



Holy Rosary Church

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*"Celebrating 137 years as the First Italian Parish in the State of New Jersey."
Established in 1885*

Baptism Information

Parish Registration

Every Catholic should be registered in the Parish where they worship. If you are not already registered with Holy Rosary Parish, you should register as soon possible after you realize you are expecting. You should be registered for at least six (6) months prior to contacting the Parish for Baptism.

Introduction to Baptizing Your Child

We are happy that you have decided to share the wonder of faith with your child through the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism. In the following pages you will find information for the celebration of the sacrament here at Holy Rosary Church. We hope that you will find this resource helpful as you plan for the celebration of Baptism and give our community of faith the opportunity to welcome your child into the Church.

Baptism is an opportunity to encounter the living presence of Christ, not just in the celebration of the sacrament, but in the opportunity to live out the sacrament in our daily lives. While we know that sin is a part of our reality, we also know that we can grow in holiness through the cooperation with the grace given us in the sacrament.

Celebrating the Sacrament

Baptisms are normally celebrated on the 2nd Sunday of every month at either the 9:00am or 11:30am Mass on Sunday.

Baptism is not celebrated, except in an emergency, during the season of Lent, as Lent is a time when we prepare to celebrate baptism of adults at the Easter Vigil or prepare to renew our own baptismal promises at Easter.

Liturgy is a communal event, thus it is important that everyone be able to participate as much as possible. All present are encouraged to make the appropriate responses and otherwise be attentive to the celebration.

Other children, especially siblings, and other family members, are always welcome and encouraged to attend. We ask that the volume be kept down so as to allow others to hear and participate.

Preparation

Baptismal preparation classes are scheduled before the celebration of Baptism. The class is normally held in the Parish Center or Parish Office Office. Both parents and Godparents are expected to attend this class.

Parents

Children learn most from their parents. They will learn from you (with help from the Godparents, family and your parish community) what it means to be a Baptized member of the Church, to love God, to love neighbor, to live a sacramental life and to live a life of faith. We would like to support you in all of your efforts, and invite you to join us each Sunday, with your children, at the Eucharist, even if full participation is not possible. We also invite you to speak to us if you still need to complete your sacraments of initiation (Eucharist and/or Confirmation) or are engaged, or need to have a civil marriage convalidated (blessed in the Church), or need information regarding annulments.

Godparents

Godparents are an important part of the celebration of Baptism, as well as the role they accept in being a model of faith for your child. The decision to ask someone to be a Godparent for your child is an important one because of the ministry they are called to in the life of your child and in the life of the Church. It is not an opportunity to honor someone or to make others happy, it is the chance to choose someone who can give your child a living example of faith and to help you in the religious education and faith formation of your child. Therefore, the people you choose to be the Godparents of your child must fulfill the following requirements:

- They must be at least 16 years of age.
- They must have celebrated Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation in the Roman Catholic Church (or have been received in the Church).
- Their marriage (if married) must have been celebrated in accordance with the sacramental norms and canon law of the Church, i.e., they must be married in Church, not just a civil marriage.
- They must be living out their faith through regular participation at the Sunday Eucharist, living a life in accord with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, especially in regards to faith, morals and charity.
- Only one Godparent is necessary. If there are two, there must be one Godmother and one Godfather.

Christians of other denominations may act as Christian Witnesses to the Baptism of your child provided the other Godparent is able to fulfill the above requirements. People of non-Christian faiths are unable to act as a Godparent or witness to Baptism.

These requirements are the law of the Church and must be fulfilled by the Godparent(s). The Godparent(s) must have the proper eligibility form filled out and signed by their parish priest prior to scheduling the Baptism.

The Next Step

In Baptism we are invited to live out our faith in Christ, to live out the sacrament we have celebrated. You are encouraged to join us in the celebration of the Eucharist each Sunday, and when your child begins school to enroll him/her into a religious education program.

