

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)

Though Baptism confers such great gifts, it is not a final stage in God's generosity towards us --- it is only a beginning. Baptism plants the seed, the remaining sacraments bring it to harvest. All the sacraments are directed toward the Holy Eucharist, particularly Baptism. Baptism gives me the right to receive the Holy Eucharist while the Holy Eucharist preserves and makes fruitful my baptismal privileges. Baptism by making me share in the priesthood of Christ through the "character" it imprints, enables me to share in the offerings of the one only Sacrifice; by offering this Sacrifice with Christ I again renew my baptismal descent with Christ into death in order to rise again with Him in newness of life. Baptism makes me a cell in Christ's Body, the Eucharist nourishes that cell, makes it healthy, makes it function in a loving, sacrificial spirit of unity with countless cells, makes it ever a more fitting dwelling for the triune God.

Baptism is our birth as Christians. A little reflection, and this age-old truth becomes fresh and dynamic. Its power produced the Age of Martyrs and glories of patristic Christianity. If we but give holy Baptism the thought and attention it deserves, its power will vitalize and transform our weak devotions into a spirituality strong with the strength of Christ our Head and holy with the holiness of the indwelling Trinity. Its power will make us pleasing and acceptable to the eternal Father, for through it we have been enabled to offer the perfect Sacrifice in and through His Son Christ Jesus. Truly, holy Baptism is a great sacrament, making us Christians, making us "a kingdom of priests, a holy people" (1Peter 2:9).

II. Expectations

- 1) Your family should be registered and active parishioners.
- 2) If you are registered in another parish and yet would like your child baptized at St. Patrick's, then you will need to provide a letter from the pastor of your home parish granting permission for us to perform the Baptism.
- 3) Schedule a prep class with our pastor. This may not be required if you have recently attended this class for the Baptism of an earlier child.
- 4) Schedule your Baptism with the pastor. Baptisms during Mass are allowed every third weekend of the month. Private Baptisms take place any day except Monday.
- 5) Fill out the Baptism registration form with Denise (office administrative assistant).
- 6) Provide a copy of the birth certificate.
- 7) Offer a stipend to the church ---

a. Church offering	\$75
b. Parish Facility Upkeep	\$25
Total =	\$100
- 8) If financial assistance is necessary, or if the family has further questions, please feel welcome to discuss your situation with the pastor.

Thank you for your interest in the Baptism of your child at the Church of St. Patrick.

Contact information:	1) Denise	651-455-6624
	2) Fr. Brian	612-242-9151