

240. Who Has the Right to Baptize?

Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 1 Cor. 4, 1.

Baptism was made a permanent institution by our Lord; this Sacrament is to be administered to the end of days. The eleven disciples to whom Christ gave that Great Commission before His ascension all died, but the charge to make disciples is valid even to-day. Christ entrusted His Gospel and His Sacraments to the entire Christian Church, the communion of saints. These are the possessors of all heavenly treasures merited by the Savior. All believers are spiritual priests and have the right to baptize.

And yet not every Christian may administer Baptism at his own pleasure or discretion. Why? Because God is a God of order. He established the office of the ministry. He demands that every Christian congregation do all things decently and in order by choosing and calling special ministers, or pastors, who in their name are to administer this Sacrament; for St. Paul says: "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." Ordinarily the "ministers of Christ," duly called and ordained, are to administer Baptism in the name of Christ and the Church.

But in cases of necessity, when a child is in danger of dying before a true minister of Christ can be had, any Christian has the right to baptize. In our hymn-books you will find a formula for that very purpose. This so-called emergency baptism, whether administered by a man, woman, or child, must not be repeated if the child lives. It should, however, be publicly acknowledged and confirmed in church. The minister, therefore, makes inquiry how such baptism was applied, and if it was rightly administered, he duly records it, so that the child in after-years may rest assured of his having been validly baptized.

The question need not disquiet us whether Holy Baptism has been administered by an unbelieving pastor; for as little as a pious minister *increases* the efficacy of Baptism, just so little does a godless minister *decrease* it.

Prayer.

O Lord God, we have been made members of Thy holy Christian Church and partakers of the abounding riches of Thy grace. We thank Thee, heavenly Father, that Thou hast received us as Thy children. We thank Thee, O Lord Jesus, that Thou hast shed Thy blood for us and thereby washed us from all our sins. We thank Thee, O Thou Holy Spirit, that Thou hast regenerated and renewed us through Holy Baptism, so that we are the children of God and fellow-heirs, together with Christ, of eternal life. May we ever praise Thee, O Thou holy Trinity, for Thy gracious gifts, keeping Thy covenant! Amen.

Therefore hasten we to Thee,
Take the pledge we bring, O take it!
Let us here Thy glory see
And in tender pity make it
Now Thy child and leave it never,
Thine on earth and Thine forever.

This devotion is one of 318 taken from *Daily Bread* by F. E. Pasche, published by CPH in 1926, but now in the public domain. They have been copied and reformatted by Rev. Bruce G. Ley and made available for distribution by pastors and missionaries. You may contact Rev. Ley at: pastorley@leychalet.com.

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