

# Preparation for CHILDREN'S BAPTISM



I baptize you in the name  
of the Father and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit

## General Announcement

Classes are held for both parents and would be godparents on the First Saturday of the month at 10:00 AM in the Parish Rectory Office. The moderator for the program is Deacon Brian Payne. This class is required for new parents who have not before attended a class. It is also required for those who would be first time godparents, either here or at another Parish.

It is preferred that parental and sponsorship forms should be filled out prior to class attendance. These forms can be picked up at the Rectory or online at the Parish webpage. Parish registration forms are also available on the website. Baptisms can be scheduled on any available **Saturday (10:00 AM)** except for First Saturday when the Parish holds all-day Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Unless exempt from the class due to previous participation, Permissorial Forms for baptisms held elsewhere and Suitability Letters for parishioners asked to be godparents in other parishes will be issued only after successful completion of the class. Similarly, we can accept such documents from other parishes for services requested here at Holy Family. If at all possible, we urge parents to find baby sitters or a trusted person to care for the children at home so that adults can attend the class with few or no distractions. Currently there is no fee for the class although donations will be accepted toward the cost of distributed baptismal booklets. Call the Rectory at 301-249-2266. Ask for either Father Joe or Ilene.

## **More Information about Registration**

Please do not delay baptism without sufficient reason. Despite current medical technologies, we are all mortal and accidents do happen. Waiting for a beloved family member to visit from overseas is an excuse we frequently hear. It is a poor reason to deprive a child of God's graces and the satisfaction of our hope for salvation in Christ. Soon after the birth, contact the Parish Office and inform us of your desire to have your child baptized.

Registered parishioners who are practicing their faith can easily sign up for the baptismal class but there are a few other steps for others. If you are new to the Parish or not registered, or a returnee, set up an appointment to introduce yourself to the Pastor. He will make sure you have the forms required for baptism and will invite you to register in the Parish. This will save time and possible embarrassment later on. He will try to get to know you and any complications to your Christian discipleship. This is not because he wants to be intrusive into the personal lives of others but because he wants to insure healing and reconciliation in Christ.

Note that this preparation and the baptism of children only refer to babies who have insufficient use of reason to make their own choices. If your child has already reached catechetical age (Grade 2 or 7 years old) then he or she would have to go through the Parish Religious Education Program. The contact is the Parish DRE. Ask for Mrs. Pam Rozanski at 301-249-1167.

## **SOME BASIC QUESTIONS**

### **Why have your child baptized?**

Baptism makes possible holiness and justification in the sight of Almighty God. Baptism makes possible our genuine participation in the life of Christ. We are made adoptive sons and daughters to the Father, kin to Christ and children of Mary our Queen Mother. Baptism makes us temples of the Holy Spirit. We are incorporated into the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. Baptism purifies us of the stain caused by Original Sin. Given the corporate nature of the Church, parents and godparents come to the font, wanting to share their saving faith with the children. No one comes to the font alone, not even the adult. Baptism is not the end of a process, but the beginning. Parents and godparents are pledged to share their faith with the children so that they might receive the other sacraments and one day make a personal profession, as we do in Confirmation and every Sunday when we add our voices to those reciting the Creed. The commitment to raise the children in the faith and their subsequent reception of Eucharist and Confirmation is one that binds the parents under the pain of mortal sin. They have no greater charge before the Lord. It is what defines a Christian parent, by blood, adoption or spiritual sponsorship.

### **What are the basic expectations for families?**

As soon as possible or practical, children should share the pew with parents at Mass. Even if they do not know exactly what is going on, this starts a memory and habit to which

they will hopefully cling. Unless there is an emergency, the proper place for baptism is in a Catholic church.

Babies cannot be baptized secretly or against the will of parents and guardians. Sometimes a grandparent begs for a child's baptism, but everything must be in concert with parental wishes.

It is a general expectation that at least one parent is trying to live the faith. There must be a reasonable hope that the child will be brought up in the Catholic faith. That means going to Mass, teaching and saying prayers with the child, insuring the reception of sacraments, and the appropriation through word and witness of our Christian values. Baptism is not magic. We must cooperate with divine grace.

Baptism is so much more than a mere social celebration of joy over a new child. It is the great sacrament instituted by Christ. Baptism is the doorway to all the other sacraments. If there be no faith and no intention to live a Christian life then the whole ceremony of ritual and words becomes an act of hypocrisy. We must be truthful— with ourselves, with others and with God. Do we mean to say what we are saying in the public baptism of a child? “We are announcing that ours is a Christian household. We are saying that our family will be a Little Church where Jesus is present. But again, do we mean to say this?”

