



# Word on Worship

Newsletter of the Worship Office, Archdiocese of Newark, NJ

### Editor's Note:

This issue of *Word on Worship* is the first in a two part series on the celebration of the sacrament of baptism. The second part will appear in the Winter 1998 issue.

### In This Issue:

- Why Baptize Children at a Communal Celebration?
- Baptizing Children Outside of Mass
- Doing It Rite: What Happens to the Saints During the Advent-Christmas Season?

At the cash register of a local stationery store I came across an intriguing item: a little pin cross affixed to a card with a prayer entitled "The Cross in My Pocket." The first paragraph of the prayer was edifying enough:

*I carry a cross in my pocket  
A simple reminder to me  
Of the fact that I am a  
Christian  
No matter where I may be.*

So far so good, until the third paragraph, which evoked a definite reaction:

*It's not for identification  
For all the world to see  
It's simply an understanding  
Between my Savior and me.*

While innocent in itself, the prayer is, nonetheless, one example of an unhealthy individualism, a privatism which undergirds American life and spills over into spirituality. Religion is considered a private affair between me and my God. How far afield is this approach from the revelation of both the Old and New Testaments that

God's consistent plan is to form us as a people, a people of God!

So pervasive is this privatistic attitude that one can actually speak of differing views of the human person. The research of sociologist Robert Bellah (*Habits of the Heart*, Harper & Row, 1985) has yielded the following contrasts of Catholic Christianity vs. American Individualism:

- we find wholeness in our relationships with others vs. self is autonomous — totally independent of others.
  - natural, assumed interdependence within society vs. social ties result only from free contract between autonomous beings.
  - moral co-responsibility for human dignity, suffering, freedom, etc. vs. naturally and morally independent of one another.
  - center of value: God and others vs. center of value: self as individual.
  - values derived from relationships with God and others vs. moral values reflect private taste.
  - private moral values affect our choices and actions in public/work sector vs. private moral values apply to home only. Marketplace is for pursuit of self-interest.
- One does not have to be a

rocket scientist to make the practical application of these conflicting philosophies to some of the most pressing moral and social issues of our day: abortion, euthanasia, gun control, health and welfare reforms, to name a few.

Even our words betray us! We tend to identify anything private and individual as "personal." By inference, anything communal or social is deemed impersonal. Carried over into the realm of liturgical celebration — which is what this article is about! — it becomes very difficult to appreciate the liturgy as a personal communal experience. Against this backdrop of individualism and privatism comes the clarion call to communal celebration in two of the most important paragraphs of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (CSL) of the Second Vatican Council:

"Liturgical services are not private functions but are celebrations of the Church which is 'the sacrament of unity'.... Therefore, liturgical services pertain to the whole Body of the Church. They manifest it, and have effects upon it." (CSL 26)

"It must be emphasized that rites which are meant to be celebrated in common, with the faithful present and actively participating, should as far as possible be celebrated in that way rather than by an individual and

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## WHY BAPTIZE CHILDREN AT A COMMUNAL CELEBRATION?

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quasi-privately." (CSL 27)

We hear a lot these days about the resurgence of baptism/initiation in Christian life. Why all the fuss, the much greater profile given to baptism/initiation in the Church? For example, the *Rite of Baptism for Children* (RB) (1969) stipulates that baptisms should take place on Sundays "in a communal celebration for all the recently born children." (RB 32) Provision is also made for the celebration of baptism within Sunday Mass. (RB 9, 29) Many parishes have moved their baptismal font into the main body of the church to facilitate such a communal celebration. During the Easter Season we renew our baptismal promises and may begin Mass by being sprinkled with holy water blessed at the Easter Vigil. Even the funeral liturgy now begins with the baptismal symbols of

sprinkling, clothing with the white pall, and the presence of the Easter candle, which recall when the deceased was first brought into the church to be incorporated into the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ and initiated into his Church. This recovery of baptism as the gateway sacrament impacts upon five areas of Church life.

