



FAQs on the new *Order of Baptism for Children*

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Archdiocese of Cincinnati

What's happening and why?

The Church in the United States is receiving a new translation of the ritual book *The Order of Baptism of Children*. Having been approved both by the U.S. bishops and by the Vatican, this new ritual text replaces the existing English version. Beginning with *The Order of Mass* in 2011, all liturgical books are being re-translated and re-published; this is simply the latest.

What's new?

It is important to note that this is only a new *translation*, not a new ritual itself. The Latin *typical edition* (master version) has not changed, so the rite is not different. That being said, publishing a newly-translated ritual book is an opportunity to make things more clear and accurate, as well as to include pastoral developments that have occurred since the original publication.

What will the faithful notice most?

Most changes will be subtle, detectable only by clergy and liturgical ministers. For example, in the opening dialogue between celebrant and the child's family, the expression "Christian community" is replaced by "Church of God" to emphasize that through baptism, one becomes part of the universal Church, not just a local Christian community.

There are some new acclamations, an expanded Litany of the Saints, new introductory comments, and other small changes.

Is baptism during Mass still permitted?

Yes. Baptism during Mass (especially on Sunday) is permitted, as well as a communal (not “private”) celebration outside of Mass.

Of note, there is a new appendix for the celebration of baptism within Sunday Mass, something that happens frequently in the United States. It makes clear the order of ritual celebration in one unified text, rather than ministers needing to reference several liturgical books.

Does anything about the role of parents and godparents change?

No, but with any new ritual book, there is an opportunity for pastoral ministers to focus on these roles and how to best prepare parents and godparents of young children for their duties as primary teachers of the faith.

Is immersion still permitted?

Yes. Immersion of children into the font, either partially or fully, is still permitted. In fact, the Church teaches in the *General Instruction to Christian Initiation*: “As the rite for baptizing, either immersion, which is more suitable as a symbol of participation in the death and resurrection of Christ, or pouring may lawfully be used.” (22)

How many godparents must there be?

Canon law specifies that for each person baptized, there must be at least one Catholic godparent. There may be two, but they must be of opposite sexes. One of the sponsors may be a non-Catholic Christian witness.

Who participates in the renewal of baptismal promises during the rite of baptism?

Outside of Mass, ONLY the parents and godparents renew their baptismal promises. However, new to this edition, the rubrics make clear that DURING Mass the entire assembly participates in this ritual element.

What white garment can be used? When does the child put it on?

The rite of baptism provides an “explanatory rite” about a white garment. While custom has found infants wearing a traditional white garment (aka “christening gown”) BEFORE the rite, it is permitted and entirely possible for infants to come to the rite wearing something else and don the white garment during or after the rite. Also, if the family provides a white garment, the parish need not provide an additional garment (e.g. a small bib or stole).

