

## **What is the sacrament of Baptism?**

Baptism is the foundation of the whole Christian life and birth into the new life in Jesus Christ. This sacrament is necessary for our salvation, as is the Church herself, which we enter by Baptism. Through Baptism a person is freed from sin (original sin and all personal sins), is reborn as a child of God and is incorporated into the Church. Without it, a person cannot receive any other sacraments.

## **How and who can baptize?**

The ordinary minister of baptism is a bishop, a priest or a deacon. In a case of necessity, and only in necessity, anyone with the required intention – even a non-baptized person – can baptize. The required intention means that the person baptizing wills to do what the Church does when it baptizes.

The essential rite of Baptism consists in immersing the candidate in water or pouring water on his/her head, while pronouncing the words of invocation: “I baptize you in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

## **Who can be a godparent?**

To be permitted to take on the function of a godparent, a person must:

- 1/ be designated by the adult to be baptized, or by the child’s parents or the person who takes their place and have the qualifications and intention of fulfilling this function;
- 2/ have completed the sixteenth year of age;
- 3/ be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the sacrament of Holy Communion and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on;
- 4/ not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;
- 5/ not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized.

## **Is it permitted to have two godfathers or two godmothers?**

No. There is to be only one male godfather or one female godmother, or both of them present at baptism.

Also, a baptized person who is a non-Catholic cannot be a godparent and cannot participate at the baptism except together with a Catholic sponsor. In this instance, he/she is only as a witness of the baptism.

## ***Baptism of blood. Desire for Baptism.***

The Catholic Church teaches that those who suffer death for the sake of the faith without having received Baptism are baptized by their death. This *Baptism of blood* brings about the fruits of Baptism without being a sacrament.

In case of those who die before their Baptism, their explicit *desire for Baptism* to receive it, together with repentance for their sins, and charity, assures them the salvation that they were not able to receive through the sacrament.

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

### **1. I was baptized in a Protestant Church? Is my baptism valid?**

As long as you were immersed in water or water was poured on your head, while the words: “I baptize you in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” were pronounced, your baptism is valid, regardless the Church, in which it was performed.

### **2. I was never baptized and would like to become a Catholic? What should I do?**

Please contact your parish priest to be enrolled in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults that will lead you through a process of preparation for the sacrament of Baptism. Usually, this program begins in the Fall and ends in the Easter season.