#### SPIRITUALITY

There is no lack of interest these days in the topic of spirituality. In earlier times we spoke of spirituality inspired by religious orders such as the Benedictines, Franciscans, Dominicans, and the Jesuits. More recently, attention has been focused on one's particular vocation in life: priest, religious sister, married, single persons. More and more we are rediscovering that the basic spirituality common to us all is that at baptism we were washed clean by the blood of the Lamb. This is what bonds us together: John Paul II, Mother Teresa, Thomas Merton, our parents, our pastor, ourselves! Sometimes priests or deacons preaching at a Mass where baptism is celebrated feel they must come up with a special "baptismal homily" geared to the occasion. Why so? Preach the Gospel of the day and make the application of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the children being discipled to the Lord. Otherwise we run the risk of extrinsicism, as if baptism belongs on the fringe of Christian existence rather than mainstream to our following of Christ.

#### MINISTRY

Christian ministry and mission is grounded in baptism which thrusts the believer into a co-responsibility for the mission of the Church as a result of his/her sharing in the general priesthood of Jesus Christ.

Bernard Lonergan calls this "ecclesial conversion." Rather than speaking of church volunteers, we would be better advised to show how service in the Church is an exercise of the mission given us at baptism. This mission extends beyond the church walls, and for most laypeople, is a vocation to promote the Kingdom of God in the world in which they live and work. Perhaps the most important value in any Christian formation process is this: you are a Christian not just for yourself but for others. Christians are not only saved; they are also sent.

#### LITURGICAL YEAR

Liturgical feasts and seasons are not a static ordering of time, but a road map for people on a journey, a pilgrimage of faith to God. In this regard Lent/Easter is a season of baptismal conversion and renewal: a time for initiating new members through the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*; a time for rejuvenating those already initiated by the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and first eucharist. The season of Lent itself might be perceived as a baptismal retreat for those preparing for the initiation sacraments at the Easter Vigil. One can expand this image so as to envision Lent as a mission/retreat for the whole parish community: the acceptance of ashes on Ash Wednesday is an acceptance of this call to prepare to renew our baptismal promises at Easter.

#### SACRAMENTS

We believe in seven sacraments instituted by Christ to give grace. Just as the Council of Trent declared that not all sacraments were of equal excellence, we can say that baptism and eucharist are the twin pillars of the





sacramental economy of the Church. All the other sacraments are either further specifications which flow from baptism and eucharist or else refer back to the primordial sacraments of the font and the table. For example, in the tradition confirmation served as a transitional rite concluding baptism and leading to first eucharist. Orders and marriage are further specifications of our baptismal commitment in a eucharistic community. Or again, the sacrament of penance is a recovery of the grace of baptism in a Church which we have wounded by our sins; anointing of the sick enables the baptized Christian to discover the paschal mystery of Christ in a serious illness while receiving the love and support of a caring eucharistic community.

#### CHURCH

In our day we are re-discovering the concept of initiation sacraments. These are baptism, confirmation, and first eucharist. Initiated into what? Initiated into the Church: a communion (*koinonia*) of life with the Trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit and with one another. What we need today is a more ecclesial spirituality: a spirituality that recognizes that salvation is first of all extended to the Church, a community of faith, and then further appropriated to the individual. This role of the Church as an agent of salvation and grace is what scholastic theology used to call the first effect of a sacrament, the *res et sacramentum*, which leads to the ultimate effect which is grace or sharing in the life of the Triune God. Is not this what we profess in the prayer before the sign of peace at Mass: "Look not on our sins, but see the faith of your Church...."

