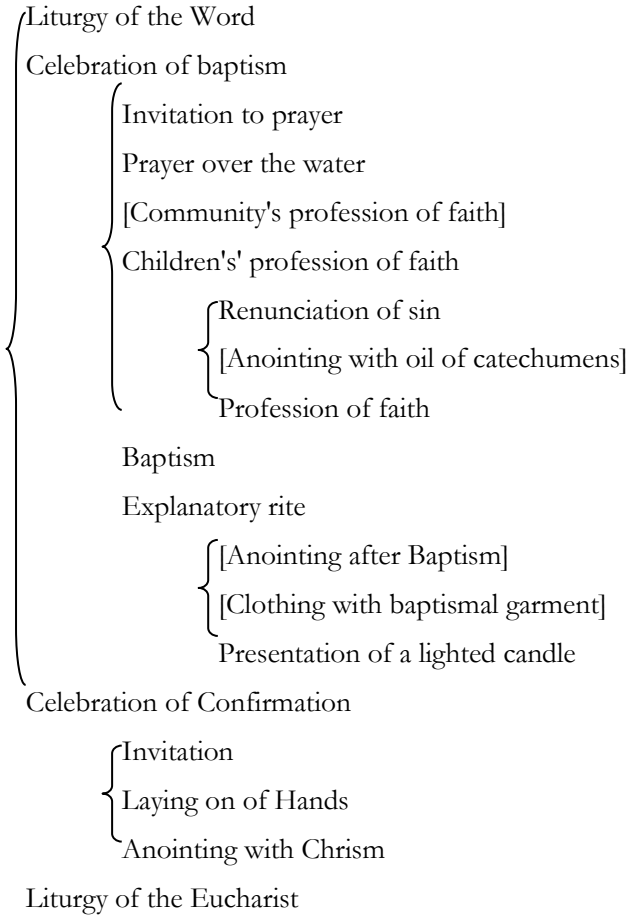
All the children to be baptised are to be accompanied by their own godparents or godparents, chosen by themselves and approved by the priest.

Baptised children of the catechetical group may be completing their Christian initiation in the sacraments of confirmation and the Eucharist at this same celebration. When the bishop himself will not be the celebrant, he should grant the faculty to confirm such children to the priest who will be the celebrant.¹⁰⁴ For the confirmation, previously baptised children of the catechetical group are to have their own sponsors. If possible, these should be the persons who were godparents for their baptism, but other qualified persons may be chosen.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ *Rite of Confirmation*, Introduction, no. 7.b.

¹⁰⁵ *ite of Confirmation*, Introduction, nos. 5, 6.

The outline of the rite is as follows:



CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Exceptional circumstances may arise in which the local bishop, in individual cases, can allow the use of a form of Christian initiation that is simpler than the usual, complete rite.

The bishop may permit this simpler form to consist in the abbreviated form of the rite that is carried out in one celebration. Or he may permit an expansion of this abbreviated rite, so that there are celebrations not only of the sacraments of initiation but also of one or more of the rites belonging to the period of the catechumenate and to the period of purification and enlightenment.

The extraordinary circumstances in question are either events that prevent the candidate from completing all the steps of the catechumenate or a depth of Christian conversion and a degree of religious maturity that lead the local bishop to decide that the candidate may receive baptism without delay.

Expanded form

Extraordinary circumstances, for example, sickness, old age, change of residence, long absence for travel, may sometimes either prevent a candidate from celebrating the rite of acceptance that leads to the period of the catechumenate or, having begun the catechumenate, from completing it by participation in all the rites belonging to the period. Yet merely to use the abbreviated form of the rite could mean a spiritual loss for the candidate, who would be deprived of the benefits of a longer preparation for the sacraments of initiation. It is therefore important that, with the bishop's permission, an expanded form of initiation be developed by the incorporation of elements from the complete rite for the Christian initiation of adults.

Through such an expansion of the abbreviated rite a new candidate can reach the same level as those who are already advanced in the catechumenate, since some of the earlier elements from the full rite can be added, for example, the rite of acceptance into the order of catechumens or the minor exorcisms and blessing from the period of the catechumenate. The expansion also makes it possible for a candidate who

had begun the catechumenate with others, but was forced to interrupt, it, to complete the catechumenate alone by celebrating, in addition to the sacraments of initiation, elements from the full rite, for example, the rite of election and rite belonging to the period of purification and enlightenment.

Pastors can arrange this expansion form of initiation by taking the abbreviated form as a basis, then choosing wisely from the full rite to make adaptations in any of different ways.¹⁰⁶ When the expanded form of initiation is arranged, care should be taken to ensure that:

The candidate has received a full catechesis

The rite is celebrated with the active participation of an assembly

After receiving the sacraments the neophyte has the benefit of a period of post-baptismal catechesis, if at all possible.

Abbreviated form

Before the abbreviated form of the rite is celebrated the candidate must have gone through an adequate period of instruction and preparation before baptism, in order to purify his or her motives for requesting baptism and to grow stronger in conversion and faith. The candidate should also have chosen godparents or a godparent and become acquainted with the local Christian community.

The rite includes elements that express the presentation and welcoming of the candidate and that also express the candidate's clear and firm resolve to request Christian initiation, as well as the Church's approval of the candidate. A suitable liturgy of the word is also celebrated, then the sacraments of initiation.

Normally the rite is celebrated within Mass. The choice of readings should be in keeping with the character of the celebration; they may be either those of the day or those in the Lectionary for Mass, ritual Mass, "Christian Initiation apart from the Easter Vigil". The other Mass texts are those of one of the ritual Masses "Christian Initiation: Baptism" or of another Mass. After receiving baptism and confirmation, the candidate takes part for the first time in the celebration of the Eucharist.

¹⁰⁶ With regard to the different ways in which the rite can be expanded see *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, no. 334, typical Latin edition no. 276.

If at all possible, the celebration should take place on a Sunday, with the local community taking an active part.

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF A PERSON IN DANGER OF DEATH

Persons, whether catechumens or not, who are in danger of death but are not at the point of death and so are able to hear and answer the questions involved may be baptised with this short rite.

