CAN NOVUS ORDO BAPTISMS BE TRUSTED AS VALID?

Why Do Not the Clergy of Saint Gertrude the Great
Investigate the Validity of Novus Ordo Baptisms?

by Most Reverend Donald J. Sanborn

Recently Father Lehtoranta, a priest of the clergy of Saint Gertrude the Great [SGG] in West Chester, Ohio, wrote an article criticizing the position of the Roman Catholic Institute [RCI] regarding Novus Ordo Baptisms. Since the matter is somewhat complicated, I will present our response in a question and answer format.

Father Lehtoranta's assertions are essentially two: (1) SGG denies that there is prudent doubt concerning the validity of Novus Ordo Baptisms; instead they opt to presume their validity until they are proved doubtful or invalid by positive evidence; (2) the doubts which the RCI alleges concerning Novus Ordo Baptisms are negative doubts, "baseless suspicions and scruples,", "utterly imprudent and void," and without foundation.

I will respond to both of these assertions.

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1. What is the SGG policy regarding Novus Ordo Baptisms?

It is to investigate the *fact* of a Novus Ordo Baptism (i.e., the fact that such a ceremony took place). Once the fact is proved, the Baptism is presumed valid.

2. What is the policy of the Roman Catholic Institute regarding Novus Ordo baptisms?

It is to investigate the *fact,* and then the *validity (i.e., how* the ceremony was performed), presuming doubt if valid conferral cannot be proven. In other words, Baptisms performed in the Novus Ordo since 1990 must be investigated in order to establish, by means of reliable eyewitnesses or video, that the sacrament was performed correctly.

3. Why was the year 1990 chosen?

The year 1990 was chosen for the reason that most of the clergy who had been trained in pre-Vatican II seminaries were dead or retired by that time. As well, reports of invalid or doubtful baptisms started at that time to become more common.[1]

4. When is a baptism to be presumed valid?

In normal circumstances in the Church's life and activity, it is legitimate and even necessary to *presume* that any sacrament conferred by a properly trained Catholic priest or bishop was done validly. To *presume* means that you arrive at certitude of the validity of the sacrament because of factors which were certainly present in the performance of the sacrament. This certitude we call *moral certitude,* which is distinguished from *physical certitude.*

5. Explain the difference between moral certitude and physical certitude.

Moral certitude arises from the knowledge of normal human activity. Physical certitude arises from a direct knowledge of all of the physical causes of some event.

> For example, when you board an airplane, you have moral certitude of the following things: (1) the pilot and co-pilot are certified to fly the plane; (2) they in fact know how to fly the plane; (3) they are not drunk; (4) the engines and all the essential mechanics of the aircraft are in good working order; (5) there is enough fuel. You board the plane, placing your life at stake, with the *moral certitude* that all these things are true. There is reasonable cause for this certitude because of the

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[1] Fr. Lehtoranta criticizes this date as being "arbitrary." However, it is not without reasonable foundation, for the motives mentioned above. In fact, after having done the research for this article, I wonder if the date should not be moved back into the 1980's. There is a precedent to assigning a date. In England, the Provincial Council of Westminster in 1852 renewed the rule that all converts born and baptized by protestants **after the year 1733** were to be baptized conditionally. [Joseph G. Goodwine, *The Reception of Converts,* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1944) chap. V, pp. 114-115][emphasis added]

reputation of the airplane, the airline, and the government controls which regulate all of these necessary conditions.

Airplanes, however, occasionally crash. Nonetheless, it is so uncommon, at least in civilized countries, that a crash would have to be termed a *fluke,* something very extraordinary and unforeseen. Consequently these flukes do not destroy the moral certitude of arriving at your destination when boarding.

Physical certitude, however, would require that you check every single aspect of the flight and the aircraft yourself. Even then, factors of weather and the attention of the pilot would be beyond your control.

However, if many commercial planes crashed every single day, you would lose your moral certitude of arriving at your destination.