Let us try to recap all this: why should children be baptized in a communal celebration, be this at Mass or outside of Mass? Baptism is the gateway sacrament to the Christian life. It is not simply a private family service which removes original sin or a religious counterpart to childbirth. Baptism has to do with rebirth or regeneration as adopted children of God the Father. In the waters of baptism we are immersed into the mystery of Christ crucified and risen, sharing in Christ's mission as priest, prophet, and king. Because of baptism we become temples of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is a powerful sacrament of initiation into the Church which is a community of salvation. Through baptism we are moved from a potential solidarity in sin (original sin) to a solidarity in grace. Baptism is always a sacrament of faith, a faith which is very evident in the adult catechumens who are baptized. For infants the faith is supplied by the Church: the Church universal, made manifest in the local Church or parish, and expressed in the domestic Church or family which presents the child for baptism.

For this reason baptism is a celebration of the Church and deserves to be celebrated accordingly. A private, family baptism would be a contradiction in terms: baptism is a public event in which the Church acts as a mother, as "a begetting community." The family into which the infants are baptized is the family of the Church, the people of God, our brothers and sisters in the Lord. "Here comes everybody" is an apt phrase someone once used to describe this inclusivity and universality of the Church. All the members of the Church have an important ministry and responsibility towards those

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being initiated at any age. The *Rite of Baptism for Children* puts it this way: "The people of God, that is the Church, made present in the local community, has an important part to play in the baptism of both children and adults. Before and after the celebration of the sacrament, the child has a right to the love and help of the community." (RB 4) The celebration of baptism at Sunday Mass should not be perceived as a foreign body in the Eucharist, but rather as intrinsic to the assembly's sense of Church as an initiating community.+

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# BAPTIZING CHILDREN

## OUTSIDE OF MASS

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It's Sunday afternoon at 1:50 PM as four couples with infants to be baptized arrive at church. The priest who presided at the noon Mass is in the rectory grabbing a quick lunch before returning to celebrate the baptisms. The parents and godparents linger in the vestibule of the church unsure whether they should take a seat or wait by the doors. Father just said to meet him at church at 2:00 PM. Some of the guests for the baptism are wandering through the church, while a few relatives are claiming positions that will give them a good location from which to video the event.

### LET'S GET STARTED!

At 2:00 PM Father pushes himself away from the rectory kitchen table, walks to the sacristy, vests in an alb and stole. He collects the items he needs for the liturgy and brings them to a table near the baptismal font, which is located in the main aisle, near the last pew of the church. He walks over to the parents and godparents, checks to see that everyone is present, and says "Great, everyone is here. Let's get started."

He asks those in church to gather near the font. He introduces himself, and distributes a pamphlet containing the entire ritual. He explains he wants everyone to participate. All they have to do is read along and respond with the text in red print. He

adds that if they see a section with different options, he will always pick the first option so that it will be easier for everyone to follow along.

With everyone standing near the font, Father begins the liturgy. He questions the parents, then signs the children with the cross. After the parents and godparents have repeated the signing, Father asks everyone to listen to a scripture reading that he proclaims from the book containing the baptismal ritual. He reads the story of Jesus telling his apostles not to hinder the children from coming to him. Father says a few words about how proud the parents, godparents, and grandparents must be, and how this is such a happy day for all the families. Family members nod approvingly, but also hope that Father will not talk too long, since they are standing.

After the homily, Father leads the intercessions, says the Litany of the Saints, then prays the prayer of exorcism. He anoints each infant with the oil of catechumens that is in a small brass vessel containing more absorbent cotton than holy oil.

### AT THE FONT

After the anointing, Father moves next to the font, which is only partially filled, and blesses the water. Father invites the parents and godparents to renew their baptismal promises. He points

out the page in their pamphlets, and reminds them he wants a loud "I do," after each question.

Father invites each individual family to step forward when he calls the name of their baby. Before he pours the water over the head of each infant, Father gives all those with video and still cameras time to line up their shots. The pouring of water follows. Father uses a brass shell that he fills once with water. He pours a little water from the shell as he says the baptismal formula.

