

**ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST,
MOST HOLY TRINITY, ST. ANN PARISH
SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM**



670 Yonkers Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10704
(914) 963-1486
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Dear New Parents,

The parish family of St. John the Baptist, Most Holy Trinity, St. Ann Parish congratulates you on the birth of your new baby, and your choice to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism for your child.

The celebration of the beautiful Sacrament of Baptism is a wonderful gift for your child, salvation in Jesus Christ and membership into our Roman Catholic faith. This is also a very important decision on your part because, as the parents, you are the first teachers of your child in the practice of the faith. This is why you yourselves will need to be active in your Catholic faith and participating members of this Catholic community at St. John the Baptist, Most Holy Trinity, St. Ann Parish. We are a merged parish with three names, two sites and one parish family. Your family is invited to participate in Sunday Mass at either Church site.

As with any celebration there is need for preparation, and the Sacrament of Baptism is no different. We have developed this Baptismal Information Packet and Baptism Registration Form to assist and guide you through the preparation process to have your child initiated into our Catholic Faith. We hope you find this Information Packet helpful and informative.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Stephen P. Norton
Pastor

SACRAMENT OF INFANT BAPTISM

What is Baptism?

Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other six sacraments. The fruits of Baptism, or Baptismal grace, are that we are cleansed from original sin, we are reborn into the Church as sons and daughters of God (Act 2:38), brothers and sisters of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit. We are made sharers in Christ as priest, prophet and King.

Jesus affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation in John 3:5, "Unless one is born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God."

You can only be Baptized once, as it has an unchangeable effect of imprinting a lasting character on our souls which permanently identifies us as belonging to and having a permanent relationship with Christ. This new identity as a Christian endures forever, it cannot be destroyed, even by mortal sin (CCC 1272-1274).

Vatican II established two separate rites of Baptism, one for adults and one for children. This information packet deals only with infant Baptism. Should you need information regarding Adult Baptisms, please contact the Rectory at 914-963-1486.

At the Council of Trent in 1545, the Catholic Church first defined as Dogma (Dogma is a religious truth established by Divine Revelation defined by the Church) that there are seven sacraments, and that the sacraments were necessary for our salvation and the conference of God's grace. These seven sacraments were further grouped into three major groupings:

1. Sacraments of Initiations, which include Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation. Through these sacraments one becomes a full member of the Catholic Church. These three sacraments confer the graces needed for us pilgrims on our journey toward our home, which is Heaven.
2. Sacraments of Healing, which include Penance (Reconciliation or Confession, as you might know it) and the Anointing of the Sick. The Sacrament of Penance restores the image of God within us that has been distorted by sin, and the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick brings comfort to us in times of illness.
3. Sacraments of Service, which includes Matrimony and Holy Orders, which are directed towards the salvation of others as well as ourselves, as through our service to others we obtain personal salvation.

The origin and foundation of Christian Baptism is Jesus. Before starting his public ministry, Jesus submitted himself to the baptism given by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. The waters did not purify Jesus, but Jesus cleansed the waters for our sake.

Jesus' immersion in the water is a sign for all human beings of the need to die to themselves to do God's will. Jesus did not need to be baptized because he was totally faithful to the will of his Father and free from sin. However, he wanted to show his solidarity with human beings in order to reconcile them to the Father. By commanding his disciples to baptize all nations, he established the means by which people would die to sin and begin to live a new life with God.

Baptismal Rite

The actual rite of Baptism is broken out into four main parts: (1) Reception of the Child, (2) Liturgy of the Word, (3) Celebration of the Sacrament, and (4) Conclusion of the Rite.

Signs and Symbols of Baptism

Within these four main parts of the rite, there are eight major elements which teach us the meaning of this Sacrament and help us appreciate our life in Christ. Signs and symbols have their own capacity to communicate their meaning. Of course, the Sacrament of Baptism is more than an instructive symbol; it accomplishes what it signifies.