Persons who have already been accepted as catechumens must make a promise that upon recovery they will complete the usual catechesis. Persons who are not catechumens must give serious indication of their conversion to Christ and renunciation of pagan worship and must not be seen to be attached to anything that conflicts with the moral life (for example, "simultaneous polygamy"). They must also promise that upon recovery they will go through the complete program of initiation as it applies to them.

This shorter rite is designed particularly for use by catechists and lay persons; a priest or a deacon may use it in a case of emergency. But normally a priest or a deacon is to use the abbreviated form of Christian initiation,¹⁰⁷ making any changes required by circumstances of place and time.

The minister of baptism who is a priest should, when the Chrism is at hand and there is time, confer confirmation after the baptism; in this case there is no post-baptismal anointing.

The minister of baptism who is a priest, a deacon, or a catechist or lay person having permission to distribute communion, should, if this is possible, give the Eucharist to the newly baptised person. In this case before the beginning of the celebration of the rite the blessed sacrament is placed reverently on a table covered with a white cloth.

In the case of a person who is at the point of death, that is, whose death is imminent, and time is short, the minister, omitting everything else, pours natural water (even if not blessed) on the head of the sick person, while saying the usual sacramental form.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ See Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, 340-369.

¹⁰⁸ See *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, no. 23.

If persons who were baptised when in danger of death or at the point of death recover their health, they are to be given a suitable formation, be welcomed at the church in due time, and there receive the other sacraments of initiation. In such cases the guidelines for baptised but uncatechised adults are followed, with the necessary changes.¹⁰⁹ The same guidelines should be applied when sick persons recover after receiving not only baptism but also confirmation and Eucharist as viaticum.

¹⁰⁹ Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, 400-410.

The following is the outline of the rite

Introductory rite

Opening dialogue

Affirmation by the godparent and witnesses

Liturgy of the word

Gospel reading

Intercessions for the candidate

Prayer over the candidate

Celebration of baptism

Renunciation of sin

Profession of faith

Baptism

[Anointing after Baptism]

Celebration of confirmation

Invitation

Laying on of Hands

Anointing with Chrism

Celebration of Viaticum

Invitation to Prayer

Communion as Viaticum

Prayer after Communion

Concluding Rite

Blessing

Sign of Peace

PREPARATION OF UNCATECHISED ADULTS FOR CONFIRMATION AND EUCHARIST

The following pastoral guidelines concern adults who were baptised as infants either as Roman Catholics or as members of another Christian community but did not receive further catechetical formation or, consequently, the sacraments of confirmation and Eucharist. These suggestions may also be applied to similar cases, especially that of an adult who recovers after being baptised in danger of death or at the point of death.

Even though uncatechised adults have not yet heard the message of the mystery of Christ, their status differs from that of catechumens, since by baptism they have already become members of the Church and children of God. Hence their conversion is based on the baptism they have already received, the effects of which they must develop.

As in the case of catechumens, the preparation of these adults requires a considerable time, during which the faith infused in baptism must grow in them and take deep root through the pastoral formation they receive. A program of training, catechesis suited to their needs, contact with the community of the faithful, and participation in certain liturgical rites are needed in order to strengthen them in the Christian life.

For the most part the plan of catechesis corresponds to the one laid down for catechumens.¹¹⁰ But in the process of catechesis the priest, deacon, or catechist should take into account that these adults have a special status because they are already baptised.

Just as it helps catechumens, the Christian community should also help these adults by its love and prayer¹¹¹ and by testifying to their suitability when it is time for them to be admitted to the sacraments.¹¹²

A sponsor presents these adults to the community.¹¹³ During the period of their catechetical formation, they all choose godparents (a godfather, a

¹¹⁰ RCIA, 75.1.

¹¹¹ RCIA, 4, 75.2.

¹¹² RCIA, 120, 121.

¹¹³ RCIA, 10.

godmother, or both) approved by the priest. Their godparents work with these adults as the representatives of the community and have the same responsibilities as the godparents have towards catechumens.¹¹⁴ The same persons who were the godparents at the baptism of these adults may be chosen as godparents at this time, provided they are truly capable of carrying out the responsibilities of godparents.

The period of preparation is made holy by means of liturgical celebrations. The first of these is a rite by which the adults are welcomed into the community and acknowledge themselves to be part of it because they have already been marked with the seal of baptism.

Once a rite of reception has been celebrated, these adults take part in celebrations of the word of God, both those of the entire Christian assembly and those celebrations arranged specially for the benefit of the catechumens.¹¹⁵

As a sign of God's activity in this work of preparation, some of the rites belonging to the catechumenate, especially suited to the condition and spiritual needs of these baptised adults, can be used to advantage. Among these are the presentation of the Creed¹¹⁶ and of the Lord's Prayer¹¹⁷ or also a presentation of a book of the Gospels.¹¹⁸

The period of catechesis for these adults should be properly co-ordinated with the liturgical year. This is particularly true of its final phase, which should as a rule coincide with Lent. During the Lenten season penitential services should be arranged in such a way as to prepare these adults for the celebration of the sacrament of Penance.

The high point of their entire formation will normally be the Easter Vigil. At that time they will make a profession of the faith in which they were baptised, receive the sacrament of confirmation, and take part in the Eucharist. If, because neither the bishop nor another authorised minister is present, confirmation cannot be given at the Easter Vigil, it is to be

¹¹⁴ RCIA, 11.

¹¹⁵ RCIA, 81-84.

¹¹⁶ RCIA, 157-162.

¹¹⁷ RCIA, 178-182.

¹¹⁸ RCIA, 64.

celebrated as soon as possible and, if this can be arranged, during the Easter season.

These adults will complete their Christian formation and become fully integrated into the community by going through the period of post-baptismal catechesis or mystagogy with the newly baptised members of the Christian community.

RECEPTION OF A BAPTISED CHRISTIAN INTO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

This is the liturgical rite by which a person born and baptised in a separated ecclesial community is received, according to the Latin rite,¹¹⁹ into the full communion of the Catholic Church. The rite is so arranged that no greater burden than necessary¹²⁰ is required for the establishment of communion and unity.¹²¹

In the case of Christians of the Eastern rite, those who enter into fullness of Catholic communion, no liturgical rite is required, but simply a profession of Catholic faith, even if such persons are permitted, in virtue of recourse to the Apostolic See, to transfer to the Latin rite.¹²²

In regard to the manner of celebrating the rite of reception:

The rite should appear clearly as a celebration of the Church and have as its high point Eucharistic communion. For this reason the rite should normally take place within Mass.