6. Why are Catholic sacraments conferred by properly trained Catholic clergy presumed valid with moral certitude?

What generates moral certitude of the validity of the sacrament are the following factors: (1) that the Catholic rite of the sacrament is being used; (2) that the minister of the sacrament has been trained to perform the sacrament properly, just as the pilots must be trained in flight school; (3) that the minister of the sacrament is following the instructions of the Catholic rite, and not deviating from it in any essential way.

All of these factors were reasonably presumed before Vatican II. There was moral certitude that Baptisms, Masses, confessions, and so forth, were validly conferred, and one could act upon it. Consequently a Catholic baptismal certificate was all that you needed.

This moral certitude, however, would not exclude absolutely the possibility of a fluke, that is, an occasional invalid or doubtful sacrament owing to some defect, e.g., the distraction of the priest, but given the level of training before Vatican II, and the general solicitude regarding validity of sacraments among the clergy before the council, these exceptions were so rare that they would not destroy moral certitude.

If a Baptism, however, has been performed by a lay person, because, for example, of the imminent danger of the death of a baby, the priest must, according to Catholic moral theology, inquire as to how the baptism was performed, since conditions (2) and (3) mentioned above would not have been present. If the priest can verify that all was done correctly, then the baptism can be entered into the register. Normally the ceremonies surrounding the rite are performed later by the priest.

7. Distinguish positive doubt and negative doubt.

The distinction is very simple. Positive doubt is based on a reasonable cause. Negative doubt is based on an unreasonable cause.

To return to our airplane example: If you detected that the pilot was impaired by alcohol before he boarded the plane, you would have a reasonable doubt about whether you would safely arrive at your destination or not. But to doubt whether the flaps on the wings are in good order or not or whether the wings will fall off or not is a negative doubt. Negative doubt is founded on scrupulous and baseless fears.

8. Is it licit to baptize conditionally when there is merely negative doubt concerning the validity of the first baptism?

No. Everyone agrees that negative doubt should be discounted in considering the validity of a sacrament.

9. What is the central question in this dispute between SGG and RCI?

The question is: *Is it necessary to demand proof that Novus Ordo Baptisms have been validly conferred? In the absence of the proof, should the Baptism be conferred again conditionally?* The RCI answers *yes* to both of these questions. SGG answers *no* to both.

10. Distinguish rite and ceremonies.

The *rite* of a sacrament consists (1) in the use of the correct essential matter and essential form of the sacrament, including its correct application; (2) the *ceremonies* of a sacrament consist of the surrounding prayers and gestures which manifest the Catholic doctrine concerning the sacrament.

11. Are we speaking here about rite only?

Yes. Here we are speaking only about *rite,* that is, the essential matter and form and its proper application. We are not speaking about the Novus Ordo revision of the *ceremonies* of baptism, which downplay the notion of original sin and emphasize the "welcoming into the community," i.e., the Novus Ordo religion. This is a whole other question which does not pertain to our present discussion.

12. Did the Novus Ordo change the *rite* of baptism?

No. They did not change substantially the rubrics and words from the traditional ritual concerning the rite of baptism.

13. If the Novus Ordo rite is valid, then why would anyone question its validity?

There are many non-Catholic sects which have valid baptismal rites in their ritual books. But for the Catholic Church this evidence is not sufficient. Investigation must be made, according to the Holy Office, theologians, canonists, and liturgists, that by means of reliable and qualified eyewitness testimony, there is sufficient evidence that the rite was performed validly.

14. Is the Novus Ordo a non-Catholic sect?

The SGG clergy take the position that the Novus Ordo is a non-Catholic sect, that is, a separate church from the Roman Catholic Church. The RCI does not hold this position. Instead we say that the Novus Ordo hierarchy has retained and maintained the *juridical structures* of the Roman Catholic Church, while at the same time has filled these structures with a false religion.

> This was the precise plan of the modernists, namely to slowly infiltrate the hierarchical positions of the Roman Catholic Church, and once established in them, to inject the poison of Modernism into all of its institutions. Indeed, this is the reason why so many Catholics have been deceived by the Novus Ordo, since it spreads its errors from the juridical structures of the Catholic Church.