While it pains the Pastor and all of us at Holy Family, the Church makes it clear that baptism should probably be delayed when facing antagonism to the faith, a refusal to

repent from a life of sin and a lack of desire to be disciples living in harmony with the Gospel.

### **What about the godparents?**

Given the smaller sizes of many families, frequently we find parents requesting large numbers of godparents. Parents can invite to the ceremony anyone they will; however, Church law mandates that there must be at least one godparent and no more than two. If there are two godparents (also called sponsors) then they must represent the two genders. A godparent chosen by the parents must have both the ability and intention to fulfill his or her role. The godparent must be a Catholic, at least 16 years of age, fully initiated (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist), and living a life in harmony with our faith and values. That means lapsed Catholics or those in irregular unions or cohabitating or married outside the Church would not be suitable. Neither would those who have embraced a life of criminality. The long-and-short-of-it is this, if they are involved with activities regarded as the matter of mortal sin, select someone else. You cannot witness to the faith if you are not living it. You do not want to fashion a spiritual link between your child and someone in grievous sin and no longer a friend to Christ. Someone might be your sibling or a dear friend, but he or she might not be suitable for this sacred role. Further, no matter how scarce might be suitable candidates for sponsorship; the godparent cannot be the mother or father of the child.

As long as there is one suitable Catholic godparent, the Church permits the substitution of a Christian witness for the

other. This is a non-Catholic (Protestant) baptized person. Note this is NOT a true godparent but a Christian witness. Frequently, Christian witnesses are not even entered on the baptismal certificates. Such a person can never have been a Catholic. They should be at least 16 years of age and must have been baptized with water in the name of the Trinity for the forgiveness of sins (general intention of the Church). A non-baptized person cannot be a Christian witness. You cannot witness to that which you do not possess or believe. While there is a social dimension to baptism, it remains fundamentally a spiritual event. Christian witnesses are routinely permitted from most Protestant churches (Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, most Baptists, etc.) The rectory can be contacted for a special determination. Among those faith communities not recognized would be Christian Scientist, Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, certain Pentecostals, Latter Day Saints (Mormons), Quakers, Salvation Army, Unitarians, etc.

### **What about those coming from another Parish?**

Godparents from other parishes may take a baptismal preparation class either here at Holy Family or at their own parish. The latter is preferred. Godparents from other parishes will have to bring Suitability (Attestation) Letters from their pastors certifying that they are registered Catholics in good standing with the Church. We provide forms for this purpose but will take whatever forms or letters that other pastors use.

Parents from other parishes may have their children baptized at Holy Family. However, in addition to the other

requirements, they will have to provide a Permissorial Letter from their own Pastor. Given grandparents and family ties, this is not an uncommon practice. Their baptismal preparation should usually take place in the home parish. Pastors retain sacramental jurisdiction over their own parishioners.

### **What if the parents are not married in the Church?**

Please do not allow the question of marital status constitute the cause for delay in getting a child baptized. While there may be pastors who will not baptize illegitimate children or those born to couples married outside the Church, Pope Francis made it clear that children should not be punished for the sins of their parents. You will be queried about your marital status but this information will not be publicly shared in the monthly class. It is something that must be discussed with the Pastor. In strict confidence, he will inquire as to the lasting strength of the relationship and what might be done to regularize the marital status... possibly annulments, marital instruction and convalidations.

### **Message from the Pastor**

Hopefully you found these few pages informative as to the great sacrament you are requesting and how to proceed. The Baptismal Preparation answers many basic questions, especially regarding the meaning of Baptism and the Ritual. Speaking for myself and our small staff here at Holy Family Parish, I want to extend our heartiest congratulations to all those families celebrating the birth of a child. It is a cause for joy in the lives of both family and friends. It should also

be a time for a personal and corporate renewal of faith. You are introducing your children to Jesus and to his spiritual family, the Church. Lydia was converted by Paul's preaching and "She was baptized, with her household" (Acts 16:15). The Philippian jailer whom Paul and Silas had converted to the faith was baptized that night along with his household. (see Acts 16:33). Paul likewise baptized "the household of Stephana"" (1 Cor. 1:16). The faith profession of loving adults suffices until that day when the little ones can make it alongside their family and friends. We are saved, not just individually or personally, but also within the communal faith in Christ's Church.

*"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" "For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him" (Acts 2:38-39).*

*"Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14).*

There is no greater gift that you can give. It is my prayer that everyone will always cherish and nurture this gift. May we all remain friends to Jesus and faithful to the discipleship he has given us!

Many blessings and peace!

