



Baptismal Symbols

- Oil of Catechumens
- Water
- Lighted Candle
- Oil of Chrism
- White Garment

Now, we look at the meaning of each symbol:

Oil of Catechumens

This anointing symbolizes the person's need for the help and strength of God to profess faith, come to baptism, and live as a child of God.



Water

Water, which gives life as well as takes life, is a symbol of both life and death. When we are baptised into the death of Jesus, our former life dies with him upon the cross.

When Jesus died, he triumphed over sin and death. As Jesus was raised from the dead by the Father and given new life, we too, through the waters of baptism, are from that moment raised to share in eternal life with Jesus Christ.

The waters of baptism wash away Original Sin and make us a new creation in Christ. Our baptism does not end in death, but continues with eternal life.

The Lighted Candle

The Light of Christ is passed on to us in a candle, lit from the Paschal Candle which was blessed at the Easter Vigil. We are called to be the light of Christ in the world and we are asked to keep that light burning brightly by our daily practice of the faith.



The Oil of Chrism

Chrism is a perfumed olive oil consecrated by the Bishop during Holy Week along with the Oil of Catechumens and the Oil of the Sick.



This oil is used to anoint the crown of the head of the person being baptised.

In ancient times men and women were anointed to bring God's message to the world in word and action.

We are anointed priest, prophet and king just as Christ was, to also bring the good news to others by the way that we live our lives.

The White Garment

Once we have been claimed for Christ through the water of life we are clothed in a white garment.

This white garment is an outward sign of our Christian dignity. Once we have put on Christ, we are to always walk as his followers.



The Rite of Baptism

Reception of the Child

The child is presented for Baptism by the Parents and Godparents

Celebration of God's Word

Readings from Scripture & Prayers to God

Preparation for the Sacrament

The priest anoints the child on the breast with the Oil of Catechumens invoking the strength of Christ's power

Celebration of the Sacrament

Profession of Faith, Baptism at the Font & the Symbols of the Sacrament

Conclusion of the Rite

The Our Father & Final Blessing

Responsibilities of Parents

Choosing the Names

Baptism is not simply a "naming ceremony" or even just a blessing for a new baby. It is the beginning of the Christian life and the gateway to eternal life. Because of this, the sacrament is taken very seriously in the Church.

Connection with a Saint

The child should have the name of at least one saint. This gives the child a patron, an annual feast day, and an immediate friend in heaven who prays for the child.

A Sacrament

Baptism is a sacrament: a sacred ritual, a gift from and action of Jesus Christ in his People, who are the Church.

What Baptism does for your child

In this sacrament Jesus Christ

- forgives original sin and opens heaven for us
- welcomes us into his Church
- adopts us as sons and daughters of God

Your duties

The ceremony of Baptism assumes a well-founded hope that you will bring your child up in the practice of the faith.

This means that you will:

- teach your child to pray every day
- teach your child to lead a Catholic life
- teach your child the Catholic faith
- come to Mass every Sunday

Preparation

Pre-baptismal instruction will take place and will consist of, for new parents and those new to the parish, a session to enable parents and Godparents reach a fuller appreciation of the faith that they are bringing their children into.

Who can be a Godparent?

A Godparent can neither be the father or the mother of the person to be baptised – the role of Godparents is separate.

Godparents need to:

- be practising Catholics
- have received the three sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation.
- have made First Confession.
- be suitable for this role and have the intention of fulfilling it.
- be a source of strength, support, encouragement and example to the parents in the bringing up of children in the faith.
- have maturity of faith before they take on the responsibility of guiding another soul.
- have attained the age of 16.

One Godparent is sufficient; when there are two Godparents one has to be male and the other female.

A non-Catholic Christian who has validly received baptism in another Christian church can act as a Christian witness for the child. In that case, the other sponsor needs to be a fully initiated practising Catholic.

Also, a Godparent is a permanent choice. If there is a disagreement, a change of heart or loss of interest later on, the name of the person selected as Godparent cannot be changed or removed from the official record of the child's baptism.

This is another consideration when making a choice of Godparent!

Responsibilities of a Godparent

To be chosen as a Godparent is a special honour. You, above all others, have been entrusted with the responsibility to participate in this child's Christian life and education.

This privilege offers you the opportunity to develop a mutually enriching spiritual relationship – one that will last throughout this life and beyond.



As a Godparent you make a promise to God, to the parents, to the child, and to the Church.

You proclaim aloud a covenant to witness Gospel attitudes and values in your life and the developing relationships with this child.

You proclaim that you will be a living Christian example of community for this child.

You say you will surround this child in growing to maturity with care concern, support, faith, trust, challenge and compassion.

CHECKLIST

ON THE DAY:

- bring a White Garment
(Baptismal robe, shawl or blanket)
- bring a white Baptismal Candle
- all arrive and be in place 10 minutes before the arranged time

Contact us...

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This leaflet gives you some background information to the Church's teaching on the Sacrament of Baptism.

The Baptism Preparation Team will be glad to help with any other queries you may have.

