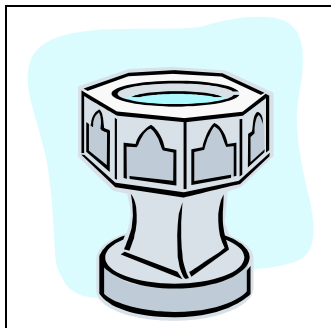


Baptism - the Sacrament of Belonging

What is Baptism?

What for you is the central meaning or significance of the Sacrament of Baptism? Check off which responses below best capture the meaning of the Sacrament of Baptism for you.

- Being welcomed and becoming a person who is welcoming
 - Being healed and becoming a person who is healing
 - Seeing others as Christ would see them
 - Being positive and life-giving in our attitudes and actions
 - Turning to Christ for guidance through prayer
 - Being freed from original sin through the waters of salvation
 - Turning to the faith community for support in times of need, confusion, and doubt
 - Staying connected to Jesus and to the faith community by participating in church activities, celebrations, and sacraments
 - Being Christ's light to the world
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There are tremendous benefits that come with participating deeply and meaningfully in a community —whether it's a Christian community, your local community, or the world. Whether you are a single young adult, a newly married couple, a family with children or teens, a single adult, an "empty nest" household, or an older adult, there are lots of ways you can become more deeply involved in your church, neighborhood, and world.

The Letter of Peter reminds us: *Each one, as a good manager of God's different gifts, must use for the good of others the special gift he has received from God.* (1 Peter 4:10)

Remembering Your Baptism

- I was baptized at... (church, town)
- My name was chosen because...
- My Godparents are... They were chosen because...
- My parents/grandparents wanted me baptized because...

- How does (did) their life reflect what it means to be a baptized person?
- People who attended my Baptism were...



Baptism is the first step on a very long road of faith. It's a beginning—and who knows where it will lead or how the journey will play itself out?

The Sacrament of Baptism is one of initiation. And who doesn't long to be a part of something really special? But since Baptisms are usually performed on infants, they can't really agree to

join the Church. That's up to the child's parents—and godparents. It's their job to make sure that the child being baptized is given the knowledge and shown through word and example how to live out his or her faith while growing up.

Baptism is also jam-packed with symbols of our faith—water, oil, candles, a white garment. Each of these symbols has its own special meaning.

The water, for instance, is probably the symbol most people associate with Baptism and represents a number of things. It is a sign of cleansing us of Original Sin, and also represents the source of life.

During Baptism, blessed oil or chrism is marked on the forehead and chest of the person being baptized in the sign of the cross. This symbolizes receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Even though most children being baptized wear a white gown, they also receive another white garment during the ceremony, which signifies "putting on Christ." The white garment is a welcome gift from our parish family.

The baptismal candle is lighted from the Easter candle and reminds both the baptized and his or her parents and godparents to be light for the world



The Sacrament of Belonging...An Ongoing Commitment

So while Baptism is only the first step on our faith journey, it's a very big and important first step. Here are ways you can continue to celebrate your initiation into the Church:

Living out one's Baptism is a lifelong responsibility. Growing in holiness and discipleship involves a willingness to continue to learn throughout one's whole life about the faith and how to live it. It also involves a willingness to support and encourage others who share the faith and who have committed themselves to the ongoing process of conversion of heart and mind to God, which results in the holiness to which we are called.

The word *baptism* means to "dip" into the water. Your parents, godparents and parish community acting on your behalf dipped you into the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ when you were baptized. They marked the name of Jesus Christ on your forehead forever, claiming you for Christ. This marking is permanent, and cannot be erased.



When we are baptized:

⌚ We are connected to a common-union —our community includes our living faith community and those who have died.

⌚ Our name is proclaimed to the community, we are marked with the sign of the cross and are claimed as a child of God.

⌚ Through the profession of faith we say no to sin and yes to life and faith in Jesus.

The Symbols of Baptism

- **Water** – We are all born with what is called “Original Sin”. Water is used at our Baptism to cleanse us of this sin, and make us holy and right with God again.
- **Oil** – In our every day lives oil is used to strengthen, heal, and protect us in lots of different ways. We use oil in Baptism as a sign of being anointed by the Holy Spirit, who gives us the strength we need for each day, who heals us when we are sick and protects us from harm.

- **White Garment** – In Baptism, the newly baptized are given a white garment that symbolizes that the person has just “Put on Christ”. The garment is white, the color of purity, or being cleansed of sin. The garment is simple and plain, because the beauty of each individual comes from God who lives within each person. All the baptized are clothed in similar white garments because everyone is equal in the eyes of God, and equally valued as new Children of God.
- **Light** – In the celebration of Baptism, a candle is lit from the Paschal (Easter) candle and given to each newly baptized person. The lighted candle signifies that Christ has enlightened the baptized person, and in Christ those who are baptized become the "light of the world". It is the light of Christ that guides our lives as Christians, and we are called to bring that light of Christ to our world by being like Jesus in our daily lives.

Naming in the Rite of Baptism

The *Rite of Baptism for Children* begins with a naming ritual. The parents state the name of their child as they present him or her to the community. This liturgical naming calls us to be personally present to the community and introduces us to the community.

Those who are being baptized or initiated receive a new name, too: “Christian.” In infant baptism, for example, the priest states the name of the child and says “the Christian community welcomes you with great joy. In the name of this Christian Community, I claim you for Christ Jesus.” In Baptism, we take on a new name and a new identity. We also take on new relationships—belonging to Christ, belonging to the Christian community.

