

### SYMBOLS:

The Ritual of Baptism incorporates many symbols. These symbols convey the deeper meaning of our Faith.

The asking of the name of the child, reminds us that in Old Testament times, the naming of anything, gave it a dignity. Moreover, in both the Old and New Testament, the changing of a person's name was a sign of their vocation and new relationship with God. In asking for the child's name, what is really being asked is how this child shall be known in relationship with God.

The use of Oil of the Catechumen, reminds us of God's protection in the fight against evil in our lives.

The anointing with the Sacred Chrism, symbolizes, that through Baptism, this child is now "priest, prophet, and king": called to proclaim and live the good news of faith. The child will be anointed again with Chrism in Confirmation.

The white garment conveys the sense of Baptismal purity and Christian dignity. It calls all of us to assist in helping the child keep that dignity unstained unto the everlasting life of heaven.

The Candle tells us that the light of faith has enlightened this child. We pray that the child will always walk as a child of the light of Christ. It is given to the parents to remind them of the special obligation to keep the light of faith alive in the child's life.

### FOLLOW-UP:

In Baptism, your child has begun the life long journey of faith. We hope that your home can be a place where your child is nurtured in faith and that your parish community can support you by prayer and example. If there are particular needs with which you feel your parish staff can assist, please contact us.



**C**ongratulations on the birth of your child. We, your Parish Pastoral Staff and faith community, join in sharing this proud and joyful time with you. The following information is presented to help you in preparing for your child's Baptism and the beginning of your child's life of faith. We are extremely happy that Visitation Parish -Sacred Heart Church, Manchester-By-The-Sea, MA and Saint John the Baptist Church, Essex, MA are the communities of faith where your child will be welcomed into the Church and where your child's faith will be nurtured.

Baptism welcomes one into the life of the Church. For adults who are seeking membership in the community of believers, it is a time of conversion, faith and commitment, expressed and ratified in the Initiation Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. For infants, it is no less a time of conversion and faith, but the focus is on the parent's faith and that of the larger faith community. The Sacrament of Baptism welcomes the child into the Church, establishing a life-long relationship with God freed from original sin.

In order to prepare for your child's Baptism, we offer the following information to assist in your thoughtful preparation.

#### *Your Parish Pastoral Staff*

Rev. Paul Flammia, Pastor  
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### **TIME OF CELEBRATION:**

The celebration of the Sacraments is never a private affair. It always happens within the context of the Church and the local faith community. It is presumed that those seeking to have their child baptized at our parishes are registered members of our parish and regularly worship with the community.

We strive to acknowledge the communal nature of the Sacraments. Baptisms are celebrated at **Sacred Heart Church** on the **First Sunday of the month at Noon**. Baptisms are celebrated at **Saint John the Baptist Church** on the **Second Sunday at Noon**. Baptisms may also be celebrated at Sunday Masses, so that the larger parish community can be present to welcome its newest members.

In order to help you understand the preparation program for Baptism and the Celebration of Baptism, we present the following as a typical scenario for your infant's Baptism.

### **PREPARATION:**

Either during pregnancy or shortly after the birth of your child you should contact the Rectory to indicate your interest in having your child Baptized. This initial contact can be done over the phone or in person at the Rectory between 9:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. on weekdays. At this time you will be asked if you are a registered member of the parish. If you are new to the area, the registration process can be fulfilled at this time. Registering for the parish means that you will create a bond with the other believers through regular participation in Liturgy, Education and Ministry. You will also be requested to fill out the Information Form. This form must be returned in order to confirm a Baptismal Date and should be returned to the parish at least a week before the scheduled Baptism.

Godparents are witnesses to the child of the life of Christian faith. During the celebration, they will be asked to publicly affirm their faith. Throughout the child's life they should take an active interest in the child's faith development. Because being a godparent is more than an honorary role, certain things need to be observed in selecting godparents. At least one godparent is needed for the celebration of the Sacrament. Often times, parents will ask two people, one of each sex, to assume this role. At least one godparent must be a Confirmed, practicing Roman Catholic. The second person may be a Baptized Christian, who is living an active life of faith. This person is called a Christian Witness.

### **THE DAY OF THE BAPTISM:**

If your child is being Baptized at a Sunday Mass, you are asked to arrive about 20 minutes before the celebration and enter the Sacristy. The priest who is doing the Baptism will welcome you and go over any last minute details with you. Your family and friends may wish to sit in the first few rows of the right side of the Church. The first row will be reserved for the parents, godparents, and siblings of the child to be Baptized. As the Liturgy begins, you will gather at the doors of the Church for the Preliminary Rites. This will include the announcing of the name of the baby and your desire to have the child baptized and the signing of the child with the Sign of the Cross. You will process in with the Liturgical Ministers and the Presider in the opening procession. After the Homily, the baby, parents and godparents will be invited into the Sanctuary for the celebration of the Sacrament. After the Baptism, you may return to the front row for the continuation of Mass. At the end of Mass you will leave during the recessional behind the Liturgical Ministers and before the Presider.

If you are having your child baptized at the monthly Baptisms, you are asked to be at the church about 15 minutes before the celebration. The parents and godparents should sit near the front to the church at the end of a pew. The priest who will be celebrating the Baptism will perform the preliminary rites (naming of the child, signing with the cross, first anointing, etc.) while you are in the pew. After the Profession of Faith you will be invited to the sanctuary for the Blessing of Water, Baptism and subsequent rites, (Anointing with Chrism, Clothing with the White Garment, Presentation of the Baptismal Candle, etc.).

Photographs may be taken during the celebration. We do ask that you inform your photographers that this is a solemn celebration and that photography cannot become distracting or intrusive.

The Church never charges for Sacraments. However, offerings are needed to cover the cost of the operating and maintaining our beautiful churches. A stipend of \$50.00 - \$100.00 for the parish is suggested. Your particular circumstances should be applied to any offering you may wish to make.