- The Signing of the Cross on the forehead of the child during the reception of the child, which the cross symbolizes the love of Jesus, for by his death He showed us how much he loves us. When we make the sign of the cross on our forehead, chest and shoulders, we are recalling Jesus' command to love God with all our minds, all our hearts and all our strength.
- The Reading from Scripture in the midst of the community sheds divine light on the celebration and is meant to build up the faith of all the participants. One of the traditional names for Baptism is "Illumination." The Holy Spirit fills the heart and mind with the light of revealed truth and enables the response of faith.
- Exorcism and Anointing: An exorcism prayer is recited over the child by the celebrant so the child is strengthened by the gift of God's grace and is guided and guarded by God on every step of life's journey. Then the celebrant anoints the child with the Oil of Catechumens (oil blessed by the Bishop) on the breast bone, and just as with the Prayer of Exorcism, this anointing and prayer asks for Christ to strengthen the child with His power. Early Christians value oil for its cleansing and protective qualities and that is why it came to be used in Baptism.
- The Blessing of the Baptismal Water asks the Father "that through his Son, the power of the Holy Spirit may be sent upon the water, so that those who will be baptized may be born of water and Spirit." Water symbolizes both life and death. As water can destroy, so in Baptism a person dies with Jesus. As water can give life, so in Baptism a person receives new life in the risen Christ.
- Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith: The parents and Godparents reject sin and Satan, and profess their faith in the Triune God on behalf of the child, who cannot speak for himself/herself.
- The Essential Rite of the Sacrament: When the Bishop, Priest or Deacon pours water three times on the head of the child and accompanies the act with the words, "{Name}, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The celebrant matches each pouring with the invocation of each of the Divine Persons of the Trinity. This ritual washing helps us understand that sins are buried and washed away as we die with Jesus, and we are filled with divine light and life as we are cleanse by the pouring of water.
- The Anointing with Sacred Chrism on the crown of the head symbolizes the joy of union with Christ and the special calling each of us receives at Baptism to share in Christ's work as Priest, Prophet and King. We often hear people refer to a baptism as a Christening. The word Christ comes from the Greek "Christos," which means "anointed one."
- The White Garment and Lighted Candle: In the ancient Church, when baptism involved actually entering into a pool of water and being immersed, the person disrobed before entering the water, and after baptism, the new Christian was dressed in a white gown. The taking off of the old clothes symbolized the sinful life one was leaving behind, and the white baptismal garment was an expression of new life in Christ. The lighted candle symbolized the flame of faith your child has

received. It is the flame of faith passed among believers, and is called to share the light of Christ with others.

Requirements to Have Your Child Baptized at St. John the Baptist, Most Holy Trinity, St. Ann Parish

- Parents should be registered and active parishioners of St. John the Baptist, Most Holy Trinity, St. Ann Parish
- Parents must be married in accord with the laws of the Catholic Church. If not, they must meet with a priest before any arrangements are made.
- If parents are not active parishioners of our parish, and not active in any other Catholic Church outside of the St. John the Baptist, Most Holy Trinity, St. Ann Parish boundaries, they must meet with a priest before any arrangements are made.
- If parents are registered and active members of another Catholic Church outside of our boundaries, and want to have their child baptized at St. John the Baptist or St. Ann's, then a letter must be received from their own home parish's Pastor granting the parents permission to have their child baptized at either St. John the Baptist or at St. Ann's Church also stating that they are members in good standing and active at their Church, and have participated in that Parish's Baptism Instruction Class.
- If you want to have a Catholic priest or Deacon perform the Baptism that is not assigned to St. John the Baptist, Most Holy Trinity, St. Ann Parish then they must make a request in writing asking for the Delegation from the Pastor of St. John the Baptist, Most Holy Trinity, St. Ann Parish to perform the Baptism at St. John the Baptist, Most Holy Trinity, St. Ann Parish.

Role & Requirements of Godparents (Sponsors) in the Catholic Church

By the very title, “Godparent,” you can see that this role is connected with “God,” and therefore belongs primarily to the realm of the spiritual and holy. It is not a reward for past deeds, and certainly not connected with civil guardianship or future care of your child.