This action is repeated for each child. Father anoints the children with chrism that is in the same type of brass container as that holding the oil of catechumens. He gives each godmother a small white bib to place on the breast of each child. Then he lights small candles from the Easter candle, which is in a stand next to the font, and gives them to the godfathers. The priest asks everyone to join him in praying the Our Father. After this prayer he says the prayer of blessing, and congratulates the parents on the baptism of their children. At this point the relatives and friends who have been standing near the font break into applause. Aunts and uncles begin posing family pictures near the font, asking Father to be in some of their shots. As the pictures continue, Father puts away the items used for the liturgy, collects the participation pamphlets, and gives each set



of parents a baptismal certificate for their newly baptized son or daughter.

What I have just described is how baptism outside of Mass is often celebrated in our parishes. Often there is only one minister present, namely, the priest or deacon; there is no singing; there is barely any ritual movement; there is little thought to the options within the rite; there is no preparation of the assembly; there is minimal participation. The liturgy is minimalistic. Yet if we look at the *Rite of Baptism for Children* (RB), we see that the celebration envisioned in this ritual book is rich and full.

#### THE RITE OUTSIDE MASS

In this article, I would like to examine how the *Rite of Baptism for Children* envisions the celebration taking place outside of Mass.

The celebration of baptism outside of Mass "should take

place on Sunday, the day on which the Church celebrates the paschal mystery." (RB 32) There should be only one such communal celebration on any Sunday which would include all the children being baptized that day. As the Rite states, baptism "should be conferred in a communal celebration for all the recently born children, and 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." (RB 32) "As far as possible, all recently born babies should be baptized at a common celebration on the same day. Except for a good reason, baptism should not be celebrated more than once on the same day in the same church." (RB, General Introduction 27)

#### APPROPRIATE SUNDAYS

The Sundays on which the celebration of baptism will take place, should be chosen in light of the liturgical calendar.

Certain Sundays of the liturgical year are especially appropriate, for example, Easter Sunday, Pentecost Sunday, and the other Sundays of the Easter season, the Solemnity of Christ the King, the Baptism of the Lord, and perhaps two or three appropriate Sundays in ordinary time spaced throughout the summer and fall. Baptisms should not be scheduled on a routine basis, for example, the second Sunday of each month. Such scheduling will have baptisms fall at times which are not particularly appropriate.

#### INVOLVING OTHERS

The celebration of baptism outside of Mass should also involve more than just the children, parents, godparents, and the priest or deacon. Relatives and friends should be encouraged to attend, certainly all those who are invited to the reception should be invited to take part in the liturgy. In addition, members of the parish should also be invited to the liturgy. This can be done by announcements in the bulletin or at Sunday Mass. The celebration of baptism, like any liturgy of the Church, is not a private affair strictly for the benefit of one particular child and his or her immediate family. It is a celebration of the Church!

The wider Church can be made present not only by the assembly that gathers to celebrate with the families and their children, but also by the presence of additional ministers beyond the presiding priest or deacon. For example, there should be: servers to assist the presider; a reader or two to proclaim the scriptures and the intercessions; greeters or ministers of hospitality to welcome the assembly and organize those taking part in

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the celebration; a leader of song, organist, or other musician, to assist the assembly in song which should be an integral part of any liturgical celebration. If there are many children being baptized, other priests or deacons can also be present to assist the presider. "The celebrant may be assisted by other priests and deacons and also by the laity in those parts which pertain to them, especially if there are many persons to be baptized. This provision is made in various parts of the rite." (RB 15)

#### ACCORDING TO THE RITE

Let us now consider how the celebration of baptism outside of Mass might take place for those four infants we met earlier, at the beginning of this article.

The liturgy formally begins with the presider greeting the families at the doors of the church, but actually the liturgy begins earlier. It begins with the assisting ministers

preparing the items needed for the liturgy before the people arrive. It also means preparing the space for the celebration. This means making sure the church is neat and clean. This is especially important after a full schedule of Sunday morning Masses. Having people arrive for the celebration of baptism in a church where the pews are littered with discarded bulletins, hymnals, and worship aids that were not properly put away, signals that what is about to take place is not very important.

