

Common Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Baptism

On November 16, 2010, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops ratified a *Common Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Baptism* with four ecclesial communities of the Reformed tradition. The Common Agreement was the result of six years of study and consultation by Catholic and Reformed scholars during the seventh round of the Catholic-Reformed Dialogue in the USA. The dialogue has been co-sponsored since 1965 by the Bishops Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs along with the Christian Reformed Church in North America, the Presbyterian Church - USA, the Reformed Church in America and the United Church of Christ.

The key provision in the Common Agreement is that only those baptisms which are performed "with flowing water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" will be considered valid by the signatories. Proof of baptism will be accomplished by the use of common wording on baptismal certificates for baptisms performed after the effective date of the agreement.

While other episcopal conferences around the world have similar agreements with Protestant communities, this is the first such agreement into which the USCCB has entered. At present, the Common Agreement has been ratified by the USCCB and the Presbyterian Church - USA. The Christian Reformed Church in North American, the Reformed Church in America and the United Church of Christ will consider the Common Agreement at their respective synods this summer.

Included here are:

- The text of the Common Agreement
- A sample Baptismal Certificate
- The Reception Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops
- The Press Statement of Most Rev. Wilton D. Gregory, Archbishop of Atlanta and Chairman of the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs.