

Sign of the Cross

The cross is a reminder of the love that Jesus Christ showed by giving his life for his friends. The tracing of the cross on the forehead is an invisible “marking” that says “they belong to Jesus”. The priest will trace the cross on the forehead of the baby and invite the parents and godparents to do the same.

Word of God

The liturgy is based on the Word of God in Scripture. The priest gives a short homily or reflection on the readings.

Naming of the Child

The priest asks the name of the child. It is important that both parents respond with the child’s name. Just as Adam was given dominion over all creatures as he named them, so are parents responsible for their children as they are named during Baptism.

Water

The priest pours water over the baby’s head and says “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

Water is a sign of cleansing, symbolically washing away all of the sin of the person being baptized. It is also a sign of life, because without water, nothing can grow. It is a sign of the new spiritual life into which the baptized person is entering.

Anointing with Oil

The priest anoints the baby on the chest with the Oil of Baptism. After baptism, he then anoints the baby’s forehead with the Oil of Chrism.

The Oil of Baptism (Catechumens) is olive oil which has been specially blessed. It is associated with the days when athletes used to rub oil into their bodies before events to strengthen them and make their skin supple, and symbolizes strengthening for the challenges of life ahead. The Oil of Chrism is a combination of olive oil and balsam and symbolizes the sealing with the Holy Spirit.

White Garment

The child is clothed in a white garment which is a symbol of purity and innocence. Sometimes families like to use a christening gown or shawl that has been used by previous generations, while others will use a white baptismal gown, a stole or white bib.

Candle

A candle will be lit as a sign of this new life. It is usually lit from the Easter Candles which symbolizes the light of Christ and will be held by a parent or godparent.

Baptismal Certificate

At the end of the ceremony the parents are given a Baptismal Certificate which they will keep as a record of their child’s initiation into the Church and present at future sacraments.

Choosing Godparents

Be judicious in your choice of godparents. They are considered witnesses to the baptism and representatives of the Christian Community. Once witnesses at a baptism, godparents are assigned as such permanently. They cannot be changed. The godparent is more than being a Christian relative or friend. The godparents represent the Church and will assist the child to grow in that community. For a Catholic baptism:

- At least one godparent must be an active Catholic
- The godparents must be at least 16 years old
- Godparents must not co-habiting and, if married, in a marriage recognized by the Catholic Church

A Godparent should be...

- A believer in Jesus Christ
- An active member in the church
- One who attends Mass regularly
- A regular recipient of the sacraments
- One who prays often
- A loving and caring person
- Someone who gives good example
- Someone growing in the virtues
- A spiritual partner with the parents.

A Godparent may assist the parents in:

- Teaching prayers to their godchild
- Praying with their godchild
- Pray for their godchild
- Take the godchild to church
- Do good works with their godchild
- Read and explain Bible stories to their godchild

- Help prepare their godchild for other sacraments
- Be present for the celebration of future sacraments
- Possibly serve as a Confirmation sponsor
- Assist where the parents need help
- Nurture their godchild's faith

At St. Clare Parish, baptismal classes are offered four times a year. Parents are encouraged to be proactive in registering for a class prior to your child's birth.

Zoom classes are scheduled for:

- February 6 at 6:00 pm
- May 15 at 6:00 pm
- August 7 at 6:00 pm
- November 6 at 6:00 pm

Consider attending prior to selecting your godparents to make sure your candidates are up for the challenge. If you select a candidate in advance, they are welcome to attend the class in addition to parents to learn more about their crucial role in your child's faith and Christian upbringing. (Previous attendees strongly advise parental enrollment and participation prior to birth!)

To register contact:

Barb Boltz at barb@saintclareparish.com or 724.445.3713 X4

Additional information for parents and godparents is available through formed.org – Baptism Series. We encourage all parents and godparents to review this information as you prepare to welcome your child into the Catholic faith.

If you have any questions on registering for Formed, contact evangyam@stwendelinbutler.com

Introduction to Baptism



*“You are a Child of God;
You are
wonderfully made,
dearly loved and
precious in His sight.”*

- Psalm 139