

QUESTION 67

The Ministers by whom the Sacrament of Baptism is Conferred

Next we have to consider the ministers by whom the sacrament of baptism is conferred. And on this topic there are eight questions: (1) Does it belong to a deacon to baptize? (2) Does it belong to a priest or only to a bishop? (3) Can a layman confer the sacrament of baptism? (4) Can a woman do this? (5) Can an individual who is not baptized confer baptism? (6) Can many simultaneously baptize one and the same individual? (7) Is it necessary for there to be someone who raises the baptized individual from the sacred font? (8) Is the one who takes the baptized individual from the sacred font responsible for instructing him?

Article 1

Does baptizing belong to a deacon's role?

It seems that baptizing belongs to a deacon's role (*ad officium diaconi pertineat baptizare*):

Objection 1: Our Lord tied together the role of preaching and the role of baptizing—this according to Matthew 28:19 (“Go and teach all nations, baptizing them, etc.”). But evangelizing belongs to a deacon's role. Therefore, it seems that baptizing likewise belongs to a deacon's role.

Objection 2: According to Dionysius in *Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*, chap. 5, purging belongs to the role of a deacon. But the purging of sins is effected especially through baptism—this according to Ephesians 5:26 (“... cleansing her with a bath of water in the word of life”). Therefore, it seems that being a deacon involves baptizing.

Objection 3: We read of St. Lawrence that when he himself was a deacon, he baptized many individuals. Therefore, baptizing seems to belong to deacons.

But contrary to this: Pope Gelasius says—and this is found in *Decretals*, dist. 93—“We have directed the deacons to observe due measure.” And later: “They should not dare to baptize without a priest or bishop, except in cases in which extreme necessity demands it, when those established in the orders just mentioned are too far away.”

I respond: Just as, according to Dionysius in *De Caelesti Hierarchia*, the properties of the celestial orders are taken from their names, so, too, what belongs to each of the ecclesiastical orders can be taken from their names. For deacons (*diacones*) are called, as it were, ministers (*ministri*), because it does not pertain to deacons to offer any sacrament principally and, so to speak, by their proper role. Instead, what belongs to them is to provide assistance (*ministerium*) to others in the higher orders in the dispensing of the sacraments.

And so being a deacon does not, by his proper role, involve conferring the sacrament of baptism, but instead involves assisting and serving those of higher orders in conferring this sacrament and the others. Hence, Isidore says, “The deacon's role is to assist and serve the priests in all the things that are done in Christ's sacraments, viz., with respect to baptism, to the chrism, to the paten and to the chalice.”

Reply to objection 1: It belongs to a deacon to read the Gospel aloud in church and to preach it in the manner of one who is giving catechesis (*per modum catechizantis*). This is why Dionysius says that deacons have responsibility for the unclean, among whom he numbers the catechumens.

On the other hand, to teach, i.e., to expound upon the gospel (*exponere evangelium*), belongs properly to the bishop, whose act it is “to bring to perfection,” according to Dionysius in *Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*, chap. 5, where to bring to perfection is the same as teaching.

Hence, it does not follow that deacons have the role of baptizing.

Reply to objection 2: As Dionysius explains in *Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*, chap. 2, baptism has not only a purgative power but also an illuminative power. And so it exceeds the role of a deacon, to whom it

belongs solely to purge, either by repelling the unclean or by disposing them toward the reception of the sacraments.

Reply to objection 3: Since baptism is a necessary sacrament, deacons are permitted to baptize when there is an urgent necessity in the absence of men of the higher orders—as is clear from the passage from Gelasius quoted above. And that is how it came about that Saint Lawrence baptized when he was a deacon.

Article 2

Does baptizing belong to the role of priests or only to the role of bishops?

It seems that baptizing belongs only to the role of bishops and not to the role of priests (*baptizare non pertineat ad officium presbyterorum, sed solum episcoporum*):

Objection 1: As has been stated (a. 1), the roles of teaching and baptizing are joined together in Matthew 28:19. But as is clear from Dionysius, *Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*, chaps. 5 and 6, to teach, which is “to bring to perfection,” belongs to the role of the bishop. Therefore, baptizing likewise belongs only to the role of the bishop.

