

The sacrament of Baptism ushers us into the divine life, cleanses us from sin, and initiates us as members of the Christian community. It is the foundation for sacramental life.

At Baptism, the presider prays over the water:

Father, look now with love upon your Church, and unseal for her the fountain of baptism. By the power of the Holy Spirit give to this water the grace of your Son, so that in the sacrament of baptism all those whom you have created in your likeness may be cleansed from sin and rise to a new birth of innocence by water and the Holy Spirit. (Christian Initiation of Adults, #222A)

Freed from Sin

Baptism frees us from the bondage of original and actual sin. Water is poured in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Today, the sacrament of Baptism is often performed on infants shortly after birth. Adult baptisms take place at the Easter Vigil through the restored Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults. Adults or children who have been baptized in a valid Christian church are not baptized again in the Catholic Church. As the Nicene Creed says, *“I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins....”*

The *Catechism* teaches:

“The fruit of Baptism, or baptismal grace, is a rich reality that includes forgiveness of original sin and all personal sins, birth into the new life by which man becomes an adoptive son of the Father, a member of Christ, and a temple of the Holy Spirit. By this very fact, the person baptized is incorporated into the Church, the Body of Christ, and made a sharer in the priesthood of Christ” (CCC 1279).

Baptismal Symbols

- **Water** – The waters of Baptism recall Jesus' own Baptism by John the Baptist in the river Jordan. Water symbolizes cleansing and renewal as we begin a new life in Christ. We are washed clean of sin.
- **Oil** – At Baptism, we are anointed into the life of Christ as "priest, prophet, and king." A cross is traced on the candidate's forehead as a reminder that we are inheritors of the Kingdom of God.
- **Light** – The baptismal candle is lit from the Paschal or Easter candle that stands in the Church as a sign of Christ's light in the world. At Baptism, we receive the light of Christ and are called forth to share this light with the world.
- **White garment** – The white garment placed upon us at Baptism symbolizes Christ's victory over death and his glorious resurrection. Likewise, the white garment or pall placed over the coffin at the time of death recalls our baptismal promises and reminds us that we are destined for eternal life.

While in ordinary circumstances, sacraments in the Catholic Church are administered validly by a member of the ordained clergy, in an emergency situation, the sacrament of Baptism can be administered by anyone.

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