

## VALID-INVALID BAPTISMS

**VALID:** The following is a list of baptisms which are considered **valid**, as both water (*pouring, sprinkling, or immersing the one baptized*) and the Trinitarian formula (*“I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”*) are used. Also, the minister must intend to do what the Church does when baptizing.

- All Eastern non-Catholics (including all Orthodox churches)
- Adventist Valid Baptism
- African Methodist Episcopal
- Amish/Mennonite
- Anglican / Church of England
- Assembly of God
- Baptists
- Chinese Catholic Baptism/Confirmation recognized
- Chinese Christian
- Christian and Missionary Alliance
- Christian Fellowship
- Church of the Brethren
- Church of Christ
- Church of God
- Church of the Nazarene
- Community of Pope Pius X (Lefebvre) Baptism/Confirmation recognized
- Congregational
- Disciples of Christ
- Dutch Reformed
- Eastern Non-Catholics (Orthodox) Baptism/Confirmation recognized
- Episcopal
- Evangelical
- Evangelical Church of Covenant
- Evangelical United Brethren
- International Council of Community
- Liberal Catholic
- Lutheran
- Methodist
- Mennonite
- Missionary Hill
- Moravian

- New Apostolic Church
- Church of the Nazarene
- Old Catholic
- Old Roman Catholic
- Orthodox (see Eastern above) Baptism/Confirmation recognized
- Polish National
- Presbyterian
- Reformed
- Seventh Day Adventist
- United Church
- United Church of Canada
- United Church of Christ
- United Reformed
- United Church of Australia
- Waldensian
- Zion

**DOUBTFUL:** The following communities have baptismal practices which are not uniform and are considered to be **doubtful**, requiring an investigation into each case. Some of their communities have valid baptism, others do not.

☒ Mennonite

☒ Moravian

☒ Pentecostal

☒ Seventh Day Adventist

**INVALID:** The following is a list (albeit incomplete) of baptisms considered to be **invalid**, due to a number of reasons.

- All non-Christian groups and communities (Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Baha 'I, Vedanta Society)
- Amana Church Society
- American Ethical Union
- American (United American) Catholic Valid Baptism/Confirmation doubtful
- Apostolic Church ("Apostolic Overcoming Holy Church of God")
- Apostolic Faith Mission
- Armenian Apostolic
- Bohemian Free Thinkers
- Baha'I Faith
- Brethren
- Children of God ("The Family")

- Christadelphians
- Christian Community (disciples of Rudolph Steiner)
- Christian and Missionary alliance
- Christians of Universalist Brotherhood
- Church of Christ, Scientist (“Christian Scientists”) – **no baptism**
- Church of Divine Science
- Church of David’s Band
- Church of Illumination
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (“Mormons”) – **as of 2001**
- Church of Revelation
- Church of the New Jerusalem
- Church of the Scientology
- Erieside Church
- General Assembly of Spiritualists
- Hephzibah Faith Missionary Association
- House of David Church
- Iglesia ni Kristo (Philippines)
- Independent Church of Filipino Christians
- Jehovah’s Witnesses
- Masons / Freemasonry – **no baptism**
- Metropolitan Church Association
- New Church of Mr. Emmanuel Swedenborg
- National David Spiritual Temple of Christ Church Union
- National Spiritualist Association
- New Jerusalem Church (Swedenborg or “New Age” Church)
- Peoples Church of Chicago
- Pentecostal Churches
- Plymouth Brethren
- Quakers (“Society of Friends”) – **no baptism**
- Reunification Church (“Moonies”)
- Salvation Army
- Shakers (“United Society of Believers”) – **no baptism**
- **Some communities of Mennonites, Morovians, of the Plymouth**
- Spiritualist Church
- Swedenborg (New Age)
- Unitarians
- Universal Emancipation Church
- Word Harves

***Determining Baptismal Validity by Church of Origin***

*The following has been compiled to assist you in determining the canonical status of your people. This list is not exhaustive. If you have questions, contact the Office for Divine Worship 213-637-7262*

**Eastern Churches in Communion with Rome**

Baptism and Confirmation conferred in the Eastern Churches is always valid. It is sufficient to establish the fact that Baptism was administered. Valid Confirmation is always administered at the same time as Baptism. Usually, the child has also received First Communion at the time of Baptism. The Eastern Churches in Communion with Rome include:

**The Alexandrian Rite**

*The Coptic Catholic Church*

*The Ethiopian Catholic Church*

**The Antiochene Rite (West Syrian)**

*The Malankara (Malankarese) Catholic Church*

*The Maronite Catholic Church*

*The Syrian (Syriac) Catholic Church*

**The Armenian Rite**

*The Armenian Holy Apostolic Church*

**The Chaldean Rite (East Syrian)**

*The Chaldean Catholic Church*

*The Syro-Malabar Catholic Church*

**The Byzantine Rite**

*The Melkite Catholic Church*

*The Byzantine Slovak Catholic Church*

*The Byzantine Ukrainian Catholic Church*

*The Albanian Catholic Church*

*The Byelorussian Catholic Church*

*The Bulgarian Catholic Church*

*The Greek Catholic Church*

*The Italo-Albanian Catholic Church*

*The Byzantine Yugoslav Catholic Church*

*The Russian Catholic Church*

*The Byzantine-Romanian Catholic Church*

*The Ruthenian Catholic Church*

**Eastern Churches in Communion with Rome continued**

- Children who have celebrated the full initiation rite in the Eastern Church are to be further

catechized concerning the sacrament of the Eucharist. The families should be encouraged to enroll them in the parish religious education program and to continue to bring their child to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

- If a person of any of the above rites wishes to join the Latin rite (Roman Catholic) they will need to obtain permission of the Holy See. This is to be done outside the RCIA. Please contact the Chancery for assistance in this matter.
- When a husband or wife is of a different rite, one may change to the rite of the other. If the marriage ends, the person who changed rites may return to their original rite.

