CODE OF CANON LAW

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BOOK IV

FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH

LIBER IV. DE ECCLESIAE MUNERE SANCTIFICANDI

Can. 834 §1. The Church fulfills its sanctifying function in a particular way through the sacred liturgy, which is an exercise of the priestly function of Jesus Christ. In the sacred liturgy the sanctification of humanity is signified through sensible signs and effected in a manner proper to each sign. In the sacred liturgy, the whole public worship of God is carried out by the Head and members of the mystical Body of Jesus Christ.

§2. Such worship takes place when it is carried out in the name of the Church by persons legitimately designated and through acts approved by the authority of the Church.

Can. 835 §1. The bishops in the first place exercise the sanctifying function; they are the high priests, the principal dispensers of the mysteries of God, and the directors, promoters, and guardians of the entire liturgical life in the church entrusted to them.

§2. Presbyters also exercise this function; sharing in the priesthood of Christ and as his ministers under the authority of the bishop, they are consecrated to celebrate divine worship and to sanctify the people.

§3. Deacons have a part in the celebration of divine worship according to the norm of the prescripts of the law.

§4. The other members of the Christian faithful also have their own part in the function of sanctifying by participating actively in their own way in liturgical celebrations, especially the Eucharist. Parents share in a particular way in this function by leading a conjugal life in a Christian spirit and by seeing to the Christian education of their children.

Can. 836 Since Christian worship, in which the common priesthood of the Christian faithful is carried out, is a work which proceeds from faith and is based on it, sacred ministers are to take care to arouse and enlighten this faith diligently, especially through the ministry of the word, which gives birth to and nourishes the faith.

Can. 837 §1. Liturgical actions are not private actions but celebrations of the Church itself which is the sacrament of unity, that is, a holy people gathered and ordered under the bishops. Liturgical actions therefore belong to the whole body of the Church and manifest and affect it; they touch its individual members in different ways, however, according to the diversity of orders, functions, and actual participation.

§2. Inasmuch as liturgical actions by their nature entail a common celebration, they are to be celebrated with the presence and active participation of the Christian faithful where possible.

Can. 838[n] — §1. The ordering and guidance of the sacred liturgy depends solely upon the authority of the Church, namely, that of the Apostolic See and, as provided by law, that of the diocesan Bishop.

§ 2. It is for the Apostolic See to order the sacred liturgy of the universal Church, publish liturgical books, recognise adaptations approved by the Episcopal Conference according to the norm of law, and exercise vigilance that liturgical regulations are observed faithfully everywhere.

§ 3. It pertains to the Episcopal Conferences to faithfully prepare versions of the liturgical books in vernacular languages, suitably accommodated within defined limits, and to approve and publish the liturgical books for the regions for which they are responsible after the confirmation of the Apostolic See.

§ 4 Within the limits of his competence, it belongs to the diocesan Bishop to lay down in the Church entrusted to his care, liturgical regulations which are binding on all.

Can. 839 §1. The Church carries out the function of sanctifying also by other means, both by prayers in which it asks God to sanctify the Christian faithful in truth, and by works of penance and charity which greatly help to root and strengthen the kingdom of Christ in souls and contribute to the salvation of the world.

§2. Local ordinaries are to take care that the prayers and pious and sacred exercises of the Christian people are fully in keeping with the norms of the Church.

PART I.

THE SACRAMENTS

Can. 840 The sacraments of the New Testament were instituted by Christ the Lord and entrusted to the Church.

As actions of Christ and the Church, they are signs and means which express and strengthen the faith, render worship to God, and effect the sanctification of humanity and thus contribute in the greatest way to establish, strengthen, and manifest ecclesiastical communion. Accordingly, in the celebration of the sacraments the sacred ministers and the other members of the Christian faithful must use the greatest veneration and necessary diligence.

Can. 841 Since the sacraments are the same for the whole Church and belong to the divine deposit, it is only for the supreme authority of the Church to approve or define the requirements for their validity; it is for the same or another competent authority according to the norm of can. 838 §§3 and 4 to decide what pertains to their licit celebration, administration, and reception and to the order to be observed in their celebration.

Can. 842 §1. A person who has not received baptism cannot be admitted validly to the other sacraments.