*Father Joe (Jenkins)*

[frjoe@erols.com](mailto:frjoe@erols.com)

**Parish Email Address:** [holyfamilyadmin@msn.com](mailto:holyfamilyadmin@msn.com)

## RITE OF BAPTISM FOR CHILDREN

**Priest or Deacon:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

### Reception of the Child

*(To Parents)* What name do you give your child?

**Parents:** *(Name)*

**Priest or Deacon:** What do you ask of God's Church for *N*?

**Parents:** Baptism.

**Priest or Deacon:** You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so, you are accepting the responsibility of training him/her in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him/her up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us by loving God and our neighbor. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?

**Parents:** We do.

**Priest or Deacon** *(to Godparents)*: Godparents, are you ready to help the parents of this child in their duty as Christian parents?

**Godparents:** We are.

**Priest or Deacon:** *N*, the Christian community welcomes you with great joy. In its name, I claim you for Christ our Savior by the sign of his cross. I now trace the cross on your forehead, and invite your parents and godparents to do the same. *(signs child in silence)*

## *Proclamation of the Gospel & Brief Remarks*

### **Intercessions**

**Priest or Deacon:** My dear brothers and sisters, let us ask our Lord Jesus Christ to look lovingly on this child who is to be baptized, on his/her parents and godparents, and on all the baptized.

By the mystery of your death and resurrection, bathe this child in light, give him/her the new life of baptism and welcome him/her into your holy Church.

**Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

Through baptism and confirmation, make him/her your faithful follower and a witness to your gospel.

**Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

Lead him/her by a holy life to the joys of God's kingdom.

**Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

Make the lives of his/her parents and godparents examples of faith to inspire this child.

**Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

Keep his/her family always in your love.

**Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

Renew the grace of our baptism in each one of us.

**Response:** Lord, hear our prayer.

*The celebrant invites all present to invoke the saints.*

**Priest or Deacon:**

Holy Mary, Mother of God, *pray for us.*

Saint John the Baptist, *pray for us.*

Saint Joseph, *pray for us.*

Saint Peter and Saint Paul, *pray for us.*

*Names may be added.*

All holy men and women, *pray for us.*

**Prayer of Exorcism & Anointing Before Baptism**

**Priest or Deacon:** Almighty and ever-living God, you sent your only Son into the world to cast out the power of Satan, spirit of evil, to rescue man from the kingdom of darkness, and bring him into the splendor of your kingdom of light. We pray for this child: set him/her free from original sin, make him/her a temple of your glory, and send your Holy Spirit to dwell with him/her. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

**Priest or Deacon:** We anoint you with the oil of salvation in the name of Christ our Savior; may he strengthen you with his power, who lives and reigns forever and ever.

**All:** Amen.

*The child is anointed on the breast with the oil of catechumens. Older children are anointed upon the hands. He immediately lays his hand on the child in silence.*

## **Blessing over the Baptismal Water**

### **Priest or Deacon:**

My dear brothers and sisters, we now ask God to give this child new life in abundance through water and the Holy Spirit. *(turning to the font)*

Father, you give us grace through sacramental signs, which tell us of the wonders of your unseen power. / In baptism we use your gift of water, which you have made a rich symbol of the grace you give us in this sacrament. / At the very dawn of creation your Spirit breathed on the waters, making them the wellspring of all holiness. / The waters of the great flood you made a sign of the waters of baptism that make an end of sin and a new beginning of goodness. / Through the waters of the Red Sea you led Israel out of slavery to be an image of God's holy people set free from sin by baptism. / In the waters of the Jordan your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Spirit. Your Son willed that water and blood should flow from his side as he hung upon the cross. / After his resurrection, he told his disciples: "Go out and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." / Father, look now with love upon your Church and unseal for it the fountain of baptism. / By the power of the Holy Spirit give to this water the grace of your Son, so that in the sacrament of baptism all those whom you have created in your likeness may be cleansed from sin and rise to a new birth of innocence by water and the Holy Spirit.

*The celebrant touches the water with his right hand.*

We ask you, Father, with your Son to send the Holy Spirit upon the waters of this font. May all who are buried with Christ in the death of baptism rise also with him to newness of life. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

### **Easter Substitution**

Father, God of Mercy, through these waters of baptism you have filled us with new life as your very own children.

**All:** Blessed be God.

From all who are baptized in water and the Holy Spirit, you have formed one people, united in your son, Jesus Christ.

**All:** Blessed be God.

You have set us free and filled our hearts with the Spirit of your love that we may live in your peace.

**All:** Blessed be God.

You call those who have been baptized to announce the Good News of Jesus Christ to people everywhere.