15. Why does the RCI hold that the Novus Ordo is not a non-Catholic sect?

The RCI holds that the Novus Ordo is not a non-Catholic sect because (1) it has never declared itself severed from the Roman Catholic Church *legally* (as Martin Luther did as well as the Greek schismatics, by publicly repudiating submission to the Roman Pontiff), (2) the Novus Ordo has never been severed *legally,* i.e., by canonical declaration, by the Roman Catholic Church (which was done both regarding Luther and the Greek Schismatics).

16. How does the RCI regard the Novus Ordo?

The RCI regards the Novus Ordo as a non-Catholic religion occupying Catholic institutions, but not cut off legally from those institutions.

It could be compared to a gangrenous arm. It is something that is putrid with corruption, but nonetheless is still, unfortunately, attached to the body. It *should* be cut off, but as yet has not been cut off.

17. Why does this theological difference between the SGG and RCI affect the conditional baptism of Novus Ordites?

It affects it in this way: Since the SGG clergy regard the Novus Ordo as a non-Catholic sect, like the Lutheran church, then they are bound by the 1878 decree of the Holy Office to investigate Novus Ordo Baptisms, as having been done by clergy who belong to a non-Catholic church.

SGG is also logically bound to regard Novus Ordo Baptisms as *non-Catholic Baptisms,* and therefore subject to the presumption of doubt as to the proper administration of the matter and form. Furthermore, the Novus Ordo Baptismal certificates would have to be considered as merely private documents, and not true certificates. This is important, since a certificate of *Catholic* Baptism generates *certitude* concerning the proper administration of the rite.

> Nor have the Saint Gertrude the Great clergy ever defined *at what point* the "Novus Ordo Church" came into being. For example, if it is from the election of John XXIII, then they are bound to examine Baptisms from 1958 to the present day.
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> Although they say that the Novus Ordo is a different church from the Roman Catholic Church, they do not require a public abjuration of the false church for those coming in from the Novus Ordo, required by law for those belonging to non-Catholic churches. Furthermore, since nearly all of the SGG clergy at one time or other in their lives belonged to the "Novus Ordo Church," how could they receive the abjurations of converts from the "Novus Ordo Church," when they themselves have never abjured, or did abjure before someone who himself had never abjured, and was therefore incapable of reconciling them to the Roman Catholic Church? The SGG clergy apparently have not done the logic of their position. According to their position, they are logically bound to say that their clergy are non-Catholics, that is, unabjured Novus Ordites, and that their people are also members of the "Novus Ordo Church," having never publicly abjured the false church, nor had their excommunication lifted. When one returns from a non-Catholic sect, it is necessary to make a public abjuration of the sect, and to have the excommunication lifted by a *Catholic* priest. The absurdity of this position should cause the SGG clergy to reflect upon their theological principles.

18. If the RCI does not consider the Novus Ordo to be a separate church, then why does it investigate Novus Ordo baptisms, and baptize

conditionally when there is insufficient evidence of validity?

The RCI investigates and baptizes conditionally because there is positive doubt as to the *application* of the matter and form, and even the use of the correct words. This positive doubt is based on the following: (1) the common practice of the Novus Ordo ministers to pour water on the hair only; (2) Novus Ordo contempt for the traditional sacramental theology; (3) The Novus Ordo culture and practice of ad-libbing and of personal innovation in the liturgy; (4) the lack of adequate training among Novus Ordo clergy.

19. Why is pouring the water on the hair considered doubtful?

Catholic theologians commonly teach that to pour water merely on the hair, without flow on the skin of the head, is of doubtful validity. This is true because hair is a non-living substance, therefore not animated by the human soul. A person can lose all his hair without any detriment to the integrity of his body. The skin, on the other hand, is a living organ of the body, animated by the soul. To lose skin is a diminution of the integrity of the body.

