

7 Questions

about the Sacrament of

BAPTISM

by Juan Carlos Moreno

QUESTION 1

Why should I have my child baptized?

A: Baptism is necessary for salvation. Because it washes away Original Sin and calls us to a new life in Christ, the sacrament is the basis of Christian life. When we are immersed in the baptismal waters, we are joined to Christ's Death, burial, Resurrection, and Ascension. Through Baptism, we receive God's grace. There is no better thing we can do for a child than to equip him or her almost from birth with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

QUESTION 2

What is the role of the godparents?

A: The role of godparents is to stand with the parents, providing an example of Christian life and assisting parents in raising their child in the practice of the faith. In the rite of Baptism, godparents express their willingness to provide support to parents, and they pray that their own and the parents' lives will provide an example of faith to the child. Godparents commit to keeping the child safe from sin and to making sure that Christ's light grows always stronger in the child's heart.

QUESTION 3

Who can be a godparent?

A: The Church places great importance on the role of godparents and wants to ensure that anyone called to that role can fulfill it. There can be one or two godparents. Godparents must be fully initiated Catholics, at least 16 years old, who are leading a life of faith. "Fully initiated" means that they have celebrated the three Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. Godparents cannot be under any canonical penalty.

QUESTION 4

Do we have to be married in the Catholic Church to have our child baptized?

A: A child may be baptized in the Catholic Church if there is a commitment to bring up the child as a Catholic. Not being in a marriage recognized by the Catholic Church does not prevent you from having your child baptized.

QUESTION 5

My spouse is a non-Catholic Christian. Can our child still be baptized in the Catholic Church?

A: Yes. The Catholic spouse makes a sincere promise to do all in his or her power to have their children baptized and to bring them up in the Catholic Church. The non-Catholic spouse is to be informed of the promise the Catholic spouse has made, so that he or she can be supportive in fulfilling that obligation.

QUESTION 6

What is the benefit of our attending baptismal preparation sessions?

A: Baptismal preparation provides parents with a richer understanding of the meaning and symbolism underlying the sacrament. It provides a way of ensuring that parents fully understand what they are undertaking in promising to raise a child in the Catholic faith, while providing a context in which parents can see how rich and rewarding that undertaking is. It also helps parents recognize their child's Baptism as the beginning of a continuous encounter with Christ for themselves and their child.

QUESTION 7

How can the Church help us, as parents, nurture our own faith and our child's faith?

A: Your pastor and/or baptism coordinator may want to meet with you to determine the best formation plan for you as you seek Baptism for your child. Each journey is unique and requires different formation. Your pastor can help identify your family's needs in recognizing God's presence in your lives and in acknowledging your call to pass on the faith to your children. The Church can provide continued faith formation opportunities to help you fulfill the promises you will make at your child's Baptism.