Any appearance of triumphalism should be carefully avoided and the manner of celebrating this Mass should be decided beforehand and with a view to the particular circumstances. Both the ecumenical implications and the bond between the candidate and the parish community should be considered. Often it will be preferable to celebrate the Mass with only a few relatives and friends. If for a serious reason Mass cannot be celebrated, the reception should at least take place within a liturgy of the word, whenever this is possible. The person to be received into full communion should be consulted about the form of reception.

If the rite of reception is celebrated outside Mass, the Mass in which for the first time the newly received will take part with the Catholic community should be celebrated as soon as possible, in order to make clear the connection between the reception and eucharistic communion.

¹¹⁹ SC, 69,b; Unitatis redintegratio, 3; Ecumenical Directory I, no 19.

¹²⁰ Acts, 15: 28.

¹²¹ Vatican Council II, Decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, 25, 4.

¹²² *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, 25, 4

The baptised Christian is to receive both doctrinal and spiritual preparation, adapted to individual pastoral requirements, for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church. The candidate should learn to deepen an inner adherence to the Church, where he or she will find the fullness of his or her baptism. During the period of preparation the candidate may share in worship in conformity with the provision of the *Ecumenical Directory*.

Anything that would equate candidates for reception with those who are catechumens is to be absolutely avoided.

During the period of their doctrinal and spiritual preparation individual candidates for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church may benefit from the celebration of liturgical rites marking their progress in formation. Thus, for pastoral reasons and in light of the catechesis in the faith which these baptised Christians have received previously, one or several of the rites included in Par II, of the RCIA, "Preparation of Uncatechised Adults for Confirmation and Eucharist," may be celebrated as they are presented or in similar words. In all cases, however, discernment should be made regarding the length of catechetical formation required for each individual candidate for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

One who was born and baptised outside the visible communion of the Catholic Church is not required to make an abjuration of heresy, but simply a profession of faith.¹²³

The sacrament of baptism cannot be repeated and therefore it is not permitted to confer it again conditionally, unless there is a reasonable doubt about the fact or validity of the baptism already conferred. If serious investigation raises such prudent doubt and it seems necessary to confer baptism again conditionally, the minister should explain beforehand the reasons why this is being done and a non-solemn form of baptism is to be used.¹²⁴

The local Ordinary is to decide in each case what rites are to be included or excluded in conferring conditional baptism.

It is the office of the bishop to receive baptised Christians into the full communion of the Catholic Church. But a priest to whom the bishop

¹²³ Ecumenical Directory I, 19, 20.

¹²⁴ Ecumenical Directory 14-15.

entrusts the celebration of the rite has the faculty of confirming the candidate within the rite of reception, unless the person received has already been validly confirmed.

If the profession of faith and reception take place within Mass, the candidate, according to his or her own conscience, should make a confession of sins beforehand, first informing the confessor that he or she is about to be received into full communion. Any confessor who is lawfully approved may hear the candidate's confession.

At the reception, the candidate should be accompanied by a sponsor and may even have two sponsors. If someone has had the principal part in guiding or preparing the candidate, he or she should be the sponsor.

In the eucharistic celebration within which reception into full communion takes place or, if the reception takes place outside Mass, in the Mass that follows at a later time, communion under both kinds is permitted for the person received, the sponsor, the parents and spouse who are Catholic, lay catechists who may have instructed the person and, if the number involved and other circumstances make this feasible, for all Catholics present.

The conference of bishops may, in accord with the provisions of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, art. 63, adapt the rite of reception to various circumstances. The local Ordinary, by expanding or shortening the rite, may arrange it to suit the particular circumstances of the persons and place involved.

The names of those received into the full communion of the Catholic Church should be recorded in a special book with the date and place of their baptism also noted.

CONFIRMATION

<i>In General</i>	113
<i>Parents</i>	113
<i>Sponsors</i>	113
<i>Pastors</i>	114
<i>The Bishop</i>	114
<i>Those who may replace the Bishop's Office</i>	114
<i>Essential Elements</i>	115
<i>Other Elements</i>	116
<i>Recipients of the Sacrament</i>	117
<i>Place and Time of Celebration</i>	118
<i>Recording of Confirmation</i>	119
<i>Within Mass</i>	119
Liturgy of the Word.....	119
Sacrament of Confirmation.....	119
Liturgy of the Eucharist.....	122
Final Blessing.....	122
<i>Outside Mass</i>	122
<i>Rite of Confirmation by a Minister who is not a Bishop</i>	123
<i>Confirmation in Danger of Death</i>	123
<i>Adaptations by Episcopal Conferences</i>	124
<i>Adaptations by Ministers</i>	125
<i>Ecumenical Aspects of Confirmation</i>	126
<i>Possibility of confirming another Christian into the Catholic faith</i>	126

INTRODUCTION

It is usual pastoral practice that at the sacrament of Confirmation is conferred in the parish every year. In many parishes it is also the occasion of the hosting of the bishop during his annual pastoral visit to the parish. In his absence the bishop may delegate somebody to deputise for him. In either case the pastor should be prepared to play his role in the preparation of the candidates, the training and directing of the catechists and sponsors involved. He should know what is involved in the actual liturgical celebration of the sacrament. He should know what to do if called upon to assist the bishop when necessary,¹²⁵ or when he himself has to confirm. Above all, he should know the theological meaning of the sacrament, in order to impart his knowledge to those who receive the sacrament.

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION¹²⁶

The New Testament shows how the Holy Spirit assisted Christ in fulfilling his messianic mission. On receiving the baptism of John, Jesus saw the Spirit descending on him¹²⁷ and remaining with him¹²⁸. He was impelled by the Spirit to undertake his public ministry as the Messiah, relying on the Spirit's presence and assistance. Teaching the people of Nazareth, he shows by what he said that the words of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me", referred to himself.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ "For a serious reason, as sometimes is present because of the large number of those to be confirmed, the bishop may associate presbyters with himself, as ministers of the sacrament. It is preferable that the presbyters who are so invited either have a particular function or office in the diocese... or be the parish priests (pastors) of the places where confirmation is conferred, parish priests (pastors) of the places where the candidates belong, or presbyters who have had a special part in the catechetical preparation of the candidates." CB, 456.