For this reason, the theologians in general hold that, for validity, there must be an *ablution* of the *skin.* The word "ablution" means the running of water over the skin of the head, as opposed to a mere application of water to the skin of the head. Therefore, in the pre-Vatican II theological textbooks, the theologians indicate that the water is poured onto the head, *but that, if the hair is thick, it should be pushed pack sufficiently so that the scalp is showing.*

In the case of most newborn babies, this is not necessary, since the hair is so fine that the scalp easily receives the ablution in the manner I described. In the case of older children, however, care must be taken that the water, somehow, flows over the skin of the head of the child. For an ever greater reason care must be taken that adults receive the valid ablution of the skin of the head as well.[2]

20. What do properly trained traditional priests do in performing baptism?

Traditional priests, in order to perform the rite validly, aim the water on the forehead of the child.[3] In the case of an adult they ask him to bend over the font, but to look up at the ceiling, so that the forehead can receive the ablution.

21. What is the common Novus Ordo practice with regard to the ablution of the hair only?

From eyewitness evidence and from videos of Novus Ordo baptisms, they seem to have no care of this traditional insistence on ablution of the skin of the head. I urge the reader to view the videos of Novus Ordo baptisms [indicated in the links below] to illustrate the point. In these, you will see even Bishop Barron, a favorite of Novus Ordo conservatives, performing a "hair alone" baptism, which is therefore doubtful. Even "Saint" John Paul II is doing a doubtful "hair alone" baptism.

In other cases, they can be seen to be merely rubbing some water on the child's head. This is invalid.[4]

22. What is the Novus Ordo contempt for the traditional sacramental theology?

In the first place, Novus Ordo clergy have contempt for what is known as scholastic philosophy and theology. Saint Pius X mentions this in his encyclical *Pascendi* condemning Modernism. He even says that it is a sign of a modernist.

In order to describe the nature of a sacrament, the pre-Vatican II theologians commonly referred to *matter and form,* where the matter is the physical element, and the form consists of the words which give meaning to the matter. In the Sacrament of Baptism, the water is the matter, and the words are the form. The Novus Ordo clergy have taken a subjectivistic and existentialist view of sacraments. This means that they emphasize what the sacraments mean to you, and what your experience is, instead of the objective nature of the sacrament.

For this reason, the Novus Ordites have abandoned belief in transubstantiation, a doctrine *defined* by the Council of Trent, because the Novus Ordites say it is "too scholastic, too

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[2] Ablution of other parts of the body is considered doubtful.

[3] This mention of the *forehead* was added to the 1958 Baltimore Catechism. The previous edition simply mentioned *the head.* cf. *Baltimore Catechism* no. 3, 1958 ed., question 319.

[4] Photos and videos of Novus Ordo doubtful baptisms are available. Visit: www.romancatholicinstitute.org/blog/

aristotelean, too medieval." According to polls very few Novus Ordites believe in transubstantiation, that is, that in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, the substance of bread and wine are changed into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ, only the accidents of bread and wine (taste, color etc.) remaining. Bergoglio, for example, once made the statement, as stupid as it is heretical: "Christ is in the bread." The Catholic doctrine is that there is no bread after the consecration, but only the Body and Blood of Christ.

23. What is the effect of the Novus Ordo contempt for the traditional sacramental theology?

As a result of this new idea concerning the sacraments, the Novus Ordite clergy pooh-pooh the careful union of matter and form, sarcastically referring to the pre-Vatican II approach to the form as "magic words." For them, sign, meaning, and experience are the all-important elements of sacraments; the "matter and form" are not that important.

So the "hair" problem is not significant for them, nor is the requirement for ablution.

24. How does the Novus Ordo culture of ad-libbing and personal innovation affect validity?

Father Cekada mentioned this culture in his book on the New Mass, entitled *Work of Human Hands*. The Novus Ordo priest is encouraged to depart from the assigned text and to add his own personal thoughts to the liturgical rites. This practice can easily lead to invalidity or doubt regarding a sacrament. A perfect example is the substitution of "We baptize" for "I baptize," which resulted in *thousands* of invalid baptisms in two dioceses in the United States.[5]

25. How does the lack of adequate training among Novus Ordo clergy affect validity?

The Novus Ordo clergy are not taught traditional theology, but the modern subjectivistic and existentialist approach to the sacraments, i.e., "what it means to you." Consequently, they do not even know what constitutes validity or invalidity. For them the words do not have a specific meaning which must be followed. An example of this is the innovation made by a priest in Phoenix, by which he substituted "we baptize" for "I baptize." He said that he had no idea that he was performing the sacrament invalidly.

