



# Baptism



Baptism is often called the “door to the Church,” or the gate which gives access to the other sacraments. It is that, and so much more. We believe that baptism frees us from sin, and indelibly marks us as reborn children of God. Through baptism, we become members of the body of Christ, his Church, and share in the mission of the Church: calling all to the love of Christ and taking part in building up the kingdom of God on earth.

In baptism, we are forgiven of any sins we have ever committed, including original sin, which we inherited from Adam and Eve. And importantly, we are welcomed lovingly into the family of faith that is the Church. Jesus himself was baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan, marking the beginning of his public ministry. It is in baptism that one “puts on Christ” (Galatians 3:27). Baptism is a bath that purifies, justifies and sanctifies, through the action of the Holy Spirit.

The word “baptism” is from the Greek, to Baptize (*baptisma*), meaning to plunge or immerse into water, which is the central rite that accompanies the sacrament. This plunging symbolizes dying to the old and rising up again as a new child of God in Christ. It also symbolizes washing. In this, it signifies and brings about the birth of water and the Spirit, without which no one “can enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Throughout salvation history, water has been a symbol of cleansing and rebirth. Noah and the ark, Moses and the Red Sea, the Israelites crossing the River Jordan — all told of leaving the old behind and becoming reborn in God.

In the same way we welcome a new baby into our families at birth, we welcome them into their family of faith, the Church, with a new birth in water and the Holy Spirit. We remember that God himself came as a baby to save us — he was helpless, vulnerable and dependent on the love and guidance of his earthly parents. As parents and family, we nurture the faith of our newest member.

Any person of any age who has not been baptized before can receive the sacrament of baptism. Usually, adults and children over the age of reason (about 7) are baptized during the Easter Vigil Mass. Infant baptisms can occur at any time. Because baptism leaves an indelible (not to be erased) mark on the soul, we don’t re-baptize anyone who has had a Christian baptism that involved water and the words of baptism. Catholics recognize most other Christian baptisms.

First time parents seeking to have their child baptized are asked to attend a special preparation class. The program offers parents a spirituality of parenthood and relating this spirituality to the celebration of this wonderful sacrament of initiation. The class helps parents and godparents prepare for the gift and responsibility of guiding children in the Catholic Christian faith. The class offers instruction on the Sacrament of Baptism and the primacy of our baptismal call. Participants explore their commitment to the Church, reflect on the responsibilities of Christian parenting and discuss practical ways to incorporate Christian values into family life. You must be a registered parishioner and have attended Holy Angels for at least 3 months. Classes are scheduled as needed by contacting the church office. It is a long standing tradition in the church to pay a stipend to the priest for performing this sacrament.

**Baptismal Preparation** -- Contact Father to schedule an appointment