It is also important to have greeters or ministers of hospitality present. Such ministers can welcome families and their guests, distribute any required worship aids, and answer any questions about the celebration. Very often the majority of people attending baptisms are people from outside the parish, people who have had little contact with church, or people who are not Catholic who have come out of social obligation. The

first impression we give them is very important. A warm welcome, a clean church, a well prepared celebration, says this ceremony is important:...and so they are!

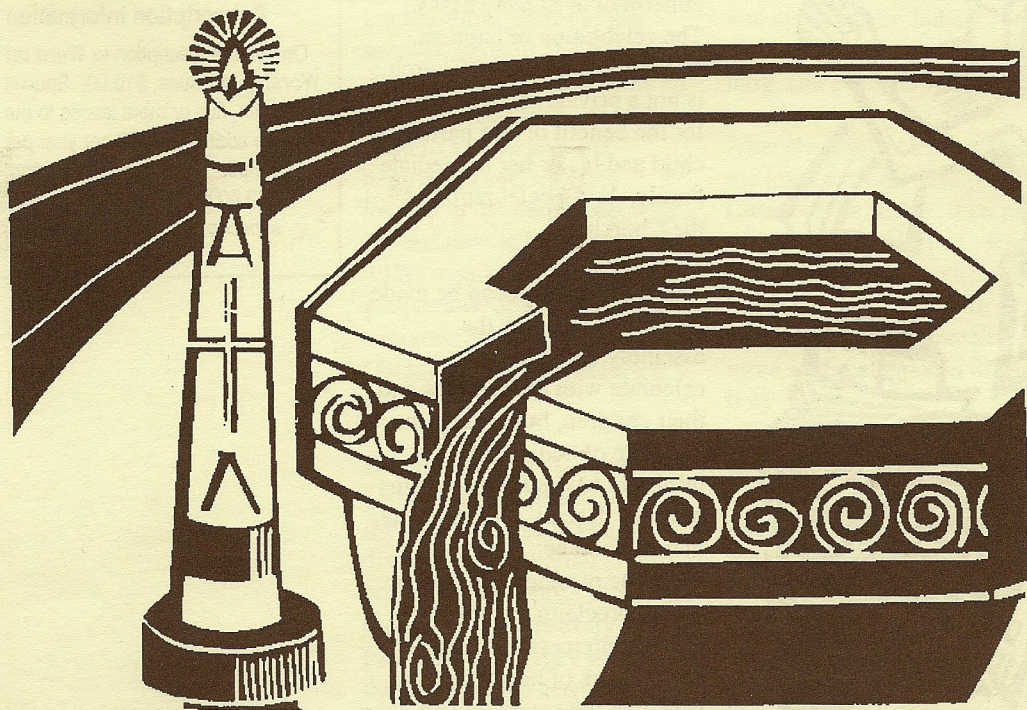
#### AIDS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Before continuing, a word about baptismal worship aids or service booklets. Such aids should contain only what the people absolutely need for the celebration; namely, the order of service, their spoken and sung responses and acclamations, and the music and text of the songs that will be used during the liturgy. Such worship aids should not contain the readings nor the prayers of the presider. At liturgy, we do not supply scripts, but rather aids containing only what is needed by the assembly.

