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## PREPARING YOUR CHILD'S BAPTISM AT ST. MARY

**1) Contact the parish office** before or shortly after the birth of your child. You will speak with someone who will collect the necessary information and begin the preparation process with you.

**2) Schedule the Baptism:** We will help you schedule the celebration with your preferred priest or deacon. Most baptisms are scheduled on Saturdays, outside of Mass, although having your baptism celebrated with the parish family at one of the weekend Masses is possible. Baptisms are celebrated either at the font in our parish vestibule or in St. Joseph Chapel in the Pastoral Center.

**3) Baptism Preparation Class:** The parish has a baptism preparation class once-a-month on the 3rd Saturday from 9:00am-12:00pm. You, and your chosen godparent(s), will need to attend one of these classes. This class is waived if you have taken a baptism class within the last 3 years.

During the class you will learn about God's plan for our salvation in the waters of Baptism and how this sacrament intimately unites us to Christ in His death, and ultimately in His resurrection.

The class also prepares parents and godparents to deepen their own conversions and faith in Christ and the Church so they are able to raise this child to know, love, and serve the Lord.

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## WELCOME TO YOUR “FAMILY OF FAMILIES”



*“The fruit of Baptism, 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”*

*~ Catechism of the  
Catholic Church #1279*



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## A NEW CREATION

### The Sanctifying Role of the Church

*(Code of Canon Law, c. 842, 849; Catechism of the Catholic Church 1213, 1263, 1265, 1267-1270)*

Through Baptism, God enables us to participate in his life in Jesus Christ and makes us his children. It is through this sacrament that we receive the Holy Spirit and become members of the People of God, of the Body of Christ, which is the Church. Baptism becomes our commitment to grow in this new life and to strive to acquire spiritual maturity. By baptism, God purifies us from sin.

Baptism is the sacrament of faith which has the Risen Christ as its source, and it is the offer of salvation for all people. Intimately linked to Confirmation and to Eucharist, Baptism is, with these two sacraments, Christian Initiation. The child is baptized in the faith of their parents, godparents and of the Church.

### The Sacrament of Baptism

*This sacrament is called Baptism, after the central rite by which it is carried out: to baptize (Greek baptizein) means to "plunge" or "immerse"; the "plunge" into the water symbolizes the catechumen's burial into Christ's death, from which he rises up by resurrection with him, as "a new creature." (CCC 1214)*

*Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in Baptism to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the children of God, to which all men are called. The sheer gratuitousness of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest in infant Baptism. The Church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer Baptism shortly after birth. (CCC 1250)*

*Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, the person baptized is configured to Christ. Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (character) of his belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark, even if sin prevents Baptism from bearing the fruits of salvation. Given once for all, Baptism cannot be repeated. (CCC 1272)*

## CHILDREN OF GOD'S FAMILY

### Basic Guidelines for Infant Baptism

*(Code of Canon Law, cc. 867-868; Catechism of the Catholic Church 1251)*

Parents are responsible for bringing their child to the Sacrament of Baptism as soon after birth as possible. Except in case of necessity, the church is the usual place of baptism.

In order that a child be baptized, it is necessary that the parents consent, or at least one of them, or someone legally standing in their place, and that there is reasonable hope that the child will be brought up in the Catholic Faith.

### Godparents

A person may only have one or two godparents (also called sponsors); if two are chosen, they must be male and female.

*In order for someone to be eligible as a godparent they must:*

- ❖ be chosen by the parents,
- ❖ have the ability and intention to fulfill the role,
- ❖ be at least 16 years of age,
- ❖ and be a confirmed Roman Catholic, who has already received the Most Holy Eucharist,
- ❖ is leading a life in harmony with the Catholic Faith (including Marriage)
- ❖ and will be a good role model for the one being baptized,
- ❖ and be neither the father nor mother of the child.

A baptized person who belongs to another Christian community may be admitted only as a "Christian witness" (not a godparent) provided that there is at least one Roman Catholic godparent who fulfills the above criteria.

A non-baptized person cannot be a witness.  
*(Code of Canon Law, cc. 872-874; Catechism of the Catholic Church 1255).*

If a godparent, for serious reasons, cannot be present at the Baptism, then a proxy can stand in. The proxy must fulfill the above requirements as well in the same manner as the godparent.

## THE LIFE OF GRACE

### Baptismal Preparation in your Parish

*(Code of Canon Law, c. 851; Catechism of the Catholic Church 843)*

In order to respect your request for the baptism of your child, you are invited to follow closely the stages of preparation offered below:

- ❖ Contact your parish office and express your desire to have your child baptized.
- ❖ Introduce yourself to the parish priest if you do not already know him personally.
- ❖ Open yourself to the invitation to actively join the faith community of your parish. If you are not registered parishioners, please consider formally joining our parish family by registering.

### Marital Status

Your marital status will be clarified during the baptismal preparation process. Baptism is not denied if the parents are unmarried or not married in the Roman Catholic Church.

However, there may be reason to postpone Baptism if parents are not practicing the Faith, or have no intention of living a Catholic life in harmony with the Gospel.

If your status is not in harmony with the Roman Catholic understanding of sacramental marriage, please inquire as to how we may help you enter into proper sacramental marriage or, if need be, seek a declaration of nullity by the Church.