Objection 2: Through baptism an individual is added to the Christian people—something that seems to belong to role of a prince alone. But within the Church it is the bishops who hold the position of princes (*principatum tenent*), as a Gloss on Luke 10:1 says, and who hold the place of the apostles, of whom Psalm 44:17 says, “You will make them princes over all the earth.” Therefore, it seems that baptizing belongs only to the role of the bishop.

Objection 3: Isidore says, “What belongs to the bishop are the consecration of basilicas, the anointing of an altar, and the consecration of the chrism; he himself confers the ecclesiastical orders and blesses the consecrated virgins.” But the sacrament of baptism is greater than all these things. Therefore, it seems that, *a fortiori*, it is the role of the bishop alone to baptize.

But contrary to this: In *De Officiis* Isidore says, “It is clear that baptism is entrusted to priests alone.”

I respond: As was said above (q. 65, a. 3), priests are consecrated to confect the sacrament of the Body of Christ. But that is the sacrament of ecclesiastical unity—this according to the Apostle in 1 Corinthians 10:17 (“We many are one bread and one body, all of us who partake of the one bread and the one cup”). And it is through baptism that an individual becomes a partaker of ecclesiastical unity and thus receives the right to ascend to the table of the Lord. And so just as it belongs to the priest to consecrate the Eucharist, toward which his priesthood is principally ordered, so baptizing belongs to the proper role of the priest. For making the whole and placing the part in the whole seem to belong to the same individual.

Reply to objection 1: Our Lord enjoined upon the apostles, whose place the bishops take, both roles, viz., teaching and baptizing, but in different ways. For Christ commissioned the role of teaching to them in order that they themselves might exercise that role in their own right, as their principal task; hence, in Acts 6:2 the apostles themselves said, “It is not right for us to forsake the word of God and wait on tables.” By contrast, He commissioned the role of baptizing to the apostles as something to be exercised by others; hence, in 1 Corinthians 1:17 the Apostle says, “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to evangelize (*sed evangelizare*).” And, as is clear from what was said above (q. 64, aa. 1 and 5 and 9), the reason for this is that the merit and wisdom of the minister plays no part in baptizing in the way that it does play a part in teaching. Again, as an indication of this, our Lord himself did not baptize, but instead, as is clear from John 4:2. “It was His disciples who baptized.”

However, this does not exclude bishops from being able to baptize, since whatever the lower power is capable of, the higher power is likewise capable of. Hence, in the same place cited above, the Apostle says that he himself has baptized some individuals.

Reply to objection 2: In every republic things that are minor belong to minor roles, whereas things that are major are reserved to major roles—this according to Exodus 18:22 (“Whatever is greater let them refer back to you, and let them judge only the minor matters themselves”). And so it belongs to the lesser leaders (*ad minores principes*) of the city to take care of matters concerning the ordinary people (*disponere de infimo*), whereas it belongs to the highest leaders to take care of those matters that have to do with the more important people in the city.

Now through baptism an individual attains to only the lowest rank among the Christian people. And that is why baptizing belongs to the lesser leaders of the Church, i.e., to the priests, who, as a Gloss on Luke 10:1 explains, take the place of Christ’s seventy-two disciples.

Reply to objection 3: As was explained above (q. 65, a. 3), the sacrament of baptism is of the greatest *necessity*, but as regards *perfection*, there are other more important sacraments, and these are reserved to the bishops.

Article 3

Can a layman confer baptism?

It seems that a layman cannot confer baptism (*laicus baptizare non possit*):

Objection 1: As has been explained (a. 2), baptizing properly belongs to the order of priests. But what belongs to a given holy order cannot be commissioned to someone who does not have that order. Therefore, it seems that a layman, who does not have a holy order, cannot confer baptism.

