

POLICY 2.2.1 Preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism

Preparation for the sacrament of Baptism

As with all sacraments, there must be adequate preparation for the sacrament of Baptism. Canon 851, § 2 states that the parents of an infant who is to be baptized and likewise those who are to undertake the office of sponsor are to be properly instructed in the meaning of this Sacrament and the obligations which are attached to it.

Given the long-standing custom in many Native communities of the grandmother requesting to have grandchildren baptized, such a request is to be treated as if coming from the parents.

Place of Baptism

Note that Canon 860, § 1 states that “Outside the case of necessity, baptism is not to be conferred in private homes, unless the local Ordinary has permitted this for a grave cause.” As with other sacraments, the usual setting is the parish church; other settings should be contemplated only with the greatest caution. Baptism may appropriately take place at the Sunday Eucharist so that the entire community may be present, but the choice for such should be offered to the family, and this should not become the regular practice in parishes where there are many baptisms.

One Requirement for Infant Baptism

Canon 868, § 2 states that “there be a founded hope that the infant will be brought up in the Catholic Church. If such a hope is altogether lacking, the Baptism is to be put off according to the prescriptions of particular law and the parents are to be informed of the reason.” A baptism consequently, may be deferred but never completely refused. In the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan, if a baptism is deferred, the priest or deacon must notify the Archbishop in writing, giving the reasons why.

In 1980, the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, issued an Instruction on the baptism of infants. Regarding deferral of the Sacrament in cases of “non-practicing” Christian parents, it sets down the following mode of action:

- a) It is essential to bring the parents to a recognition of their responsibilities.
- b) It is also essential to evaluate the sufficiency of the guarantees concerning the Catholic upbringing of the children. These guarantees are given by some member of the family or by the godparents or by the support of the Christian community. (By guarantees, we mean that there is a well-founded hope of a Catholic upbringing)
- c) If conditions are sufficient in the judgement of the pastor, he can proceed with the baptism, because the children are baptized in the faith of the Church.

Preparation of Non-Baptized Children of Catechetical Age

According to Church law, Canon 852 §1, children who have attained the use of reason and are of catechetical age, seven years or older, who desire to celebrate Baptism are prepared through their participation in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA), adapted for children. In keeping with this rite, they are to be prepared to celebrate the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist at the Easter Vigil.

A suitable preparation program in the parish would ideally involve the children's parents and members of the child's Catholic school (where one is present) and parish community.

Preparation of Non-Baptized Adults

In the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan, the norm for the preparation of non-baptized adults, as well as the norm for the preparation for a baptized adult for the Profession of Faith, is the R.C.I.A. (The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults). (Cf. Canon 851)

Baptism and Rite

Given the significant number of Eastern Rite Catholics in our Province, attention must be paid to Canon 111:- "A child of parents who belong to the Latin Church is ascribed to it by reception of baptism, or if one or other parent does not belong to the Latin Church, and both parents agree in choosing that the child be baptized in the Latin Church, the child is ascribed to it by reception of baptism. But if the agreement is lacking, the child is ascribed to the Ritual Church to which the father belongs."

In such cases, note should be made in the parish baptismal register.

All other considerations concerning baptism can be found in Chapter 1 of the *Canonical and Pastoral Guide for Parishes*.

Amended by the College of Consultors on 16 February 2011

Amended by the College of Consultors on 14 January 2015

Amended by the College of Consultors on 20 October 2015