§2. The sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and the Most Holy Eucharist are interrelated in such a way that they are required for full Christian initiation.

Can. 843 §1. Sacred ministers cannot deny the sacraments to those who seek them at appropriate times, are properly disposed, and are not prohibited by law from receiving them.

§2. Pastors of souls and other members of the Christian faithful, according to their respective ecclesiastical function, have the duty to take care that those who seek the sacraments are prepared to receive them by proper evangelization and catechetical instruction, attentive to the norms issued by competent authority.

Can. 844 §1. Catholic ministers administer the sacraments licitly to Catholic members of the Christian faithful alone, who likewise receive them licitly from Catholic ministers alone, without prejudice to the prescripts of §§2, 3, and 4 of this canon, and can. 861, §2.

§2. Whenever necessity requires it or true spiritual advantage suggests it, and provided that danger of error or of indifferentism is avoided, the Christian faithful for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a Catholic minister are permitted to receive the sacraments of penance, Eucharist, and anointing of the sick from non-

Catholic ministers in whose Churches these sacraments are valid.

§3. Catholic ministers administer the sacraments of penance, Eucharist, and anointing of the sick licitly to members of Eastern Churches which do not have full communion with the Catholic Church if they seek such on their own accord and are properly disposed. This is also valid for members of other Churches which in the judgment of the Apostolic See are in the same condition in regard to the sacraments as these Eastern Churches.

§4. If the danger of death is present or if, in the judgment of the diocesan bishop or conference of bishops, some other grave necessity urges it, Catholic ministers administer these same sacraments licitly also to other Christians not having full communion with the Catholic Church, who cannot approach a minister of their own community and who seek such on their own accord, provided that they manifest Catholic faith in respect to these sacraments and are properly disposed.

§5. For the cases mentioned in §§2, 3, and 4, the diocesan bishop or conference of bishops is not to issue general norms except after consultation at least with the local competent authority of the interested non-Catholic Church or community.

Can. 845 §1. Since the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and orders imprint a character, they cannot be repeated.

§2. If after completing a diligent inquiry a prudent doubt still exists whether the sacraments mentioned in §1

were actually or validly conferred, they are to be conferred conditionally.

Can. 846 §1. In celebrating the sacraments the liturgical books approved by competent authority are to be observed faithfully; accordingly, no one is to add, omit, or alter anything in them on one's own authority.

§2. The minister is to celebrate the sacraments according to the minister's own rite.

Can. 847 §1. In administering the sacraments in which holy oils must be used, the minister must use oils pressed from olives or other plants and, without prejudice to the prescript of can. 999, n. 2, consecrated or blessed recently by a bishop; he is not to use old oils unless it is necessary.

§2. The pastor is to obtain the holy oils from his own bishop and is to preserve them diligently with proper care.

Can. 848 The minister is to seek nothing for the administration of the sacraments beyond the offerings defined by competent authority, always taking care that the needy are not deprived of the assistance of the sacraments because of poverty.

TITLE I.

BAPTISM (Cann. 849 - 878)

Can. 849 Baptism, the gateway to the sacraments and necessary for salvation by actual reception or at least by desire, is validly conferred only by a washing of true water with the proper form of words. Through baptism men and women are freed from sin, are reborn as children of God, and, configured to Christ by an indelible character, are incorporated into the Church.

CHAPTER I.

THE CELEBRATION OF BAPTISM

Can. 850 Baptism is administered according to the order prescribed in the approved liturgical books, except in case of urgent necessity when only those things required for the validity of the sacrament must be observed.

Can. 851 The celebration of baptism must be prepared properly; consequently:

1/ an adult who intends to receive baptism is to be admitted to the catechumenate and is to be led insofar as possible through the various stages to sacramental initiation, according to the order of initiation adapted by the conference of bishops and the special norms issued by it;

2/ the parents of an infant to be baptized and those who are to undertake the function of sponsor are to be instructed properly on the meaning of this sacrament and the obligations attached to it. The pastor personally or through others is to take care that the parents are properly instructed through both pastoral advice and common prayer, bringing several families together and, where possible, visiting them.