Objection 2: To baptize is greater than to carry out the other sacramentals connected to baptism, such as catechizing, exorcizing, and blessing the baptismal water. But the latter can be done only by priests and not by laymen. Therefore, it seems that, *a fortiori*, laymen cannot confer baptism.

Objection 3: Just as baptism is necessary, so, too, is penance. But a layman cannot give absolution in the forum of penance (*non potest absolvere in foro penitentiali*). Therefore, neither can a layman confer baptism.

But contrary to this: Pope Gelasius and Isidore say that, in cases of urgent necessity, it is permissible most of the time for Christian laymen to confer baptism.

I respond: It pertains to the mercy of Him who “wishes all men to be saved” (1 Timothy 2:4) that, in the case of those things that are necessary for salvation, a man might easily find healing. Among all the other sacraments, the one with the greatest necessity is baptism, which is man’s regeneration into the spiritual life. For in the case of a child, he cannot be helped in any other way, and in the case of adults, they cannot in any other way obtain full remission both respect to sins and with respect to punishment.

And so in order that a man might not suffer a loss with respect to so necessary a healing, it has been established that the matter of baptism is something common, viz., water, which can be had by anyone, and that the minister of baptism may likewise be anyone, even if not ordained—lest a man suffer the loss of his salvation because of a lack of baptism.

Reply to objection 1: Baptizing belongs to the priestly order as regards its fittingness and solemnity, but this is not necessary for the sacrament. Hence, even if a layman were to baptize outside of an emergency, he would, to be sure, commit a sin, but he would nonetheless confer the sacrament of baptism, and the one whom he baptized in those circumstances should not be baptized again.

Reply to objection 2: The sacramentals connected to baptism have to do with solemnity, but they

are not necessary for baptism. And so they neither should be nor can be carried out by a layman, but only by a priest, whose role it is to confer baptism with solemnity.

Reply to objection 3: As was explained above (q. 65, aa. 3-4), penance is not as necessary as baptism is, since through contrition one can make up for the lack of priestly absolution, which does not itself liberate one from all punishment and which, again, is not applied in the case of small children. And that is why penance is not similar to baptism, the effect of which cannot be supplied by anything else.

Article 4

Can a woman confer baptism?

It seems that a woman cannot confer baptism (*mulier non possit baptizare*):

Objection 1: We read in the Council of Carthage: “A woman, even if she is learned and holy, may not presume to teach in an assembly or to baptize others.” But it is in no way permissible for a woman teach in an assembly—this according to 1 Corinthians 14:35 (“It is unseemly for a woman to speak in church”). Therefore, it seems that, likewise, neither is a woman permitted to confer baptism.

Objection 2: Baptizing belongs to the role of someone having authority (*pertinet ad officium praelationis*), and so baptism should be received from priests who have the care of souls. But this cannot be fitting for a woman—this according to 1 Timothy 2:12 (“I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over men, but she is to be subdued”). Therefore, a woman cannot confer baptism.

Objection 3: As Augustine explains in commenting on John 3:4 (“Can a man enter his mother’s womb again and be born?”), in spiritual regeneration, water seems to take the place of the mother’s womb, and the one who confers baptism seems to play the role of the father. But the latter does not befit a woman. Therefore, a woman cannot confer baptism.

But contrary to this: Pope Urban says—and this is found in *Decretals* 30, q. 3—“In reply to the questions posed to us by Your Love, it seems to us that we should respond with this answer: there is a baptism if, in the case of an emergency, a woman has baptized a child in the name of the Trinity.”

I respond: It is Christ who baptizes as a principal cause (*Christus est qui principaliter baptizat*)—this according to John 1:33 (“He upon whom you will see the Spirit descending and abiding upon Him, He it is who baptizes ...”). But Galatians* 3:28 says, “In Christ there is no male or female.” And so just as a male lay person can confer baptism as a minister of Christ, so, too, can a female.

However, since as 1 Corinthians 11:3 says, “the head of the woman is the man, and the head of the man is Christ,” a woman should not confer baptism if a man is available—just as a layman should not confer baptism when a cleric is present, and a cleric should not confer baptism if a priest is present. However, it is permissible for a priest to confer baptism in the presence of a bishop, because baptism belongs to the role of a priest.

