

Baptismal Rite Overview

Reception of the Child

The celebrant (the priest) welcomes the family of the child at the entrance of the church, near the Baptismal font. He will ask the parents:

- ❖ What name have you chosen for your child?
- ❖ What do you ask of God's church for (child's name)? *Baptism*
- ❖ Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking? *We do*

Of course *no parent* can honestly say they understand what they are undertaking when they have a child! Yet the Church wants to know if you are willing to take on the responsibility of making faith practices a part of your family life. If you aren't able to commit to this now, you should honestly re-consider if you want to go forward with the baptism.

Next the celebrant will ask the godparents:

- ❖ Godparents, are you willing to help these parents in their Christian duty? *We are*

The celebrant traces the sign of the cross on the child's forehead and asks the parents and godparents to do the same.

Litany of Saints

As Catholics, we believe that the entire Christian community is present with us in the Holy Spirit at each Baptism. This community includes the saints in heaven. We begin every Baptism celebration by asking these saints to be with us and pray for us.

The Liturgy of the Word

Readings from Scripture will be proclaimed aloud, followed by a brief homily.



Prayer of Exorcism

We ask that God free your child from original sin and fill your child with the Holy Spirit, protecting him or her from all sin and evil.

Renunciations and Promises

Father will call for a rejection of sin and profession of faith: "Do you reject sin, Satan, and Satan's empty promises?" "Do you believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?" Your response of "I do" to each statement says that you believe in the Church's teachings and accept responsibility for teaching your child to believe these core Christian beliefs, too. Renewing your own baptismal promises at this time is one of the most important ways you participate in the celebration.

Baptism

The water of Baptism contained in the baptismal font is the primary symbol of this sacrament. The priest or deacon will pour water on the child's forehead three times



while baptizing “in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”



Anointing

The celebrant anoints the child with the sacred chrism by making the sign of the cross on the child's forehead. This oil is meant to stay until it evaporates, “sealing” the baptism. The anointing marks the child as a member of the body of Christ, who shares the everlasting life of Christ who is “Priest, Prophet, and King.”

White Garment

This is provided by the parish as a symbol of the child's rebirth and as a sign of purity.

The godparent puts this on the child when indicated by the celebrant. (At Sacred Heart the “garment” is a stole that is placed on top of the child's other clothing.)



Baptismal Candle

The candle symbolizes the light of Christ that now burns within the child. Often the second godparent lights this from the great Easter candle – which will be burning near the baptismal font – when indicated by the presider. He or she then presents this to the

child (holding it for him or her if the child is an infant or a very young). Sacred Heart will provide the baptismal candle.

Conclusion

Father will indicate that the ritual is over with a concluding prayer and blessings for the mother and father.

Baptism is not something which magically makes a baby into a Christian. Rather it helps nurture the seeds of faith. The splash of baptismal water or the immersion into the baptismal pool and the words said by the priest or deacon during the ceremony are not magic. The church does not believe in a God of magic; it believes in a God who invites, who loves, who forgives. Baptism helps us affirm what we already believe – that this child you are presenting to the church is welcomed by God and welcomed, cleansed of all sin, into God's people, the Christian community.

– Tom Sheridan

The Gift of Baptism: A Handbook for Parents