26. What is the evidence from pre-Vatican II theologians regarding doubtful or non-Catholic baptisms?

Herbert Jone O.F.M. Cap, J.C.D. *Moral Theology.* (Translated and adapted to the Code and Customs of the United States of America by Rev. Urban Adelman, O.F.M. Cap., J.C.D., 1951):

"Conditional Baptism is always necessary whenever there is a doubt, **even a slight doubt,** about the validity of the Baptism received, because the Sacrament is indispensably necessary for salvation. If there is no doubt about the validity of the Baptism received, one may not be rebaptized, even conditionally, though Baptism was administered by a lay person or heretic. — Before one rebaptizes conditionally because of a doubt he must try to remove the doubt by investigation. If nothing can be learned about the Baptism of one converting to the Faith **conditional Baptism is necessary.**" [no. 470] [emphasis added]

"If the hair alone and not the skin is touched the baptism is doubtful. [no. 467]

"Baptism is certainly valid if administered on the *head* (If the hair is very thick it were better to baptize on the forehead)" [ibid.]

"Validity requires that *one and the same person* apply the water and pronounce the words." [ibid.][6]

Benedictus Henricus Merkelbach, O.P., *Summa Theologiæ Moralis. Volume III, 1962:*

"Baptism conferred by a heretic or schismatic must be subjected to an examination: Which examination must be

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[5] This ad-libbing is the direct result of the Novus Ordo change in the doctrine of the sacrament of Baptism. All of the emphasis is to "welcome a new member of the community" instead of washing away original sin. So naturally the Novus Ordo priest or deacon thinks it is more appropriate to say "we" instead of "I," which sounds so "exclusive." Even the Novus Ordo bishops in the two dioceses called these baptisms invalid.

[6] Another famous case of Novus Ordo invalidity was that of the priest saying the words while the godfather poured water.

conducted in each case, after having consulted the bishop.

If the Baptism is dubious, or if no investigation can be undertaken, or if nothing can be learned about the validity of the sacrament, it is to be presumed doubtful and the baptism must be repeated conditionally." [no. 168]

Rev. Frederick Schulze, D.D., *A Manual of Pastoral Theology. 1923.*

"The rule today is almost invariably to rebaptize those who come from a Protestant sect, because there is a just reason to doubt the validity of their former baptism. Still, an investigation should in each case be made, lest a priest become irregular by rebaptizing without a sufficient reason."

Marcellinus Zalba, S.J., *Theologiæ Moralis Summa. 1958.*

"Those who are doubtfully baptized, if they want to live in a christian manner or hope to receive a christian formation, **must be baptized conditionally,** either publicly or privately, depending on whether there is evidence that their former baptism had been done publicly or not. The reason for this assertion is that Baptism, imprinting a character, cannot be repeated without grave sacrilege; but because it is so necessary for salvation, it is always prudently repeated when there is a **reasonable doubt, even light,** concerning the validity of the first baptism." [The author cites a footnote from the Vatican's Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith: no.1346,43] which states that "those baptized by catechists shall be ordinarily rebaptized unless two witnesses can testify that the baptism was done correctly." [Catechists were lay persons who were trained to instruct others in the Faith, and were officially authorized by the Catholic Church to do so. They were used extensively, but not exclusively, in mission lands] [emphasis added]

Nicholas Halligan, O.P., *The Administration of the Sacraments. 1962.*

"When diligent investigation uncovers solid reasons for doubting either the administration or the validity of a previous baptism, there is a sufficient basis for a conditional rebaptism; **where there is further doubt whether the reasons themselves for doubting are sufficient for rebaptism, resolve the doubt in favor of conditional rebaptism.**"

Felix Cappello, S.J., *Tractatus Canonico-Moralis de Sacramentis. 1961.*

"According to the decree of the Holy Office of November 20, 1878, this is the rule to be observed with regard to individual cases, with which the decree is concerned:

"From whatever place and from whatever sect heretics should come as converts to the Catholic Faith, there must be an investigation concerning the validity of the Baptism received in heresy. **It is not sufficient to consider the ritual of the sect and to examine whether it contains something contrary to the validity of Baptism, but in addition one must investigate in each case whether in fact, that is, concerning the Baptism conferred, the manner in which the prescriptions of their own ritual were observed by the minister.**

"If, when the matter has been diligently investigated, the validity of the Baptism is certainly established, in no way should they be rebaptized, but only admitted to the abjuration and profession of faith.

