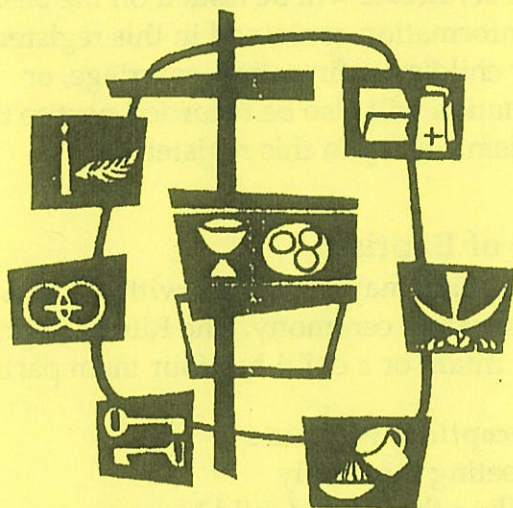


# The Sacrament of Baptism

When parents present their child for baptism, they are asking the church to receive their child as a part of the family of God. They are also making a commitment to their child to help him/her become part of



this community of faith. At baptism parents are told to "make it their constant care to bring up their child in the practice of faith."

Baptism is one of the seven sacraments instituted by Christ. It is the sacrament of initiation or the first sacrament to be received. Without baptism, a person cannot be admitted to the other sacraments of the Catholic Church. Baptism is received only once.

Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist are sacraments of initiation. Baptism is a sacrament of new life in Christ. In baptism, a person becomes a Christian and receives grace and life from the Holy Spirit.

## The Rite of Christian Initiation

Adults and youth who are baptized are initiated into the community of faith through the process called the Rite of Chris-

tian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). The RCIA stresses the connection between the sacraments of Christian initiation. During the Easter vigil, those who have been prepared, or the elect, are welcomed into the Church and receive all three sacraments.

Those who are baptized as infants receive the sacraments of confirmation and eucharist after they are prepared at a later age. At baptism, the parents of these infants make a commitment to prepare their child for the sacramental life of the Church. Those who receive baptism as infants are usually prepared to receive the sacraments of reconciliation and eucharist while they are in elementary school. They begin preparation for confirmation in most parishes a little later.

## A Gift

Baptism is a gift. It is a grace which is not earned or merited. In baptism, sins are washed away. If a person has committed any personal sins, they are forgiven in baptism. An infant cannot commit personal sins, but, in baptism the child is set free from the state of original sin. This state of original sin is the situation of being human but not yet part of God's family as God originally intended.

## Symbols of Baptism

- Water-** symbolizes new life and washing away of sin.
- Candle-** symbolizes new life in the resurrected Christ.
- White Garment-** symbolizes a new creation clothed in Christ.
- Oil of Baptism-** symbolizes Christ's strengthening power.

## The Sacrament of Baptism

### Role of Parents

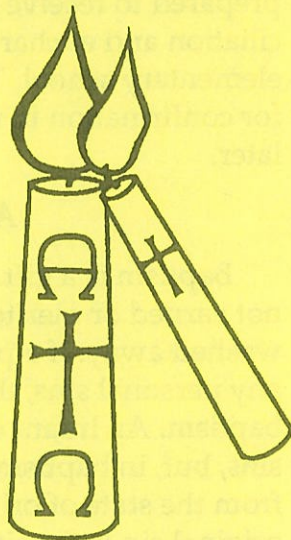
Parents:

- are responsible for initiating their children into the sacramental life.
- serve as models for their children by being committed Christians.
- have the primary responsibility for the religious education of their children.
- worship regularly with their families.
- nurture the child they brought to baptism in his/ her faith.
- are asked to determine their child's readiness for other sacraments.
- are asked to take time with their child to talk about Jesus, to read him/ her bible stories, and to pray together as a family.

### Role of a Godparent:

The Godparent:

- is chosen by the infant's parents.
- must be a Catholic who is fully initiated into the Church, having received baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist.
- accepts a lifetime commitment to help the child grow in the faith.
- should be reasonably informed on the teachings of the Catholic Church
- is asked to help the child grow in the faith.



### The Gift of A Name

Naming your baby is a special gift you give to your child. The name you give is a gift for a lifetime.

Catholics traditionally name their children after Jesus, Mary, or the saints. This custom derives from the idea of providing models of Christian virtue for the person being baptized.

### Baptismal Register

Every parish has a baptismal register in which baptisms are recorded. Your baby's baptism will be recorded in our parish baptismal register. If you or your child should ever need a proof of baptism, it may be obtained by contacting our parish office.

A certificate will be issued on the basis of the information contained in this register. Your child's confirmation, marriage, or ordination will also be recorded next to the baptismal entry in this register.

### Rite of Baptism

Baptism may take place within a Mass or as a separate ceremony. The Rite of Baptism of an infant or a child has four main parts:

#### 1. Reception/ Welcome

- Greeting the family
- Calling the infant/child by name
- Signing the infant/child with the sign of the cross.

