

What Makes a Valid Baptism?

Immersion VS Pouring

Latin-rite Catholics are usually baptized by infusion (pouring). Immersion (dunking) and sprinkling are also valid ways to baptize. Some religions, however, regard only baptism by immersion as true baptism, concluding that most Catholics are not validly baptized at all.

Although the New Testament contains no explicit instructions on how to administer the water of baptism, some religions argue that the Greek word *baptize* found in the New Testament means "to immerse."

It is true that *baptize* often means immersion. For example, the Greek version of the Old Testament tells us that Naaman, at Elisha's direction, "went down and *dipped himself* (the Greek word here is *baptizo*) seven times in the Jordan" (2 Kgs. 5:14, *Septuagint*, emphasis added).

Ezekiel prophesied that baptism would come: "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your impurities, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. A new heart I will give you, and a new Spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and be careful to observe My ordinances," (Ezekiel 36:25-27). This baptism in water, according to Ezekiel, is most appropriately understood as an act of God, not merely an act of men. Bible-believers can take into consideration Ezekiel's teaching on the cleansing power of Baptism and his use of the word "sprinkle." Baptism is cleansing with water, an outward sign that signifies an interior reality.

It is true that immersion *best* represents death and resurrection, bringing out more fully the meaning of the sacrament than pouring or sprinkling (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1239). On the other hand, *pouring* best represents the *infusion* of the Holy Spirit also associated with water baptism. And all three modes adequately suggest the sense of cleansing signified by baptism. No one mode has exclusive symbolical validity over the others.

*Excerpts taken from: <https://www.catholic.com/tract/baptism-immersion-only>
<https://catholicexchange.com/baptism-and0151-sprinkling-vs-immersion>*