

## Agreement on Holy Baptism

The Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia (ECAV), represented by its presidium and council of bishops and the Catholic Church of both rites, represented by the Conference of Bishops of Slovakia (KBS), in accord with their doctrinal and legal regulations, agree on the mutual recognition of baptism. This recognition is based on the following:

1. We confess in common the same faith in the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as it is expressed in the Apostles' and Niceo-Constantinopolitan Creeds.
2. We confess in common our faith in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism on the basis of New Testament teaching. Jesus Christ, our Savior, instituted Baptism and commissioned the church to confer it (Mt 28:19). Baptism by water and the Holy Spirit (Jn 3:5) makes one a member of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13), which is the church. By means of Baptism we share in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom 6:4). The one who is baptized belongs to Christ and is inseparably bound to him (Rom. 6:5). Baptism cleanses the one who is baptized from sins (1 Cor 6:11) and makes that person a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), renewed by the Holy Spirit (Tit 3:5). By the grace of Baptism, which the one who is baptized receives by faith in Jesus Christ, God, who is righteous, makes a person righteous (Rom 3:26).
3. Our baptismal practice is carried out according to the following principles:
  - a. A valid Baptism requires an intention that agrees with Christ's intention.
  - b. The essential signs of the Baptism that the church administers according to the command of Christ are: the immersion of the candidate in water or the pouring of water on the candidate's head, during which is said:

*in the Roman Catholic rite:* "N. N., I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

*in the Greek Catholic rite:* "The servant of God, N. N. is baptized, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

*in the Evangelical rite:* "By the command of the Lord Jesus Christ, I baptize you, N.N., into the name of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."
  - c. Other elements of the baptismal rite are established by our churches independently of one another.
4. We consider the Baptism of infants to be theologically well-grounded. The Baptism of adults who are able to decide for themselves requires a personal confession of Christ and the beginning of faith, which then needs to be developed. In both cases our churches accompany the baptized in growth in faith by means of prayer, catechization and pastoral care.
5. We believe in common that, once conferred, Baptism binds the baptized to Christ for life and cannot be rendered invalid. Therefore we do not baptize those who have already been validly baptized.

6. We are convinced that agreement on the above questions is a sufficient basis for mutual recognition of Baptism. It follows from this mutual recognition of Baptism that we mutually recognize each other as Christians, as brothers and sisters in Christ. Baptism makes us members of the one body of Christ, a community that, although it is not complete, is nevertheless real.

In Bratislava, 4 June 2001

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(Translated from Slovak original)