Reply to objection 1: Just as a woman is not permitted to teach in public, but can nonetheless instruct someone with a private teaching or monition, so a woman is not permitted to confer baptism in public and solemnly, but can nonetheless confer baptism in an emergency (*in necessitatis articulo*).

Reply to objection 2: When baptism is celebrated solemnly and in due order, the individual should receive the sacrament of baptism from a priest who has the care of souls or from someone representing him. However, this is not required in an emergency, in which a woman can confer baptism.

Reply to objection 3: In *carnal generation* the man and the woman operate in accord with the power of their own natures, and so the woman can be only a passive principle, and not an active principle, of generation. By contrast, in *spiritual generation* neither of them operates in accord with his or her proper nature; instead, they act only as instrumental causes through the power of Christ. And so it

is in the same way that a man and a woman confer baptism in a case of necessity.

However, if a woman were to confer baptism outside of a case of necessity, the individual would not have to be baptized again—just as we said about the case of a layman as well. However, she herself would commit a sin by conferring the baptism, as would the others who cooperated in this either by receiving baptism for her or by bringing to her someone to be baptized.

Article 5

Can someone who has not been baptized confer the sacrament of baptism?

It seems that someone who has not been baptized cannot confer the sacrament of baptism (*ille qui non est baptizatus, non possit sacramentum Baptismi conferre*):

Objection 1: No one gives what he does not have. But an individual who has not been baptized does not have the sacrament of baptism. Therefore, he cannot confer it.

Objection 2: An individual confers the sacrament of baptism insofar as he is a minister of the Church. But an individual who has not been baptized does not belong to the Church in any way, either with respect to the reality or with respect to the sacrament. Therefore, he cannot confer the sacrament of baptism.

Objection 3: Conferring a sacrament is greater than receiving a sacrament. But an unbaptized individual cannot receive any other sacrament. Therefore, *a fortiori*, he cannot confer any sacrament.

But contrary to this: Isidore says, “The Roman pontiff judges that it is the Holy Spirit, and not the man doing the baptizing, who confers the grace of baptism—even if it is a pagan who is doing the baptizing.” Therefore, an individual who has not been baptized can confer the sacrament of baptism.

I respond: Augustine left this question undecided. For instance, in *Contra Epistolam Parmeniani* 2 he says, “There is this other question, viz., whether baptism can be conferred even by those who have never been Christians, and nothing should be rashly asserted about this question without the authority of as great a sacred council as suffices for such an important matter.”

However, it was later determined by the Church that those who have not been baptized, whether Jews or pagans, can confer the sacrament of baptism as long as they baptize with the Church’s form (*dummodo in forma Ecclesiae baptizent*). Hence, in *Ad Consulta Bulgarorum* Pope Nicholas responds, “You say that many in your country were baptized by someone, whether Christian or pagan you do not know. If they were baptized in the name of the Trinity, they should not be re-baptized.”

On the other hand, if the Church’s form is not used, then the sacrament of baptism is not conferred. And that is how to understand what Gregory II writes to the bishop Boniface, “We order you to baptize *de novo* in the name of the Trinity those whom you assert were baptized by pagans”—i.e., without the observance of the Church’s formula.

The reason for this is that just as any sort of water is sufficient for what is necessary for the sacrament on the part of its matter, so, too, any human being is sufficient on the part of minister. And so even someone who has not been baptized can confer baptism in an emergency—with the result that two unbaptized individuals may baptize each other, as long as the one first baptizes the other and is afterwards baptized by that same individual; and each of them would receive not only the *sacrament*, but also the *reality* of the sacrament (*consequeretur non solum sacramentum sed etiam rem sacramenti*). However, if this were to happen outside of an emergency, then both of them, i.e., the one baptizing and the one baptized, would sin grievously, and the effect of the baptism would thereby be impeded—even though the sacrament itself would not be removed.

