

**Possible References To Assist Dioceses  
in Issuing Reminders and/or Providing Catechesis  
on the Trinitarian Formula and the Essential Rite of Baptism**

**1. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium***

14. This Sacred Council wishes to turn its attention firstly to the Catholic faithful. Basing itself upon Sacred Scripture and Tradition, it teaches that the Church, now sojourning on earth as an exile, is necessary for salvation. Christ, present to us in His Body, which is the Church, is the one Mediator and the unique way of salvation. In explicit terms He Himself affirmed the necessity of faith and Baptism and thereby affirmed also the necessity of the Church, for through Baptism as through a door men enter the Church.....

15. The Church recognizes that in many ways she is linked with those who, being baptized, are honored with the name of Christian, though they do not profess the faith in its entirety or do not preserve unity of communion with the successor of Peter....

**2. Second Vatican Council, Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio***

22. Whenever the Sacrament of Baptism is duly administered as Our Lord instituted it, and is received with the right dispositions, a person is truly incorporated into the crucified and glorified Christ, and reborn to a sharing of the divine life, as the Apostle says: "You were buried together with Him in Baptism, and in Him also rose again through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."

Baptism therefore establishes a sacramental bond of unity which links all who have been reborn by it. But of itself Baptism is only a beginning, an inauguration wholly directed toward the fullness of life in Christ. Baptism, therefore, envisages a complete profession of faith, complete incorporation in the system of salvation such as Christ willed it to be, and finally complete ingrafting in eucharistic communion.

Though the ecclesial Communities which are separated from us lack the fullness of unity with us flowing from Baptism, and though we believe they have not retained the proper reality of the eucharistic mystery in its fullness, especially because of the absence of the sacrament of Orders, nevertheless when they commemorate His death and resurrection in the Lord's Supper, they profess that it signifies life in communion with Christ and look forward to His coming in glory. Therefore the teaching concerning the Lord's Supper, the other sacraments, worship, the ministry of the Church, must be the subject of the dialogue.

### ***3. Code of Canon Law***

Canon 869 § 1. If there is a doubt whether one has been baptized or whether Baptism was validly conferred and the doubt remains after serious investigation, Baptism is to be conferred conditionally.

Canon 869 § 2. Those baptized in a non-Catholic ecclesial community are not to be baptized conditionally unless, after an examination of the matter and the form of the words used in the conferral of Baptism and after a consideration of the intention of an adult baptized person and of the minister of the Baptism, a serious reason for doubting the validity of the Baptism is present.

### ***Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches***

Canon 672 § 1. The sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation with holy myron and sacred Ordination cannot be repeated.

Canon 672 § 2. If a prudent doubt exists as to whether they have been truly or validly celebrated, and the doubt remains after a serious investigation, they are to be administered conditionally.

Canon 675 § 1. In Baptism a person through washing with natural water with the invocation of the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is freed from sin, reborn to new life, puts on Christ and is incorporated in the Church which is His Body.

Canon 675 § 2. Only by the actual reception of Baptism is a person made capable for the other sacraments.

### ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***

1239. The essential rite of the sacrament follows: Baptism properly speaking. It signifies and actually brings about death to sin and entry into the life of the Most Holy Trinity through configuration to the Paschal mystery of Christ. Baptism is performed in the most expressive way by triple immersion in the baptismal water. However, from ancient times it has also been able to be conferred by pouring the water three times over the candidate's head.

1240. In the Latin Church this triple infusion is accompanied by the minister's words: "N., I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." In the Eastern liturgies the catechumen turns toward the East and the priest says: "The servant of God, N., is baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." At the invocation of each person of the Most Holy Trinity, the priest immerses the candidate in the water and raises him up again.

1278. The essential rite of Baptism consists in immersing the candidate in water or pouring water on his head, while pronouncing the invocation of the Most Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

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93. Baptism is conferred with water and with a formula which clearly indicates that Baptism is done in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is therefore of the utmost importance for all the disciples of Christ that Baptism be administered in this manner by all and that the various Churches and ecclesial Communities arrive as closely as possible at an agreement about its significance and valid celebration.

94. It is strongly recommended that the dialogue concerning both the significance and the valid celebration of Baptism take place between Catholic authorities and those of other Churches and ecclesial Communities at the diocesan or Episcopal Conference levels. Thus it should be possible to arrive at common statements through which they express mutual recognition of Baptisms as well as procedures for considering cases in which a doubt may arise as to the validity of a particular Baptism.

95. In arriving at these expressions of common agreement, the following points should be kept in mind:

a) Baptism by immersion, or by pouring, together with the Trinitarian formula is, of itself, valid. Therefore, if the rituals, liturgical books or established customs of a Church or ecclesial Community prescribe either of these ways of Baptism, the sacrament is to be considered valid unless there are serious reasons for doubting that the minister has observed the regulations of his/her own Community or Church.

b) The minister's insufficient faith concerning Baptism never of itself makes Baptism invalid. Sufficient intention in a minister who baptizes is to be presumed, unless there is serious ground for doubting that the minister intended to do what the Church does.

c) Wherever doubts arise about whether, or how water was used, respect for the sacrament and deference towards these ecclesial Communities require that serious investigation of the practice of the Community concerned be made before any judgment is passed on the validity of its Baptism.

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