The role of the Godparent is a sacred responsibility, that should be entrusted to a person you select to help you, the parents, teach your child the Catholic faith and how to live as a practicing Catholic. The person must also meet all of the following criteria established by Canon Law (the law governing the Catholic Church), in order to be a Godparent (Sponsor):

- be at least sixteen (16) years of age.
- Be a “fully initiated Catholic.” That is, have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation.
- Be a practicing Catholic who lives their faith as part of a Catholic parish community.
- If married, the marriage must be in accord with the laws of the Catholic Church.
- Cannot be the mother or father of the child to be baptized.

As parents, you can select one or two Catholics that meet all of the above requirements to serve as your child’s Godparents. If you choose two Godparents, there can only be one female Godparent and one male Godparent.

If you only have one person who meets all of the above requirements, then another person who is baptized in another (non-Catholic) Christian Church and can be a suitable spiritual mentor for your child can be witness to the Baptism as a “Christian Witness.” Please note that a person who is baptized Catholic cannot be a Christian Witness.

A baptized Catholic must meet the criteria for Catholic Godparent. (Note: only the names of Godparents are included in the church’s official records.)

Infant Baptism at St. John the Baptist or St. Ann’s Church

- Celebration: The Sacrament of Baptism is celebrated every Sunday at 1:00PM in our Chapel, in a group setting.
- Baptism Instruction Class: To prepare parents for baptizing their child, we offer a Baptism Instruction Class, held on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7PM in Father Anthony Hall (31 College Place, at the rear of the Chapel and Rectory).
- Baptismal Registration: At least six (6) weeks prior to your proposed Baptism date, the following items need to be presented in person at the Rectory Office during normal office hours (Monday-Friday 9:00AM-4:00PM) in order to secure a final Baptismal date:
 1. Your child’s birth certificate.
 2. Sponsor Certificates for each Godparent.
 3. If having a Christian Witness, then proof of their Christian Baptism, and letter from their Pastor stating that they are in good standing and active in their church.
- Fee: A fee of \$100 is to be paid on the day of Baptism.

St. John the Baptist, Most Holy Trinity, St. Ann Parish
670 Yonkers Avenue
Yonkers, NY 10704
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Baptism or Confirmation Sponsor Certificate of Eligibility

The role of Sponsor is an important one for the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. Today some may see the role as honorary, but the Church sees the sponsor, popularly called a godparent, as a fully-initiated Catholic who actively supports the newly Baptized or Confirmed by good example and instruction in the Christian life. In order to be admitted to the role of sponsor, the law of the Church directs that a person must be designated specifically by the parents of the infant or individual who is to be baptized or confirmed. To be a sponsor, a person must be a Catholic, at least 16 years of age, and have already received the Sacraments of the Most Holy Eucharist and Confirmation. In addition, he or she must be leading a life in harmony with the faith and not be bound by a canonical penalty (see reverse).

I, _____, have been asked to be the Sponsor at the

☐ Baptism ☐ Confirmation of _____ on
_____ at _____ Church in
_____.

Before Almighty God, I:

- _____ am at least sixteen (16) years of age
- _____ have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation in the Catholic Church
- _____ am faithful to weekly Mass & Holy Days of Obligation, and I receive the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion at least once each year during the Lenten or Easter Season
- _____ (if married) am married in the Catholic Church
- _____ am a registered parishioner and support my parish
- _____ will pray for my godchild and help my godchild to practice the Catholic faith by my good example
- _____ I have difficulty with one or more of the above statements and would like to make an appointment to see a priest to discuss the matter further

Sponsor's Name (please print) _____

Sponsor's Signature _____ Date _____

Pastor/Priest Signature _____ Date _____

Please include Church Seal.

