

BAPTISM HAS CONSEQUENCES AND IS ANTI-LIBERAL SO IT SHOULD BE THE CHILD'S CHOICE

Catholicism gets its power mainly through children being conscripted into the faith by baptism as soldiers of Christ. This is an illusion for a child may be baptised in a Catholic Church and raised Protestant and nobody says that child is under canon law, Catholic law. Its purely a social construct. Its even more a social construct than many other things are! It is an artificial construct and that means it is a lie. Being artificial does not stop anything from having consequences.

The parents and godparents make vows to God and his Church for the baby or child.

The Catholic baptism ceremony treats parents as if they are in the background while the godparents are brought to the fore. The reason for this is that the message is the parents are giving the child to God through his Church to teach her faith and morals and what to believe and what must be done to remain a practicing Catholic. The word Catholic means inclusive and all so the ceremony is a vow and promise not to cherry-pick faith or morals. This vow is affirmed by the child for himself at confirmation. So no disagreeing with the ban on abortion or holding that one Christian Church is as good as another.

Former President of Ireland and Doctor of Canon Law Mary McAleese explained that human rights are "acknowledged in the secular world to freedom of religion, conscience and thought, as well as freedom to change religion or give it up entirely." She noted that these rights, "are not recognised in canon law. All such freedoms are subordinated to the demands of compulsory obedience to the Church's teaching (magisterium), the obligation to maintain communion with the Church and the Church's insistence that 'once a Catholic', always a Catholic."

In fact the Church does agree you can leave the Church as in practicing member or leave as a Catholic full stop. The doctrine is that once you are baptised you are always baptised and obligated to follow God in the Church he has set up. So rather than forced membership it is a choice, membership or defiant leaving of the Church. The doctrine is that once you are baptised you are obligated to stay Catholic always. The doctrine then is not that once you are Catholic you always are Catholic. The duty to stay Catholic is imposed.

McAleese complains that the Church "has never considered the ethical, legal and moral implications of imposing lifelong membership of the Church and a body of obligations on a baby who is not in a position to weigh the implications."

The Church through the Vatican did sign up to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1969 and has never disputed the religious freedom aspects implying a child has a right to choose any religion and be considered a member of it.

Article 14, 1. States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. 2. States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child. 3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

The Catholic child has a human right to cease to be Catholic of her own free will and choice. It is impossible to describe baptising a child and counting her a Catholic as acting in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child. Clearly the religious teaching has to be sensitive to the child's vulnerability and be age appropriate. Baptism is religious teaching in rite form which adds to the problem. It is about treating the child as having made a promise to accept the faith instead of thinking whatever they like.

Please notice as well that there is no clear approval to "educate" a child in your faith assumptions and religious freedom is curtailed by the article. It is clear that the state has a right to assume that a law that bans religion being forced on children may be enacted. Few laws to prevent harm are clear so the door is wide open.

The Council of Europe Guide on Article 9 says that being an atheist or agnostic or sceptic is to be protected as much as religious faith. You can download it here.

https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Guide_Art_9_ENG.pdf

Here is the Guide on Article 9.

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion as enshrined in Article 9 of the Convention represents one of the foundations of a "democratic society" within the meaning of the Convention. It is, in its religious dimension, one of the most vital elements that go to make up the identity of believers and their conception of life, but it is also a precious asset for atheists,

agnostics, sceptics, and the unconcerned. The pluralism indissociable from a democratic society, which has been dearly won over the centuries, depends on it. That freedom entails, inter alia, freedom to hold or not to hold religious beliefs and to practise or not to practise a religion (Kokkinakis v. Greece, § 31; Buscarini and Others v. San Marino [GC], § 34).

Baptism of babies is clearly against:

Guide on Article 9 of the Convention –Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

European Court of Human Rights 6/96 Last update: 31.08.2019

Article 9 of the Convention –Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

2. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the **protection of the rights and freedoms of others**.