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

The Sacrament of Baptism

Institution by Christ

Jesus Christ told us about Baptism during his conversation with Nicodemus. This Pharisee had just complimented Jesus. The Savior replied by saying, “No one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is begotten from above”. To which Nicodemus objected, “How can a man be born again? Can he go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?” This was a perfect question to introduce Christ’s revealed teaching about Baptism. He said, “I solemnly assure you no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being begotten of water and the Spirit.”

For no less than fifteen verses does Jesus explain the meaning of what He had just told Nicodemus. Underlying Christ’s teaching is the fact that Baptism is necessary. So true is this that the Catholic Church recognizes the rite of Baptism practiced by other Christian churches, provided the sacrament is conferred by immersion in water or the pouring or sprinkling of water, while the same person pronounces the words, “I baptize you in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

How necessary is Baptism? It is absolutely necessary to receive Baptism of water or at least of desire, which can be implicit, provided a person believes at least in God and His goodness and is faithful to the graces that God gives him.

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, “As regards infants who have died without Baptism, the Church can only entrust them to the mercy of God, as she does in her funeral rites for them. Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all people should be saved, and Jesus’ tenderness toward infants which caused him to say: ‘Let the little ones come to me, do not hinder them,’ allow us to hope that there is a way of salvation for infants who have died without Baptism. All the more urgent is the Church’s call not to prevent infants coming to Christ through the gift of holy Baptism.”

Meaning

Baptism can be defined as the sacrament of supernatural rebirth or regeneration. We should stress the prefix “re” when we speak of Baptism as a rebirth or regeneration. This brings out the astounding fact that although we are indeed generated or born naturally of our human parents, Baptism gives us a new life. This is a higher life, the supernatural life that we need above our natural existence. Why do we need this life? Because we hope to reach heaven after our natural life expires when we die. Absolutely speaking, none of us will ever die. What we commonly call death is merely the separation of our immortal soul from our body. But the soul is meant to be alive twice over. As a spiritual reality, our soul will never cease to exist. But if our soul is not animated by the grace we received at Baptism, we shall die the double death of both body and soul.

Importance

Baptism is not only the first of the seven sacraments; it is also the basic sacrament. How? Unless a person is baptized, none of the other six sacraments can be received. Only a baptized person can be confirmed. Only a baptized person can receive absolution in the Sacrament of Confession. Only a baptized person can receive the Sacrament of Matrimony. Only a baptized man can be validly ordained a priest.

Baptism first gives a person the supernatural life, whereas the other sacraments provide for the restoration, or growth, or healing, or communication of the supernatural life. As we shall see, the moment we are conceived in our mother's womb, we receive the principle of the natural life of our body, called the soul. When we are baptized, our soul receives its principle of the supernatural life. *The foundation of supernatural existence is conferred by the Sacrament of Baptism.* Baptism clearly shows that the Catholic Church understands by the sacraments. They actually give cause if you will, the grace which they signify. There need be no deliberate contribution from a newborn child. The sacrament itself confers grace from God just because the infant is baptized.

Effects of Baptism

All the effects of Baptism are supernatural as we should expect. These effects are mainly five and may be summarized in five words: sin, life, power, Church and character.

Removal of Guilt and Penalty for Sin

The first and most practical effect of Baptism is to remove the guilt of original sin and restore the corresponding title to heavenly glory. What does this mean? It means that the guilt of all the sin a person may have on his soul is taken away. A baptized child, who has not reached the age of reason, if it dies, has an immediately title to the beatific vision. After the age of reason, a baptized person is freed not only from original sin but all the sins committed, and all the punishment due to even a lifetime of personal sins.

Supernatural

By the sin of Adam, mankind lost its share in the divine life. By the death of Christ, the second Adam, this life can now be restored. Baptism restores what we call our supernatural life. This is the new birth of which Christ spoke to Nicodemus, when He said that we must be born again of water and the Holy Spirit.

