

Come to the Water



*A Guide to Baptisms
at Holy Trinity Church*

Congratulations on the birth of your child from all of us here at Holy Trinity! In this guide, presented in question and answer form, we hope to provide you with a guide to the policies governing the Sacrament of Baptism at our church. As always, do not hesitate to contact the office if you have other questions or need clarification.

- **How soon should I have my child baptized?**

While there is no need (unless your child is seriously ill) to baptize him immediately, the Church reminds us that there also should not be an inordinate delay in having him baptized. Baptism within six months of the birth is reasonable. You may sign up for Baptism either before, or after, your child is born. (See below.)

- **What if my child is older?**

If for some reason, your child has reached seven years of age before being baptized, he must receive formal instruction before we can perform this Sacrament. Children under the age of seven are normally baptized as if they were still babies.

- **Who can be baptized at Holy Trinity?**

Baptism is offered for the children of parishioners who have been registered and active at Holy Trinity for at least the previous six months. Baptism is also offered for the grandchildren of active, registered parishioners. Baptisms for children of parents registered in other parishes are available only under certain circumstances and with proper permissions and paperwork from the other parish.

- **When do Baptisms take place?**

Baptisms normally take place on Sundays at 12:30pm. There are no baptisms on Easter Sunday, the Sunday before Easter (Palm Sunday), or on Christmas Day.

- **How do I register my child for Baptism?**

Registration forms are available from the Parish Office during regular business hours. You may also call to give your information over the phone or download a form from the Parish Website (htrccsherman.org under "forms"). In the case of twins, one form is needed for each child. This form should be filled out (please print clearly) and returned to the Office as soon as possible. Once we receive your form, you will be contacted within a few days to go over various details and to arrange the date for the Baptism. Please do not contact caterers or send invitations until you have a confirmed date from the Office.

- **What if I would like an outside (non-Holy Trinity) Priest or Deacon to do the Baptism.**

Guest Catholic clergy are always welcome to perform a Baptism when this is a relationship with the family in question. The time of the service, in this case, will then depend upon the schedule at Holy Trinity as well as the guest clergy's own schedule. Non-Catholic or Protestant clergy are not permitted to perform Baptisms, but are welcome to attend along with your guests.

- **Do I have to name my child after a Saint?**

While this is no longer required, it remains an ancient and venerable tradition which is well-worth following and highly recommended so that your child will have a specific patron Saint. A Saint's name can always be included as a middle name or a third name for this purpose. It is not permitted for a child to be baptized with a name which is specifically anti-Catholic or in some way contrary to the Faith. While this situation is very rare, if it should occur, Father will discuss a proper baptismal name with you before the ceremony.

- **What about godparents?**

There are several considerations and regulations to keep in mind when selecting godparents. Their role is to be able to witness to a living and active faith in Jesus Christ and to be able to pass this on to your child by word and example. In addition, they also have the responsibility to ensure that your child is raised and educated in our Faith if for some reason you are unable to fulfill this promise. Note that this does not necessarily mean that they are also your child's legal guardian if something should happen to you. To perform their role, the godparents should be people who will be close to your child and actively involved in his life. For this reason, someone who lives far away may not be the best choice. Nor is it always the best idea to give someone this role just because it's "their turn." In addition, to be a godparent, one must be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church. One must also be 16 years of age or older, have received the Sacraments of Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation. If married, one must be married according to Church Law.

- **Do the godparents have to be Catholic?**

At least one godparent must be a practicing Catholic in good standing with the Church. To this end, he/she will need to obtain a "sponsor certificate" from his/her regular parish. This is a statement from their Priest that they are, in fact, practicing and in good standing. While it is preferable for both godparents to be Catholic, it is permitted for one godparent to be a Protestant or a member of the Eastern Orthodox Church provided that he/she is also Baptized and in good standing with his own church. Since the role of godparent involves being able to witness to one's own faith in Jesus as God and Savior, it is not possible for a non-Baptized person (ie: Jewish, Moslem, Buddhist, Hindu, etc.) to serve as godparent.

- **Can there be multiple godparents?**

Yes. The Church requires, as a minimum, one Catholic godmother or godfather. However, it is customary to have both. In the case of more than one set of godparents, only one godmother and one godfather are recorded on the certificate and in the sacramental records of the church. In the case of more than one godparent, there must be at least one godmother and at least one godfather. So, for example, it is not permitted to have two godmothers and no godfather.

- **What if I'm a single parent or not married according to Church Law?**

This does not in any way affect whether we will baptize your child. However, if you are in an irregular marriage, (ie: in a marriage not recognized by the Church), Father is available to help you regularize your situation. If he can be of assistance in this area, please feel free to approach him on this delicate matter. The matter will be handled with confidentiality for all concerned.

- **Can we take pictures or video?**

During the ceremony, your guests may take pictures or video, however flashes and camera lights may not be used. As there can be a lot of moving around during the ceremony, and for the comfort of all concerned, it is requested that photographers remain in their pew during the ceremony. It is also important that photography not become distracting to the ceremony. After the Baptism, you can take whatever additional pictures you like.

- **What about other matters: baptismal gowns, candles, fees, and certificates?**

You will need to provide your own baptismal gown for the baby. Traditionally, the gown is always white. The church will provide a small baptismal bib and a baptismal candle, both of which are yours to keep after the ceremony as mementoes of the day. There is no fee for the Baptism. Donations, at your own discretion, either to the church or to the Priest are always appreciated. After the Baptism, an official certificate of baptism will be provided to you. It is suitable for framing if you wish and it should be retained in a safe place for future reference. Copies can always be requested from the Office when needed.

- **What if I have other questions?**

Don't hesitate to ask! The Office number is: (860) 354-1414 or parishoffice@htrccsherman.org