¹²⁶ Paul VI, "Apostolic Constitution On the Sacrament of Confirmation", *The Rites of the Catholic Church*, p. 291.

¹²⁷ "And just as he was coming up out of the water, [Jesus] saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him." Mark 1: 10

¹²⁸ "And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him." John 1:32

¹²⁹ Luke 4: 17-21.

He later promised his disciples that the Holy Spirit would help them also to bear fearless witness to their faith even before persecutors.¹³⁰ The day before he suffered, he assured his apostles that he would send the Spirit of truth from his Father¹³¹ to stay with them “for ever”¹³² and help them to be his witnesses.¹³³ Finally, after his resurrection, Christ promised the coming descent of the Holy Spirit: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes down on you; then you are to be my witnesses.”¹³⁴

And in fact on the day of the feast of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came down in an extraordinary way on the Apostles as they were gathered together with Mary the mother of Jesus and the group of disciples. They were so “filled with” the Holy Spirit¹³⁵ that by divine inspiration they began to proclaim “the mighty works of God.” Peter regarded the Spirit who had thus come down upon the Apostles as the gift of the messianic age.¹³⁶ Those who believed the Apostles’ preaching were then baptised and they too received “the gift of the Holy Spirit”¹³⁷ From that time on the apostles, in fulfilment of Christ’s wish, imparted the gift of the Spirit to the newly baptised by the laying on of hands to complete the grace of baptism. Hence it is that the Letter to the Hebrews lists among the first elements of Christian instruction the teaching about baptisms and the laying on of hands.¹³⁸ This laying on of hands is rightly recognised by Catholic tradition

¹³⁰ “When they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers, and the authorities, do not worry about how you are to defend yourselves or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what you ought to say.” Luke 12: 11-12.

¹³¹ “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf.” John 15: 26.

¹³² “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever.” John 14: 16

¹³³ John 15: 26.

¹³⁴ Acts 1: 8; Cf. Luke 24: 49.

¹³⁵ “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.” Acts 2:4

¹³⁶ Acts 2: 17-18.

¹³⁷ “Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” Acts 2: 38.

¹³⁸ Therefore let us go on toward perfection, leaving behind the basic teaching about Christ, and not laying again the foundation: repentance from dead works and faith toward God, instruction about baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.” Hebrews 6.1-2.

as the beginning of the sacrament of confirmation, which in certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church.

RELATION WITH OTHER SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

This makes clear the specific importance of confirmation for sacramental initiation by which the faithful “as members of the living Christ are incorporated into him and made like him through baptism and through confirmation and Eucharist.”¹³⁹ In baptism, the newly baptised receive forgiveness of sins, adoption as sons and daughters of God, and the character of Christ, by which they are made members of the Church and for the first time become sharers in the priesthood of their Saviour.¹⁴⁰ Through the sacrament of confirmation, those who have been born anew in baptism receive the inexpressible Gift, the Holy Spirit himself, by which “they are endowed...with special strength.”¹⁴¹ Moreover, having received the character of this sacrament, they are “bound more intimately to the Church”¹⁴² and “they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith both by word and by deed as true witnesses of Christ.”¹⁴³ Finally, confirmation is so closely linked with the holy Eucharist that the faithful, after being signed by holy baptism and confirmation, are incorporated fully into the body of Christ by participation in the Eucharist.

DIGNITY OF CONFIRMATION¹⁴⁴

Those who have been baptised continue on the path of Christian initiation through the sacrament of confirmation. In this sacrament they receive the Holy Spirit, who was sent upon the apostles by the Lord on Pentecost.

This giving of the Holy Spirit conforms believers more perfectly to Christ and strengthens them so that they may bear witness to Christ for the building up of his body in faith and love. They are so marked with the character or seal of the Lord that the sacrament of confirmation cannot be repeated.

¹³⁹ *Ad gentes*, 36.

¹⁴⁰ 1 Peter 2: 5,9.

¹⁴¹ *Lumen Gentium*, 11.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ad gentes* 11.

¹⁴⁴ *Rite of Confirmation*, 1-2. Cf. Can. 879.

OFFICES AND MINISTRIES¹⁴⁵

In General

It is the responsibility of the people of God to prepare the baptised for confirmation. It is the responsibility of the pastors to see that all the baptised come to the fullness of Christian initiation and are carefully prepared for confirmation.

Adult catechumens, who are to be confirmed immediately after baptism, have the help of the Christian community, and, in particular, the formation which is given to them during the catechumenate, catechesis and common liturgical celebrations. Catechists, sponsors, and members of the local church should participate in the catechumenate.

Attention should be paid to the festive and solemn character of the liturgical service, especially its significance for the local Church, especially if all the candidates are assembled for a common celebration. The whole people of God, represented by the families and friends of the candidates and by the members of the local community, will be invited to take part in the celebration and will express its faith in the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Parents

The initiation of children into the sacramental life is for the most part the responsibility and concern of Christian parents. They are to form and gradually increase a spirit of faith in the children and, with the help of catechetical institutions, prepare them for the fruitful reception of the sacraments of confirmation and the Eucharist. The role of the parents is also expressed by their active participation in the celebration of the sacraments.

Sponsors¹⁴⁶

Ordinarily there should be a sponsor for each of those to be confirmed. The sponsor brings the candidate to receive the sacrament, presents him to the minister for the anointing, and will later help him to fulfil his baptismal promises faithfully under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴⁵ Can. 882-888.

¹⁴⁶ Can. 892-893.

In view of contemporary pastoral circumstances, it is desirable that the godparent at baptism, if present, also be the sponsor at confirmation; canon 796, no. 1 is abrogated.¹⁴⁷ This change expresses more clearly the relationship between baptism and confirmation and also makes the function and responsibility of the sponsor more effective. Nevertheless the choice of a special sponsor for confirmation is not excluded. Even the parents themselves may present their children for confirmation. It is for the local Ordinary to determine diocesan practice in the light of local circumstances.