"If, on the other hand, it is certain that no baptism was conferred, or that it was conferred invalidly, then Baptism is to be conferred absolutely. **If, however, in consideration of times and places, after the investigation has been performed, nothing in favor of validity or in favor of invalidity has been discovered (and the same must be said if no investigation could be done), or if a probable doubt concerning the validity of the Baptism remains, then they must be baptized conditionally secretly, that is, not publicly**. [emphasis added]

27. Give a summary of the foregoing.

It should be noted that all the theologians who comment on this subject, even those not cited here, say exactly the same thing, namely that where there is prudent doubt concerning the validity of a conferred baptism, an investigation must be made (1) as to the validity of the rite itself, and (2) whether or not the minister who performed the baptism followed the valid rite correctly. **(Notice that Father Halligan, whom Father Lehtoranta himself cites, says that even if there is a doubt about the reasons for rebaptizing, the doubt must be resolved in favor of the conditional baptism).**

28. What do the RCI clergy do?

The RCI clergy follow precisely what is indicated by the Holy Office and the universal

teaching of theologians concerning non-Catholic and/or doubtful baptisms.

29. If the RCI clergy do not consider the Novus Ordo to be a separate church, then why do they not consider Novus Ordo baptisms to be Catholic baptisms, and therefore to be presumed valid?

The RCI considers Novus Ordo baptisms to be non-Catholic baptisms, *only from the sacramental point of view.* Juridically, they are considered Catholic Baptisms, always for the same reason, namely that the Novus Ordo has not be juridically separated from the Roman Catholic Church. The Novus Ordo clergy adhere to heretical doctrines, evil disciplines, and modernist liturgy. Consequently, in all ways the Novus Ordo has the characteristics of a sect, but which has not been, unfortunately, separated legally from the Catholic Church. Therefore, from the *sacramental* point of view, we treat their baptisms *as if* coming from a sect.

30. Why does the RCI insist on an investigation and conditional baptism if the Novus Ordo rite of baptism is in itself valid?

Although the Novus Ordo rite is in itself valid, there is serious doubt about the manner in which it was performed. This doubt arises from many incidents of various innovations on the part of the Novus Ordo priests and deacons, as well as from the widespread practice of baptizing the hair only.

31. Are not the Novus Ordo aberrations isolated cases?

These are not isolated instances, and cannot be dismissed as "anecdotal," that is, mere flukes in a system which confers the sacrament validly. To the contrary, these aberrations are systemic. These deviations are based on the Novus Ordo theology and custom itself, that is, of repudiation of the notion of matter and form, of carelessness and of nonchalance with regard to the administration of the sacraments, of the culture and practice of ad-libbing and of inventing personalized manners of conferring the sacraments, of the repudiation of the traditional norms of conferring baptism (e.g., that it must flow on the skin of the head and not the hair only), and of lack of supervision on the part of Novus Ordo pastors and hierarchy, which can be clearly seen in the general lawlessness which prevails in the Novus Ordo.

The Novus Ordo is a liturgical and moral free-for-all, an unruly and chaotic mess.

32. Can you give examples of invalid or doubtful baptisms performed by Novus Ordo clergy?

In addition to the "hair baptisms" seen in the videos above, there some famous cases of invalid baptisms on a grand scale. One is in the Diocese of Phoenix, Arizona, in which it was discovered that a Novus Ordo priest, for over twenty years from 1995 to 2021, had the habit of conferring baptism saying "We baptize.." instead of "I baptize…" The Novus Ordo bishop rightly declared these baptisms to be invalid. The diocese also noted, correctly, that the invalid baptism also invalidates other sacraments received by the invalidly baptized persons. It is estimated that *thousands* of baptisms were invalidly performed.