The Rite of Baptism

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| <p>Reception of the Children</p> <p>The presider asks the parents: What name do you give your child? What do you ask of God’s Church for your child?</p> | <p>God has created us and called us each by name. Created by God, in God’s image and likeness, we celebrate our belonging to God through Baptism. It is through Baptism that our name is proclaimed to the community and our beauty as God’s children is celebrated.</p> |
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The presider traces the cross on the child's forehead and asks the parents and god parents to do the same.



“In Baptism we are marked with the sign of the cross – we are claimed, loved, marked by God as God’s own – marked and claimed to love as God loves. “The cross is the principal Christian symbol of hope. Without the cross there is no resurrection. The symbol of cross was fostered by Jesus who challenged his disciples to take up their cross and follow him. Being signed with the cross is to be marked and reminded that one belongs to Christ and his cross” (*Word and Worship Workbook Year B* by Mary Birmingham. New York: Paulist Press, 2000. pp. 304ff).



Proclamation of the Word

“Optional gospel passages include the great commandment to love God and neighbor, the mandate to go forth and baptize all nations, the invitation to children to come to Jesus, the conversation with Nicodemus about being born again of water and the Spirit, the stories of the woman at the well and the man born blind and the great Johannine passage about union with Christ as intimate and life-sustaining as vine and branches. These are all passages that depict God’s action in the lives of individuals and the community and the community’s obligations of life and mission...The sacramental rhythm, true of every sacrament, is one of listening and response, of listening and then loving in return” (*Saying Amen: A Mystagogy of Sacrament* by Mary Hughes. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1999. p. 75).

Intercessions and Litany to the Saints



Being baptized into a community of faith, as a community we pray together for the Baptismal candidates, their parents, and godparents, and for ourselves – that we may receive the graces we need to be faithful witnesses of Christ in today’s world.

We are connected to a communion of saints – our community includes those that have walked faithfully before us and we invite them to pray for us and with us through the litany of the saints.

Prayer of Exorcism

The presider prays with the community that the child may be freed from original sin and be strengthened with Christ's grace.



"The theology of Original Sin was developed as a way to speak about our need for salvation in Christ Jesus. As the Catechism explains, 'The doctrine of Original Sin is, so to speak, the 'reverse side' of the Good News that Jesus is the Savior of all' (# 389).

Original sin is removed when the person is filled with the Holy Spirit, the saving love and grace of Christ" ("Infant Baptism: Gift to the Parish" by Thomas Richstatter. *Catholic Update* 0595, Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1995).

Anointing before Baptism

The presider anoints the child on the chest with the oil of catechumens.



The purpose of the anointing with the oil of catechumens is "to give wisdom and strength to all those anointed with it."

Blessing and Invocation of God over the Baptismal Waters (If the Baptism is outside the Easter Season)



The presider invites the Holy Spirit to bless the water, that those being baptized may die to sin and rise to new life in Christ.

Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith



“Do you reject sin as to live in the freedom of God’s children...Do you reject the glamour of evil and refuse to be mastered by sin...Do you reject Satan, father of sin and prince of darkness...Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth...Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, dies, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father...Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting?”

“Through Baptism we say no to sin and yes to life and faith in Jesus. As Christians we choose to be loving, life giving people of God, saying no to the things that divide us from God and each other and saying yes to those things that life and nurture others”
(*Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1237).

Baptism

The celebrant baptizes each candidate either



The presider immerses or pours water on the child three times saying: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

by immersion or by the pouring of water. "Water is cited in scripture more than any other natural resource. In scripture, water is a sign of God's providential care. It can be abundantly showered down or withheld because of sin. It is also a sign of purification. Water in the Rite of Baptism is used to purify, justify, sanctify, and incorporate one into the body of Christ. Water is used in the rite of sprinkling to remind us of our Baptism. Caskets are blessed with holy water as a reminder that Baptism is a share in the eternal life of Christ. We bless ourselves with water as a sign of being members of Christ's body" (*Word and Worship Workbook Year B* by Mary Birmingham. New York: Paulist Press, 2000. pp. 325).

Anointing After Baptism



The presider anoints the baptized on the head with the oil of salvation (chrism), so that the baptized "may remain forever a member of Christ who is Priest, Prophet, and King."

The baptized are sealed with the Holy Spirit through the signing with the oil of sacred chrism. The Christian is branded to Christ, marked permanently with the sign of salvation, the cross of Jesus Christ. In ordinary life oil heals, soothes, is used in cooking, for energy, for lubrication, and for protection from the elements. Oil is difficult to rub off, and stains clothing when spilled. Oil marks us for life as belonging to Christ.

Clothing with White Garment



White garments are placed on the baptized as an “outward sign of Christian dignity.”

“The white garment symbolizes that the person baptized has put on Christ, has risen with Christ” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1243).

Lighted Candle



A lighted candle is given to the baptized as a reminder to them to “keep the flame of faith alive in their hearts.”

“The candle, lit from the Easter Candle, signifies that Christ has enlightened the neophyte. In him the baptized are the light of the world” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1243).

Sending Forth: Lords' Prayer, Blessing, and Dismissal



“My brothers and sisters, we commend you to the mercy and grace of God our almighty Father, of his only Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May he protect your paths, so that walking in the light of faith, you may come to the good things he has promised us” (*Rite of Baptism* # 130).

“All receive a blessing at the conclusion of an infant Baptism, underscoring that all have enacted commitments during the rite. Living as faithful members of God’s holy people, being present to each other, participating as far as is possible in the life and growth of the child and its gradual assimilation of all that the community holds dear – these are the kinds of commitments articulated by members of the community, truly representing the whole society of saints and believers we call the church” (*Saying Amen: A Mystagogy of Sacrament* by Mary Hughes. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1999. p. 79).