When all is ready, I would suggest that someone, perhaps a greeter, or the director of the baptism program, or even the presider himself, take a few moments to make any necessary announcements, and to encourage the participation of all present. The people should then be asked to stand, and a song should be sung as the presider and other ministers process to the doors of the church where the parents, godparents, and children are waiting. (RB 35)

#### INTRODUCTORY RITES

When the song has ended, the rite of reception takes place. The presider may make the sign of the cross and greet the people as at Mass. He welcomes the parents and sponsors in a friendly manner. This welcome is done by the minister in his own words, it is not included in the ritual text. The rite says "the celebrant (presider) greets all present, especially the parents and





godparents, reminding them briefly of the joy with which parents welcomed their children as gifts from God, the source of life, who now wishes to bestow his own life on these little ones." (RB 36)

The presider asks the parents the name of each child and what they ask of God's church for the child. After receiving their responses, the presider questions the parents and godparents about their readiness to accept responsibility for the Christian upbringing of the children.

The presider now announces the acceptance of the children by the Christian community and he signs each child with the sign of the cross and invites the parents and godparents to do the same.

Then "the celebrant (presider) invites the parents and 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." (RB 42) The presider and other ministers process forward, followed by the parents and godparents with the children to be baptized. There should be seats in the front of the church reserved for the families involved in the baptism. When the song ends, the people sit for the liturgy of the word.

#### THE WORD OF GOD

The readings take place at the pulpit, using the Lectionary and/or the Book of Gospels. If necessary, the children may be taken to another place during the liturgy of the word. "The children to be baptized may be carried to a separate place, where they remain until the end of the liturgy of the word."

(RB 43) "Provision should be made for the mothers and godmothers to attend the liturgy of the word; the children should therefore be entrusted to the care of other women." (RB 14)

According to the *Rite of Baptism for Children*, the liturgy of the word can follow a weekday model, or a Sunday model, or merely consist of one or two gospel readings. (RB 44) It would seem best to follow the weekday model. The first reading should be proclaimed by a reader; a cantor may lead the people in a short responsorial psalm, then all could stand for the gospel acclamation as the priest or deacon brings the Book of Gospels from the altar to the pulpit for the gospel reading.

After the gospel, the presider preaches the homily whose purpose the rite explains is "to lead the people 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." (RB 45)

#### INTERCESSIONS

After the homily, the intercessions and the invocation of the saints follow. It would be wise to conclude the intercessions given in the rite with a short phrase which would signal the assembly to respond. For example, the reader could add "*we pray*" to each petition given in the rite. For example "Through baptism and confirmation, make them your faithful followers and witnesses to your gospel. *We pray*: Lord, hear our prayer."

The presider does not conclude the intercessions in the usual way, instead the invocation of the saints immediately follows the final petition. It would be

effective if the invocation of the saints were chanted by the presider or another minister. The names of the saints of those baptized and of the local church should be added to the litany. If any of the children were brought to another place for the liturgy of the word, they are brought back in during the invocation of the saints.

The prayer of exorcism concludes the intercessions and the invocation of saints, and introduces "either the anointing with the oil of catechumens or the laying on of hands." (RB 17) Following the gesture for prayers of exorcism in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, the presider prays this prayer with hands joined.

While the anointing with oil of catechumens may follow, it would be better to replace it with a prayer and the laying on of hands, as permitted in the rite. (RB 51) Omitting this anointing avoids duplication and confusion with the more significant anointing with chrism.

#### IN REMEMBRANCE

### MOST REVEREND WALTER W. CURTIS

Bishop Curtis, retired Bishop of Bridgeport, died on October 18, 1997. Ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Newark in 1937, and an auxiliary bishop in 1957, he had been Professor of Moral Theology at Immaculate Conception Seminary, Darlington, Archdiocesan Director of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and Pastor of Sacred Heart Church, Bloomfield. Bishop Curtis was appointed second Bishop of Bridgeport in 1961 and retired in 1988. As diocesan bishop he founded Sacred Heart University, Bridgeport, and established high schools throughout the diocese. He served as chairman of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy from 1972 to 1975.

**God of loving kindness,  
listen favorably to our prayers:  
strengthen our belief that your Son  
has risen from the dead  
and our hope that your servant Walter  
will also rise again.**

(From the *Order of Christian Funerals*)



#### PROCESSION TO FONT

At this point in the rite, the ministers, and the parents and godparents with their children, process to the baptismal font. This procession may be led by a minister carrying the processional cross. During the Easter season a minister might lead the procession by carrying the Easter Candle from its place near the altar to the baptismal font.