In the Archdiocese of Detroit, the very same defect was detected in 2022, which affected nearly 800 parishioners. The invalid baptisms were performed by a deacon over a period of thirteen years, that is, between 1986 and 1999.

A Novus Ordo priest in the Archdiocese of Detroit, Fr. Matthew Hood, discovered from a video that as an infant, in 1992, he was baptized invalidly. This means that even in the eyes of the Novus Ordo, his ordination was invalid.

In 2004, it was discovered that an Australian Novus Ordo priest in the Diocese of Brisbane was substituting the words "creator, liberator and sustainer" for "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." This was clearly invalid. The Novus Ordo priest in question, who had been ordained for forty-six years, defended the aberration. "It's fundamentalism to argue that the actual words are all-important," he said. "That's the trouble with the Church; under the present Pope [then John Paul II] you're not allowed to have different opinions."[7]

There have been many other cases of invalid baptisms which have been mentioned above, where, for example, the priest says the words and the godfather pours the water, or vice versa. This is certainly invalid.

One of our own priests was doubtfully baptized in 1996, in which he was submerged completely up to his neck, but the water never touched his head. The baptism was later done

[7] Quoted from Catholic News Agency.

correctly. But what if it had not been done again correctly? He would be a doubtfully ordained priest, and all the sacraments which he confers, except Baptism itself, would labor under doubt. If he were to be consecrated a bishop, then all his priestly ordinations and episcopal consecrations would also be doubtful. Think of all of those potentially invalid Masses, invalid ordinations, invalid confessions, and Extreme Unctions.

In 1878, the Holy Office required that all non-Catholic baptisms be investigated as to whether or not a valid rite was used.

Summary. We have learned the following things:

- When there is a positive (i.e., prudent) doubt concerning the validity of a baptism, the priest must investigate as to whether or not the baptism was performed correctly.
- If the evidence for validity is insufficient or unreliable, or if it is unavailable, the baptism must be performed again conditionally.
- In the investigation concerning validity of non-Catholic baptisms, it is not sufficient to determine that the non-Catholic sect has a valid rite in their ritual, but it is necessary to determine that the non-Catholic minister correctly followed the valid rite.
- In 1878, the Holy Office required that all non-Catholic baptisms be investigated as to whether or not a valid rite was used.
- The Holy Office also decreed that it is not permitted to baptize conditionally merely on a *presumption* of doubt or invalidity, but that an investigation must be undertaken.
- That there is prudent doubt concerning Novus Ordo baptisms done in recent times (1) because they repudiate the traditional norms and cautions concerning validity; (2) they generally repudiate the notion of matter and form; (3) they are prone to ad-libbing, innovation, and personalization of liturgical acts; (4) they lack the proper formation in sacramental theology, with the result that they do not even know what constitutes a valid, doubtful, or invalid sacrament; (5) the Novus Ordo clergy, including married deacons, who often do the baptisms, lack supervision.[8]

The great invalidators. The Novus Ordo religion has invalidated or made doubtful every sacrament. We have already seen the doubt it has caused in Baptism. What is yet worse, it has invalidated the consecration of bishops, which in turn invalidates the sacrament of Holy Orders, which in turn invalidates the Mass, even the traditional Mass, invalidates the Holy Eucharist, invalidates Extreme Unction, invalidates Penance, invalidates Confirmation, invalidates the blessing of Holy Oils. If both parties are invalidly baptized, then Matrimony is reduced to a mere natural contract between two unbaptized persons, and no sacrament is received. Is it prudent for us to trust the validity of their Baptisms without any investigation?

It is for this reason that we want to be extremely careful about Novus Ordo Baptisms, which, for the reasons we have adduced, merit to be considered doubtful until proven valid by reliable testimony of witnesses. One of our primary duties as traditional clergy is to preserve the validity of the sacraments. Every precaution must be taken. To me it is an insanity to "trust" the Novus Ordo clergy to perform the baptismal rite correctly, when they have either invalidated or rendered dubious every single sacrament.

Why not? I do not understand why the clergy of Saint Gertrude the Great refuse to investigate Novus Ordo Baptisms, and why they have attacked our practice of doing so. Why do they expose their people to the doubt that arises not only from an improperly performed Baptism, but also from all of the doubt and possible invalidity which arises from such a Baptism? *Why not investigate?* It takes only a few minutes to do a conditional Baptism. I do not understand why they have so much trust in the Novus Ordo,

[8] For example, that a deacon in the Detroit Archdiocese, could, for so many years, baptize invalidly. The same may be said about the priest in Phoenix. No one, in these cases, was supervising what they were doing, or did not care.

especially since they consider it to be a non-Catholic sect. If they investigate a protestant baptism, which I hope they do, on the grounds that the protestant church is a *sect,* then why do they not investigate baptisms done by the Novus Ordo, which they consider to be a sect? Is this logical and consistent? Yet they accuse us of being "soft" on the Novus Ordo.

According to the rule set down by the Holy Office in 1878, it is required to investigate all baptisms conferred by non-Catholic ministers, and to rebaptize conditionally where there is prudent doubt concerning the validity of the non-Catholic baptism.

Consequently, the SGG clergy would be bound to consider Novus Ordo baptisms as Catholic baptisms, in order to avoid this investigation of validity required by the Holy Office in 1878.

The reader is invited to check our website
www.romancatholicinstitute.org/blog/
for yet further testimony of theologians in support of the position of the Roman Catholic Institute.

A Catholic Baptism, however, which does not require investigation, understood in pre-Vatican II Catholicism, is one that is (1) performed by a duly ordained Catholic priest or deacon; (2) who has undergone a full course of studies in a pre-Vatican II seminary; (3) has been instructed in how to perform a valid baptism; (4) has been instructed in pre-Vatican II sacramental theology; (5) professes and believes all that is taught by the pre-Vatican II magisterium of the Catholic Church.

Novus Ordo Baptisms are done, in most cases, by (1) clergy who are invalidly ordained; (2) have attended post-Vatican II seminaries (or not even that, in the case of the married deacons); (3) have obviously not been trained in how to do a valid Baptism; (4) have not been instructed in pre-Vatican II sacramental theology; (5) do not profess or believe all that is taught by the pre-Vatican II magisterium of the Catholic Church.

Do the SGG clergy want us to accept these baptisms as "Catholic," having all the presumption of validity as a pre-Vatican II Catholic baptism?

To me that would be absurd, insane, and would render seriously doubtful the validity not only of the Baptism, but also the validity of all the sacraments which the "baptized" person would receive thereafter, including *ordination* and *episcopal consecration.*

Conclusion.

• **The doubts raised concerning Novus Ordo Baptisms are not unfounded or negative doubts,** but are founded on factual and reliable testimony, including videos of actual baptisms. Nor are these "isolated cases."

• **The RCI, although it does not regard the Novus Ordo to be a separate church, nonetheless recognizes that its doctrines and practices are those of a false religion,** and consequently our attitude toward their Baptisms ought to one of treating their sacraments *as if* of a separate church, applying to them all of the laws and customs of the Catholic Church regarding non-Catholic sacraments.

• **SGG, although it does regard the Novus Ordo to be a separate church, like the Lutheran church, nonetheless inconsistently accepts Novus Ordo baptismal certificates as true Catholic certificates, as providing certitude of both Catholic Baptism and validity.** SGG inconsistently ignores and repudiates, as well, the decree of the Holy Office that non-Catholic baptisms must be investigated not only regarding their established rite in their ritual books, but also the manner in which they Baptism was conferred.

• The ultimate question in this entire controversy is: *Can we trust the Novus Ordo clergy to perform the Sacrament of Baptism correctly and validly?* I answer with a resounding *no!*

• **There is overwhelming evidence from moral theologians, canonists, and even the Holy Office itself, that wherever there is even the slightest prudent doubt concerning the validity of Baptism, it should be repeated conditionally.**