

Baptism Ceremony during Mass.

Congratulations on the birth of your child!

Having your child baptized is a sacred moment for you, your family and for the whole Church. It's a moment when we see God's fidelity and love revealed to his people at first hand. At his Ascension Christ told the disciples to "***go and baptize all nations***" and promised that he would be with them to "***the close of the age.***" Through the centuries the Church has fulfilled this sacred mission and today your child will join us on this holy journey.

Baptism should never be seen as private matter so here at St. Mary's we prefer to celebrate it during Mass (either on Sunday or Wednesday) so as to allow the whole community to share in its joy. After all baptism incorporates us into the Body of Christ and so it is appropriate that the community be present to witness and welcome its newest member. So as you prepare for this day we invite you (parents, god-parents and family members) to pray and reflect on how you can best participate in this holy event. Here are a few points to remember:

- Arrive **NO LATER** than 10 minutes before the beginning of Mass. You will be met by either the deacon or the pastor at the front door. They will confirm the names you have chosen and will briefly run through the liturgy with you.

The front pews on the south side of the Church will be reserved for you and your family. Please remember that we often baptize more than one child at each Mass. When you arrive please go there and settle your things in the pew. Then you will be directed to go to the back of the church for the opening procession. (Brothers and sisters of the child to be baptized may participate in the entrance procession, but we request other family members to remain in their seats) On arriving at the sanctuary father will reverence the altar and then go and stand on the lowest step where he will perform the ad limina or opening rites of the baptismal rite. During these rites you will be asked two questions:

***What names have you given your child?
and what do you ask of God's Church?***

The answer to this second question is either ***faith or baptism.***

After this Father and will mark the baby with the sign of the cross as a sign of being claimed for Christ. He will then invite you to do the same!

After the Homily the whole community will join in a communal ***Profession of Faith and Renunciation*** of Sin. This will then be followed by the Intercessions after which you will be once more asked if it your intention to have your baby baptized.

You will then be invited to join Father and the deacon in a short procession to the Baptismal Font on the south side of the Church. Once again only parents, siblings and godparents are invited to join the procession. All other family members are expected to remain in their seats. At this point, simply walk ahead of father and the deacon to the Font. As you gather at the Font please remember to stand with your backs to the altar rail as this will allow all present to witness the celebration. If there are two or more children to be baptized each family will be called by name. As

your child is baptized, please step to one side of the Font and wait until each child is baptized. ***At all times please follow the directions of deacon.***

The child will then be anointed with Sacred Chrism and clothed in a white garment to symbolize that he/she has become a new creation in Christ. Father usually invites the god-mother to place this garment on the child and will then hand a candle to the god-father to light from the Paschal Candle which stands next to the Font.

(Please note that during the Easter Season these parts of the rite will be celebrated in the main sanctuary of the Church.)

Gifts: as we are often in need of parishioners to bring forward the gifts at the Presentation of the Gifts we invite you to consider inviting family members to bring them forward at the appropriate time. This is a great way to involve grand parents in a special way in this holy event!