Pastors

Pastors are to see that the sponsor, chosen by the candidate or his family, is spiritually qualified for the office and satisfies these requirements: a) that he be sufficiently mature for this role; b) that he belong to the Catholic Church and have been initiated in the three sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist; c) that he be not prohibited by law from exercising the role of sponsor.

The Bishop

The original minister of confirmation is the bishop. Ordinarily the sacrament is administered by the bishop so that there will be a more evident relationship to the first pouring forth of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. After the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, they themselves gave the Spirit to the faithful through the laying on of their hands. Thus the reception of the Spirit through the ministry of the bishop shows the close bond which joins the confirmed to the Church and the mandate to be witnesses of Christ among men.

Those who may replace the Bishop's Office

In addition to the bishop, the law gives the faculty to confirm to the following: a) apostolic administrators who are not bishops, prelates or abbots *nullius*, vicars and prefects apostolic, vicars capitular, within the

¹⁴⁷ This canon states that: "Among the means of advancing education, Christ's faithful are to consider schools as of great importance, since they are the principal means of helping parents to fulfil their role in education". However, under the present conditions which advocate for freedom of worship and in which the tendency is towards secularism, this canon no longer applies.

limits of their territory and while they hold office; b) priests who, in virtue of an office which they lawfully hold, baptise an adult or a child old enough for catechesis or receive a validly baptised adult into full communion with the Church; c) in danger of death, provided a bishop is not easily available or is lawfully impeded: pastors and parochial vicars; in their absence, their parochial associates; priests who are in charge of special parishes lawfully established; administrators; substitutes; and assistants;¹⁴⁸ in the absence of all of the preceding, any priest who is not subject to censure or canonical penalty.

In case of true necessity and special reason, for example, the large number of persons to be confirmed, the minister of confirmation mentioned no. 7 or the extraordinary minister designated by special indult of the Apostolic See or by law may associate other priests with himself in the administration of this sacrament.

It is required that these priests: a) have a particular function or office in the diocese, namely, vicars general, Episcopal vicars or delegates, district or regional vicars,¹⁴⁹ or those who by mandate of the Ordinary hold equivalent or offices; or b) be the pastors of the places where confirmation is conferred, pastors of the places where the candidates belong, or priests who have had a special part in the catechetical preparation of the candidates.

CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT IN GENERAL¹⁵⁰

Essential Elements

The sacrament of confirmation is conferred through the anointing with Chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying of the hands, and through the words: *Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit*. This second laying on of hands, in a cross-form on the forehead, which is essential to the validity of the sacrament must be distinguished from earlier laying on of hands.

It is with regard to the first laying on of hands that Pope Paul VI in his *Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation* said: “although the laying

¹⁴⁸ See canons 451, 471, 476, 216 §4, 472, 474, 475.

¹⁴⁹ Can. 217 §1.

¹⁵⁰ Can 880-881.

of hands on the candidates, which is done with the prescribed prayer before the anointing, does not belong to the essence of the sacramental rite, it is nevertheless to be held in high esteem, in that it contributes to the integral perfection of that rite and to a clearer understanding of the sacrament. It is evident that this preceding laying on of hands differs from the laying on of the hand by which the anointing is done on the forehead.”¹⁵¹

Priests who are sometimes associated with the principal minister in conferring the sacrament join him in laying their hands on all the candidates together,¹⁵² but they do not say the prayer.

Thus the whole rite has a twofold meaning. The laying of hands on the candidates by the bishop and the concelebrating priests is the biblical gesture by which the gift of the Holy Spirit is invoked. This is well adapted to the understanding of the Christian people. The anointing with Chrism and the accompanying words express clearly the effects of the giving of the Holy Spirit. Signed with the perfumed oil, the baptised person receives the indelible character, the seal of the Lord, together with the gift of the spirit, which conforms him more closely to Christ and gives him the grace of spreading the Lord’s presence among men.

Other Elements

Emphasis should be given to the celebration of the word of God which begins the rite of confirmation. It is from the hearing of the word of God that the many-sided power of the Holy Spirit flows upon the Church and upon each one of the baptised and confirmed, and it is by this word that God’s will is manifest in the life of Christians.

The saying of the Lord’s Prayer by the newly confirmed with the rest of the people is also of very great importance, whether during Mass before communion or outside Mass before the blessing, because it is the Spirit who prays in us, and in the Spirit the Christian says “*Abba, Father.*”

¹⁵¹ See also *Rite of Confirmation*, 9.

¹⁵² This is the first laying on of hands.

*Recipients of the Sacrament*¹⁵³

Adult catechumens and children who are baptised at an age when they are old enough for catechesis should ordinarily be admitted to confirmation and the Eucharist at the same time they receive baptism. If this is impossible, they should receive confirmation in a common celebration. Similarly adults who were baptised in infancy should, after suitable preparation, receive confirmation and the Eucharist in a common celebration.

With regard to children, in the Latin Church the administration of confirmation is generally postponed until about the seventh year.¹⁵⁴ For pastoral reasons, however, especially to strengthen the faithful in complete obedience to Christ the Lord and in loyal testimony to him, Episcopal conferences may choose an age which seems more appropriate, so that the sacrament is given at a more mature age after appropriate formation.¹⁵⁵ In this case the necessary precautions should be taken so that children will be confirmed at the proper time, even before the use of reason, where there is danger of death or other serious difficulty. They should not be deprived of the benefit of this sacrament.

One must be baptised to receive the sacrament of confirmation. In addition, if the baptised person has the use of reason, it is required that he be in a state of grace, properly instructed, and able to renew his baptismal promises.

Suitable catechesis should precede confirmation, and there should be sufficient effective relationship of the candidates with the Christian community and with individual members of the faithful to assist in their formation. This formation should be directed toward their giving the witness of a Christian life and exercising the Christian apostolate, while developing a genuine desire to participate in the Eucharist.

Sometimes the preparation of a baptised adult for confirmation is part of his or her preparation for marriage. In such cases, if it is foreseen that the

¹⁵³ Can. 889-891.

