

Day 145 – Wednesday, August 12 - Baptism - Frequently Asked Questions

Baptism - Frequently Asked Questions – From the Archdiocese of Toronto

20. Does our child have to be baptized in order to attend a Catholic school?

It is important to check with the School Board that has jurisdiction where your child will attend school. The trustees of each Board interpret the admission requirements in their own way. Some School Boards require proof of a parent's Catholic Baptism, especially if the child has not been baptized. This establishes their eligibility to direct their taxes to the Catholic Board. This is a government, not a Church stipulation. If the child is not baptized, the parents are usually encouraged to meet with the Pastor of their parish (or his delegate) to discuss this issue.

Baptism is never to be seen as a means to enrol in the Catholic school.

21. May a child be "rebaptized" if he/she was baptized in a hospital, etc. in an emergency situation?

A person may be baptized only once. If a child is baptized in an emergency situation, once the child returns to health the parents may bring the child to their parish to celebrate the further rites as indicated in Rite of Baptism for Children. See "Rite of Bringing a Baptized Child to the Church Outside Mass" [nn. 267-287] or "Rite of Bringing a Baptized Child to the Church within Mass" [nn. 288-312].

22. What happens if the child is adopted?

See Rite of Baptism for Children, Appendix II: "Rite of Welcome for an Adopted Child who is Baptized" [nn. 345-363].

The baptismal records of adopted children are subject to both canon and civil law. If persons come to the parish looking for information on their birth name or parents they are to be directed to the Ontario government, which has legislation relating to adoption disclosure. Parish personnel have a legal obligation not to disclose any information that would identify or reveal, directly or indirectly, the fact that a person was adopted (L&L p. 9, 520, 1523, 1945, 2068, letter dated January 30, 2004).

For children baptized after their adoption is finalized, the following information is entered in the register: given name designated by the adopting parent(s); name(s) of the adopting parent(s); date and place of birth; sponsor(s) or godparent(s); minister performing the baptism; a statement that the child is adopted. The baptismal certificate issued for an adopted child is the same as a typical baptismal certificate. However, please note that the notation of adoption is not entered on the certificate.

For children already baptized, who later become part of an adoption process, the names of the adopting parent(s) and the new names for the child are added to the baptismal register after the adoption has been finalized. A notation is also made stating that the child was adopted along with the name of the court or agency involved, the date of adoption and the case number. Children who are in the process of being adopted who have not already been baptized should not be baptized until the process is finalized, unless it is a matter of danger of death or urgent necessity.

Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for these individuals give only the name(s) of the adopting parent(s), the child's new legal name, the date and place of baptism, and the name of the priest/deacon who conferred the sacrament. The name(s) of the sponsor(s) are not given unless the adopting parents designated honorary sponsors. The notation of adoption in the register is not entered on the certificate.

In the light of eternity, we're here for a very short time, really. We're here for one thing, ultimately: to learn how to love, because God is love. - James Finley

Sincerely,
Fr. Jim Kaptein