"If the baptistry is located within view of the congregation the celebrant (presider), parents and godparents go there with the children, while others remain in their places. If, however, the baptistry cannot accommodate the congregation, the baptism may be celebrated in a suitable place within the church, and the parents and godparents bring the child forward at the proper moment." (RB 52) During this movement to the font, a song may be sung. (RB 52)

#### BLESSING THE WATER

When all have taken their places near the font, the presider blesses the water. It would be effective for assisting ministers to pour some additional water into the font at this time. The sound of the splashing water will remind people of its presence in the font and call attention to the water about to be blessed. In keeping with the instruction in the Sacramentary concerning the blessing of water during the Easter Vigil, the presider prays the prayer of blessing over the water with hands joined. It would be wise to choose a prayer of blessing with acclamations that could be sung by the people.

During the Easter season, water blessed at the Vigil is

used. In this case the sections of the prayer asking God to bless and come upon the water are omitted. (RB 55)

#### RENUNCIATION OF SIN AND PROFESSION OF FAITH

The presider invites the parents and godparents to renew the vows of their baptism, to reject sin and profess their faith in Christ Jesus. The assembly assents to this profession of faith with its "Amen." (RB 59) This could be done in the following way. After questioning the parents and godparents, the presider could sing "This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus the Lord." The assembly could respond by singing a Great Amen used to conclude the final doxology of the eucharistic prayer.

#### BAPTISM

Each child is now brought to the font by its parents and godparents. There the final question is asked and the child is then baptized by immersion or the pouring of water. (RB 60) If pouring is used, the presider should use an abundance of water so that a true baptismal bath is signified. He should pour water three times, once for each person of the Trinity, while saying the formula. The assembly should sing an acclamation after the baptism of each child; the refrain from the *Celtic Alleluia* is a particularly effective choice.

#### ANOINTING, CLOTHING, CANDLE

After the children have been baptized, the presider prays the prayer before the anointing. Then he "anoints each child on the crown of the head with chrism, in silence." (RB 62) The chrismation should be done liberally. The oil is not wiped off the head of the child.

The chrism should be in a vessel which allows the oil to be seen by the assembly and even poured over the head of the newly baptized.

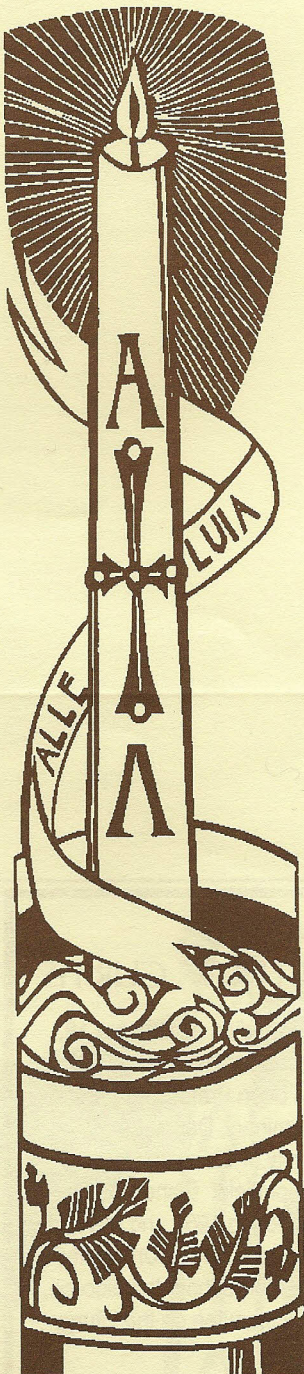
After the anointing the children are dressed in their baptismal garments. Ideally, the children should not have been brought into the church wearing their white baptismal clothing, but wearing simple clothes of another color. If a blanket is used, it should not be white. It is at this point that the rite foresees the children being dressed in white by the parents and godparents, and wrapped, if necessary, in a white blanket. In fact the rite foresees an actual clothing taking place, and not merely the presentation of a "baptismal bib" or a symbolic garment as noted in the instruction: "it is desirable that the families provide the garments." (RB 63)