Requirements of the Sponsor

The role of the sponsor is an important one for the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. The Church sees the Sponsor as a fully-initiated Catholic who supports the one receiving the Sacrament of Baptism or Confirmation with example and instruction. Because of the seriousness of this ministry, the Church has the following requirements:

- The Sponsor must be a fully-initiated member of the Catholic Church through Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation.
- The Sponsor must be at least sixteen (16) years of age.
- The Sponsor must have an active life of faith in the Church and provide good example:
 - a) Someone married outside the Church is not able to receive Communion, and is not able to be a Sponsor.
 - b) Also, a Catholic who has left the Church is not able to be a Sponsor of a new member into the Church.
 - c) Therefore, a Catholic who has left the Catholic Church cannot be a Sponsor, and cannot be a “Christian Witness” if they join another Christian communion.
- The Sponsor cannot be either parent.

When there are two Sponsors, they are “spiritual parents,” and are to be Godfather and Godmother.

Christian Witness (A baptized non-Catholic Christian)

Provided there is one Catholic Sponsor, a baptized non-Catholic Christian may serve as a Christian Witness for Baptism only. This person is a *Christian Witness*, not a *Sponsor/Godparent*.

- Requirements to be a Christian Witness:
 - a) At least 16 years old.
 - b) A validly baptized Christian.
 - c) Living an upright life.
 - d) Cannot be either parent.
 - e) Cannot be a Catholic who has left the Catholic Church.
- A Christian Witness may never be a non-baptized person. For example, Jewish or Muslim godparents are not permitted by universal church law.
- The notation “Christian Witness” is placed under the name of the non-Catholic Christian Witness in the Baptismal Register.

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- _____ am faithful to weekly Mass & Holy Days of Obligation, and I receive the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion at least once each year during the Lenten or Easter Season
- _____ (if married) am married in the Catholic Church
- _____ am a registered parishioner and support my parish
- _____ will pray for my godchild and help my godchild to practice the Catholic faith by my good example
- _____ I have difficulty with one or more of the above statements and would like to make an appointment to see a priest to discuss the matter further

Sponsor's Name (please print) _____

Sponsor's Signature _____ Date _____

Pastor/Priest Signature _____ Date _____

Please include Church Seal.

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- The notation “Christian Witness” is placed under the name of the non-Catholic Christian Witness in the Baptismal Register.

St. John the Baptist, Most Holy, St. Ann Parish Baptism Checklist

Parish House | (914) 963-1486 | office@sjbstann.com

If you are **not** active parishioners of St. John the Baptist, Most Holy Trinity, St. Ann Parish and not active in any other Catholic Church outside of the St. John the Baptist boundaries, you must meet with a priest before any arrangements are made. Please phone the Rectory Office for an appointment.

_____ Date _____ *Monday-Friday 9AM-4PM*

_____ If you are registered at **another** Parish but would like your baby baptized at St. John the Baptist, Most Holy Trinity, St. Ann Parish, please speak with your Pastor about attending their Baptism Instruction Class and then getting a letter granting permission for the Baptism to be held here.

_____ If you **are** registered at St. John the Baptist, Most Holy Trinity, St. Ann Parish and active for more than 60 days, call the Rectory Office to reserve your seat at the next available **Baptismal Instruction Class**.

_____ Date of class you registered for _____

_____ Register for either online giving (see website for link) or call the Parish House to register for collection envelopes.

_____ Select your Godparents as defined by the materials you have received in Class.

At least six (6) weeks prior to your proposed Baptism date, the following items need to be **presented in person** at the Parish House during normal office hours (Monday-Friday 9:00AM-4:00PM) in order to secure a final Baptismal date:

1. Your child's birth corticate.
2. Sponsor Certificates for each Godparent.
3. If having a Christian Witness, then proof of their Christian Baptism, and letter from their Pastor stating that they are in good standing and active in their church.

_____ Phone the Parish House to reserve seating in the next available Baptism Instruction Class.

_____ Date _____ *third Monday of each month, 7PM, Fr. Anthony Hall, located at 31 College Pl., Yonkers*

At the completion of your Baptism Instruction Class, and when all above documentation has been provided to St. John the Baptist, Most Holy Trinity, St. Ann Parish, call the Parish House to schedule your child's Baptism.

_____ Date _____, Sundays at St. Ann's Church at 1:00 p.m. and Sundays at St. John the Baptist Church at 1:30 p.m. *holiday weekends excluded*