

# The Rite of Baptism

Jesus Christ instituted, or gave us, the sacrament of Baptism and told his followers to give it to others by using water and calling upon the name of the Blessed Trinity.

## The use of WATER in Baptism

Christ chose **water** as a sign for this sacrament because it had deep meaning to God's people. To state a few examples; in the book of Genesis, we know that the Spirit began the work of creation in the waters of the world (Gen 1:2); God had used water to destroy all evil men in Noah's time; God had used the waters of the Red Sea to save his people when the waves parted for them to pass through into the Promised Land. So, in all these events the people had come to see that God had used water both as a way of destroying evil and of doing good for them. Likewise, St. John the Baptist also used water as a way of showing the desire to be cleansed of sin. So, it was quite easy for them to accept it as God's sign of actually taking sin away.

We must remember that water by itself cannot free us from sin or give us the new life of grace. **Only when it is used in Baptism** according to the plan of Jesus can it do this. This means that the water must be **poured over the forehead of the person to be baptized** while the **priest says** these words: **"I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."**

To explain further, these words tell us that the person is being consecrated to the Blessed Trinity. He is being made a child of the Father, a brother or sister of Jesus Christ; a temple of the Holy Spirit.

## The Rite of Baptism

The infant to be baptized is brought to the church by his parents and godparents where the priest, who represents Jesus for us, meets the family at the entrance and welcomes the baby into the community of God, thus making him/her members of the holy Church.

The liturgy of the Word reminds us that God has commanded Baptism for our salvation. After the homily and *Litany of the Saint/s* (after one of whom we are usually named), the ceremony reaches its most important part:

### ***The exorcism and actual Baptism with water begins -***

Exorcism is the Church's powerful way of destroying sin. The prayer of exorcism says: *Almighty and everlasting God, you sent your only Son into the world to cast out the power of Satan, spirit of evil, to rescue man from the kingdom of darkness, and bring him into the splendor of your Kingdom of light. We pray for this child: set him free from*

*original sin, make him a temple of your glory, and send your Holy Spirit to dwell with him. We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen. (Rite of Baptism)*

After the exorcism, the priest anoints the baby with the oil of the catechumens. Following this, the parents and godparents, on behalf of the Child rejects sin and Satan and accepts the teachings of Jesus as stated in the Creed. Then the priest carries out the actual sacrament by pouring water while saying the words of Baptism.

The final ceremonial actions are the anointing with chrism, the clothing, and the lighting of the baptismal candle.

**Anointing** is done with a special oil called **chrism**, which is blessed by the bishop and is used to show that the new Christian shares in Christ's triple mission as prophet, priest, and king. The priest says this prayer while anointing the baby: *God the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into His Holy People. He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as members of his body, sharing everlasting life. Amen.*

The infant receives a White Garment and a New White candle.

*White* - is an ancient symbol for purity and sinlessness.

*New white candle* - a reminder of Our Lord, who is the true Light of the world (Jn 9:5)/ (Mt 5:14, 16).

### ***Living our Baptismal Commitment***

At Baptism we make a vow, or solemn promise to God. We vow to give up sin and live according to his teachings of Christ. In order to keep this promise we need to pray and receive the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist often. We must also study the Catholic faith. This helps us live in faith, hope and charity as we journey toward Heaven, our eternal home.

**Words to know:** Sign of Baptism; rite; exorcism; chrism ; oil of the catechumens; vow.