This is that life of which St. John writes in the opening chapter of his Gospel, when he says that we are children of God, "who are begotten not by blood, nor by carnal desire nor by man's willing it, but by God" (John 1:13). Because we have this life of God in our souls, we become heirs of heaven. The only condition which God requires is that we remain spiritually alive when our bodies die. Provided we are in the grace of God when, as we say, we die, our souls will not only survive but will have a right to heavenly glory. In other words, this supernatural life received at Baptism is destined to continue, beyond our bodily death, into a heavenly eternity.

We have a name for the source of this supernatural life. We call it sanctifying grace. St. Augustine calls it the soul of the soul. What our soul is to our body, giving it natural life, sanctifying grace is to the soul, giving it supernatural life.

To be noted, however, is that sanctifying grace is already the created effect of the indwelling of the Holy Trinity. We may therefore say that the most important effect of the sacrament of Baptism is to have the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, dwell in our souls. This indwelling is called the uncreated grace that we have received when we were baptized and are to retain when the Lord calls us to our everlasting destiny.

Virtues, Gifts and Fruits

Baptism not only gives supernatural life to the soul, it also gives the soul supernatural powers, instincts and joys which we commonly identify as the virtues, gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. Another name for the virtues infused at Baptism is supernatural powers to do what is impossible to human nature alone. The three most important of these powers are the virtues of faith, hope and charity.

By faith we are empowered to believe everything which God has revealed: that God is the eternal Community of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; that God became man in the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary; that Jesus Christ, the God-man, suffered and dies for our sins; that Jesus Christ is now present, really and truly, actually and bodily on earth in the Holy Eucharist; that the Church which Christ founded is our road to salvation, and that the visible head of this Church is Bishop of Rome, successor to St. Peter, whom Christ made the rock, so that what the Pope teaches the universal Church, it is the teaching of Christ Himself. By hope we are empowered to confidently trust that all the good things promised us by God we shall obtain; that we will never be without the light and strength we need to fulfill the will of God; that no trials that God send us will be greater than, with His grace, we can bear; that provided we cooperate with God's grace, heaven is ours. We are confident of His mercy, no matter how sinful our lives may have been. The only condition is that we repent, make a good Confession, and resolve to amend our lives.

By charity we are empowered to love God above all things; to love Him more than ourselves; to love Him even, or especially when He sends us sufferings and the cross; to love Him in all the circumstances of life, no matter how demanding His love may be. By charity we are empowered to love others not only as much as we love ourselves. We are enabled to love others more than ourselves; to love others even as Christ has loved us, by suffering and dying on our cross out of love for others; to love others out of love for God constantly, patiently and generously beyond all human power and expectation.

Unforgettable Character

The final and most mysterious effect of Baptism is to receive a permanent, irremovable character or seal. Baptism imparts a likeness to Christ, especially to Christ the priest. The seal will remain throughout our lives on earth and into the endless reaches of eternity. The baptismal character grafts a person into Christ the Vine so that all the baptized share in a unique way in the graces of Christ's humanity. As a result, Jesus Christ has a claim on the baptized that no one else enjoys; and they have a claim on Him that no one else on earth can share. The baptismal character is permanent because it is timeless; it is indelible because nothing, not even the loss of faith can remove it. Therefore a baptized person always remains a Christian. Why? Because the baptismal seal confers a permanent relationship with Christ.

What Happens when we are Baptized?

Contemporary Catholics spend a great deal of time preparing for their own or their child's Baptism. There are new clothes to buy, and classes to take, and godparents to select, all leading up to that moment at the waters of Baptism touch the new initiate. But Baptism and all sacraments, for that matter, are much more than the moment of celebration.

The ritual of Baptism does not bring God's love into being as if that love did not exist before the ceremony. Baptism is the Church's way of celebrating and enacting the embrace of God who first loved us from the moment of our conception. Baptism celebrates a family's and a community's experience of that love in the baptized.

