



NewsLetter

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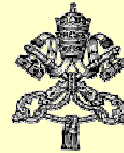
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Volume XLIV

March 2008

Response to Questions Regarding Baptismal Formulas

On February 1, 2008, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a response regarding formulas used for the Sacrament of Baptism. Their response is reprinted below for the benefit of our readers:



CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS PROPOSED

on the validity of Baptism conferred with the formulas

“I baptize you in the name of the Creator, and of the Redeemer, and of the Sanctifier”
and *“I baptize you in the name of the Creator, and of the Liberator, and of the Sustainer”*

QUESTIONS

First question: Whether the Baptism conferred with the formulas *“I baptize you in the name of the Creator, and of the Redeemer, and of the Sanctifier”* and *“I baptize you in the name of the Creator, and of the Liberator, and of the Sustainer”* is valid?

Second question: Whether the persons baptized with those formulas have to be baptized *in forma absoluta*?

RESPONSES

To the first question: Negative.

To the second question: Affirmative.

The Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI, at the Audience granted to the undersigned Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, approved these Responses, adopted in the Ordinary Session of the Congregation, and ordered their publication.

Rome, from the Offices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, February 1, 2008.

William Cardinal Levada
Prefect

Angelo Amato, S.D.B.
Titular Archbishop of Sila
Secretary

Five Questions about the CDF Response on Baptismal Formulas

1. What are the main issues being addressed by this response?

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has determined that baptism using the aforementioned formulas is invalid and, when a person has been baptized with either of the formulas, they must be baptized *in forma absoluta*.

2. What is the distinction between conditional baptism and baptism *in forma absoluta*?

Conditional baptism is utilized in circumstances where there is sufficient doubt about the fact of baptism or about the validity of a baptism that was previously received. In conditional Baptism, the minister says: "If you are not yet baptized, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." In absolute Baptism, there is no reference to a possible earlier baptism (in the cases specified by the Congregation, the earlier baptisms were invalid). Persons that were baptized using the invalid formulas should be baptized absolutely using the formula: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

3. Why is the question of the formula so important?

First and foremost, it is important because it is a matter of people's salvation. Jesus Christ commissioned the Church to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19). Baptism also has juridic effects within the Church. It gives rise to various rights and responsibilities, and it is necessary for the valid reception of all other sacraments. The Church cannot allow formulas that would, in any way, invalidate the conferral of true Baptism.

4. What must Baptism contain as a form to be valid?

Any valid Baptism must contain, as a form, the invocation of the Most Holy Trinity, with the distinct expression of the three persons with their respective names. Throughout history, the Church has taught that Christian Baptism is administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. People are baptized into the Trinity as the Trinity is – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The formulas that were rejected speak of functions of the Persons of the Trinity and not their own personal being. The Church has prescribed the form for valid baptism, which is contained in the approved liturgical books. All ministers of baptism, therefore, may not modify, adapt, or omit any part of it. Changes to the prescribed form will require investigation by Church authorities regarding their effect on validity.

5. Is there urgency in addressing this issue and does this response have an effect on other sacraments?

The Church has been given the responsibility to see to it that the sacraments are conferred validly and licitly. We should not be content in trusting that God will remedy all human failures. Such invalid baptisms need to be remedied without delay since it is a matter of justice for God's people. Catechesis needs to be provided on this point so that all can understand why the situation needs to be remedied and to avoid such situations in the future.

Erratum in the 2009 *Liturgical Calendar*

The 2009 edition of the *Liturgical Calendar for the Dioceses of the United States of America*, published by the Secretariat of Divine Worship, contains an error. In the listing for the 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time, the short form of the Gospel is not listed. The correct citation for Sunday, October 4, therefore, should read:

4 SUN TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME green
Gn 2:18-24/Heb 2:9-11/Mk 10:2-16 or 10:2-12 (140) Pss III

The 42-page 2009 *Liturgical Calendar* remains available for sale from the Secretariat for \$10.00 in either paperback or electronic format (Microsoft Word file or diskette). Checks made out to the "Committee on Divine Worship" may be mailed to Sr. Clelia Cecchetti, SP at the address listed on the front of this *Newsletter*.

Principles of Translating the *Missale Romanum*, Part 3



Continuing the series on principles surrounding the translation of the *Missale Romanum*, *editio typica tertia*, we turn now to questions of person, number, and gender.

Paragraph 57b of *Liturgiam authenticam* (LA) notes that “in the translation of terms contained in the original text, the same person, number and gender is to be maintained insofar as possible.” This applies not only to the liturgical text but also to the original language of the biblical text as well. Thus the grammatical gender of a given word which denotes a spiritual or divine being such as God the Father or Christ should be translated as in the original text.

A particular exception is given with reference to the Holy Spirit. The masculine person is to be used for the Holy Spirit (i.e., Romans 8:16 “The Spirit *himself* bears witness.”) and for the “Spirit” of God in the Old Testament as well. This is seen as consistent with the Latin tradition of biblical translation and liturgical prayer.

