

## Question: Can Baptisms happen during Lent?

Answer: Good question. It is not forbidden to baptize during Lent.

The pertinent sections of the *Rite of Baptism for Children* (whose introduction states the liturgical law) are paragraphs number eight and nine.

### TIME AND PLACE FOR THE BAPTISM OF CHILDREN

#8. As for the time of baptism, the first consideration is the welfare of the child, that it may not be deprived of the benefit of the sacrament; then the health of the mother must be considered, so that, if at all possible, she too may be present. Then, as long as they do not interfere with the greater good of the child, there are pastoral considerations, such as allowing sufficient time to prepare the parents and to plan the actual celebration in order to bring out its true character effectively.

Accordingly:

1. If the child is in danger of death, it is to be baptized without delay, in the manner laid down in no. 21.

2. In other cases, as soon as possible - if need be, even before the child is born, the parents should be in touch with the parish priest (pastor) concerning the baptism, so that proper preparation may be made for the celebration.

3. An infant should be baptized within the first weeks after birth. The conference of bishops may, for sufficiently serious pastoral reasons, determine a longer interval of time between birth and baptism.

4. When the parents are not yet prepared to profess the faith or to undertake the duty of bringing up their children as Christians, it is for the parish priest (pastor), keeping in mind whatever regulations may have been laid down by the conference of bishops, to determine the time for the baptism of infants.

#9. To bring out the paschal character of baptism, it is recommended that the sacrament be celebrated during the Easter Vigil or on Sunday, when

the Church commemorates the Lord's resurrection. On Sunday, baptism may be celebrated even during Mass, so that the entire community may be present and the relationship between baptism and eucharist may be clearly seen; but this should not be done too often. Regulations for the celebration of baptism during the Easter Vigil or at Mass on Sunday will be set out later.

The *Code of Canon Law* in Canons 856 and 867 restate the same:

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. 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.

Historically, it was the case that baptism *was not* celebrated during the season of Lent in the early Middle Ages, as shown by certain local synods; in Spain for example canon #2 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Council of Toledo, (7th century).

So as it stands today, there is a preference to bring out baptism's paschal character by celebrating at the Easter Vigil or on a Sunday. (#9) As it is, though, it is not forbidden during Lent.