### **Eastern Churches Not in Communion with Rome:**

The initiation rites conferred by the Eastern Churches not in communion with Rome are considered valid rites. The churches included in this are any of the Orthodox Churches and the Assyrian Churches of the East (also known as the Nestorian Church).

- An individual who wishes to enter into the Roman Catholic Church from an Eastern Church not in communion with Rome does not become a Latin rite Catholic, but rather a member of the ritual rite indicated by their baptism. (E.g.: a Russian Orthodox becomes a Russian Catholic; a Syrian Orthodox a Syrian Catholic, and so on)
- The Roman Catholic Church recognizes all of the sacraments of the Eastern rites. A child receives all of the rites of initiation (Eucharist and Confirmation) when baptized so a person should never be reconfirmed. Instead, after catechesis, they would simply make a profession of faith (RCIA 474).

### **Christian Baptism:**

It is important to read a baptismal certificate thoroughly. On occasion a certificate may read that the person has been baptized in the “holy catholic church”. This does not mean that they have been baptized Roman Catholic.

The Roman Catholic norm for valid baptism must follow the proper matter and form. The “matter” is water baptism by immersion or pouring. The “form” is the Trinitarian formula (canons 849, 850; RCIA 226). Always ensure that this has been followed.

If the rituals or established customs of a church or community prescribe baptism by immersion, pouring, sprinkling together with the Trinitarian formula (in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit), doubt can only arise if it happens that the minister did not observe the regulations of his or her own church or community.

## CONSIDERATIONS

If an individual is from a church with a valid baptism and they wish to enter into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church, they will need to make a profession of faith and receive the sacrament of Confirmation after a suitable period of catechesis. (RCIA, 400-504)

### **Valid Confirmations**

If an individual is from a church with a valid baptism and confirmation and they wish to enter into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church, they will need to make a profession of faith only after a suitable period of catechesis. (RCIA, 473-504)

### **Individuals from a Church with an Invalid Baptism**

If an individual is from a church with an invalid or no baptism and they wish to enter into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church, they will be treated as a catechumen and will need to enter into the steps and periods of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. They are fully initiated at the Easter Vigil. (RCIA, 1-251)

### **Children**

- If a child is not baptized and under the age of reason (7 years old), they may be baptized and enrolled into parish formation with children their own age and consequently receive Confirmation and Holy Eucharist with them.
- If they are older than 7 years of age, they are to enter the catechumenate for a period of no less than 1 year. They are fully initiated at the Easter Vigil.
- If a child's parents are from the Eastern rite, they remain the rite of their parents.
- Children of adults received into the Church who are under 7 years of age and validly baptized in another church in communion with the Church are to be enrolled in the parish religious education program and undergo sacramental preparation with others in their age group. When they make their first Communion, they will make a profession of faith with the other children. It is not necessary for them to add the statement found in the RCIA rite 491.

Please note in the first Communion registry that they have made their profession of faith. All pertinent Office for Divine Worship information about their baptism should be noted in the baptismal registry with a note that they made their profession of faith at their first Communion. Make sure to include the date.

## SOURCES

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Notification," A.A.S. 83 (1991), p 442 and "Concerning the Validity of Baptism," in A.A.S. 85 (1993), p. 179

Drake-Brockman, D. "Valid Baptism: A Guide to When Baptism or Conditional Baptism May be Required," in Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland Newsletter, n. 100 (June, 1997), pp. 24-36

Goodwine, J.G. "Statistics on Baptism as observed by Religious Bodies in the United States of America," in the Jurist 5 (1945), 285-288.

Huels, John M. The Pastoral Companion, Quincy, Illinois: Franciscan Press, 1995, p 342

### THE VALIDITY OF CONFIRMATION

By Eileen Jaramillo, JCL

A Basic Understanding

Confirmation is valid in those churches which have a valid sacrament of Holy Orders. These are separated Eastern Churches, Old Catholic, Old Roman Catholic, and Polish National Churches. Hence, someone coming from these churches is not to be confirmed again.

We do not recognize the Protestant denominations as having valid Orders. So, someone baptized in those ecclesial communities should be confirmed during the Rite of Reception into Full Communion.

Huels, John M. The Pastoral Companion: A Canon Law Handbook for Catholic Ministry. Quincy, Illinois: Franciscan Press, 1995 (revised edition)

Huels, John. The Catechumenate and the Law: A Pastoral and Canonical Commentary for the Church in the United States. Chicago: LTP, 1994

Significant Canons from the Oriental Code of Canon Law (CCEO)  
Related to Receiving Eastern Non-Catholics into Full Communion

Canon 35- Baptized non- Catholics coming into full communion with the Catholic Church should retain and practice their own rite everywhere in the world and should observe it as much as humanly possible. Thus, they are to be enrolled *sui iuris* of the same rite with due regard for the right of approaching the apostolic see in special cases of persons, communities, or regions.

Canon 986 – Whether it is a group or an individual, no obligation except what is necessary can be imposed on the Christian faithful who have been baptized in non-Catholic Churches or ecclesial communities and who ask of their own to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church.

Canon 897 – A member of the Christian faithful of an eastern non-Catholic Church is to be received into the Catholic Church with only the profession of the Catholic faith, after doctrinal and spiritual preparation according to each one's condition.