Reply to objection 1: A man who confers baptism applies only an exterior ministry, whereas it is Christ who baptizes interiorly and who is able to make use of all men for anything He wants to. And the reason why unbaptized individuals are able to baptize is that, as Pope Nicholas says, the baptism “belongs not to them,” i.e., to the individuals doing the baptizing, “but to Him,” i.e., to Christ.

Reply to objection 2: Even though an individual who has not been baptized does not belong to the Church with respect to either the reality or the sacrament, he can nonetheless belong to her by intention and similarity of act, viz., insofar as he intends to do what the Church intends and observes the Church’s form in baptizing and in this way acts as a minister of Christ, who does not bind His power to those who have been baptized, just as He does not bind His power to the sacraments, either.

Reply to objection 3: The other sacraments do not have as great a necessity as baptism has. And that is why it is more to be conceded that an unbaptized individual can confer baptism than that he can receive the other sacraments.

Article 6

Can several individuals confer a baptism together at the same time?

It seems that several individuals can confer a baptism together at the same time (*plures possint simul baptizare*):

Objection 1: *One* is contained in *many*, but not vice versa (*in multitudine continetur unum sed non convertitur*). Hence, it seems that whatever one individual can do, many can do, but not vice versa, in the way that many individuals drag a boat that one individual cannot drag. But one human being can confer a baptism. Therefore, more than one can likewise confer one baptism together at the same time.

Objection 2: It is more difficult for one agent to act on many things than for many agents to act on one thing. But one human being can simultaneously confer baptism on many individuals. Therefore, *a fortiori*, many human beings can baptize one individual together at the same time.

Objection 3: Baptism is the maximally necessary sacrament. But in some cases it seems to be necessary for more than one individual to confer one baptism together at the same time. Suppose, for instance, that some small child were in danger of death and two individuals were present, one of whom was unable to speak (*esset mutus*) and the other of whom lacked hands and arms. In such a case, it would be necessary for the mutilated individual to say the words and for the mute individual to enact the baptism. Therefore, it seems that several individuals can confer one baptism together at the same time.

But contrary to this: For one agent there is one action. Therefore, if several individuals were to confer one baptism, it would seem to follow that there is more than one baptism. But this is contrary to what is said in Ephesians 4:5 (“one faith, one baptism ...”).

I respond: The sacrament of baptism has its power mainly from its form, which the Apostle calls “the word of life” in Ephesians 5:26. And so one has to figure out which form the many individuals would be using if they were conferring a baptism together at the same time.

For instance, if they were to say “*We* baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” some will claim that the sacrament of baptism is not being conferred, and this because the Church’s form is not being preserved, where this form is “I baptize you in the name of the Father of the of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” But this objection is excluded by the form of baptizing that the Greek Church uses. For [the many individuals] could say instead, “The servant of God, N., is baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”—which is the form under which the Greeks receive baptism and which is nonetheless much less similar to the form that we use than it would be to say, “We baptize you ...”

However, consider that what is expressed by the form “We baptize you ...” is an intention such that many individuals are agreeing to confer one baptism. But this seems to contradict the nature of ministry. For a man confers baptism only as a minister of Christ and as standing in His place; hence, just as Christ is one, it is necessary for there to be one minister who represents Christ. It is for this reason that in Ephesians 4:5 the Apostle says pointedly, “One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” And so a contrary intention seems to exclude the sacrament of baptism.

On the other hand, if each of them were to say “I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” then each one would be expressing his own intention as if he were conferring the baptism by himself (*singulariter*). This could happen in a case in which the two of them were contentiously trying to baptize someone. And in that case it is clear that the individual who pronounced the words first would be conferring the sacrament of baptism, whereas if the other one, whatever right he might have to baptize, also presumed to pronounce the words, he would have to be punished as a re-baptizer. And if the two of them altogether simultaneously pronounced the words and immersed the man or poured water on him, they would have to be punished not for repeating a baptism, but for baptizing in a disordered way and, and each of them, taken by himself, would have conferred baptism. But they would not have conferred two distinct sacraments (*nec traderent alium et alium sacramentum*); instead, Christ, who is the one who baptizes interiorly, would confer one sacrament through the two of them.