I would urge that if religion is bad religion that is just culture will be as bad or worse. Parents and godparents aren't in a position to argue with certain scholars who say just that and yet they think they have the right to baptise and even celebrate it. Robert A. Orsi <https://bulletin.hds.harvard.edu/the-study-of-religion-on-the-other-side-of-disgust/>

Fussing over baptising a child even if you are the Christian parent is totally against this. Why care? Then why should the atheist care either? The answer is that baptism involves the parent's conscience - me and my partner and our child are resolving to make the child a good Catholic. As for the Christian, the Christian should trust God to guide the child if she or he is not baptised so God can do the work of inviting them to the baptism font when they can make their own choice.

Baptism is too much about culture not spirituality and Jesus said that he would have followers he would not know though they cast out demons in his name meaning baptism can still mean you may as well not have been baptised. For cultural change it should be abandoned.

Liberalism it has been noted does not fit the meaning of baptism. Liberalism is about autonomy being your own thing and is not given by God or anybody. An article on firstthings.com Infant Baptism and the Logic of Liberalism by Brandon McGinley says, of initiation sacraments such as baptism, "The sacraments are commonly seen as rites of passage and nothing more, the Church as one voluntary association among many, and God as a cheerful but invasive grandfather against whom we have certain rights, like the right not to be bothered with or by him." In fact, it must be admitted that liberalism does in fact say we have the right to be free from God or any demands of religion if we so choose. Another way to look at it is, "People may plausibly have a message from God but is it worth the risk of listening to them? They could still be wrong." Liberalism can arise from a healthy scepticism. It is faith and faith people they don't want trouble from. If liberalism is a fundamental human right then baptism is a disgrace and an abuse of the child's vulnerability.

It is good to have such a high profile figure as McAleese explaining that baptism is not a mere rite of passage or excuse for a party. She is right that baptism with its spiritual obligations and the other obligations it gives to the Church should be a matter of personal choice. Some say she should say what she thinks should be done to parents who do have their children baptised. It is obvious that nobody should cooperate with them and there is no excuse for a priest doing it either. She said, that the obligations, "are not consistent with the child's right to freedom of conscience, thought and religion including the right to change religion. These rights are understood today differently and that changed understanding has yet to be reflected in canon law." She says, "When canon law says an infant can be held to the fiction of promises it did not make and never had an opportunity to evaluate, validate or repudiate when capable of doing so, human rights law says 'no' it cannot. The current extensive catechesis of obligation whether at home or school or church is problematic as a result".

The Catholic think tank Iona Institute wrote, "But we all know people who have left the Church, even at a young age, embracing another faith or no faith at all. They didn't breach any contract and they have no obligations towards their former Church. This happens every day with no legal consequences of any sort." This is a lie for canon law still claims to obligate them and there are legal consequences in many places that do not firmly separate Church and state. The census accepts them as Catholic though it is their fault for ticking the box. Those former Catholics are treated as Catholics in Church marriage law. For example, your marriage to a baptised person will be regarded as binding for life. If you were not baptised you could out of it. The point is not people having no consequences - the point is the minority who do and you don't know when it will be you.

Christians respond that making a child a member of a religion or connecting a child to a God in baptism is not necessarily wrong for we give language, culture and citizenship to children without asking them for somebody has to make the choices. Language and culture and citizenship are not the same thing as anything spiritual or religious. Religion if it really believed

its lies would say it celebrates parents not baptising as much as it celebrates them doing it for it is about choice. The implication is there is something wrong with secular parenting and one child is not quite as good as another and it depends on the child being baptised. Does religion really want to be equated with culture in this issue? Cultural religion becomes hypocritical and divisive and venal. The Catholic claim that there are no major consequences from baptising a child for the child is just a bold lie. If it gives spiritual grace and salvation and fits for eternal life then that is the biggest consequence imaginable. And a lot of work is demanded, going to Mass once a week and on holydays of obligation and paying money to the Church and going to catechism class so it is no small matter.