

Baptism Issues

Baptism is
Only
Once

Canon 864. Every person not yet baptized and only such a person is capable of baptism.

Two other sacraments cannot be repeated:

- Confirmation
- Orders (each grade)

Baptism Essentials For Validity

- Immersion or pouring of water three times.
- Use of Trinitarian formula: “I baptized you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”
- Intend to do what the Church intends to do by baptism.

What makes a person “Catholic”?

- By definition, “Catholic” means in union with the Pope & bishops
- Not all groups that use the term “Catholic” truly are Catholic
- One becomes Catholic through:
 - Baptism as a Catholic
 - Reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church

How is Baptism Proven?

For Catholic adults
seeking confirmation
&/or first Holy
Communion:

- ➊ A baptismal certificate
is required.
- ➋ An affidavit of the fact of Catholic baptism by
a parent or other witness can be used only
when it is **impossible** to obtain a baptismal
certificate.

Diocese of Honolulu
Affidavit in Lieu of Baptismal Certificate
For use when it is impossible to provide a baptismal certificate

Name of person baptized _____

Completed by a parent, godparent or another witness to the baptismal ceremony

This form may be completed by the person baptized him/herself only when the person baptized was an adult or at least over the age of reason when baptized and no other witnesses are available.

Oath: Do you solemnly swear before Almighty God to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth in answering the following questions? _____

Print your name _____

Your address _____

Your relationship to the person who was baptized _____

I hereby attest that I was a witness at the baptism of the above mentioned person, that he/she was baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," and that he/she was immersed in water three times or had water poured over him/her three times.

Date of baptism _____

Name of church of baptism _____

Denomination of church of baptism _____

City/State/Zip/Country _____

Name of priest/deacon/minister of baptism _____

Names of those present at the ceremony _____

Do you know why no baptismal certificate can be acquired? _____

Your signature _____ Date _____

Witness _____ Date _____
(Signature should be witnessed by a priest, deacon, minister, or public notary)

Seal

For baptized non-Catholics seeking reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church:

- Proof of baptism, in order of preference:
 - A baptismal certificate
 - A page copied from a sacramental register
 - An affidavit of the fact of baptism by a parent or other witness
 - An affidavit of the fact of baptism by the person baptized (if baptized after the age of reason)
 - Some other reliable proof
- A lack of proof of baptism does not necessarily mean that no baptism occurred.

What Should Be Recorded in the Baptismal Register?

The following should be noted
in the baptismal register :

- Date & place of non-Catholic baptism, if applicable
- Date & place of reception into full communion, if applicable,
and
of confirmation & first Holy Communion
- Current marital information, including any declarations of nullity or dissolutions

Communities with Valid Baptism

All Eastern Churches
(Orthodox, Armenian,
Etc.)

African Methodist
Episcopal
Amish/Mennonites
Anglican
Assembly of God
Baptist
Evangelical United
Brethren

Church of the Brethren/
Dunkers
Church of God
Congregational
Disciples of Christ/
Disciples & Christians
Door of Faith Church

Evangelical United Brethren
Evangelical
Foursquare/Hope Chapel
Liberal Catholic
Lutheran
Methodist
Old Catholic

Old Roman Catholic
Church of the
Nazarene
Polish National
Catholic Presbyterian
Reformed
Seventh Day Adventist
United Church of
Christ

Communities with Invalid Baptism

Mormon (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints)
Denominations that baptize only “in the name of Jesus”

Apostolic Church
Bohemian Free Thinkers
Christadelphians
Christian and Missionary Alliance
Christian Community (Rudolph Steiner)
Christian Scientists
Church of Divine Science
Jehovah’s Witnesses
New Church of Mr. Emmanuel Swedenborg/
Church of the New Jerusalem (in the U.S.)
Pentecostals
Peoples Church of Chicago
Quakers/Society of Friends
Salvation Army
Universalists/Unitarians

What About Aglipayans?

Invalid:

Independent
Church of Filipino
Christians under
the Fonacier
faction using a
Unitarian formula

Valid:

Philippines
Independent Church
under the De Los
Reyes faction using a
Trinitarian formula
(after 1947)

Doubt About Fact of Baptism: Resources to Resolve Doubt

- If the group is not listed, one can examine the norms, rituals, & customs of that community.
- Dedication ceremonies of infants do not entail a valid baptism.
- Often a group which does not list a denomination prominently does in fact have a denominational affiliation & will baptize according to the rules of the denomination. Often this affiliation can be found on the group's web site.

Doubt about Fact of Baptism: Conditional Baptism

Canon 869, §1. If there is a doubt whether a person has been baptized or whether baptism was conferred validly and the doubt remains after a serious investigation, baptism is to be conferred conditionally.

Doubt about Fact of Baptism: Conditional Baptism

Canon 869, §2. Those baptized in a non-Catholic ecclesial community must not be baptized conditionally unless, after an examination of the matter and the form of the words used in the conferral of baptism and a consideration of the intention of the baptized adult and the minister of the baptism, a serious reason exists to doubt the validity of the baptism.

Catechesis Before Conditional Baptism

Canon 869, §3. If in the cases mentioned in §§ 1 and 2 the conferral or validity of the baptism remains doubtful, baptism is not to be conferred until after the doctrine of the sacrament of baptism is explained to the person to be baptized, if an adult, and the reasons of the doubtful validity of the baptism are explained to the person or, in the case of an infant, to the parents.

Reception of Eastern Christians Into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church

Members of Eastern Churches (e.g., Greek Orthodox) who have already received baptism, chrismation (confirmation), & 1st Holy Communion may attend RCIA catechetical sessions, but are not to participate in any ceremonies.

- They only need to make a profession of Catholic faith in order to be received into the Catholic Church.

Ritual Church Membership

- They are then received into the corresponding Eastern Catholic ritual Church. For example, a member of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church who becomes Catholic becomes a member of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. This is true even if the person is received into Catholic Church in a Latin parish.
- All Protestants who are received into the full communion of the Catholic Church are received into the Latin Catholic Church because of the western roots of those ecclesial communities.

Baptism of Adults vs. Infants

- Children from birth to age 6 are infants.
- Also are considered infants for baptism:

Canon 852, §2. A person who is not responsible for oneself is also regarded as an infant with respect to baptism.

Baptism of Adults vs. Infants

Canon 852, § I. The prescripts of the canons on adult baptism are to be applied to all those who, no longer infants, have attained the use of reason.

- Children age 7 & up are treated as adults for baptism. So they are to be admitted to the catechumenate & confirmed with baptism.

Age 7 & Up Must Be Confirmed with Baptism or Reception into Full Communion

Can. 883 The following possess the faculty of administering confirmation by the law itself: ...

2° as regards the person in question, the presbyter who baptizes one who is no longer an infant or admits one already baptized into the full communion of the Catholic Church; ...

Canon 885, §2. A presbyter who possesses this faculty must use it for the sake of those in whose favor the faculty was granted.