



St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church

1400 Suther Road • Charlotte, NC 28213 • Phone (704) 549-1607 • Fax (704) 549-1614

11/28/20

Dear parishioners,

Earlier this year, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued an important [clarification](#) that the sacrament of baptism is not valid if the appropriate prayer for the rite is modified by the celebrant. Specifically, the doctrinal note explained that the modified words “**We baptize** you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” do not convey the sacrament of baptism. Rather, the proper prayer has always been “**I baptize** you...” because it reflects the truth that the sacrament is administered by Our Lord acting through the minister, not through the assembly. In making this clarification, the Congregation cites the Second Vatican Council, which declared no one “may add, remove, or change anything in the liturgy on his own authority.”

Since the Congregation’s announcement, it was recently brought to our attention that a deacon of the Diocese of Dallas – who previously served in the Diocese of Charlotte – used this incorrect wording in some, but not all, of the baptisms he performed in Dallas. Deacon Carl J. Macero, who is now deceased, served at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Charlotte from 1996 to 2004. **While we have no reports that he incorrectly administered the sacrament of baptism here, it must be presumed to be a possibility.** Thus, we are making parishioners aware of the situation so they can act.

Our parish is working to identify and contact those baptized by Deacon Macero so that each individual’s circumstance may be examined and, if necessary, rectified. We are asking that anyone baptized by Deacon Macero review any video or audio recordings of their baptism or that of family members to determine whether the proper formula was used. If incorrect wording was used, the baptism is invalid and the sacrament was not conferred. An invalid baptism also renders subsequent sacraments invalid, including confirmation and possibly matrimony. **Please be assured our parish and diocese are prepared to act swiftly to confer baptism and other sacraments to those affected, either actually or conditionally, and that issues related to marriage can be remedied quickly and without an additional ceremony.**

For those who were baptized by Deacon Macero but have no recordings, it may be necessary to pursue a conditional baptism, which is administered when it is impossible to verify whether an individual has been baptized or there is doubt about the validity of a previous attempt to confer baptism. Subsequent sacraments may also have to be conditionally administered.

We know this news may be unsettling or perceived as a burdensome technicality by some, yet it is an important matter requiring our response. The sacraments entrusted to us by Jesus through the Church are essential and are not subject to redefinition or substantive alteration. They fortify our life of faith and help us along our journey toward the ultimate goal of eternal life. As the first sacrament, baptism brings about adoption into the family of God and places sanctifying grace in the soul, which is necessary in order to spend eternity in heaven.

On behalf of the entire diocese, I am deeply sorry this error has resulted in disruption to the sacramental lives of some members of the faithful. We will take every step necessary to remedy the situation and ask for your help in identifying those possibly affected. **If you believe you were baptized by Deacon Macero, please contact the parish office at (704) 549-1607.** For more information, please see [Frequently Asked Questions](#) published on our website. And in closing, I hope you will join me in praying for those affected by this situation and that by God’s grace we might achieve a smooth resolution.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father Matthew Codd