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Three Worship Sites

One Parish

Serving God and Neighbor

Baptisms at St. Mary's Parish

“You have put on Christ, in him you have been baptized. Alleluia! Alleluia!”

Baptism is a special time for each family. The miracle of life you have been part of in the birth of your child is now brought into the miracle of new life in the sacrament of baptism. Baptism cleanses from original sin, makes one the temple of the Holy Spirit, gives the gift of grace, configures one to Christ and marks the entrance into the Church. It is a wonderful and holy experience.

As you look forward to baptism, we at St. Mary's parish want to thank and encourage you. Thank you for the gift of new life in our midst. Your child and the love you show your child is a miracle beyond value. Thank you. You also know that there come responsibilities with this birth. We want to encourage you to take seriously the responsibility of training your child in the ways of faith. By ourselves we can accomplish only so much, but with God all things are possible. In baptism you give your child the gift of a relationship with the Trinity. Make it your task to see that the faith your child receives is constantly nourished, protected and supported.

A QUICK OVERVIEW OF THE RITE OF BAPTISM

Before the Baptism begins, please arrive at least 15 minutes before the ceremony starts. Place your coats, diaper bag, baby bottles, etc. in the row assigned to you. Each couple is assigned a row for themselves, the godparents and immediate family. The two rows behind these are for invited guests. Look for your baptismal certificate to know which row to sit in. Then ask the coordinator or priest where to go.

Reception of the Children: The Baptism begins with a dialogue. The priest will ask the couple what name they have given their child. The couples respond in turn with the first and middle name. Then the priest will ask what are they asking of the Church? The couples respond “Baptism” or another suitable response (faith, salvation, new life, entrance into the Church, etc.). The priest will ask if they understand what they are asking and the responsibilities that come with such a request. The couples respond “Yes”. He will then ask the godparents if they are willing to help the parents. They respond “We are.” The priest will trace the sign of the cross on the forehead of each child and invite the parents, godparents (and siblings) to do the same. Then all prepare to listen to God's Word.

Celebration of God's Word: The priest reads from the sacred scriptures. This is followed by a brief homily, prayers of intercession and a litany of saints. The priest then casts behind the child all that is evil and original sin by praying over the child and anointing his/her chest with the oil of salvation (make sure it is easy to get

access to the child's chest).

Celebration of the Sacrament: The priest blesses the water. Then all are invited to renew their baptismal promises by responding "I do" to a set of questions. Then, gathered around the baptismal font, he will ask whether it is your will to have your child baptized in the faith of the Church we have all professed with you. The couple and godparents respond, "It is". As one of the parents holds their child over the font, the priest baptizes the child by pouring water and saying, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." When all have been baptized, the priest will anoint the child's head with the Sacred Chrism. Then he will ask the godmothers to robe their godchild as he explains the gesture (you may keep the robe). Then the priest asks the godfather to light their candles off of the Easter Candle while the priest explains the gesture. The godfather holds the lit candle for the remainder of the ceremony (you may keep the candle). Following this, the priest prays a blessing over the mouth and ears of each child (this is called the *epiphetha*, "be opened").

Conclusion of the Rite: The ceremony ends with an *Our Father* and four part blessing (usually this blessings given to the mother, father and everyone gathered).

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Can young children within the family of the baptized child go with the child throughout the ceremony? **Yes. It is a good learning experience for young children and encouraged.**

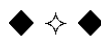
Are godparents involved in the ceremony? **Yes. Godparents are an essential part of the celebration. They are encouraged to take part in the ceremony by their presence, prayers and gestures. Even more, they are asked to be involved in the life of the child going forward. Through prayer and positive presence Godparents are called be a model of Catholic Christian life. This is why we have a special form for godparents that**

Is picture taking or recording permitted during the ceremony? **Yes. We just ask two things. First, that people realize where they are and thus respect the furnishings and sacredness of the church. Second, to realize that others also want to take pictures or see the baptism and thus be courteous to everyone present. We have seen some amazing things with photographers and videographers. Please talk with them before the ceremony.**

What do we bring to a baptism? **We encourage to bring pacifiers, bottles, food, extra cloths, quiet toys and all the sundry baby survival gear you have begun to collect. In short, bring anything that you feel would make your child happy. We suggest that you dress your child in white (a reminder of the purity given the child in baptism), in a garment that provides easy access to the chest (for the anointing), without a bonnet (the child's head will be anointed with oil).**

What do we take home? **The parish gives each child a robe, candle and baptismal certificate.**

Is a donation for the ceremony accepted by the priests? **No donation is required. If you want to make a donation you can do so to the priest or the parish.**



Baptism is God's most beautiful and magnificent gift . . . We call it gift, grace, anointing, enlightenment, garment of immortality, bath of rebirth, seal, and most precious gift. It is call *gift* because it is conferred on those who bring nothing of their own; *grace* since it is given even to the guilty; *baptism* because sin is buried in the water; *anointing* for it is priestly and royal as are those who are anointed; *enlightenment* because it radiates

light; *clothing* since it veils our shame; *bath* because it washes; and *seal* as it is our guard and the sign of God's Lordship.

- St. Gregory of

Nazianzus