



Holy Spirit Parish

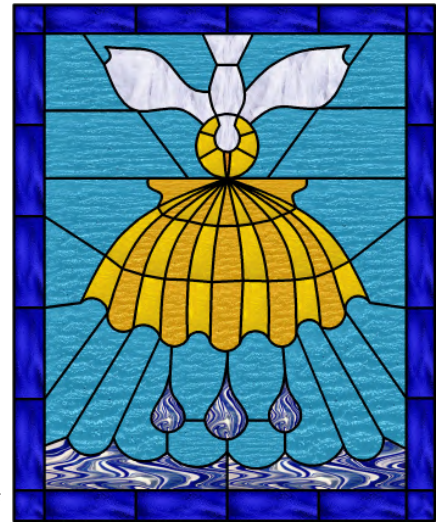
Pastored by the Augustinians

Baptism for your infant

The Gift

“What shall we give our children?” is a question which parents of infants and toddlers often ask. We are concerned about their physical, intellectual, moral, social, psychological and spiritual growth. Some Christian parents dream of sharing their own religious faith, convictions and values with their children. However, they are uncertain just how best to do this.

Pause and remember what in your home was ‘holy’? People? Rosaries?, the Bible, holy water, the crucifix, holy pictures? What meaning did they hold for you then? In this home do you remember praying when you were a small child? Before meals, at bedtime, on Sundays? Was prayer an important part of your family’s life together?



Leave your home and recall the first church you can remember. Try to remember your first Confession and first Holy Communion. As young children, we shared the faith of our parents, grandparents, other siblings and other important adults in our lives.

In the early years we followed religious practices, such as making the sign of the cross, taking holy water and saying some of the formal prayers. God was experienced through our relationships with genuine people of faith.

As we grew we gained insights and understanding. We doubted and questioned but finally made a very real and personal decision; religious values and practices would or would not be a significant part of our lives.

Now, as parents of young children we ask “What shall we give our children and how shall we do it?”

One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is the gift of a strong positive relationship with them. Our children’s memories of being loved, cared for and respected will linger long after the years of their early childhood have passed. These relationships will be the basis for our children’s faith development as they grow through the years. They will recall, as we have, the people who valued our faith and passed on the religious traditions of our Christian heritage. And they will in their own adult lives, make a decision to commit themselves to the Lord and to the Christian way of life - or not.

To Baptise – A Parents Decision

Your child is a precious gift, a privilege but also a tremendous responsibility, that of raising your boy or girl. You realise that children will be effected for better or worse by the world into which they are born. At the celebration of Baptism, you pledge yourselves to rearing this child in a way of Christ and against the sinful inclinations of humanity. The decision to have your baby baptised must come only after serious consideration. Why? Baptism does not end once the celebration is over. Nor is baptism something which pertains to the child alone: You are involved.

Bringing your child to the baptismal font expresses your commitment to raise your child in the Christian faith. The faith needs to be awakened, strengthened and developed as the child matures. To present your child for Baptism is to accept responsibility for the growth of that faith expressed when the Christian church baptises.

Parents who ask that their child be baptised into Christ have the most significant part to play in the passing on of the Christian life to their offspring. It is through them that the child will come to know the love of God. It is through them that the child will learn to go beyond the family circle and become involved in the larger community. Through the parents, the child will acquire an awareness of being a living and active member of the church.

Parents should baptise their child not because it is the custom, but because they sincerely desire the Christian life for the child. Parents who value their own faith and baptism will want to share the life of Christ they have inherited. Later, the child's faith will be based on what he/she has learned and experienced in the home and community from the very first days of life.

Choosing Godparents

In various cultures, the role of the godparent has taken on many appearances. For some, there is a deep, life-long bond formed as the godparents become a real part of the family. For others, it is merely a passing honor, a tribute to a dear friend or relative but with no lasting significance.

“Are you ready to help these parents in their duties as Christian parents?”

In the Catholic ceremony of Baptism, the godparent/s are asked “Are you ready to help these parents in their duties as Christian parents?” This is a serious question. What is important?

There is a great honor involved but also a great responsibility. You are looking, certainly, for a mature member of the Catholic Church, one who has received the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist) and has attained the age of 16 years.

FIRST, that there is to be at least one godparent.

SECONDLY, that the godparents be present at the rite so that they can make their commitment publicly.

THIRDLY, that the church continues to understand that the bond between the godparent and family is very close and more important that he/she be an example to the child of what Christian life is.

There is a great honor involved but also a great responsibility. You are looking, certainly, for a mature member of the Catholic Church, one who has received the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist) and has attained the age of 16 years. You are looking for someone who can share with you the tasks of bonding in the faith, whose life shows that faith in great and small ways of everyday living. You are looking for someone who knows that being a Catholic has to do with prayer, with justice towards the poor, with kindness even for friends and strangers, with many things that are not so popular or common in our own society.

May you choose joyfully and well!



Baptism doesn't end, once the ceremony is over.