Can. 852 §1. The prescripts of the canons on adult baptism are to be applied to all those who, no longer infants, have attained the use of reason.

§2. A person who is not responsible for oneself (*non sui compos*) is also regarded as an infant with respect to baptism.

Can. 853 Apart from a case of necessity, the water to be used in conferring baptism must be blessed according to the prescripts of the liturgical books.

Can. 854 Baptism is to be conferred either by immersion or by pouring; the prescripts of the conference of bishops are to be observed.

Can. 855 Parents, sponsors, and the pastor are to take care that a name foreign to Christian sensibility is not given.

Can. 856 Although baptism can be celebrated on any day, it is nevertheless recommended that it be celebrated ordinarily on Sunday or, if possible, at the Easter Vigil.

Can. 857 §1. Apart from a case of necessity, the proper place of baptism is a church or oratory.

§2. As a rule an adult is to be baptized in his or her parish church and an infant in the parish church of the parents unless a just cause suggests otherwise.

Can. 858 §1. Every parish church is to have a baptismal font, without prejudice to the cumulative right already acquired by other churches.

§2. After having heard the local pastor, the local ordinary can permit or order for the convenience of the faithful that there also be a baptismal font in another church or oratory within the boundaries of the parish.

Can. 859 If because of distance or other circumstances the one to be baptized cannot go or be brought to the parish church or to the other church or oratory mentioned in can. 858, §2 without grave inconvenience, baptism can and must be conferred in another nearer church or oratory, or even in another fitting place.

Can. 860 §1. Apart from a case of necessity, baptism is not to be conferred in private houses, unless the local ordinary has permitted it for a grave cause.

§2. Except in a case of necessity or for some other compelling pastoral reason, baptism is not to be celebrated in hospitals unless the diocesan bishop has established otherwise.

CHAPTER II.

THE MINISTER OF BAPTISM

Can. 861 §1. The ordinary minister of baptism is a bishop, a presbyter, or a deacon, without prejudice to the prescript of can. 530, n. 1.

§2. When an ordinary minister is absent or impeded, a catechist or another person designated for this function by the local ordinary, or in a case of necessity any person with the right intention, confers baptism licitly. Pastors of souls, especially the pastor of a parish, are to be concerned that the Christian faithful are taught the correct way to baptize.

Can. 862 Except in a case of necessity, no one is permitted to confer baptism in the territory of another without the required permission, not even upon his own subjects.

Can. 863 The baptism of adults, at least of those who have completed their fourteenth year, is to be deferred to the diocesan bishop so that he himself administers it if he has judged it Expedient.

CHAPTER III.

THOSE TO BE BAPTIZED

Can. 864 Every person not yet baptized and only such a person is capable of baptism.

Can. 865 §1. For an adult to be baptized, the person must have manifested the intention to receive baptism, have been instructed sufficiently about the truths of the faith and Christian obligations, and have been tested in the Christian life through the catechumenate. The adult is also to be urged to have sorrow for personal sins.

§2. An adult in danger of death can be baptized if, having some knowledge of the principal truths of the faith, the person has manifested in any way at all the intention to receive baptism and promises to observe the commandments of the Christian religion.

Can. 866 Unless there is a grave reason to the contrary, an adult who is baptized is to be confirmed immediately after baptism and is to participate in the eucharistic celebration also by receiving communion

Can. 867 §1. Parents are obliged to take care that infants are baptized in the first few weeks; as soon as possible after the birth or even before it, they are to go to the pastor to request the sacrament for their child and to be prepared properly for it.

§2. An infant in danger of death is to be baptized without delay.

Can. 868 §1. For an infant to be baptized licitly:

1/ the parents or at least one of them or the person who legitimately takes their place must consent;

2/ there must be a founded hope that the infant will be brought up in the Catholic religion; if such hope is altogether lacking, the baptism is to be delayed according to the prescripts of particular law after the parents have been advised about the reason.

§2. An infant of Catholic parents or even of non-Catholic parents is baptized licitly in danger of death even against the will of the parents.

Can. 869 §1. If there is a doubt whether a person has been baptized or whether baptism was conferred validly and the doubt remains after a serious investigation, baptism is to be conferred conditionally.