There are other life experiences birth, death, washing, growing and so forth that are celebrated in Baptism. The water represents life, death, cleansing and growth, and it recalls the flood waters of Noah's day and the saving waters of the Red Sea parted by Moses. The candle symbolizes our status as an "Easter people" and signifies the way that the Church "passes the torch" of Christian commitment to those being baptized. The white garment represents the Church's belief that Baptism sets us free from Original Sin.

Baptism happens not only to the individual, but also to Christ's body, the Church. That's why the rite insists that we celebrate Baptism in the Christian assembly, with the community present and actively participating. It is the community, after all, who is welcoming the new members, journeying with them, providing models for them, supporting and nourishing them. Baptism begins with God's love and care revealed to us through Christ. It continues with us, the church, living and enacting God's love and care through Christ to the world. That's a serious commitment.

Why are Babies Baptized? Aren't they too Young to Accept Jesus?

Obviously, infants cannot understand the change of allegiance, the putting off of the old and putting on of the new, the dying and rising, the new life, or the sharing in the life of Christ. However, the parents of those infants can understand and live those values and pass them on to their children. They can also experience the support of the community in living those ideals, and that is extremely important.

Infant Baptism only makes sense if parents are true Christian disciples. If not, then it makes little sense to initiate their children into a Church which calls for a commitment to living the mission of Christ.

The Rite of Baptism for children emphasizes the importance of faithfulness on the part of parents when it says to parents: In asking to have your children baptized, "you are accepting the responsibility of training them in the practice of the faith." That word practice is crucial; it calls for Christian modeling on the part of parents.

Children learn to be Christian by osmosis, by experiencing Christianity at home. The "domestic church" prepares children for the local and world Church. It is in the home, in the domestic church, that children first learn basic trust which is the foundation of faith. Without the experience of faith, hope and commitment in the home, children will not be able to know and understand the larger Church.

Does Baptism Last a Lifetime?

Baptism lasts a lifetime in the sense that it designates this person as a member of God's people, as branches with Christ as the vine (see John 15:5).

Yes, the baptized person will eventually sin, but Baptism points out his/her deepest identity. Even though a person can live contrary to that identity, no sin can wipe it out.

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, God forgives sin. The Sacrament of the Eucharist renews a person's Baptism.

Symbols of Baptism

The Symbol of Water

Through the outward sign of water, God gives us the grace of new birth. The water of Baptism has many symbolic meanings. It symbolizes womb water and birth to new life. It symbolizes forgiveness and the washing away of all sin. Immersion symbolizes death to an old way of life and rising to a new life following in Christ's way. As the Hebrew people were saved and lead through the waters of the Red Sea, so the new "Israel" and its people saved through Baptismal water.

Water is poured just before the Baptism to show it as running or living water. Water is essential for life. It also symbolizes cleansing.

The White Robe

A change in clothing can be a symbol of important changes in our lives. Often candidates for Baptism wear special robes. The white robe symbolizes the putting on of the new life in Christ. It is the "white" of this baptismal clothing that is the origin of the name often given to the feast of Pentecost (Whitsunday, i.e., white-Sunday).

The Giving of the Light

The Paschal (Easter) candle is burning during a Baptism, to link Baptism with resurrection. The newly baptizes (or the sponsors on their behalf) often receive a lighted candle which symbolizes that there has been a passing from "darkness into light" and that now the baptized will shine with the light of Christ in the world – "let your light shine before others that they will see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:16).

Oil

Oil, sometimes called "chrism", may be applied to the crown of the newly baptized, with the sign of the cross. This marks the baptized as belonging to Christ. Scripture refers to oil being used for anointing. "Christ" means "anointed one". Our baptism links us to Christ. The oil anoints us to our Christian ministry.

The Font

The font or fountain holds the water for Baptism. Usually it is placed centrally in the Church for worship. The font should, at all times, occupy a prominent position in the place of worship.

We look forward to sharing this special occasion with you and your family. If you have any questions after reviewing this information, please do not hesitate to contact the Parish Office.