

ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS
CLERGY BULLETIN

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**THE CELEBRATION OF BAPTISM INCLUDING THE RITE OF CHRISTIAN
INITIATION OF ADULTS**

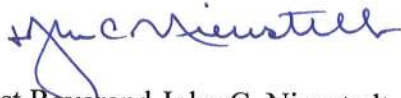
Reverend and dear Fathers,

In 1987, my predecessor, the Most Reverend John R. Roach, issued Guidelines for the Sacraments of Initiation. This document has been a helpful tool for many of our parishes, schools, and consolidated faith formation programs since that time. However, changes in canon law and pastoral practice led me to conclude that the time had come for these Guidelines to be revised.

What follows are regulations for the celebration of baptism in the parishes and institutions of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. These regulations were developed in consultation with the Office of Worship, the Office of Catholic Schools, and the Presbyteral Council. In presenting these regulations, I acknowledge that there may be a need for pastoral adaptation. However, there are also pastoral norms that need to be honored to reflect the vision of this Archdiocese and the theology of the Catholic Church. It is my hope that these regulations will encourage a consistent practice reflective of true *communio*. Therefore, no adaptation at the parish level is permitted without first referring the matter to the Archbishop or his delegate.

Parishes and institutions are encouraged to follow these regulations as soon as they are able, but in order to give parishes and institutions sufficient time to prepare, the effective date of this policy will be August 1, 2012. Following that date, all previous policies and guidelines are abrogated.

Given at Saint Paul, Minnesota, this 10th day of November, in the year of Our Lord 2011. All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John C. Nienstedt".

The Most Reverend John C. Nienstedt
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Haselberger".

Jennifer Haselberger
Chancellor for Canonical Affairs

NORMS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF INFANT BAPTISM

1. The *Rite of Baptism of Children* (RBC) is to be used for the baptism of infants. Infants are those who have not yet reached the age of reason (7 years old).
2. All other individuals are to be considered adults, and the rites and policies of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA) should be followed.
3. In the case of infant baptism, parishes are to provide a catechetical program of instruction to the parents that includes the meaning of baptism and the obligations which are attached to it, the scriptural foundation for the sacrament, and the rite of baptism itself.
4. Whenever possible, this preparation should be completed prior to the baptism. Therefore, parents should be encouraged to prepare for the sacrament even before the birth of the child.
5. Catholics in good standing who are active members of the parish would not be required to take this instruction for the baptism of subsequent children unless five years had passed since previous instruction was received.
6. In the case mentioned in #5, it is left to pastors to determine whether to accept baptismal preparation completed at another parish.
7. A request for infant baptism cannot ordinarily be refused. However, canon law requires that at least one parent or legal guardian consent to the baptism. Outside of danger of death, in the absence of such consent, baptism must be delayed. The emergency rite of baptism is only to be used in cases of danger of death and not for other situations such as when the parents refuse to baptize the infant.
8. Canon law also requires that there be a founded hope that the infant will be brought up in the Catholic religion; if such hope is altogether lacking, the baptism is to be delayed.
9. In such a case the baptism is to be delayed until the parents or at least one of the parents are ready and able to assume the responsibility entrusted to Christian parents in the rite. This should be viewed as an opportunity for evangelization, and is not meant to place an undue burden on the parents. Pastors and those responsible for sacramental preparation are to help the parents develop their spiritual life from whatever level of faith they may possess.
10. A child of parents who belong to the Latin Catholic church is ascribed into the Latin Catholic Church by reception of baptism. In addition, if one of the parents belongs to an Eastern Catholic Church and both parents agree that the child

should be baptized in the Latin Church, the child is ascribed into the Latin Catholic Church by reception of baptism. However, if such an agreement is lacking, the child must be ascribed into the ritual church to which the father belongs. Notification of the proper rite of the child is to be made in the baptismal register in the parish in which the child is baptized.

11. Registration or monetary contributions to the parish by the parents must not be a condition of a child receiving baptism. If parents living within the territorial boundaries of the parish request baptism for their children, they may not be denied baptism outside of the requirements of #7 and #8 above. Priests may not administer baptism to the infant of non-parishioners without the permission of the pastor.
12. Since baptism can be conferred validly only once, a conditional baptism is not to be administered unless there is serious reason to doubt either the fact or the validity of baptism previously administered.
13. After an emergency baptism has been performed and the danger of death has passed, parents are to be encouraged to have their children receive the accompanying ceremonies of baptism using the Rite for Receiving A Child Already Baptized.
14. Baptisms performed under emergency conditions are to be recorded in the baptismal register of the territorial parish in which the baptism took place. Priests and deacons should contact the Chancery for assistance in locating the territorial parish of hospitals and care centers if this is not already known.
15. Every effort should be made to ensure that a sponsor is designated at each baptism. To be permitted to take on the function of sponsor a person must have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function and be designated a.) by the one to be baptized, b.) by the parents or the person who takes their place or, in their absence, c.) by the pastor or minister of the sacrament.
16. The sponsor or sponsors must have completed the sixteenth year of age, unless the pastor or minister has granted an exception for a just cause¹, and must be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received their First Holy Communion and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on. This means a sponsor may not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared or be the father or mother of the one to be baptized (canon 874, §1).