Explicit directions for our question are provided in LA no. 31. One should avoid resorting to mechanical substitution of words, the transition from the singular to the plural, the splitting of a unitary collective term into masculine and feminine parts, or the introduction of impersonal or abstract words, all of which may impede the communication of the true and integral sense of a word or an expression in the original text. This approach opens the door to theological and anthropological problems.

Specific attention is given to the term, “Son of Man.” LA no. 31b notes: “the fixed expression ‘Son of Man’ must be rendered faithfully and exactly. The great Christological and typological significance of this expression requires that there should also be employed throughout the translation a rule of language that will ensure that the fixed expression remain comprehensible in the context of the whole translation.” The *Ratio translationis* indicates as particularly apt the use of the inclusive “man,” in the singular or in the plural in contexts in which a clear delineation or parallel is being drawn between divine and earthly realms.

With reference to the Church, LA no. 31b indicates a preference for the feminine pronoun rather than the neuter.

Care also has to be taken when a different word replaces the inclusive “man.” Some suggest the use of “human being” or “person.” Because these words seem to be more proper to philosophical discourse, these words might be considered as inappropriate for a biblical context. The use of the word “humans” as a substantive raises some aesthetic concerns and might evoke a contrast not with God, but with animals. Other terms such as “mortal,” “one” or “people” all have some problematic aspects to them.

LA approaches this question from a very definite perspective. In paragraph 29 it notes:

...Similarly, it is the task of catechists or of the homilist to transmit that right interpretation of the texts that excludes any prejudice or unjust discrimination on the basis of persons, gender, social condition, race or other criteria, which has no foundation at all in the texts of the Sacred Liturgy. Although considerations such as these may sometimes help one in choosing among various translations of a certain expression, they are not to be considered reasons for altering either a biblical text or a liturgical text that has been duly promulgated.

Thus, when the final text appears proper catechesis will have to be provided for those expressions that need clarification in order to address any perceived prejudice or unjust discrimination.

March 2008 Meeting of the USCCB Committee on Divine Worship

The USCCB Committee on Divine Worship met on March 10, 2008, in Washington, DC, to discuss three issues.

The use of “*ustedes*” in Spanish Masses

Recently, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments approved the use of “*ustedes*” in place of “*vosotros*” in the Ordinary of the Mass in Spanish for the Dioceses of Mexico. This decision includes the words of consecration, and is effective Easter Sunday, March 23, 2008. The Committee approved an action item to submit to the body of Bishops a request to allow the same use for the Dioceses of the United States of America. For such permission to be obtained, approval by two-thirds of the country’s Latin Rite Bishops would be required with subsequent *recognitio* by the Congregation.

Weekday Readings of Lent

The Committee also reviewed the weekday readings for the Season of Lent as part of the ongoing process of an overall review of the *Lectionary for Mass*. The review process is an intricate one, resulting in the extended time to review the entire text. An overall review of the *Lectionary* was completed in 2003. The problems found involved questions of suitability for liturgical proclamation, poetic expression, grammar, and vocabulary. In 2004 a process was developed for reviewing the texts. After review by two speech experts, the texts were submitted to a group of two Bishops and two experts in liturgical and pastoral areas. Their recommendations were then given to two Biblical scholars. Finally, the Committee on Divine Worship makes its determination before the texts are voted on by the Latin Rite Bishops of the USCCB. The weekday readings for Lent may be submitted for a vote by the Bishops at their November 2008 plenary meeting. The USCCB has already approved the revisions of the Sundays of Advent and the Sundays of Lent.

Evaluation of ICEL Green Books: *Introductory Documents and Appendices to the Roman Missal*

Finally, the Committee reviewed two “Green Books” produced by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL): *Introductory Documents and Appendices to the Roman Missal*. Committee members agreed with many of the comments submitted by the Bishops for the *Appendices*. They expressed special concern that the translations of some traditional prayers such as the Hail Mary not depart from texts that are presently used by the people. In reviewing the text of the *Introductory Documents*, which contains a new translation of the *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, the Committee found that there were no substantive changes with the translation approved by the U.S. Bishops in 2002, and that most of the changes were stylistic and also terminological. The Committee will now submit its comments on both Green Books to ICEL to assist them in preparing final “Gray Book” translations by the end of 2008.

June 2008 Plenary Assembly Agenda

The day after the meeting, on March 11, the USCCB’s Administrative Committee approved the agenda for the plenary meeting which will occur on June 11-14 in Orlando, Florida. The Committee on Divine Worship will present two action items: the Gray Book of the Proper of Seasons, approved at the Committee’s meeting in January, and the use of the form “*ustedes*” in place of “*vosotros*” in Masses celebrated in Spanish. Both action items require adoption by two-thirds of the country’s Latin Rite Bishops, followed by the *recognitio* of the Holy See, in order to become particular law for the United States. The Gray Book will form part of the English translation of the third edition of the *Missale Romanum*.



**The Committee on Divine Worship
Wishes You a Blessed Easter!**