**All:** Blessed be God.

You have called your child, *N*, to this cleansing water that he/she may share in the faith of your Church and have eternal life. By the mystery of this consecrated water, lead him/her to a new and spiritual birth. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

## **Renunciation of Sin & Profession of Faith**

**Priest or Deacon:** Dear parents and godparents: You have come here to present this child for baptism. By water and the Holy Spirit, he/she is to receive the gift of new life from God, who is love. / On your part, you must make it your constant care to bring him/her up in the practice of the faith. See that the divine life, which God gives him/her, is kept safe from the poison of sin, to grow always stronger in his/her heart. / If your faith makes you ready to accept this responsibility, renew now the vows of your own baptism. Reject sin; profess your faith in Christ Jesus. This is the faith of the Church. This is the faith in which this child is about to be baptized.

*The priest or deacon addresses parents and godparents.*

**Priest or Deacon:** Do you renounce Satan?

**Parents & Godparents:** I do.

**Priest or Deacon:** And all his works?

**Parents & Godparents:** I do.

**Priest or Deacon:** And all his empty promises?

**Parents and Godparents:** I do.

**Priest or Deacon:** Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

**All:** I do.

**Priest or Deacon:** Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

**All:** I do.

**Priest or Deacon:** Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

**All:** I do.

**Priest or Deacon:** This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

### **Baptism**

**Priest or Deacon:** *(to parents and Godparents)* Is it your will that *N* should be baptized in the faith of the Church, which we have all professed with you?

**Parents and Godparents:** It is.

*The child is baptized with water (pouring three times).*

**Priest or Deacon:** I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

### **Anointing with Chrism**

**Priest or Deacon:** The God of power and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin and brought you to new

life through water and the Holy Spirit. He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation, so that, united with his people, you may remain for ever a member of Christ who is Priest, Prophet and King.

**All:** Amen.

*The priest anoints the child on the crown of the head with the sacred chrism, in silence.*

### **Clothing with the White Garment**

**Priest or Deacon:** *N*, you have become a new creation, and have clothed yourself in Christ. See in this white garment the outward sign of your Christian dignity. With your family and friends to help you by word and example, bring that dignity unstained into the everlasting life of heaven.

**All:** Amen.

*The white garment is put on the child.*

### **Lighted Candle**

*The Baptismal Candle is lit and handed to a godparent or parent.*

**Priest or Deacon:** Receive the light of Christ.

Parents and godparents, this light is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly. This child of yours has been enlightened by Christ. He/she is to walk always as a child of the light. May he/she keep the flame of faith alive in his/her heart. When the Lord comes, may he/she go out to meet Him with all the saints in the heavenly kingdom.

## **Ephphetha**

*(The celebrant touches the child's ears and mouth.)*

**Priest or Deacon:** The Lord Jesus made the deaf hear and the mute speak. May He soon touch your ears to receive his word, and your mouth, to proclaim his faith, to the praise and glory of God the Father.

**All:** Amen.

## **Lord's Prayer**

**Priest or Deacon:** Dearly beloved, this child has been reborn in baptism. He/she is now called the child of God, for so indeed he/she is. In confirmation he/she will receive the fullness of God's Spirit. In holy communion he/she will share the banquet of Christ's sacrifice, calling God his/her Father in the midst of the Church. In the name of this child, in the Spirit of our common sonship, let us pray together in the words our Lord has given us:

**All:** Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

## **Blessing**

*The celebrant first blesses the mother, who holds the child in her arms:*

**Priest or Deacon:** God the Father, through his Son, the Virgin Mary's child, has brought joy to all Christian mothers, as they see the hope of eternal life shine on their children. May he bless the mother of this child. She now thanks God for the gift of her child. May she be one with him/her in thanking him for ever in heaven, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

*The celebrant first blesses the father:*

**Priest or Deacon:** God is the giver of all life, human and divine. May he bless the father of this child. He and his wife will be the first teachers of their child in the ways of faith. May they be also the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

*The celebrant blesses the entire assembly:*

**Priest or Deacon:** By God's gift, through water and the Holy Spirit, we are reborn to everlasting life. In his goodness, may he continue to pour out his blessings upon these sons and daughters of his. May he make them always, wherever they may be, faithful members of his holy people. May he send his peace upon all who are gathered here, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**All:** Amen.

**Priest or Deacon:** May almighty God, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit, bless you. **All:** Amen.



**This booklet is prepared as an aid to assist with baptismal preparation and the rites of initiation at Holy Family Catholic Parish, Mitchellville, MD. We pray that our families will love each other and transmit the saving faith of Christ.**

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