

Rite of Baptism for One Child

RECEPTION OF THE CHILD

If possible, baptism should take place on Sunday, the day on which the Church celebrates the paschal mystery. It should be conferred in a communal celebration in the presence of the faithful, or at least of relatives, friends, and neighbors, who are all to take an active part in the rite.

It is the role of the father and mother, accompanied by the godparents, to present the child to the Church for baptism.

The people may sing a psalm or hymn suitable for the occasion. Meanwhile the celebrating priest or deacon, vested in alb or surplice, with a stole (with or without a cope) of festive color, and accompanied by the ministers, goes to the entrance of the church or to that part of the church where the parents and godparents are waiting with the child.

The celebrant greets all present, and especially the parents and godparents, reminding them briefly of the joy with which the parents welcomed this child as a gift from God, the source of life, who now wishes to bestow his own life on this little one.

First the celebrant questions the parents:

Celebrant: What name do you give your child? (or: have you given?)

Parents: N.

CELEBRANT: What do you ask of God's Church for N.?

PARENTS: Baptism.

The celebrant may choose other words for this dialogue. The first reply may be given by someone other than the parents if local custom gives him the right to name the child.

In the second response the parents may use other words, such as, "faith," "the grace of Christ," "entrance into the Church," "eternal life."

The celebrant speaks to the parents in these or similar words:

You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training him (her) in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him (her) up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?

PARENTS: We do.

Then the celebrant turns to the godparents and addresses them in these or similar words:

Are you ready to help the parents of this child in their duty as Christian parents?

GODPARENTS: We do.

The Celebrant continues:

N., the Christian community welcomes you with great joy. In its name I claim you for Christ our Savior by the sign of his cross. I now trace the cross on your forehead, and invite your parents (and godparents) to do the same.

He signs the child on the forehead, in silence. Then he invites the parents and (if it seems appropriate) the godparents to do the same.

The celebrant invites the parents, godparents, and the others to take part in the liturgy of the word. If circumstances permit, there is a procession to the place where this will be celebrated, during which a song is sung e.g., Psalm 84: 7, 8, 9ab.

CELEBRATION OF GOD'S WORD

Scriptural Readings and Homily

One or even two of the following gospel passages are read, during which all may sit if convenient.

John 3: 1-6: The meeting with Nicodemus.

Matthew 28: 18-20: The apostles are sent to preach the gospel and to baptize.

Mark 1: 9-11: The baptism of Jesus.

Mark 10: 13-16: Let the little children come to me.

The passages listed in nos. 186-194 and 204-215 may be chosen, or other passages which better meet the wishes or needs of the parents. Between the readings, responsorial psalms or verses may be sung as given in nos. 195-203.

After the reading, 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 ready acceptance of the responsibilities which arise from the sacrament.

After the homily, or in the course of or after the litany, it is desirable to have a period of silence while all pray at the invitation of the celebrant. If convenient, a suitable song follows, such as one chosen from nos. 225-245.

Intercessions

Then the prayer of the faithful is said:

CELEBRANT: My dear brothers and sisters, let us ask our Lord Jesus Christ to look lovingly on this child who is to be baptized, on his (her) parents and godparents, and on all the baptized.

LEADER: By the mystery of your death and resurrection, bathe this child in light, give him (her) the new life of baptism and welcome him (her) into your holy Church.

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

LEADER: Through baptism and confirmation, make him (her) your faithful follower and a witness to your gospel.

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

LEADER: Lead him (her) by a holy life to the joys of God's kingdom.

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

LEADER: Make the lives of his (her) parents and godparents examples of faith to inspire this child.

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

LEADER: Keep his (her) family always in your love.

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

LEADER: Renew the grace of our baptism in each one of us.

ALL: Lord, hear our prayer.

Other forms may be chosen from nos. 217-220.

The celebrant next invites all present to invoke the saints:

CELEBRANT: Holy Mary, Mother of God.

ALL: Pray for us.

Saint John the Baptist.

ALL: Pray for us.

Saint Joseph. ALL:

Pray for us.

Saint Peter and Saint Paul.

ALL: Pray for us.

The names of other saints may be added, especially the patrons of the child to be baptized, and of the church or locality. The litany concludes:

All holy men and women.

ALL: Pray for us.