¹⁵⁴ Can. 891: "The sacrament of confirmation is to be conferred on the faithful at about the age of discretion, unless the Episcopal Conference has decided on a different age, or there is a danger of death or, in the judgement of the minister, a grave reason suggests otherwise."

¹⁵⁵ It is important that a pastor be informed of the age established in his respective diocese, if there is any established usage besides that given in the Rite of Confirmation.

conditions for a fruitful reception of confirmation cannot be satisfied, the local Ordinary will judge whether it is better to defer confirmation until after marriage.

If one who has the use of reason is confirmed in danger of death, he should be prepared spiritually, so far as possible, depending upon the circumstances of the individual case.

Place and Time of Celebration

It is desirable that the sacrament of confirmation be celebrated in a church and indeed during Mass. However, for a just and reasonable cause it may be celebrated apart from Mass and in any fitting place.¹⁵⁶

On days when ritual Masses are permitted, the ritual Mass for confirmation,¹⁵⁷ with its proper readings,¹⁵⁸ may be celebrated. On the days listed in nos. 1-4 of the table of liturgical days, the Mass of the day, with its readings, is celebrated.¹⁵⁹ The final blessing proper to the ritual Mass may always be used.

Ordinarily confirmation takes place within Mass in order to express more clearly the fundamental connection of this sacrament with the entirety of Christian initiation. The latter reaches its culmination in the communion of the body and blood of Christ. The newly confirmed should therefore participate in the Eucharist which completes their Christian initiation.

If the candidates for confirmation are children who have not received the Eucharist and are not admitted to their first communion at this liturgical celebration or if there are other special circumstances, confirmation should be celebrated outside Mass. When this occurs, there should first be a celebration of the word of God.

¹⁵⁶ Can. 881.

¹⁵⁷ Roman Missal, Ritual Masses, I. Christian Initiation, r. Confirmation.

¹⁵⁸ See Lectionary for Mass, nos. 764-768 (Ritual Masses, I. Christian Initiation, 4. Confirmation).

¹⁵⁹ *Ceremonial of Bishops*, 459.

*Recording of Confirmation*¹⁶⁰

The pastor should record the names of the minister, those confirmed, parents and sponsors, and the date and place of confirmation in a special book. The notation in the baptismal register should also be made according to law, indicating that someone has been confirmed. The baptismal tickets of those confirmed should also indicate that they have been confirmed.

STRUCTURE AND DETAILS OF THE RITE

*Within Mass*¹⁶¹

The structure of the sacrament is as follows:

Liturgy of the Word

Sacrament of Confirmation

 Presentation of the Candidates

 Holy or Instruction

 Renewal of Baptismal Promises

 The Laying on of Hands

 The Anointing with Chrism

 General Intercessions

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Prayer over the people

Liturgy of the Word

The entrance into the church, introductory rites, and liturgy of the word, including the gospel reading, take place in the usual way. The readings may be taken in whole or in part from the Mass of the day or from the texts from confirmation in the Lectionary for Mass nos. 763-767.

Sacrament of Confirmation

Presentation of the Candidates

¹⁶⁰ Can. 894-896.

¹⁶¹ *Rite of Confirmation*, 20-33; *Ceremonial of Bishops*, 458-472.

After the gospel reading, the bishop, wearing the mitre, sits in his usual chair or in the special chair prepared for the occasion. The presbyters assisting him in the confirmation take seats near him.

The parish priest or another priest, deacon, or catechist presents the candidates for confirmation, according to the custom of the region. If possible, each candidate is called by name and comes individually to the sanctuary. If the candidates are children, they are accompanied by one of their sponsors or parents and stand before the bishop. If there are very many candidates, they are not called by name, but simply take a suitable place in front of the bishop.

Homily or Instruction

The bishop then gives a brief homily. He should explain the readings and so lead the candidates, their sponsors and parents, and the whole assembly to a deeper understanding of the mystery of confirmation. He may, if he chooses, use the words of address given in *The Roman Pontifical*.¹⁶² The Pontifical explains in simple words, the biblical origins of the sacrament of confirmation, why the bishop confers this sacrament, why the reception of the sacrament requires faith, the effect of the sacrament on the lives of those who are confirmed, the responsibility of Christian witness that go with the reception of the sacrament, and the invitation to the candidates to renew the profession of faith which they or their parents and god-parents made at the baptism of the candidates.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

After the homily, the bishop, seated and with the mitre and pastoral staff, addresses the candidates standing before him with the questions pertaining to the renewal of their baptismal promises. He accepts their profession of faith by proclaiming the faith of the Church, to which all in the assembly respond with some acclamation or song expressing their assent.

The Laying on of Hands

Then, putting aside the mitre and pastoral staff, the bishop stands and the assisting priests if any stand near him. He faces the people and, with hands joined, gives the invitation to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on

¹⁶² *Rite of Confirmation*, 22.

the candidates. All pray in silence for a brief period. The bishop, and the priests who will minister confirmation with him, lay hands upon all the candidates. But the bishop alone says the prayer that follows, that invokes God to send the Holy Spirit who comes with his manifold gifts over the candidates.

The Anointing with Chrism

Then the bishop sits and takes the mitre. The deacon or MC brings vessel or vessels of Chrism to the bishop. When there are priests to assist the bishop in giving the anointing, the deacon brings all the vessels of holy Chrism to the bishop, and each of the priests assisting him in turn receives the vessel of Chrism from the bishop.

Each candidate goes to the bishop (or to a priest), or, if circumstances suggest, the bishop, with mitre and staff, and the priests, may go to the individual candidate.¹⁶³ The one who presented the candidate¹⁶⁴ places his or her right hand on the candidate's shoulder and gives the candidate's name to the bishop; or the candidate may give his or her own name.

The bishop (or priest) dips his right thumb into the Chrism and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed, as he says the sacramental formulary. When the candidate has responded, *Amen*, the bishop adds, *Peace be with you*, and the newly confirmed responds, *And also with you*.

During the anointing a suitable song may be sung. After the anointing the bishop and the priests wash their hands.

