

NOTES ON THE LITURGY

Office of Divine Worship - Archdiocese of Newark

Minister of Baptism

In a January 9, 2007 letter addressed to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Archbishop Myers inquired as to the validity of baptisms when one minister recites the baptismal formula and another pours the water or immerses the person being baptized. The Congregation responded in an April 25, 2008 letter:

A thorough study has been conducted into this important matter and I am now in a position to inform you that such a Baptism is invalid because the integrity of Baptism consists in the form of words and the use of the matter. Therefore, neither the minister who only pronounces the words, baptizes, nor the minister who only performs the immersion or the effusion of water. If one pronounces the words and the other performs the action, the formula does not express the truth, for a minister cannot truly say: "I baptize you..." when, in fact, he doesn't execute the action.

+ Angelo Amato, SDB
Titular Archbishop of Sila
Secretary, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

Consequently, any baptism at which one minister recited the baptismal formula and another minister poured or immersed the the person being baptized is invalid.

Archbishop Myers has directed that anyone who is aware of a baptism or baptisms having been administered in this manner should notify the Office of the Vicar General (Archdiocese of Newark) so that arrangements can be made for those in question to be validly baptized.