Prayer of Exorcism and Anointing Before Baptism

After the invocation, the celebrant says:

Almighty and ever-living God, you sent your only Son into the world to cast out the power of Satan, spirit of evil, to rescue man from the kingdom of darkness, and bring him into the splendor of your kingdom of light. We pray for this child: set him (her) free from original sin, make him (her) a temple of your glory, and send your Holy Spirit to dwell with him (her). We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

For another form of the prayer of exorcism, see no. 221.

The celebrant continues:

We anoint you with the oil of salvation in the name of Christ our Savior; may he strengthen you with his power, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

ALL: Amen.

He anoints the child on the breast with the oil of catechumens.

If, for serious reasons, the conference of bishops so decides, the anointing before baptism may be omitted. [in the United States, it may be omitted only when the minister of baptism judges the omission to be pastorally necessary or desirable.] In that case the celebrant says:

May you have strength in the power of Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

And immediately he lays his hand on the child in silence.

Then they go to the baptistry, or to the sanctuary when baptism is celebrated there on occasion.

CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

When they come to the font, the celebrant briefly reminds the congregation of the wonderful work of God whose plan it is to sanctify man, body and soul, through water. He may use these or similar words:

My dear brothers and sisters, we now ask God to give this child new life in abundance

through water and the Holy Spirit.

Blessing and Invocation of God over Baptismal Water

Then, turning to the font, he says the following blessing (outside the Easter season).

Father, you give us grace through sacramental signs, which tell us of the wonders of your unseen power. In baptism we use your gift of water, which you have made a rich symbol of the grace you give us in this sacrament. At the very dawn of creation your Spirit breathed on the waters, making them the wellspring of all holiness. The waters of the great flood you made a sign of the waters of baptism, that make an end of sin and a new beginning of goodness.

Through the waters of the Red Sea you led Israel out of slavery, to be an image of God's holy people, set free from sin by baptism. In the waters of the Jordan your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Spirit. Your Son willed that water and blood should flow from his side as he hung upon the cross.

After his resurrection he told his disciples: "Go out and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Father, look now with love upon your Church, and unseal for her the fountain of baptism. By the power of the Spirit give to the water of this font the grace of your Son. You created man in your own likeness: cleanse him from sin in a new birth to innocence by water and the Spirit.

The celebrant touches the water with his right hand and continues:

We ask you, Father, with your Son to send the Holy Spirit upon the water of this font. May all who are buried with Christ in the death of baptism rise also with him to newness of life. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Other forms may be chosen from nos. 223-224.

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 nos. 223-224, with the variation indicated at the end of each text.

Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith

The celebrant speaks to the parents and godparents in these words:

Dear parents and godparents: You have come here to present this child for baptism.

By water and the Holy Spirit he (she) is to receive the gift of new life from God, who is love.

On your part, you must make it your constant care to bring him (her) up in the practice of the faith. See that the divine life which God gives him (her) is kept safe from the poison of sin, to grow always stronger in his (her) heart.

If your faith makes you ready to accept this responsibility, renew now the vows of your own baptism. Reject sin; profess your faith in Christ Jesus. This is the faith of the Church. This is the faith in which this child is about to be baptized.

The celebrant questions the parents and godparents:

CELEBRANT: Do you reject Satan?

PARENTS AND GODPARENTS: I do.

CELEBRANT: And all his works?

PARENTS AND GODPARENTS: I do.

The celebrant may instead use the following three initial questions:

CELEBRANT: Do you reject sin, so as to live in the freedom of God's children?

PARENTS AND GODPARENTS: I do.

CELEBRANT: Do you reject the glamor of evil, and refuse to be mastered by sin?

PARENTS AND GODPARENTS: I do.

CELEBRANT: Do you reject Satan, father of sin and prince of darkness?

PARENTS AND GODPARENTS: I do.

According to circumstances, this second form may be expressed with greater precision by the conferences of bishops, especially in places where it is necessary for the parents and godparents to reject superstitious and magical practices used with children.

Next the celebrant asks for the threefold profession of faith from the parents and godparents:

CELEBRANT: Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

PARENTS AND GODPARENTS: I do.

CELEBRANT: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now

seated at the right hand of the Father?

PARENTS AND GODPARENTS: I do.

CELEBRANT: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

PARENTS AND GODPARENTS: I do.

The celebrant and the congregation give their assent to this profession of faith:

CELEBRANT: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All: Amen.

