



Baptism

The sacrament of baptism ushers us into the divine life, cleanses us from sin, and initiates us as members of the Christian community. It is the foundation for the sacramental life.

At baptism, the presider prays over the water:

Father, look now with love upon your Church, and unseal for her the fountain of baptism. By the power of the Holy Spirit give to this water the grace of your Son, so that in the sacrament of baptism all those whom you have created in your likeness may be cleansed from sin and rise to a new birth of innocence by water and the Holy Spirit. (Christian Initiation of Adults, #222A)

Freed from Sin

Baptism frees us from the bondage of original and actual sin. Water is poured in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Today, the sacrament of baptism is often performed on infants, shortly after birth. Adult baptisms take place at the Easter Vigil through the Rite of Christian Initiation. Adults or children who have been baptized in a valid Christian church are not baptized again in the Catholic Church. As we say in the Nicene Creed, “*I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins...*”

The *Catechism* teaches:

"The fruit of Baptism, or baptismal grace, is a rich reality that includes forgiveness of original sin and all personal sins, birth into the new life by which man becomes an adoptive son of the Father, a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit. By this very fact the person baptized is incorporated into the Church, the Body of Christ, and made a sharer in the priesthood of Christ" (CCC 1279).

Baptismal Symbols

- **Water** – The waters of baptism recall Jesus’ own baptism by John the Baptist in the river Jordan. Water is a symbol of cleansing and renewal as we begin a new life in Christ. We are washed clean of sin.

- **Oil** – At baptism we are anointed into the life of Christ as “priest, prophet and king.” A cross is traced on the candidate’s forehead as a reminder that we are inheritors of the Kingdom of God.
- **Light** – The baptismal candle is lit from the Paschal or Easter candle that stands in the church as a sign of Christ’s light in the world. At baptism, we receive the light of Christ and are called forth to share this light with the world.
- **White garment** – The white garment that is placed upon us at baptism is a symbol of Christ’s victory over death and his glorious resurrection. Likewise, the white garment or pall that is placed over the coffin at the time of death recalls our baptismal promises and reminds us that we are destined for eternal life.

While in ordinary circumstances, sacraments in the Catholic Church are administered validly by a member of the ordained clergy, in an emergency situation, the sacrament of baptism can be administered by anyone.

In case of necessity, any person can baptize provided that he have the intention of doing that which the Church does and provided that he/she pour water on the candidates head while saying: *“I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”* (CCC 1284).

Godparents

Godparents have a unique and important role that begins with their presence at the Rite of Baptism and goes far beyond that day. During the Rite, they represent the community of the faithful who undertake the responsibility of helping with the formation of the child in the faith. Their role in the child’s life flows from this representation. As the child grows, godparents have the responsibility to continue to provide support for the child and encouragement to the parents.

Godparents:

- Must be at least 16 years old
- Should be a Baptized Christian themselves.
- Should be a faith filled person to help in raising the child Christian.