

## **Infant Baptism**

Baptism is a rite of initiation into the Catholic Church, a welcoming of your child into the Christian family. From the baptismal font is born the one People of God of the New Covenant, which transcends all the natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races, and sexes: "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body." (1 Corinthians 12:13) Through Baptism we receive the grace of God and become sharers in the Church's mission. It is the first of three sacraments of initiation and is the basis of the whole Christian life.

This information sheet deals **ONLY** with the baptism of **children under six years of age**. Because they are capable of learning about their faith, older children who have already had their sixth birthday or begun first grade must take **religious instruction** before being baptized. Please call the Religious Education Office (673-222-2261 ext 211) for information about these special classes.

The Baptism of your infant child is an expression of your desire to share your faith with your child. Faith is a gift from God, a gift that needs to be nourished. We do this through prayer, Scripture reading, attendance at Mass on Sundays, reception of the Eucharist, and being of service to other people. In the sacrament of Baptism your child is being initiated into the Catholic Church because you, as parents, are promising God and the Church to raise your child in the practice of the Catholic faith. You are taking on a great responsibility of being the first teachers of your child in the ways of faith. May your example of day-to-day living of the Catholic faith make you the very best of teachers.

Here at COLA, baptism takes place before the 9:30 a.m. Mass on the Second Sunday of the month.

### **Procedures to Prepare Your Child for Infant Baptism**

It involves four steps:

- I. A prayerful reflection over the choice of godparents.
- II. Registration and interview.
- III. Participation of Parents and Godparents in a prebaptismal class
- IV. Celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism.

#### **I. Godparents**

The selection of the child's godparents is an important decision and should be made with the child's growth in faith in mind. You may choose **one** Godfather and/or **one** Godmother. Godparents accept the responsibility, along with you, of providing for the faith formation of your child in the Catholic Church. Their beliefs and life style should reflect the responsibility they are accepting. Consequently, the Church **requires** the following of the Godfather and Godmother:

1. They are **practicing Catholics**, i.e., they attend Mass and receive Holy Communion regularly.
2. They are at least **sixteen years of age**.
3. They have received the sacrament of **Confirmation**.
4. If married, they are **married in the Catholic Church**.

After considering these qualities the parents should select the godparents for their child. A non-Catholic Christian may take the place of **one** of the godparents and stand as a Christian witness along with the Catholic godparent.

## **II. Registration and Interview**

1. Call the parish (673-222-2261) for an appointment with one of the priests. BOTH PARENTS must be present for the interview.
2. Fill out the registration form completely just before the interview and present it to the priest.
3. If you live in this parish and are not registered, please come fifteen minutes before your scheduled appointment with the priest to fill out a parish registration form for your family.
4. The priest will interview the parents and schedule them for the prebaptismal class.

## **III. Prebaptismal Class**

Both parents and godparents must attend the prebaptismal class. The purpose of this class is to help them gain a fuller appreciation of the sacrament of Baptism and what it means to raise a child in the Catholic faith.

This class ordinarily takes place on the Friday evening before the baptism, only after the parents have been interviewed by one of the parish priests. If one or both of the godparents live outside the parish, they may take the class in their own parish. A letter or certificate stating they have taken the class will be required prior to the baptism.

## **IV. Celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism**

Upon completion of the prebaptismal class, a date for the celebration will be confirmed. Baptisms ordinarily take place on the second Sunday of the month prior to the 9:30 a.m. Mass. However, if you have a priest from outside the parish whom you wish to perform the sacrament, he is most welcome. Please inform the interviewing priest at the time of registration.