



BAPTISMS

ST. MARY'S BY THE SEA
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As the first Sacrament of Initiation, Baptism incorporates us into Christ and forms us into God's people. It is the door to life and the kingdom of God. As the adopted sons and daughters of the eternal Father, we become worthy to inherit the right to spend eternity with the Father in heaven. Baptism is the great moment that begins your child's spiritual journey and the way of life that you are seeking for your son or daughter. As you make this request for your child, you are confirming your primary commitment to raise this child in the practice of the faith. Ask yourself these questions: ♦ *Am I fully initiated into the Church through Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation?* ♦ *Do I actively participate in the sacramental life of the Church?* ♦ *Do I regularly attend Mass?* ♦ *Do I make use of the sacrament of Reconciliation?* ♦ *Does the Church recognize my marriage sacramentally?*

The Church is aware that, for whatever the reason, people will make choices in life that lead them in many different directions. We understand that life can get complicated and we do not want to judge, but, we expect parents to lead by example. Many times, the birth of a child raises questions about the faith life of the parents. This miracle of birth might inspire you to seek your own Confirmation or have your marriage blessed by the Church. If so, we would be happy to assist you with these matters.

POLICY

➤ **MANDATORY FOR PARENTS: YOU MUST MEET WITH THE PASTOR BEFOREHAND TO DISCUSS THE SERIOUSNESS OF YOUR CHILD RECEIVING THE SACRAMENT. ONLY THEN WILL YOU BE ABLE TO SCHEDULE A DATE FOR THE BAPTISM.**

➤ **IN ADDITION, YOU MUST BE A REGISTERED PARISHIONER AT LEAST SIX MONTHS PRIOR TO THE BAPTISM REQUEST. IF YOU ARE NOT, WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN OUR CHURCH AND SPEND THE SIX MONTH WAITING PERIOD BY GETTING TO KNOW OUR PARISH AND POSSIBLY LEARN MORE ABOUT ONE OF OUR MINISTRIES.**

IF YOU ARE A NON-PARISHIONER BUT WOULD STILL LIKE TO HAVE YOUR CHILD BAPTIZED HERE, A LETTER OF PERMISSION IS REQUIRED AND MUST BE SIGNED BY THE PASTOR OF THE CHURCH YOU ARE ATTENDING. YOU NEED TO GIVE THIS TO THE OFFICE WHEN YOU FIRST REQUEST THE BAPTISM.

1. Baptisms should be celebrated in the parish of the parents for children 6 years and younger. This should also be where they will later receive their faith formation education and the sacrament of First Holy Communion and Confirmation.
2. Baptisms are normally celebrated on the 3rd Sunday of each month at 1:30 p.m.
3. For children who have already reached the age of reason (7 years old), it is important that they know what Baptism is. Such a child would need to participate in one of our parish religion classes (contact the office for further information).
4. Pictures may be taken at the discretion of the celebrant during the ceremony. While we ask you to do nothing that would disturb the atmosphere of prayer during this time, we recognize that recording the celebration in a streaming or still manner creates a visual record to share with those who are unable to attend and will be a record to be viewed by your child in future years. Please ensure that all your family members and guests understand this expectation.

5. A Baptism Certificate will be provided for the family, and the baptism will be recorded in the official parish records. Throughout the child's life, St. Mary's by the Sea will maintain the permanent record of all their sacraments. If you later move and another Church becomes your parish, please remember the place of your child's baptism and the address of this church.
6. We ask for a \$75 donation per child for registered parishioners and \$125 per child for non-parishioners. This is due 30 days prior to the baptism.
7. It is mandatory that both parents and godparents attend a **Baptism Preparation course** prior to the child's baptism. Since St. Mary's by the Sea is **not** currently offering this, you are welcome to take the class elsewhere (including an **online** Infant Baptism course developed by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles) and provide us with a certificate of completion.

REGARDING THE PARENTS

1. At the least, one parent of the child must be a practicing Catholic committed to raising the child in the Catholic faith. (In a Mixed Marriage witnessed by the Catholic Church, the Catholic party declares that he or she promises to do all in his or her power to baptize and bring up any offspring in the practice of the Catholic Faith – Can. 1125.)
2. The parents must advise us whether their marriage is *validly recognized by the Catholic Church*.
3. The parent(s) must first attend the **required Pre-Baptism meeting** with the Pastor. If then given a date for their child's baptism, the parent(s) must also attend a **Baptism Preparation Class** (see #7 above). If they have attended one within the last 24 months, they are not required to attend a new class; however, proof of their attendance must be received prior to the baptism.

REGARDING THE GODPARENTS

The role of the godparent is a special honor that has a specific role. Parents should choose someone who will help guide and influence their child; someone who will pray for them and help teach to be a good Catholic by word and example.

1. The Godparent(s) must be at least 18 years old.
2. At least one Godparent is required, however it is customary to have two. Each Godparent must be a practicing Catholic who has received Baptism, First Eucharist and Confirmation, and leads a life in harmony with the faith. Since a godparent is meant to be a spiritual guide and support in the faith, ***those who are not Catholic are unable to function as godparents.**

***Note:** A baptized person from a non-Catholic Christian faith community may, however, be a “Witness” to the baptism together with one Catholic Godparent. This must be a person **who recognizes Jesus Christ as God and professes a belief in a Trinitarian God** (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

3. If the Godparent is married, their marriage must be ***validly recognized by the Catholic Church*** (and not simply a civil marriage or living with a partner outside of marriage).
4. Each Godparent must have a **letter of good standing** signed by their Pastor from their current parish.
5. Each Godparent must attend a **Baptism Preparation Class** (see #7 on page 3). If they have attended one within the last 24 months, they are not required to attend a new class. However, proof of their attendance must be received 30 days prior to the baptism.