#### 2. Celebration of the Word

- Scripture readings
- Short homily
- Prayer of the Faithful
- Prayers of exorcism
- Anointing before baptism

#### 3. Celebration of the sacrament of baptism

- Blessing of the water
- Profession of Faith and renunciation of sin
- Baptism
- Anointing with chrism
- Clothing with white garment
- Lighting of the baptismal candle

#### 4. Concluding Rites

- The Lord's Prayer
- Blessing

## The Sacrament of Baptism

### Role of Parents during the actual Baptismal Ceremony

#### Parents:

- Announce the name of the child when asked by the celebrant
- Request that the child be given baptism in response to the question, "What do you ask for you child?"
- Accept the responsibility of training their child in the practice of the faith
- Trace the sign of the cross on the child's forehead
- Profess their faith and renounce Satan, by responding with the words, "I do," when questioned about their belief in the articles of faith
- Carry the infant to the baptismal font and hold him/her during the actual baptism (usually the mother)
- Accept the baptismal candle from the celebrant (usually the father)
- Receive the blessings of the celebrant.

### Role of the Godparents during the actual Baptismal Ceremony

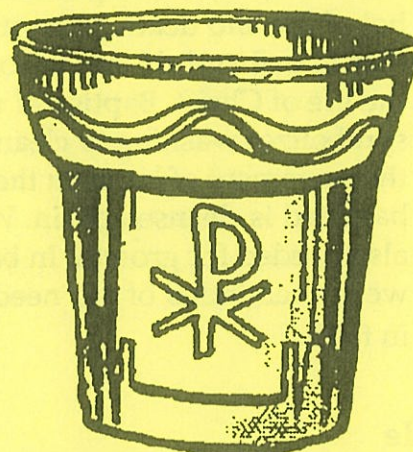
#### Godparents:

- Join the family of the child
- Announce the child's name with the parents
- Serve as a representative of the Church
- Trace the sign of the cross on the forehead of the child
- Make a profession of faith with the parents.



### Baptism of Infants

Parents who have asked to have their baby baptized are, by the act of doing this, making a special commitment for the future. They are accepting the responsibility of training their child in the practice of their faith. What does this entail?



### Practice of the Faith

In accepting the baptismal responsibilities, parents promise to:

- teach their children about God
- read the bible to their children
- prepare the children for the sacramental life of the church
- be willing to participate at Sunday Mass with their children
- arrange for the religious education of their children
- model a life of Christian virtue.

### Commandments

Parents are also asked to accept the responsibility of bringing their children up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught them. Parents are asked to not only teach the words of the commandments, but to help children understand the spirit of the commandments by providing role models. Children are to be taught to love God and neighbor for the love of God.

# SYMBOLS OF BAPTISM

## Water

Water is a symbol of life and death. Without water on our earth, life could not be supported. Water is also seen as a destructive force, as in flooding.

The water used in baptism is a symbol of life and death. In baptism one dies to evil and sin and is born into the life of Christ. Baptismal water symbolizes washing or cleansing. In the sacrament of baptism the person baptized is cleansed of sin. Water is also needed for growth. In baptism we are reminded of our need to grow in faith.

## Candle

Christians believe that Christ is the light of the world. John's gospel calls Jesus "the light that shines in darkness." During the Easter Vigil a new fire is blessed and the Pascal candle is lit. This Easter candle symbolizes the resurrected Christ.

The candle that is used in baptism is a reminder that Jesus is the light of our life and it is through baptism that we come into this new life.

## White Robe or Garment

White is a symbol of new life, of purity, and of grace. Early Christians wore a white garment when they were baptized to express their belief in the purification of baptism. Today, the white robe still stands as a sign that baptism brings a person into a new life with Christ.

## Chrism

The oil the priest or deacon uses to anoint the one who is being baptized is called chrism. It is a mixture of oil and perfume which has been blessed by the bishop.