If desired, some other formula may be used instead, or a suitable song by which the community expresses its faith with a single voice.

Baptism

The celebrant invites the family to the font and questions the parents and godparents:

CELEBRANT: Is it your will that N. should be baptized in the faith of the Church, which we have all professed with you?

PARENTS AND GODPARENTS: It is.

He baptizes the child, saying:

N., I baptize you in the name of the Father,

He immerses the child or pours water upon it.

and of the Son,

He immerses the child or pours water upon it a second time.

and of the Holy Spirit.

He immerses the child or pours water upon it a third time. After the child is baptized, it is appropriate for the people to sing a short acclamation. (See nos. 225-245.) If the baptism is performed by the pouring of water, it is preferable that the child be held by the mother (or father). Where, however, it is felt that the existing custom should be retained, the godmother (or godfather) may hold the child. If baptism is by immersion, the mother or father (godmother or godfather) lifts the child out of the font.

Anointing with Chrism

Then the celebrant says:

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people. He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life.

ALL: Amen.

Then the celebrant anoints the child on the crown of the head with the sacred chrism, in silence.

Clothing with the White Garment

The celebrant says:

N., you have become a new creation, and have clothed yourself in Christ. See in this white garment the outward sign of your Christian dignity. With your family and friends to help you by word and example, bring that dignity unstained into the everlasting life of heaven.

ALL: Amen.

The white garment is put on the child. A different color is not permitted unless demanded by local custom. It is desirable that the family provide the garment.

Lighted Candle

The celebrant takes the Easter candle and says:

Receive the light of Christ.

Someone from the family (such as the father or godfather) lights the child's candle from the Easter candle.

The celebrant then says:

Parents and godparents, this light is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly. This child of yours has been enlightened by Christ. He (she) is to walk always as a child of the light. May he (she) keep the flame of faith alive in his (her) heart. When the Lord comes, may he (she) go out to meet him with all the saints in the heavenly kingdom.

Ephphetha or Prayer over Ears and Mouth

If the conference of bishops decides to preserve the practice, the rite of Ephphetha follows. [in the United States it may be performed at the discretion of the minister.] The celebrant touches the ears and mouth of the child with his

thumb, saying:

The Lord Jesus made the deaf hear and the dumb speak. May he soon touch your ears to receive his word, and your mouth to proclaim his faith, to the praise and glory of God the Father.

ALL: Amen.

CONCLUSION OF THE RITE

Next there is a procession to the altar, unless the baptism was performed in the sanctuary. The lighted candle is carried for the child. A baptismal song is appropriate at this time, e.g.:

You have put on Christ, in him you have been baptized. Alleluia, alleluia.

Other songs may be chosen from nos. 225-245.

Lord's Prayer

The celebrant stands in front of the altar and addresses the parents, godparents, and the whole assembly in these or similar words:

Dearly beloved, this child has been reborn in baptism. He (she) is now called the child of God, for so indeed he (she) is. In confirmation he (she) will receive the fullness of God's Spirit. In holy communion he (she) will share the banquet of Christ's sacrifice, calling God his (her) Father in the midst of the Church. In the name of this child, in the Spirit of our common sonship, let us pray together in the words our Lord has given us:

All present join the celebrant in singing or saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Blessing

The celebrant first blesses the mother, who holds the child in her arms, then the father, and lastly the entire assembly:

CELEBRANT: God the Father, through his Son, the Virgin Mary's child, has brought joy to all Christian mothers, as they see the hope of eternal life shine on their children. May he bless the mother of this child. She now thanks God for the gift of her child. May she be one with him (her) in thanking him for ever in heaven, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

CELEBRANT: God is the giver of all life, human and divine. May he bless the father of this child. He and his wife will be the first teachers of their child in the ways of faith. May they be also the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

CELEBRANT: By God's gift, through water and the Holy Spirit, we are reborn to everlasting life. In his goodness, may he continue to pour out his blessings upon these sons and daughters of his. May he make them always, wherever they may be, faithful members of his holy people. May he send his peace upon all who are gathered here, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

Celebrant: May almighty God, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit, bless you.

ALL: Amen.

For other forms of the blessing, see nos.247-249.

After the blessing, all may sing a hymn which suitably expresses thanksgiving and Easter joy, or they may sing the song of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Magnificat. Where there is the practice of bringing the baptized child to the altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary, this custom is observed if appropriate.