Reply to objection 1: This line of reasoning has a place in those matters in which the individuals act by their own power. However, men baptize not by their own power, but by the power of Christ who, since He is one, brings His work to completion through one minister.

Reply to objection 2: In a case of necessity a single individual could simultaneously baptize several people under the form “I baptize you ...”—if, for instance, ruin or the sword or something else of this sort were imminent that would not at all allow for the delay involved in each of the them being baptized individually. Nor would the Church’s form be thereby changed; for the plural is nothing other than the singular repeated, especially given that the plural is used in Matthew 28:19 (“... baptizing them, etc.”). For Christ, who baptizes as a principal cause, is one, but it is the many who are made one in Christ through baptism.

Reply to objection 3: As was explained above (q. 60, a. 1), the integrity of baptism consists in *both* the form of the words *and* the use of the matter. And so neither does the one who pronounces the words confer baptism, nor does the one who immerses. And so if the one pronounces the words and the other immerses, no form of the words could be appropriate. For it could not be said “I baptize you” when he himself is not immersing and, as a result, is not baptizing. Nor, again, could he say “We baptize you,” since neither one is baptizing. For, to give an example, if there were two individuals, one of whom wrote one part of a book and the other of whom wrote the other part, then the locution “We have written that book” would not be proper, but would instead be an instance of synecdoche, insofar as the whole is being posited for the part.

Article 7

Is it required in baptism that someone raise the baptized individual up from the sacred font?

It seems that in baptism it is not required that someone raise the baptized individual up from the sacred font (*in baptismo non requiratur aliquis qui baptizatum de sacro fonte levet*):

Objection 1: Our baptism is consecrated by Christ’s baptism and is conformed to it. But the

baptized Christ was not taken by anyone from the font; instead, as Matthew 3:16 says, “When Jesus had been baptized, He immediately came up from the water.” Therefore, it does not seem to be required in the baptism of others the someone raise the baptized individual from the sacred font.

Objection 2: As was explained above (a. 3 and q. 65, aa. 1-2), baptism is a spiritual regeneration. But in a carnal generation the only things required are an active principle, i.e., the father, and a passive principle, i.e., the mother. Therefore, since, as Augustine explains in a sermon on the Epiphany, in baptism the one who baptizes takes the place of the father and the water itself takes the place of the mother, it does not seem required that anyone else should raise the baptized individual from the sacred font.

Objection 3: Nothing ridiculous should be done in the sacraments of the Church. But it seems ridiculous for baptized adults, who are able to stand up on their own and exit from the sacred font, to be raised up by another. Therefore, it seems that, especially in a case in which adults are being baptized, there is no one required to raise the baptized individual up from the sacred font.

But contrary to this: In *Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*, chap. 2 Dionysius says, “The priests, having raised up the baptized individual, hand him over to his sponsoring godparent and guide (*tradunt adductionis susceptori et duci*).”

I respond: Spiritual regeneration, which is effected by baptism, is in some ways similar to carnal generation; hence, 1 Peter 2:2 says, “Desire earnestly, like newborn infants, the pure milk of reason without guile.” Now in carnal generation the little one needs a nurse and a tutor (*indiget nutrice et paedagogo*). And, likewise, in spiritual generation what is required is an individual who takes the place of a nurse and tutor by forming and instructing someone who is new in the Faith concerning those things that pertain to the Christian Faith and way of life—a task that the leaders of the Church, occupied with the ordinary care of the people, do not have time to carry out; for little ones and those new in the Faith need special care beyond the ordinary. And so someone is needed to receive the baptized individual from the sacred font, so as to instruct and protect him.

And this is what Dionysius is getting at in *Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*, chap. 7: “It entered the mind of our divine leaders”—i.e., the apostles— “and it was decided to take charge of the infants in the following way: that the parents of the child would hand the child over to a teacher versed in divine matters and that the child would do the rest under him as under a spiritual father and guide to holy salvation.”

