Sacraments of Christian Initiation

1. Christian Initiation: Surveys & Introductions
2. Baptism in the New Testament
3. History of Baptism: Patristic Texts
4. History of Baptism: Studies
5. The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)
6. Confirmation: History & Theology
7. Infant Baptism: History & Theology
8. Contemporary Reflections: Theology, Spirituality & Catechesis

1. CHRISTIAN INITIATION: SURVEYS & INTRODUCTIONS

Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008). This is an extraordinarily wide-ranging and exhaustive 900-page study of the rites and theology of Christian baptism. Ferguson devotes full chapters to all the leading figures: Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Cyprian, Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ephrem the Syrian, Theodore of Mopsuestia, John Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine. No stone is left unturned. There are dozens of briefer explorations of the lesser-known (but not necessarily less important): Serapion of Thmuis, Aphrahat, Zeno of Verona, Maximus of Turin, Quodvultdeus. He explores a host of issues and controversies: the origins and growth of infant baptism, the debate on rebaptism, the delay of baptism, deathbed baptisms, the theology of original sin. Finally, he treats at length the archeological data, of baptisteries and font. This is the fruit of a lifetime of study. Not to be missed.


2. BAPTISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT


David Hellholm, Tor Vegge, Oyvind Norderval, and Christer Hellholm, eds., *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism: Late Antiquity, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011).


3. HISTORY OF BAPTISM: PATRISTIC TEXTS


E.C. Whitaker, ed., *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*, rev. ed., Maxwell E. Johnson (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003). This has long been recognized as the standard anthology of ancient texts on baptism. The original edition, dating from the early 1970s, was always hard to find in the United States and has been out of print for quite a while. Thankfully, it is again available. Maxwell Johnson, the leading contemporary scholar on baptism, has corrected errors and expanded the original.

Lawrence J. Johnson, ed., *Worship in the Early Church: An Anthology of Historical Sources*, 4 vol. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2009). A massive comprehensive anthology of documents touching every aspect of early Christian worship. While this is not exclusively devoted to baptism as the two above are, it is more recent and more comprehensive in the range of texts it offers:


• Vol. 4: Sixth Century: Texts include: Fulgence of Ruspe, Ennodius, Rule of the Master, Benedict of Nursia, Popes Vigilius, Pelagius and Gregory the Great; Cassiodorus, the Liber pontificalis, Avitus of Vienne, Caesarius of Arles, cyprian of Toulon, Gregory of Tours, Columbanus, Theodore Lector, Braulio of Saragossa, Martin of Braga, Finnian, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Evagrius Scholasticus, John Moschus, John of Scythopolis, and papyri.


4. HISTORY OF BAPTISM: STUDIES

William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, 20th Anniversary edition (Collegeville: Liturgical Press [A Pueblo Book], 2014) NEW revised edition, forthcoming November 2014. This study offers unique perspectives on Augustine, one of the most influential figures in Western Christianity, namely, his work as a North African pastor and a teacher of candidates for baptism. This reconstruction of Augustine's catechumenate provides fresh perspectives on the day-to-day life of the early Church and on the vibrancy and eloquence of Augustine the preacher. In this new edition, both the text and the notes have been revised from top to bottom to better reflect the state of contemporary research on Augustine, on liturgical studies, and on the catechumenate, both ancient and modern. This new edition incorporates new research on early Christian biblical interpretation, debates on the Trinity, the evolution of the liturgy, and much else.

Thomas M. Finn, *From Death to Rebirth: Ritual and Conversion in Antiquity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997). This can be read as an update and revision of A.D. Nock's classic study, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (1933). Finn's accent is on the way ritual shapes conversion. He moves back and forth from ritual documents (*Didache*, *Apostolic Tradition*, *Didascalia*) to autobiographical stories of converts (Justin Martyr, Gregory Thaumaturgos, Augustine) to the fictional—though still instructive—portraits found in pseudonymous works (*Clementine Recognitions*, *Acts of Judas Thomas*). In so doing, he allows the fragmentary nature of the historical record to be what it is, without homogenizing it or harmonizing it.


Edward Yarnold, ed., *Cyril of Jerusalem*, Early Christian Fathers Series (New York: Routledge, 2000). Cyril's sermons to the newly baptized—the Mystagogic Catecheses—provide us the clearest picture we have of the Jerusalem liturgy, both baptism and eucharist. They show it in all its “awe-inspiring” splendor. Yarnold spent much of his career writing on Cyril and liturgy in the early Church. Like others in this series, this has a lengthy introduction together with fresh translations of major works.


Susanna Elm, "Inscriptions and Conversions: Gregory of Nazianzus on Baptism (Or. 38-40)," in *Conversion in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: Seeing and Believing*, eds.


Huub van de Sandt & Davis Flusser, eds., The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and Its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity, Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002).


5. THE RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA)


### 6. CONFIRMATION

Aidan Kavanagh, *Confirmation: Origins and Reform* (reprint: Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992). A brilliant and provocative challenge to the understanding of the roots of confirmation. This volume also includes valuable reflections on contemporary
practice. Note the essays listed below which assess and critique Kavanagh’s arguments.


7. INFANT BAPTISM


8. CONTEMPORARY REFLECTIONS: THEOLOGY, SPIRITUALITY & CATECHESIS


