

Give your child the everlasting gift of

BAPTISM



*And the priceless grace
of becoming a child of God!*

“Baptism is God’s most beautiful and magnificent gift...”

—St. Gregory of Nazianzus

Learn more about the sacrament of baptism in the Catholic Church! Here are some frequently asked questions and simple, direct answers.

Why should I baptize my child?

Your child will officially be a **Child of God** in Baptism. Your child will receive the **Baptismal grace** and **be freed from Original Sin and all personal sins**. On their baptism, the person baptized becomes **an adoptive child of the Father, a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit**. They will receive **sanctifying grace**, enabling them to believe in God, to hope in Him, and to love Him. In baptism, they receive **the power to live and act through the Holy Spirit** and His gifts. Ultimately, the grace of baptism allows them to **grow in goodness through moral virtues**.

There is so much powerful grace in this amazing Sacrament of the Church, which is also the gateway to the other Sacraments (CCC 1213-1284). The Lord Himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation (*John* 3:5), and the sooner the better for the sake of the child's spiritual well-being!

What is required to have my child baptized in the Catholic Church?

- 1) **The parents, or legal guardian, must consent.**
- 2) There must be **a founded hope that the infant will be brought up in the Catholic religion.**
- 3) **The parents are to be properly instructed** through pastoral advice and common prayer. Parents will be required to meet with the priest before the Sacrament of Baptism in order to truly understand the spiritual obligations their child's baptism will place on them. Special classes will be offered in the future.

4) **A person baptized is to be given a godparent(s)**, who will help the baptized person to lead a Christian life in keeping with the teachings of the Church. Please see the godparent ratification form for important details on the Mater Dolorosa Church website: https://www.materdolorosaplaucheville.com/file-manager/forms/godparent_ratification.pdf

5) **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 becoming involved in the prayer and celebration of the Sunday Eucharistic community.

What happens after baptism?

Baptism is the door that gives access to the other Sacraments. It is the beginning, not an end to itself. It is important that your child spiritually grows after Baptism, thus the need to go to the other Sacraments after Baptism.

These include the **Sacrament of Reconciliation**, where sins are confessed and cleansed within our soul, and the **Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist**, where we receive Jesus' Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity in Holy Communion. Catholics are obliged to attend Holy Mass every Sunday. Other Sacraments include the **Sacrament of Confirmation**, where we receive the fullness of the Sacrament of Baptism, **the Sacrament of Holy Orders**, where men are ordained to the priesthood, **the Sacrament of Marriage**, where a man and woman are joined in Holy Matrimony, and **Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick**, whereupon we prepare for death.

The **age of First Communion** is **7 years old** and **Confirmation** is **16 years old** in our **diocese of Alexandria**.

If children have completed 7 years of age when approaching the Sacrament of Baptism and have the use of reason, then they would need to receive different preparation.

With sufficient understanding and preparation, they would receive all three Sacraments of Initiation: **Baptism, Holy Communion, and Confirmation** (*Canon 852.1, Canon 97.2*). Special classes and additional requirements would be required for these cases. More information about this can be given upon your appointment with the pastor.

What about me?

It is never too late to return to the Church and its Sacraments!

The best thing you can do for your child is to practice your own Catholic faith by being married in the Church, attending Sunday Mass, going to regular Confession, and praying regularly. You too can be assisted to obtain the Sacraments you may have missed, perhaps the Sacrament of Confirmation or the Sacrament of Marriage. The pastor of your parish is only too eager to help you return to the state of grace through the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Confession and receive our Lord worthily in the Holy Eucharist every Sunday. **If you have any further questions or would like help to return to the Sacraments, please contact Fr. Martin Laird at the parish office at (318) 922-3131 or e-mail martinlaird@gmail.com.**