Reply to objection 1: Christ was baptized not in order to be regenerated, but in order to regenerate others. And so after His baptism He did not need a teacher in the way that a little one does.

Reply to objection 2: In carnal generation all that is necessarily required is a father and a mother, but a midwife, a nurse, and a tutor are required for an easier birth and for a more appropriate education for the child. In baptism their role is fulfilled by the one who raises the child from the sacred font. Hence, this is not necessary for the sacrament, and in an emergency one individual alone can confer the baptism with water.

Reply to objection 3: As has been explained, it is not because of bodily weakness that the baptized individual is raised from the sacred font by the godparent, but because of spiritual weakness.

Article 8

Is an individual who raises someone up from the sacred font responsible for instructing him?

It seems that an individual who raises someone up from the sacred font is not responsible for instructing him (*ille qui suscipit aliquem de sacro fonte non obligetur ad eius instructionem*):

Objection 1: No one can instruct unless he has been instructed. But even some who are simple and have not been instructed are allowed to raise an individual up from the sacred font. Therefore, it is not the case that the one who raises the baptized individual up from the sacred font is responsible for instructing him.

Objection 2: It is better for the father to instruct a child than for someone else from the outside to do it; for as the Philosopher explains in *Ethics* 8, a child has “being and nourishment and discipline” from his father. Therefore, if the one who raises the baptized individual up from the sacred font were obliged to instruct him, it would be more appropriate for the carnal father to raise his own child up from baptism than for anyone else to do it. But this seems to be prohibited, as is stated in *Decretals* 30, q. 1, chap. *Pervenit et dictum est*.

Objection 3: Many individuals can instruct better than one individual alone can. Therefore, if someone who raises a baptized individual up from the sacred font were responsible for instructing him, then several individuals should raise him up rather than just one. But the contrary of this is found in the decree of Pope Leo, who says, “There should not be more than one individual who approaches to raise an infant [up from the sacred font], but only one, be it a man or a woman.”

But contrary to this: In an Easter sermon Augustine says, “Before everything else, I warn you, both men and women, who have raised children in baptism, that you realize that you have stood before God as underwriters on behalf of those whom you have been seen to raise up from the sacred font.”

I respond: Each individual is responsible for carrying out any role that he accepts. But it has been explained (a. 5) that someone who raises an individual up from the sacred font takes upon himself the role of teacher. And so he is responsible for the care of that individual if the necessity arises—as, for instance, at a time and place in which the baptized are being brought up among non-believers.

However, when the children are being brought up among Catholic Christians, this is enough to excuse the godparents from that care, assuming that the children are being diligently instructed by their own parents. Still, if the godparents in some way or other came to think that the contrary was true, they would be bound, as far as they are able, to devote themselves to caring for the salvation of their spiritual children.

Reply to objection 1: When danger is imminent, it is necessary for there to be, as Dionysius puts it, “someone learned in divine matters” who can raise the individual to be baptized up from the sacred font. But when there is no imminent danger because the children are being brought up among Catholics, then anyone is admitted into this role, since what Christian life and Faith involve is in that case known publicly to everyone.

Still, as was made clear in the Council of Mainz, an individual who has not been baptized cannot raise the one who has been baptized up from the font—even though an unbaptized individual can confer baptism—and this because the person of the one doing the baptizing is necessary for the sacrament, but not the person of the one doing the raising up.

Reply to objection 2: Just as spiritual generation is different from carnal generation. so, too, the teaching (*disciplina*) should be different—this according to Hebrews 12:9 (“We had fathers of our flesh as teachers, and we revered them. Shall we not much more obey the Father of spirits, and live?”). And so one’s spiritual father should be different from his carnal father, unless necessity demands the contrary.

Reply to objection 3: There would be confusion in the process of teaching if there were not one principal instructor. And so in baptism there should be a principal raiser [from the sacred font]. Others, however, can be admitted as assistants.