

The Sacrament of Baptism

I. Background

Welcome to the Church of St. Patrick! We are delighted that you are interested in having your child baptized here in our parish. For older children and adults please refer to the sections for RCIC and RCIA (Rite of Christian/Catholic Initiation for Children/Adults).

Your decision involves more than merely the Baptismal ceremony; instead, you are planning for the entire life of your child. Thus, we invite you to take a moment to reflect on your BIG DECISION through the following article which serves as the forward for the Catholic Church's Baptismal Rite. If after your prayer and deliberation you still want to proceed, then we ask you to consider our parish's expectations in section two.

Holy Baptism

Baptism is our birth as Christians, our birth as "other Christs." Through many centuries Christians loved to view the baptismal font as the womb of the holy Mother Church; for at the font her children come forth alive with a new and higher life --- that of God Himself.

This second birth into God's own family at the sacred font is the source of new and wonderful privileges. The first of the baptismal graces which needs emphasis in 21st century United States is that of our incorporation into Christ, the fact of the Mystical Body. Baptism makes us members of Christ: "We were all baptized into one Body...you are the Body of Christ" (1Corinthians 12: 13, 27). Our head is Christ, and consequently the thoughts which fill our minds must be His thoughts: "We have the mind of Christ" (1Corinthians 2:16). As in a body many cells share the same dignity, so the many individuals who form Christ's Body all share the same godlike dignity; there is no place for mutual indignities or antagonisms; fraternal charity must reign supreme. Because Baptism has made all one in Christ, the efforts of each are to the advantage of all, the sufferings of one brings tears to many, a single song of praise gladdens countless hearts.

Baptism, secondly, makes us the dwelling-place of the most Blessed Trinity, makes each of us a holy temple, for "holy is the temple of God, and this temple you are" (1Corinthians 3:17). God's active, energizing presence in the baptized soul transforms it into a creature most pleasing to God. Too frequently we may have limited our attention to the negative aspect of holy Baptism, that is, its power to remit sin and to cleanse away all guilt. More marvelous is its fulfillment of Jesus' last prayer: "If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and will make our abode with him" (John 14:23). And where Father and Son are, their Spirit must of necessity be: "Do you not know that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1Corinthians 3:16). As we become conscious of this unspeakable gift our hearts spontaneously welcome the command: "Glorify and bear God in your body" (1Corinthians 6:10)

