INTRODUCTION: SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

There is no substitute for a thorough study of the rites of Baptism, Confirmation and the Christian Initiation of Adults, their *praenotanda (i.e., introductions)* or the canonical requirements set out in the Code of Canon Law. These documents provide points of reference when preparing candidates for the Sacraments of Initiation.

AGE DETERMINANTS IN CANON LAW:

AGE OF MINOR (Under Age 18) Referred to in Canon Law as either Infants or Minors		**AGE OF MAJORITY (18th Year & Older)** Referred to in Canon Law as reaching the age of Majority or Adulthood.
INFANT	**Also called MINOR**	**ADULT**
Ages 0 – 6	Completed or attained the 7th year of age & up to age 17. Considered to have obtained the Age of Reason at 7th year and older.	Completed or attained the 18th year of age & older.

BAPTISM OF INDIVIDUALS BELOW CATECHETICAL AGE: INFANT TO AGE 6

The Rite of Baptism for Children is used exclusively for the initiation of children below the age of 7 (i.e., before the age of reason). The participation of parents/guardians and sponsors in the preparation for the Sacrament should provide a foundation for participation in the parish as a member of the Body of Christ.

A request for Baptism is not ordinarily refused. However, Baptism may be delayed until such time as the parents (or at least one of the parents) are ready and able to assume the responsibility entrusted to them in the rite (c. 868 § 1, 2º). This delay should not place an undue burden on the parents, but be seen as an opportunity for evangelization to help parents grow in their own faith life.

BAPTISM OF INDIVIDUALS OF CATECHETICAL AGE: AGE 7 AND OLDER

The process by which minors who have obtained the age of reason are initiated into the Catholic Church is the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) adapted for children (refer to: *Part II: Rites for Particular Circumstances* and *Chapter 1: Christian Initiation of Children Who Have Reached Catechetical Age* in the RCIA ritual).

This rite is intended for use with:

- Children and teens not baptized as infants, who have attained the age of reason (seven years or older)
- Children and teens validly baptized in another ecclesial community who have attained the age of reason (seven years or older)

These young people seek Christian initiation either at the direction of their parents or guardians or on their own initiative, with parental permission. At 14 years of age, an individual may request Baptism without the consent of the parents (c.111 § 2).