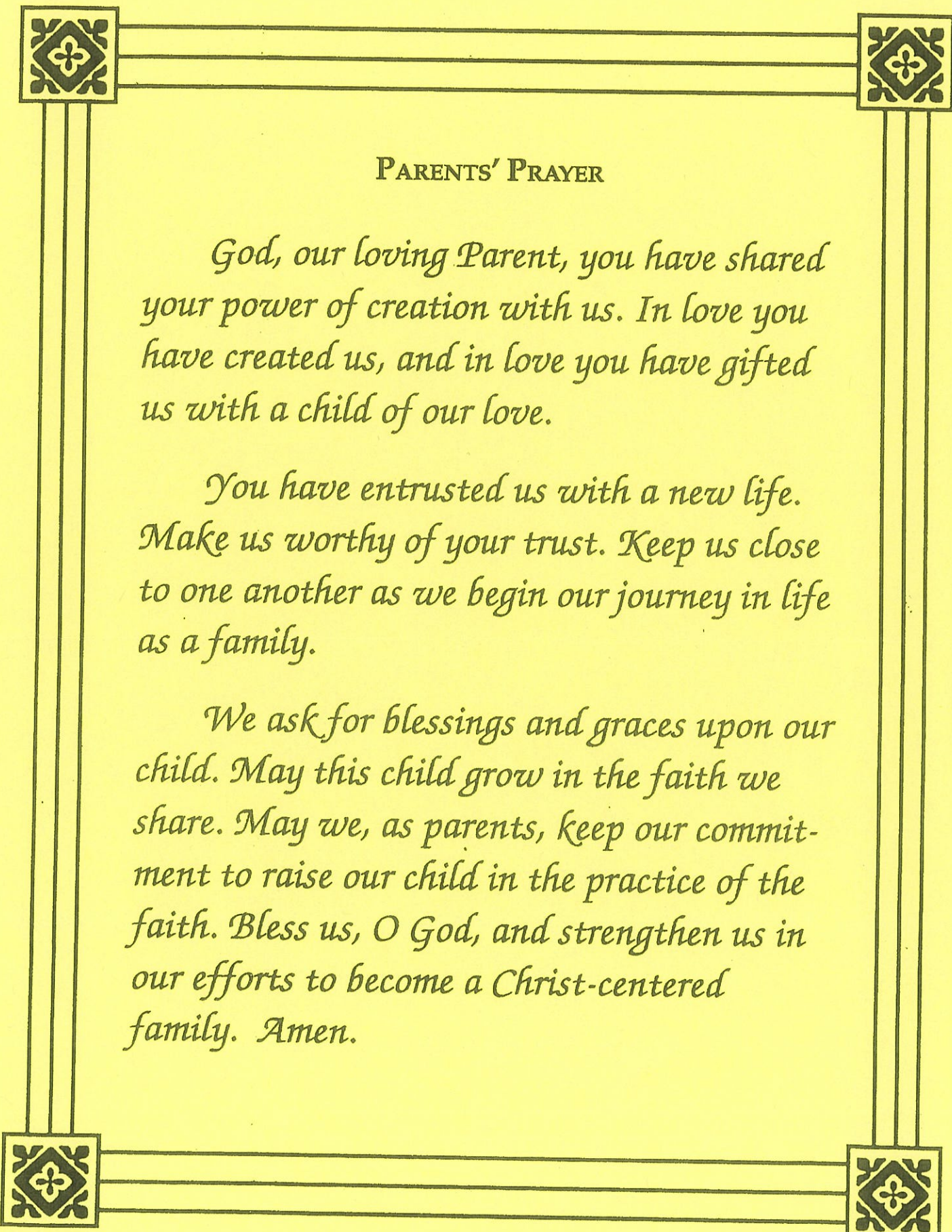
During the coronation of a king or queen, he/she is anointed with oil. Priests are anointed with oil during the sacrament of Holy Orders.

During the baptismal ceremony the person who is being baptized is anointed with oil also. The oil, or "chrism of salvation," is used during the ceremony after these words are spoken. "As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life."

In silence the priest or deacon anoints the adult, child, or infant on the head with the sacred oil. This signifies the royal priesthood of the newly baptized and his/ her enrollment in church membership.

## Discussion Questions:

- How does water symbolize both life and death in the lives of people?
- How does this symbolism carry over to the sacrament of baptism?
- On what special occasions do people use candles?
- Is there any connection between a secular celebration using candles and the candle used as a baptismal symbol?
- What images come to mind when you think about a white dress, gown or suit?
- What functions do various types of oil or balm have in the lives of the following: athletes, the sick, or injured?

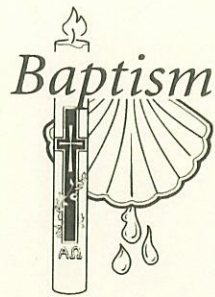


## PARENTS' PRAYER

*God, our loving Parent, you have shared your power of creation with us. In love you have created us, and in love you have gifted us with a child of our love.*

*You have entrusted us with a new life. Make us worthy of your trust. Keep us close to one another as we begin our journey in life as a family.*

*We ask for blessings and graces upon our child. May this child grow in the faith we share. May we, as parents, keep our commitment to raise our child in the practice of the faith. Bless us, O God, and strengthen us in our efforts to become a Christ-centered family. Amen.*



## **PRACTICAL MATTERS CONCERNING BAPTISM**

### **1. BAPTISM Times**

Saturday morning or Sunday at 12:15pm

### **2. SIBLINGS**

May bring their baptismal candle if participating in the baptism liturgy. It helps them feel a special part of the celebration.

### **3. GODPARENTS**

Must be at least 15 years old, confirmed, and a practicing Catholic. At least one Godparent must be a confirmed Catholic. If you want to include a non-Catholic Christian as a "Christian witness", you may do so. The purpose of a Godparent is to entrust them with the responsibility to participate in your child's Christian life and spiritual education.

**CHOOSE WISELY:** Someone who is a good Catholic mentor;  
Someone who is likely to be a part of your child's life for the years ahead.

Can be done by proxy - proxy must meet the above requirements.

### **4. MARRIAGE**

If you were not married in the Church, we strongly encourage you to make an appointment with the priest or deacon to talk about blessing your marriage.

The example you set and the decisions you make will forever affect the lives of your children.

If we can assist you in any way, or if you have any questions, please feel free to call us at 858 653-3540.