

Scripture

John the Baptist proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit'.

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased'.

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Mark 1:7-13

Prayer

*Praise to you,
almighty God and Father,
for you have created water
to cleanse and to give life.
Blessed be God.*

*Praise to you,
Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father's only Son,
for you offered yourself on the cross,
that in the blood and water
flowing from your side
and through your death
and resurrection
the Church might be born.
Blessed be God.*

*Praise to you, God the Holy Spirit,
for you anointed Christ
at his baptism
in the waters of the Jordan,
that we might all be baptised
in you.
Blessed be God.*

From the Prayer over the Water,
Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, 215B

This leaflet is one of a series of resources prepared by the Liturgy Office to accompany the publication of *Consecrated for Worship*. Excerpts from *Consecrated for Worship* and this leaflet © 2006 Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

Excerpts from *The Roman Missal* © 1973, ICEL, and from the *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*, © 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America, and are used by permission. All rights reserved.

Consecrated for Worship is published by CTS [www.cts-online.org.uk].

Further resources can be found at www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/CFW

**Liturgy
Office**
ENGLAND
& WALES

Consecrated for Worship



In the sacraments of Christian initiation we are freed from the power of darkness and joined to Christ's death, burial and resurrection. We receive the Spirit of filial adoption and are part of the entire people of God in the celebration of the memorial of the Lord's death and resurrection.

Christian Initiation, General Introduction

The Place of Baptism

The Making of Christians

The sacrament of Baptism is such an important event for the community of the Church, so rich in symbol and meaning, that even in the smallest churches the place for baptism should be kept distinct from other areas in the church. A separate, well-cared for and beautifully adorned baptistery with a font which through its design declares that all are welcome to the fountain of life, shows clearly the importance the church attaches to baptism. Even when a parish has few baptisms each year, it is important that there should be a permanent font in the parish church, as a constant reminder of the importance and meaning of baptism: the way to a new creation through water and the Holy Spirit

The rites call for more than just a font

The baptismal rites for both adults and children take place at various locations in the church:

- *the welcome of the candidates at the door or narthex;*
- *procession to the Liturgy of the word at the ambo;*
- *procession to the font for the rite of baptism*
- *procession to the altar in order to take part in or look forward to the eucharistic Liturgy around the altar.*



Thus suitable space should be set aside for the baptismal party and at least some members of the church community to gather at the beginning of the Liturgy. This may be at the church door, in the narthex or in a place near the entrance of the church.

Consideration should be given to appropriate seating arrangements during the central parts of the rite, for example for the whole assembly during the Liturgy of the Word, and for the elderly or infirm at other times during the celebration.

The baptistery

The baptistery need not be a separate, enclosed place, but should always be a space recognisably distinct within the body of the church. If not an enclosed space, the baptistery should be differentiated by the use of colour, artwork, design or decoration. A change in flooring may be sufficient to define the baptistery area. Changes of level raise safety and access issues. One appropriate and traditional place is by or close to the entrance of the church.



The space around the font should be large enough for a number of people to gather, including several baptismal parties, as envisaged by the rite itself. A font is rarely acceptable in the sanctuary area as it is the place reserved for the celebration of the Eucharist. The aim should be to provide a separate, dedicated space for the sacrament of Baptism, but ensuring that the font is visible at least from part of the main body of the church.

The font

In the baptismal Liturgy preference is given to baptism by immersion (that is either by full immersion, or standing or kneeling in water while water is poured over the head and whole body) rather than by infusion (that is, leaning over a font or bowl as water is poured over the head). New fonts should be designed and sited to enable both methods to take place for both adults and children from any side. (This avoids any inconvenience to ministers be they left or right-handed.) Consequently the bowl of the font needs to be quite large in size. Where the immersion of adults is to be undertaken a sunken or raised pool will need to be incorporated, or at least a floor area with adequate drainage or able to contain the poured water.

In the celebration of baptism the washing with water should take on its full importance as the sign of that mystical sharing in Christ's death and resurrection through which those who believe in his name die to sin and rise to eternal life.