

Book I.
Title VI.

That the Holy Baptism be not Repeated.
(Ne sanctum baptismum iteretur).

1.6.1. Emperors Valens, Gratian and Valentinian to Florianus, Vicar of Asia.

We deem unworthy of the priesthood the priest who unlawfully repeats the holy rite of baptism. For we condemn the error of those who, despising the precepts of the apostles, by rebaptising those who have already received the Christian sacraments, do not purify them but defile and pollute them under pretense of cleaning them.¹

Given at Constantinople October 17 (377).

See C. Th. 6.16.1.2.

Note.

Baptism was believed to purify the recipient from guilt of previous sin. The Donatists held that this sacrament administered by polluted hands was inefficacious. Hence when anyone was received into their fold, they rebaptized him though already baptized by the priests of the orthodox church. The Eunomians and Novations, too, rebaptized converts to their faith. This was considered sacrilegious. Boyd, The Ecc. Edicts of the Theod. Code 61, 62. Gothofredus on C. Th. 16.6.

1.6.2. Emperor Honorius and Theodosius to Anthemius, Praetorian Prefect.

If any person shall be discovered to rebaptize anyone imbued with the mysteries² of the Catholic faith, he, together with him who has permitted³ this infamous crime—provided the person persuaded to be rebaptized be of an age capable of crime—shall be punished by death.

C. Th. 16.6.6.

1.6.3. Emperors Theodosius and Valentinian to Florentius, Praetorian Prefect.

No heretic must be permitted to rebaptize, either free persons or their own slaves who have been initiated into the mysteries of the orthodox, nor forbid those (slaves) whom he has bought or whom he has in any manner, and who have not yet joined his superstition, to adhere to the religion of the Catholic Church.

1. If anyone does so, or if a free man permits himself to be rebaptized, or if asks to repeat it, he shall be condemned to a fine of ten pounds of gold. Neither of them shall have power to make a testament or a gift.

2. All these provisions must be upheld and no judge shall have power, when a crime has been reported to him, to inflict a lesser punishment than provided, or no punishment at all, unless he himself wants to suffer the penalty from which he, by dissimulating, released others.

¹ Blume penciled in several changes to the typewritten original. The most significant are the addition of “do not” before purify and of “under pretense of cleaning them.” The latter is accompanied by a marginal question mark.

² “Imbued with the mysteries” has been added in pencil, accompanied by a question mark. Scott renders this clause as: “Where anyone belonging to the ministry of the Catholic sect...” 6 [12] 72.

³ [Blume] “Commisit” is the person who was baptized.

Given at Constantinople May 30 (429).
C. Th. 16.5.65.4.