¹ An example of a 'just cause' for permitting someone under the age of sixteen would be that the person will be turning sixteen in a matter of days or weeks, and he or she is known to demonstrate an extraordinary piety and level of maturity.

17. Only one sponsor is required, and the maximum number of sponsors is two, in which case they must both be Catholics, and one male and one female. A Christian witness may be designated as such, but only if a Catholic who meets the requirements outlined above has been designated as the sponsor. A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community is not to participate except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a witness of the baptism (canon 874, §2).
18. With regard to baptisms within the Latino community, where there is a tradition of designating multiple *padrinos* and *madrinas* for baptism and other sacraments, the parents should be asked to designate one *padrino* and one *madrina* for the formal role of sponsor (*los padrinos primarios*). Only these individuals should be listed as godparents in the sacramental register. Other *padrinos* may be included in the ceremony as '*testigos*', witnesses of the ceremony, when and if it is culturally appropriate. In producing the certificates of baptism the *padrinos primarios* should be identified in the place where the godparents' names are listed on the form. Pastors have the option of including a note either at the bottom or on the reverse of the original certificate with the names of the other *testigos*.
19. To ensure accurate recording of the baptism, clergy and lay ministers involved in baptism preparation should request and receive a copy of the child's birth certificate prior to administering the sacrament of baptism. When baptism is to be administered to an adult (i.e. one more than seven years of age), a comparable process for ensuring the accuracy of the information to be recorded should be employed.
20. When recording the baptism of a child who has been adopted, the USCCB complementary legislation for recording the baptism of adopted children should be applied. If the adoption has not yet been completed, parish priests and staff should be attentive to the requirements of #7.
21. At times, parents or other individuals may desire to change information noted on a baptismal certificate or in the baptismal register, including the names of sponsors. The sacramental record policies of the Archdiocese should be followed when responding to those requests.
22. If the baptism concerns a child born to an unmarried mother, the name of the mother must be inserted in the register if her maternity is established publicly or if she seeks it willingly in writing or before two witnesses. The name of the father is to be inscribed only if a public document or his own declaration before the pastor and two witnesses, properly documented, establishes his paternity; in other cases, the name of the baptized is inscribed with no mention of the name of the father or the parents (canon 877§2).

NORMS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF ADULT BAPTISM

1. An unbaptized person age seven or older who is seeking membership into the Catholic Church is to be admitted to the catechumenate and formed in accord with the approved rites of Christian initiation, as contained in the ritual book *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. The National Statutes on the Catechumenate govern the catechumenate in the United States.
2. Both adults and children over the age of seven are to receive all three Sacraments of Initiation at the same celebration.
3. The Rite of Christian Initiation indicates that each bishop is to regulate certain elements of the rite for his own local Church. The following are in effect as a matter of Archdiocesan law.
 - a. The scrutinies should ordinarily be celebrated on Sundays in Lent according to the ritual Masses provided in the *Roman Missal* with the "A" cycle readings only (see Lectionary for Mass). The Archbishop or his designee will preside at an Archdiocesan Rite (or Rites) of Election on the First Sunday of Lent, or at another more convenient time should circumstances warrant or if multiple celebrations are to be held in order to accommodate the number to attend.
 - b. The Book of the Elect is to be signed during the parish celebration for sending catechumens for election and candidates for recognition by the Archbishop.
 - c. Pastors may seek permission to preside at a Rite of Election in their individual parishes for their own catechumens and candidates if it is impossible for the catechumens and candidates to attend the Cathedral or Basilica celebrations.
 - d. The simple Rite of Election may be used once permission is secured from the Archbishop (no.745-747).

NORMS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE RITE OF FULL RECEPTION INTO
THE CHURCH

1. The RCIA program may also be adapted for baptized non-Catholics and un-catechized Catholics age eighteen or older who never formally left the Catholic Church and who wish to complete their sacraments of initiation. Such individuals may participate in the RCIA program, although they are not RCIA candidates.
2. The doctrinal and spiritual formation of baptized non-Catholics should be determined according to individual circumstances. Priests should confirm these individuals at the time that they make the Profession of the Faith. This can take place at any time during the liturgical year.
3. Catholics who participate in the RCIA program may be confirmed at a ceremony distinct from the Easter Vigil.