

St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic Church - Baptism Class Nov 2022

The Effects of Baptism - Jesus' departing words "*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.*" Baptism makes one a disciple of Jesus, someone who follows him and learns from Him. All who have become disciples are joined to his Church, the community of all who are united to Christ.

Through baptism men and women are incorporated into Christ. They are formed into God's people, and they obtain forgiveness of all their sins. They are raised from their natural human condition to the dignity of adopted children. They become a new creation through water and the Holy Spirit. Hence they are called, and are indeed, the children of God. *Romans 8:15; Galatians 4*

This means that Baptism brings the obligation to live as a Christian, following the commandments of Christ and His Church. The Christian life, beginning with Baptism, is a constant process of strengthening that communion, through faith, sacraments and life, so that one day it might become perfect in heaven.

Is Baptism necessary for Salvation? Baptism for children? Jesus said, "*Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.*" From the earliest years of the Church, not only adults, but also children have been joined to Jesus and His Church through the sacrament of Baptism. Like all of the sacraments, Baptism is not only a sign of faith, but also a means of grace. This means that it has real spiritual effect in the soul of the baptized infant.

Responding to Jesus's words to Nicodemus that "*No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit*", the Catholic Church has always placed the highest value on the Sacrament of Baptism, believing that through Baptism, the soul is cleansed of original sin, and a person becomes a child of God, and an heir to eternal life. For this reason, the Church has always striven to make sure that young children are not deprived of the grace of Baptism, obliging Christian parents to baptize their infants.

Faith precedes Baptism: God has given the parents the authority to make the Act of Faith for their child, until the day their child is able to make it his own. This is why, in the baptismal ritual, the parents must make a profession of Faith, and renunciation of sin if they intend to raise their child as a Catholic Christian. Infant baptism is followed by another sacrament called Confirmation, when Catholics can and must speak for themselves, and are asked to confirm the faith they were given at baptism by consciously embracing it.

Responsibility as a parent in getting their children baptized

Parents are responsible for training their Children in the Christian Faith.

To fulfill the true meaning of the sacrament, children must later be formed in the Catholic faith in which they have been baptized. The foundation of this formation will be the sacrament itself that they have already received. Christian formation seeks to lead them, gradually to learn God's plan in Christ, so that they may accept for themselves the faith in which they have been baptized.

After Baptism it is the responsibility of the parents, in their gratitude to God and in fidelity to the duty they have undertaken, to enable the child to know God, whose adopted child they have become, to receive confirmation, and to participate in the Holy Eucharist.

For the parents, they must strive to make God a priority in their life, to know, love and serve Him, to seek to do his will. Strive to uphold and practice all the Church's teaching. Attend Mass weekly, Go to Confession regularly, and keep their conscience well-formed. They are making this promise to help their child make it to Heaven, to teach them about God and His commandments, and the Church's teaching on Faith and Morals. (Parents are making these promises to God, their child, and the community).

Invalid Marriage *Code of Canon Law 1095-1103, 135-136*

How do I know that my marriage was invalid?

- Did you marry outside of the Catholic Church?
- Was your marriage performed by the justice of the peace?
- Have either one of the spouses had a prior marriage, before marrying you, without an annulment?

What to do if you fall into one of the above categories?

- Talk to your parish priest or deacon about getting your marriage blessed (Convalidated) in the church, However – First, please get your child baptized.

Saint Name

- Have I given thought to a saint name for my child?
- Time honored tradition among Catholics of naming children after saints.
- Gives the child a sense of identity.
- Chosen saint provides a model of what it means to be a disciple of Christ
- Saint had certain qualities/virtues/love that you want your child to emulate.
- Serves as a patron for the child, under this saint's protection.

Godparent(s)/Sponsors

A godparent(s) should be trustworthy witnesses of the faith who will help the godchild attain salvation.

- (1) Am I aware that the godparent(s) is making the profession of faith for my child like I do as a parent?
- (2) Do the godparent(s) of my child live a life according to God's commandments and believe/uphold/practice all the Church's teaching in regard to Faith and Morals?
- (3) Are you willing to give your child to the godparent(s) to raise your child in the faith in case you are no longer able to fulfill that responsibility?

Who can be godparent(s) to my child at baptism? (cc. 872-874)

- (1) Must be a practicing Catholic, 16 years of age or older.
- (2) Must be baptized, and confirmed in the Catholic Church.
- (3) Willing and able to help the parents "in their duty as Christian mothers and fathers".
- (4) Must lead a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken.
- (5) Must not be impeded by some canonical penalty (e.g. invalid marriage, cohabitation).
- (6) Strictly speaking, a person only needs one godparent for baptism — male or female, but may have two, one male and one female.
- (7) If godparent(s) is not member of SSTM, **a sponsor certificate is required from the pastor of the Catholic Church where the godparent is registered, indicating that they are a practicing, confirmed Catholic, & eligible to be a Baptismal Sponsor.**

Godparents: Please Mail or Fax "Sponsor Certificate" to:

St. Stephen the Martyr Catholic Church
5373 Wydella Road, Lilburn, GA 30047 (fax 770-923-8061)
Reference the name of the Child being baptized.

What if someone would like to have a faithful Protestant friend as a sponsor?

Technically, only Catholics can be godparents. A Christian of another denomination, whether Orthodox or Protestant, however, may be a "Christian witness" to the baptism along with the Catholic godparent. The reason for this distinction and restriction is that the godparent not only is taking responsibility for the religious education and spiritual formation of the baptized person, but also is representing the Church, the community of faith, into which the person is being baptized. A Christian who is not Catholic, although perhaps a very holy, Christian, cannot fully attest to the beliefs of the Catholic Church.

The White Garment (outward sign of the child's Christian dignity):

- (Family heirloom gowns are encouraged).
- A) bring a white garment to be clothed in. (or - B) dress the child in white clothing.

Baptismal Candle - Symbolizes the light of Christ that will be aglow within your child after the baptism. This light will always be there, because Christ will always be there to guide and inspire your child to live as a Catholic Christian. You are encouraged to celebrate the anniversary of your child's baptism by lighting the candle on the anniversary day. (This tradition, by the way, gave rise to the practice of birthday candles).

Is there a cost?

- The Church does not charge for sacraments.
- It is appropriate to give the priest or deacon who administers the sacrament an "honorarium" or "stipend".
- How much you give is up to you.

Who to contact to setup for baptism

Contact the Pastor or one of the Deacons:

- Fr. Brian Lorei Tel. #: 770-381-7488 ext. 224 BTLOREI@outlook.com
- Deacon Evelio Garcia-Carreras 770-925-8206 eveliogc24@gmail.com
- Deacon Rich Kren krenfam@earthlink.net
- Deacon Richard Kaszycki - r_kaz@msn.com

Information that you send in your **email**:

- (1) Names of the parent(s): your first and last names.
- (2) Full name of the child & age
- (3) Contact numbers: telephone numbers that you can be reached at most easily.
- (4) Date & Time: date/time that you are requesting for the baptism of your child. Give few dates/times of your availability.
 - a. Day/Time: usually Saturdays 10:30am.
 - b. Other Days/Times also possible by request.
- (5) Include the word '**Baptism**' somewhere in the subject of the email

Visiting priest(s):

- (1) Need permission from the Pastor at St. Stephens - Fr. Brian Lorei.
- (2) Need a letter of good standing from their diocese.