

## WHY BAPTISM?

Baptism is the start of a beautiful relationship between a soul and Our Lord. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* tells us that “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 sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons and daughters of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission.” (#1213)

In other words, Baptism is a big deal and should be taken very seriously. This is much more than a family tradition or a big party. A child becomes an adopted son or daughter of God and officially begins their membership in the Church. In Baptism, parents and Godparents make a promise to God to raise this child in the faith and to be their primary teachers and examples of all that it means to be Catholic. God takes promises made to Him very seriously, so we should understand fully what we’re asking of the Church by having a child baptized.

### **What is Baptism and Why is it Necessary?**

The Resurrected Jesus told His disciples to “*Go out into the world and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*” [Matthew 28:19] It’s the doorway to faith in and relationship with Jesus. Parents and Godparents make this act of faith on behalf of infants and children; adults make it for themselves. Jesus made holy the waters of Baptism when He was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. Here, He gave us a preview of His death and Resurrection, and a pattern for us to follow:

*“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”*

~ St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans 6:3-4

In other words, when someone is placed into the water or has water poured over his/her head, they are symbolically buried in death with Jesus and then raised to new life with Him, in Him, and through Him by His Resurrection. They become a new creation!

### **How to Prepare for a Baptism**

1. **Be registered:** Are you a registered parishioner at OLOS? This initial step will save you at least three months. What’s the big deal about being registered? St. Joseph parish in Washington State sums it up perfectly:

“When we register with a parish we are saying that it is our wish to travel down [the] road of Life and Faith with that particular community of people by becoming active in its mission and vision and supporting it. In fact, the word parish comes from the Greek word “*paroikia*” meaning “a pilgrim people,” a people on a journey of faith; a journey that we hope one day will lead to the fullness of life in God’s Kingdom forever.”

In short, you’re becoming part of a family that is united by something more important than blood – it’s one united in baptism!

If you are not registered, there is a **three-month waiting period** before the baptism can happen. This gives you an opportunity to become a more fully engaged member of the parish.

Attending Mass regularly at OLOS or having received your sacraments at OLOS does not automatically mean that you're registered as a parishioner. If you receive and use collection envelopes each year, you are registered and are automatically updated each year. If you do not use envelopes, you must renew your registration each year (which is as easy as a phone call). If you are over 18, you must be registered on your own. The office staff can help you with registration.

2. **Designate Godparents:** This is sometimes the hardest part of the process for many reasons. Being asked to be a Godparent is a great honor which we like to bestow on people we love and respect. But unfortunately, not everyone can be a Godparent. A 2005 Archdiocese of Santa Fe document explains why:

*“Would you ask your best friend to perform heart surgery on your child? Of course not, unless he/she were a competent heart surgeon. So, if the role of a Godparent is to help the parents to raise the child in the good practice of the Catholic faith, then it stands to reason that you should ask someone who shows by their own knowledge and practice that they can help someone else follow in their footsteps.”*

Of course this in no way means that those we're considering for Godparents aren't good people, but rather that there are others who are better suited at this particular time for this very important role. Thankfully, the Church provides guidance. These are the norms provided by the Archdiocese:

I, (Name), swear to Almighty God that: · I am a baptized member of the Catholic Church; · I am at least 16 years old; · I have made my First Holy Communion and received the Sacrament of Confirmation; · **I am not married outside of the Catholic Church, nor am I cohabitating (living outside of marriage with someone);** · I normally attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation, receive the Sacrament of Penance (Confession) at least once a year, and go to Holy Communion at least once a year in the Easter Season;

At OLOS, we use the *Affidavit for Eligibility for the Ministry of Baptism or Confirmation Sponsor* form, which will be signed by the Godparent and Pastor if all these conditions are met and their registration at this or another parish is verified. Prospective Godparents who attend OLOS must be registered here for a minimum of three (3) months. Most other parishes also have a minimum registration requirement, so if your prospective Godparents go somewhere else other than OLOS, have them check with their parish office.

**Regarding marriage and cohabitation,** this can be a very serious challenge for someone who desires to be a Godparent. Issues like divorce and remarriage without an annulment can create frustrations and heartache for parents and prospective Godparents alike. Unfortunately, there are no quick fixes to certain situations, and dishonesty about them only compounds our standing before God, who knows all truth and expects all of us to live by and honor the truth. If you're facing a challenge finding eligible Godparents, talk to Father Rob for possible alternatives, including beginning the annulment process or convalidating (“blessing”) a civil marriage, or even beginning the process of sacramental marriage for those who are cohabitating.

For those potential Godparents who haven't yet received First Holy Communion and/or Confirmation, classes begin in the Fall. Again, ask Father Rob for assistance.

3. **Take a class:** This short, single-evening class is mandatory for parents and Godparents and helps you understand more fully the sacrament of Baptism. It's offered monthly at OLOS, but it may be taken at any Catholic parish. You must provide proof that you took the class. Call the OLOS Parish Office for dates and registration, which are typically held the third Thursday of each month at 7:00pm in the OLOS Parish Hall (in the Plaza between El Encanto and Plaza Drugs). *During COVID, we do not, at this time, have an on-line or web-based option. Participants must be masked and socially distanced from those who don't live in their home. For those who are not yet ready for in-person gatherings, please contact Father Rob for possible alternatives.*
4. **Schedule your baptism:** For infants and children under seven (7), Baptisms take place on Sundays, generally after the 10:00am Mass. For youth seven and older, they will need to enroll in nearly year-long Rite of Christian Initiation for Children (RCIC) program, with Baptism to follow at the Easter Vigil. Please contact the office for scheduling and information.
5. **Consider a Baptismal Name:** the current policy of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe instructs parents to provide at least one saint's name for their child to be baptized. Why do this? Think of the prayer we pray in the middle of every Sunday Mass - the Apostle's Creed or the Nicene Creed. Both of these speak of our belief in "the Communion of the Saints." This means we are spiritually united in heaven with those who have died and are now in heaven. They become our spiritual partners in our journey of faith by praying for us (called intercession). By choosing a saint's name, parents and Godparents acknowledge this fact and ask a particular saint to assist them in bringing up this child in the faith. The saint becomes the child's patron and role model. Why wouldn't you pick a saint's name for him or her?
6. **Grow your relationship with God:** Whether you are a parent or Godparent, your relationship with God will be an example to your children of a life of faith. Attend Sunday Mass weekly, go to Confession regularly, pray daily. Read and study the Bible. In other words, make time daily for God. A good question to consider may be that if you don't want to spend time daily with God now, are you sure you want to spend eternity with Him? Let your life be an example to your children/Godchildren that shows you do.

Question for Father Rob regarding any of this?

Email: [pastor.olos@outlook.com](mailto:pastor.olos@outlook.com)

Phone: (505) 454-1469