§2. Those baptized in a non-Catholic ecclesial community must not be baptized conditionally unless, after an examination of the matter and the form of the words used in the conferral of baptism and a consideration of the intention of the baptized adult and the minister of the baptism, a serious reason exists to doubt the validity of the baptism.

§3. If in the cases mentioned in §§1 and 2 the conferral or validity of the baptism remains doubtful, baptism is not to be conferred until after the doctrine of the sacrament of baptism is explained to the person to be baptized, if an adult, and the reasons of the doubtful validity of the baptism are explained to the person or, in the case of an infant, to the parents.

Can. 870 An abandoned infant or a foundling is to be baptized unless after diligent investigation the baptism of the infant is established.

Can. 871 If aborted fetuses are alive, they are to be baptized insofar as possible.

CHAPTER IV.

SPONSORS

Can. 872 Insofar as possible, a person to be baptized is to be given a sponsor who assists an adult in Christian initiation or together with the parents presents an infant for baptism. A sponsor also helps the baptized person to lead a Christian life in keeping with baptism and to fulfill faithfully the obligations inherent in it.

Can. 873 There is to be only one male sponsor or one female sponsor or one of each.

Can. 874 §1. To be permitted to take on the function of sponsor a person must:

1/ be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or the person who takes their place, or in their absence by the pastor or minister and have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function;

2/ have completed the sixteenth year of age, unless the diocesan bishop has established another age, or the pastor or minister has granted an exception for a just cause;

3/ be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on;

4/ not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;

5/ not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized.

§2. A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community is not to participate except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a witness of the baptism.

CHAPTER V.

THE PROOF AND REGISTRATION OF THE CONFERRAL OF BAPTISM

Can. 875 A person who administers baptism is to take care that, unless a sponsor is present, there is at least a witness who can attest to the conferral of the baptism.

Can. 876 To prove the conferral of baptism, if prejudicial to no one, the declaration of one witness beyond all exception is sufficient or the oath of the one baptized if the person received baptism as an adult.

Can. 877 §1. The pastor of the place where the baptism is celebrated must carefully and without any delay record in the baptismal register the names of the baptized, with mention made of the minister, parents, sponsors, witnesses, if any, the place and date of the conferral of the baptism, and the date and place of birth.

§2. If it concerns a child born to an unmarried mother, the name of the mother must be inserted, if her maternity is established publicly or if she seeks it willingly in writing or before two witnesses. Moreover, the name of the father must be inscribed if a public document or his own declaration before the pastor and two witnesses proves his paternity; in other cases, the name of the baptized is inscribed with no mention of the name of the father or the parents.

§3. If it concerns an adopted child, the names of those adopting are to be inscribed and, at least if it is done in the civil records of the region, also the names of the natural parents according to the norm of §§1 and 2, with due regard for the prescripts of the conference of bishops.

Can. 878 If the baptism was not administered by the pastor or in his presence, the minister of baptism, whoever it is, must inform the pastor of the parish in which it was administered of the conferral of the baptism, so that he records the baptism according to the norm of can. 877, §1.

(***n***: Indica che il testo corrisponde alla nuova versione o a un nuovo paragrafo)

Cf: **Apostolic Letter issued motu proprio of the Supreme Pontiff Francis *Magnum Principium* by which can. 838 of the Code of Canon Law is modified (3 September 2017)**

(precedente versione):

Can. 838 §1. The direction of the sacred liturgy depends solely on the authority of the Church which resides in the Apostolic See and, according to the norm of law, the diocesan bishop.

§2. It is for the Apostolic See to order the sacred liturgy of the universal Church, publish liturgical books and review their translations in vernacular languages, and exercise vigilance that liturgical regulations are observed faithfully everywhere.

§3. It pertains to the conferences of bishops to prepare and publish, after the prior review of the Holy See, translations of liturgical books in vernacular languages, adapted appropriately within the limits defined in the liturgical books themselves.

§4. Within the limits of his competence, it pertains to the diocesan bishop in the Church entrusted to him to issue liturgical norms which bind everyone.

Cf: **Apostolic Letter issued 'Motu Proprio' "De concordia inter Codices" modifying some norms of the Code of Canon Law (31 May 2016)**
[Latin]