

St. Francis of Assisi Church Wakefield, RI RCIA Deacon P. Iacono  
**A Sampling of the Early Fathers of the Church on Baptism**

**Aristides**, *Apology*, 15 (A.D. 140), in ANF, X: 277-27

"And when a child has been born to one of them[ie Christians], they give thanks to God[ie baptism]; and if moreover it happen to die in childhood, they give thanks to God the more, as for one who as passed through the world without sins."

**St. Irenaeus**, *Against Heresies*, 2, 22: 4 (A.D. 180), in ANF, I: 391

"For He came to save all through means of Himself--all, I say, who through Him are born again to God--infants, and children, and youths, and old men."

**St. Hippolytus of Rome**, *Apostolic Tradition*, 21 (c. A.D. 215), in AT, 33

"And they shall baptize the little children first. And if they can answer for themselves, let them answer. But if they cannot, let their parents answer or someone from their family."

**St. Gregory Nazianzen**, *Oration on Holy Baptism*, 40:17 (A.D. 381),

"Have you an infant child? Do not let sin get any opportunity, but let him be sanctified from his childhood..."

**St. Ambrose**, *Abraham*, 2, 11:79 (A.D. 387), in JUR, 2:169

" 'Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.' No one is excepted: not the infant, no one..."

*[Pelagius, and his heresy Pelagianism, denied original sin and Christian grace]*

**St. Augustine**, *On forgiveness of sin, and baptism*, 39 [26] (A.D. 412), in NPNF1, V:30

"Now, seeing that they [Pelagians] admit the necessity of baptizing infants, --finding themselves unable to contravene that authority of the universal Church, which has been unquestionably handed down by the Lord and His apostles, --they cannot avoid the further concession, that infants require the same benefits of the Mediator, in order that, being washed by the sacrament and charity of the faithful, and thereby incorporated into the body of Christ, which is the Church, they may be reconciled to God, and so live in Him, and be saved, and delivered, and redeemed, and enlightened. But from what, if not from death, and the vices, and guilt, and darkness of sin? And, inasmuch as they do not commit any sin in the tender age of infancy by their actual transgression, original sin only is left." **St. Augustine**, *Epistle 167*, 7, 21 (A.D. 415), in NPNF1, I: 530

"Likewise, whosoever says that those children who depart out of this life without partaking of that sacrament shall be made alive in Christ, certainly contradicts the apostolic declaration, and condemns the universal Church, in which it is the practice to lose no time and run in haste to administer baptism to infant children, because it is believed, as an indubitable truth, that otherwise they cannot be made alive in Christ."

**St. Jerome**, *Against the Pelagians*, 3:18 (A.D. 415), in NPNF2, VI: 482

" 'C. Tell me, pray, and rid me of all doubts, why little children are baptized?  
 A. That their sins may be forgiven them in baptism."