A baptismal candle is lighted directly from the Easter candle by a parent or godparent of each newly baptized child. These baptismal candles should be of sufficient size and beauty to bear the meaning attached to them. As the candles are lighted, the presider says "Receive the light of Christ."

The prayer over the ears and mouth may now follow. This rite is performed at the discretion of the minister. (RB 65) If there are many children, the prayer can be said once over all the children, without the ears and mouths being touched by the presider.

#### AT THE ALTAR

After the rites at the font have been concluded, those gathered at the font process to the altar. During this procession the lighted candles are carried for the baptized. (RB 67) As the procession moves through the





church the *Rite of Baptism* suggests singing "You have put on Christ, in him you have been baptized. Alleluia, Alleluia." (RB 67)

The presider takes his place at the altar, and addresses the parents, godparents, and the whole assembly. (RB 68) He reminds them of the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist the children will one day receive — sacraments, which with baptism, give us a place at the table of the Lord. All then pray the Lord's Prayer, which could fittingly be sung. (RB 69)

The blessing takes place. "The celebrant (presider) first blesses the mothers, who hold the children in their arms, then

the fathers, and lastly the entire assembly." (RB 70) Since the mothers hold their children as they are being blessed, it might be a good practice to invite the fathers to hold their children as they are being blessed. During the words of blessing, the presider can extend hands, in the manner of the solemn blessing at Mass.

"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." (RB 71)

After the song the presider could congratulate the parents and then dismiss the assembly. There is no need for a formal

recessional. Photographs could be taken at this time. It would be a good practice for the parish to present each family with a small container and invite the godparents to fill it with water from the baptismal font, and a prayer of blessing which the parents could pray as they sprinkle their children at home. +

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## DOING IT RITE

### Advent/Christmas Saints

#### What Happens to the Saints During the Advent-Christmas Season?

- Solemnities and Feasts are celebrated as usual.
- The first part of Advent (i.e. before December 17) and the days after the Octave of Christmas (i.e. after January 1) allow the celebration of memorials as usual.
- Memorials of the saints are not celebrated during the second part of Advent (the days of the Great Antiphons) through the Christmas Octave, i.e. from December 17 - 31.

The saints may be *commemorated* from December 17 through December 31 as follows:

#### AT MASS

The opening prayer of the saint may replace the opening prayer of the day.

The scripture readings are always those of

the occurring weekday.

The prayer over the gifts and prayer after communion are always the prayers of the weekday.

The Advent Preface is always used (except with Eucharistic Prayers that have their own proper preface).

The color is always 'advent' purple.

#### IN THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS

##### AT THE OFFICE OF READINGS

After the second reading (with its responsory) from the Advent weekday the reading of the saint (with its responsory) may be added with the concluding prayer of the saint.

##### AT MORNING AND EVENING PRAYER

The ending of the concluding prayer may be omitted and the antiphon and the prayer of the saint may be added.



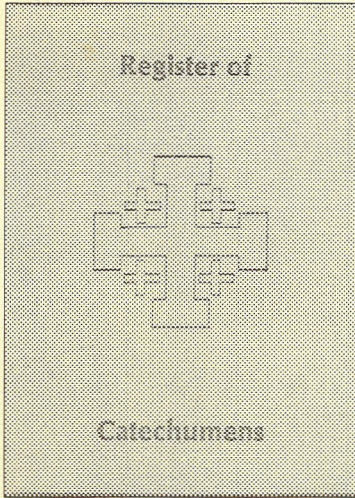
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