

Baptismal Catechesis

What happens at Baptism?

+A person (your child) dies with Christ to rise with Him as a new creation.

We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. Romans 6:4

+A baptized person is “born again.”

Jesus said, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again. Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit." Jn 3:3-5

Water definitely has the ability to kill life. Water also has the ability to give life. In the baptismal waters the life of sin and evil is destroyed, and a new life of grace begins.

+A baptized person (your child) becomes an adopted son or daughter of God Almighty.

In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. If you belong to Christ, then you are heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3:26-27,29

As parents, for sure, you want to give the very best to your child. **In baptizing your son or daughter you are giving him or her the very best.** He or she becomes adopted son or daughter of God Almighty, and a co-heir to God's entire kingdom.

If we are children, then we are heirs -- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. Romans 8:17

Baptism is not a mere ceremony or family social event. **Baptism is a radical moment that changes the eternal destiny of the person (your child).**

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God. Ephesians 2:8

From our Catholic Catechism:

1213 Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons and daughters of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church, and made sharers in her mission.

The Rite of Baptism

The rite of baptism can be divided into four parts:

1. The Welcome
2. Scripture readings and prayer
3. Baptism
4. Closing prayers and blessing

The Welcome

The minister clarifies the reason you and others are gathered in the sacred place of the church. He welcomes you and your family and asks the name you have given to your child, a name that will be respected for all eternity. Then, the minister will ask for clarification from you: *What do you ask of God's Church for your child?* Your answer: "Baptism."

The minister will then speak to you about your duties and responsibilities as Catholic Christian parents in raising your child in the Catholic faith. You will be asked: *Are you able and willing to accept your responsibility?*

For the celebration to continue you must answer "yes."

We know that words can be cheap. "Shades of truth" are common. Almighty God, however, considers words important. He instructs: "Say 'yes' when you mean 'yes' and 'no' when you mean 'no.' Mt 5:37

God spoke the world and all life into existence. He said the word and it happened. God only speaks truth. He expects us, His created image, to only speak truth as well.

The Lord is not forcing you to say "yes" at your child's baptism. But, if you do, the Lord will hold you accountable for the "yes" you have spoken.

The "welcome" ends with a simple yet very meaningful gesture: the minister will trace a cross on your child's forehead, claiming your child *for Christ*. Then, the minister will invite you and the godparents to do the same.

The Word of God (Scripture & Prayer)

The Catholic Church teaches that God is the author of Sacred Scripture. The Bible is the Word of God. All our Catholic teachings are based on the Word of God and cannot be in contradiction to God's revealed Word. By listening to God's Word, we receive instruction from God Himself.

After a selection from Holy Scripture is read, the minister will expound on it for your instruction with a short homily. Next, the Christian community will pray for the child about to be baptized, and for his or her family to be given the spiritual strength to faithfully hand on the Catholic faith to the child.

Finally, in a *prayer of exorcism*, the minister will pray to free your child of any evil spirit and influence, and cleanse your child from original sin, that your child may become a temple of God's glory.

The minister anoints the child on the breast, tracing a cross with the Oil of Catechumens, or the oil of salvation in Christ, and he prays for the child to have strength "in the power of Christ our Savior."

Baptism

This central moment of the sacrament has several parts:

1. *Blessing of the water*
2. *Renewal of Baptism Promises*
3. *Profession of Faith*
4. *The Baptism, Anointing, Clothing, and Candle-lighting*

Blessing of the Water



The celebrant asks that the power of the Holy Spirit fill the waters, so that the child may become a new creation, modeled on the death and resurrection of Jesus. In this prayer, we recall the waters of Creation, the Flood, the Red Sea, the Jordan, and the water which flowed from Christ's wounded side on the Cross. The baptismal font is the descendant of them all. It is the womb of the Church, from which your child is reborn in Christ and becomes a member of God's holy family. For these reasons, the font has a prominent place close to the altar and pulpit.

Renewal of Parents' Baptismal Promises

The priest asks you three times to reject Satan, his temptations, and evil. These are realities in the spiritual life and influence our world.

The Profession of Faith

The minister asks you three questions. They are the heart of the Catholic faith:

1. *Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?*
2. *Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?*
3. *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?*

These are the Baptismal vows which you renew for yourself and make for your child. The rejection of sin and the profession of the faith which you proclaim publicly. Answering these questions aloud before God and the church renews the promises once made for you in Baptism.

The Baptism

You have brought your child to the place where the Catholic community worships. You have heard the Word of God. You have made a public declaration of faith.



Now, the minister asks:

Is it your desire that your child be baptized in the faith of the Church which we have all professed with you?

With your 'YES', the minister pours water over the child praying:

I baptize you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Your child is now a child of God, born again in the life of the Spirit, and a member of the Body of Christ, the Church.

The Anointing

The priest *anoints* the child with perfumed oil, called chrism. This same oil is used to anoint priests and even royalty. Jesus was anointed priest, prophet, and king. A baptized person shares the same priesthood, prophetic, and royal ministry as Jesus Christ.

The Clothing

The white garment worn at baptism signifies the baptized person's Christian dignity as being born again in the Spirit and being a member of the Body of Christ. The minister prays that the newly baptized person will keep his or her dignity unstained throughout his or her earthly life.

Candle-lighting

The newly baptized person receives a candle which is lit from the Easter candle, or Paschal candle, or simply the Christ candle.

Jesus is the Light of the world. He is the light of truth, goodness, and grace. The baptized person is to bear the Light, who is Jesus, into the world, for truly this person is now a child of the Light.



Closing Prayers and Blessing

The minister invites the assembly to pray the only prayer that Jesus taught His disciples, the Lord's Prayer. This prayer contains all we need to pray for, and in the order, we should pray for them. The Lord's prayer is our prayer as Christians, as sons and daughters of God.

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us, and lead us not into
temptation, but deliver us from evil.