General Intercessions

Then the bishop, standing and without the mitre, introduces the general intercessions. Another minister takes the intercessions at the end of which

¹⁶³ *Ceremonial of Bishops*, 466. The requirement that the bishop moves with his staff implies that there should be someone else to hold the vessel for him since one hand is engaged with the staff. Some bishops might prefer to dispense with the staff at this moment in order to free both hands for the anointing and holding of the vessel.

¹⁶⁴ In *Ceremonial of Bishops*, 461, and *Rite of Confirmation*, 21, it is mentioned that one person, a designated priest, presents all the candidates. Here reference is made on "the one who presented the candidate" (i.e. in singular), most likely referring to the sponsor of the candidate and not to the priest who presents the whole group during the rite of confirmation. It is this that puts his or her hand on the shoulder of the candidate at the moment of confirmation.

the bishop says the concluding prayer. The intercessions are given in the Rite.¹⁶⁵

Liturgy of the Eucharist

After the general intercessions the liturgy of the Eucharist is celebrated according to the *Order of Mass*, with these exceptions: a) the profession of faith is omitted, since it has already been made; b) some of the newly confirmed may join those who bring the gifts to the altar; c) when Eucharistic Prayer I is used, the special form of **Father, accept this offering** is used.

Adults who are confirmed, their sponsors, parents, wives and husbands, and catechists may receive communion under both kinds.

Final Blessing

Instead of the usual blessing at the end of Mass the bishop should use the solemn blessing or the prayer over the people provided in the Roman Pontifical.¹⁶⁶

The newly confirmed stand in front of the bishop. The bishop, standing and wearing the mitre, says, *The Lord be with you*. Then one of the deacons may give the invitation before the blessing. With hands outstretched over the people, the bishop says the invocations belonging to the blessing. Then he takes the pastoral staff and says, *May almighty God bless you...* and makes the sign of the cross three times over the people.

*Outside Mass*¹⁶⁷

The structure of confirmation outside Mass is as follows:

Entrance Rite

Entrance song

Opening prayer

Liturgy of the Word

¹⁶⁵ *Rite of Confirmation*, 30.

¹⁶⁶ *Rite of Confirmation*, 33.

¹⁶⁷ *Rite of Confirmation*, 34-49; *Ceremonial of Bishops*, 473-477..

Sacrament of Confirmation

Presentation of the Candidates

Holy or Instruction

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

The Laying on of Hands

The Anointing with Chrism

General Intercessions

Blessing or Prayer over the people

The celebration outlined takes place as in the rite within Mass, except the following. At least one of the readings suggested for the Mass of confirmation is read. If two or three readings are chosen, the traditional order is followed, that is, the Old Testament, the apostle and Gospel. After the first and second reading there should be a psalm or song, or a period of silence may be observed. The Lord's prayer follows immediately after the intercessions, introduced by the bishop. After the Lord's prayer follows immediately the blessing of the bishop, or the prayer over the people.

*Rite of Confirmation by a Minister who is not a Bishop*¹⁶⁸

The minister of confirmation who is not a bishop and who confirms either by concession of the general law or by special indult of the Apostolic See observes the rite described above. If, because of the large number of candidates, other priests join the celebrant in the administration of the sacrament, he chooses them in the same way as the bishop does. These priests should also concelebrate the Mass in which confirmation is conferred.

*Confirmation in Danger of Death*¹⁶⁹

It is of the greatest importance that the initiation of every baptised Christian be completed by the sacraments of confirmation and the Eucharist. The sick person in danger of death who has reached the age of

¹⁶⁸ *Rite of Confirmation*, 50-51.

¹⁶⁹ *Rite of Confirmation*, 52-56.

reason should therefore be strengthened by confirmation before he receives the Eucharist as viaticum, after the necessary possible catechesis.

Confirmation in danger of death and anointing of the sick are not ordinarily to be celebrated in a continuous rite. In the case of a child who has not yet reached the age of reason, confirmation is given in accord with the same principles and norms as for baptism.

When circumstances permit, the entire rite of confirmation described above is followed. In case of urgent necessity, the minister of confirmation lays hands upon the sick person as he says the prayer invoking the Holy Spirit. Then the minister dips his right thumb in the Chrism and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed, as he says: *N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.* The newly confirmed responds, if he is able: *Amen.* Other parts of the preparatory and concluding rites may be added in individual cases, depending on the circumstances.

In case of extreme necessity, it is sufficient that the anointing be done with the sacramental form: *N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.*

ADAPTATIONS IN THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

The following are the specifications for adaptation in the sacrament of Confirmation. In all cases we treat the adaptations by the Episcopal Conference and then by the individual minister.

Adaptations by Episcopal Conferences

In virtue of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (art. 63b), Episcopal conferences have the right to prepare a title in particular rituals corresponding to this title of the Roman Pontifical on confirmation. This is to be adapted to the needs of individual regions so that, after confirmation of their action by the Apostolic See, the ritual may be used in the territory.¹⁷⁰

The Episcopal conference will consider whether, in view of local circumstances and the culture and traditions of the people, it is opportune:

- a) To make suitable adaptations of the formulas for the renewal of baptismal promises and professions, either following the text in the rite of

¹⁷⁰ See *Rite of Baptism for Children* (1969), *General Instruction on Christian Initiation*, nos. 30-33.

baptism or accommodating these formulas to the circumstances of the candidates for confirmation; b) To introduce a different manner for the minister to give the sign of peace after the anointing, either to each individual or to all the newly confirmed together.

Adaptations by Ministers

The minister of confirmation may introduce some explanations into the rite in individual cases in view of the capacity of candidates for confirmation. He may also make appropriate accommodations in the existing texts, for example, by expressing these in a kind of dialogue, especially with children.

When confirmation is given by a minister who is not a bishop, whether by concession of the general law or by special indult of the Apostolic see, it is fitting for him to mention in the homily that the bishop is the original minister of the sacrament and the reason why priests receive the faculty to confirm from the law or by an indult of the Apostolic See.

Ecumenical Aspects of Confirmation

Bibliographical References:

Ecumenical Directory, Part I, no. 12.

Canon 883, §2

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, appendix: “Rite of Receiving Baptised Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church, no. 8.

“Confirmation”, in John H. Huels, *The Pastoral Companion: a Canon Law Guidebook for Catholic Ministry*. Chicago, The Franciscan Herald Press, 1982, pp. 69.

Possibility of confirming another Christian into the Catholic faith

Since in the Eastern churches the sacrament of confirmation is always lawfully administered by the priest at the same time as baptism, it often happens that no mention is made of confirmation in the canonical testimony of baptism. This does not give grounds for doubting that the sacrament was conferred.¹⁷¹

Those baptised in ecclesial communities which do not have valid orders and apostolic succession should be confirmed when they are being received into full communion with the Catholic Church.¹⁷²

Those that have been baptised in a different Christian community and have converted to Catholicism are accepted in the Church with the appropriate rite, that may also include the reception of confirmation.¹⁷³

¹⁷¹ *Ecumenical Directory*, Part I, (ED), 12.

¹⁷² See can. 883, §2 and RCIA, appendix, Rite of Receiving Baptised Christians into the full Communion of the Catholic Church, n. 8.

¹⁷³ See “**Reception of a baptised Christian** into the Catholic Church” 101.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL

Hanley, P.L., *Sacraments, Conditional Administration of*, in the Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 12, (2002), p. 484ff.

DOL, 288-291

Sacrosanctum Concilium, 59-82.

Lumen Gentium, 11.

Ceremonial of Bishops, 135-183.

“The Paschal Mystery in the Church’s Sacraments”, in *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 1994. (English Translation for Africa – AMECEA countries, Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Latin Text 1992), pp.292-296.

“On the Symbolic Character of Sacraments” in Richter, Klemens. *The Meaning of the Sacramental Symbols: Answers to Today’s Questions*. Collegeville, The Liturgical Press, 1990.

“The Liturgy as a Complexus of Efficacious Sensible Signs” in Cyprian Vagaggini, *Theological Dimensions of the Liturgy*, Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1976, pp. 96-120.

SACRAMENTS OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION

S.C.D.W., *General Introduction to Christian Initiation (second edition)*, *Per Initiationis Christianae*, 24 June, 1973. (See Vatican Council II, More Conciliar Documents, pp 22-28).

Thomas H. Morris, *The RCLA, Transforming the Church: A Resource for Pastoral Implementation*, New York: Paulist Press, 1989.

Kenan B. Osborne, *The Christian Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist*, New York: Paulist Press, 1987.

Nocent, “I tre sacramenti dell’iniziazione Cristiana”, in *Anamnesis* vol. II, pp. 5-131.

INFANT BAPTISM

- SCDF, *Pastoralis Actio, (Instruction on Infant Baptism)*, 12 October, 1980. (See Vatican Council II, More Conciliar Documents, 103ff).
- S.C.D.W., *Introduction to the Rite of Infant Baptism (Second Edition), Nomine Parvulorum*, 24 June, 1973. (See Vatican Council II, More Conciliar Documents, pp. 29-34).
- “Rite of Baptism for Children”, in *The Rites of the Catholic Church...* (English Trans. By ICEL). New York: Pueblo Publishing House, 1976. Pp. 359ff.
- The Rites: Vol. 1a, Initiation.*
- Code of Canon Law*, can. 849-878
- Pamela Jackson, “Baptism”, in *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*. Pp. 81-115.
- Paul F.X. Covino, “Baptism, Theology of”, in *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*. Pp. 115-123.
- Ruth C. Duck, “Baptismal Formulae in East and West”, *The New New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*. Pp. 123-126.
- International Commission on English in the Liturgy. *Documents on the Liturgy 1963-1979: Conciliar, Papal and Curial Texts*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1982. Pp. 292-302.
- “The Sacrament of Baptism.” in *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pp.315-327.
- “Baptism”, in John H. Huels, *The Pastoral Companion: a Canon Law Guidebook for Catholic Ministry*. Chicago, The Franciscan Herald Press, 1982, pp. 33-53.
- “Baptism”, in DeGidio, Sandra. *Sacraments Alive: Their History Celebration and Significance. Mystic*. Connecticut: twenty-third Publications, 1991, 34-44.
- “Baptism: Sacrament of Initial Conversion”, in Mick E. Lawrence. *Understanding the Sacraments Today*. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1987, 13-31.
- Cabié R. “Christian Initiation”, in A.G. Martimort (ed.), *The Church at Prayer*, vol. III. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1986. Pp. 11-100.

Cabié describes Christian initiation from a historical point of view, from its origins to its post-Vatican II form.

- J. Mueller, *Baptism in the Bible*, in the Catholic Encyclopaedia, vol. 2, p. 54-58, (1967).
- J. A. Jugmann, *Baptism, Liturgy of*, in the Catholic Encyclopaedia, vol. 2, p. 58-62, (1967).
- T. M. de Ferrari, *Baptism Theology of*, in the Catholic Encyclopaedia, vol. 2, p. 62ff, (1967).
- C. Meinberg, *Baptism of Infants*, in the Catholic Encyclopaedia, vol. 2, p. 69-71, (1967).
- “The Sacrament of Baptism” in Joseph Bragotti & others eds., *We Pray and Sing to the Lord*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1991. Pp. 127-143.
- De Bekker, E. “Valid Baptism.” In *AFER* 1(1962) 13ff.
- Crowley, P. “Infant Baptism and Christian Community.” In *AFER* 1(1973) 21ff.
- Kalanda, P. “Introduction to a Short Preparation for Baptism.” In *AFER* 2(1961) 126ff.
- Mangematin, B. “Which Way Adaptation? Part II.” In *AFER* 2(1969) 115ff.

CONFIRMATION

- “Rite of Confirmation”, in *The Rites of the Catholic Church...* (English Trans. By ICEL). New York: Pueblo Publishing House, 1976. Pp. 287ff.
- “Confirmation” in *Ceremonial of Bishops*, p. 145-150, nn. 455-477.
- “Confirmation”, in John H. Huels, *The Pastoral Companion: a Canon Law Guidebook for Catholic Ministry*. Chicago, The Franciscan Herald Press, 1982, pp. 57-72.
- “The Sacrament of Confirmation” in Joseph Bragotti & others eds., *We Pray and Sing to the Lord*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1991. Pp. 144-153.
- SC 71; CB 1182; MCW 82; LMT 8; DE 99, 101; GSPD 14-18.