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✧—Why Baptism?—✧

It all starts with being made new. Just as physical birth marks the beginning of a child's physical life, the new birth in Baptism marks the beginning of a child's Christian life. Both take place in this world that God has created. Without Baptism there can be no sharing in other sacraments. Baptism is called "the gateway to life in the Spirit" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1213).

Baptism will not change your baby's appearance, but it will change what really matters most. No longer an "outsider," this child will be an "insider," a member of Christ's Body. Your baby's whole being will be permanently marked as a baptized Christian. This one-time sacrament can never be repeated or taken away.

Your child will enter into a life of grace: God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit will live in your little one in a new way.

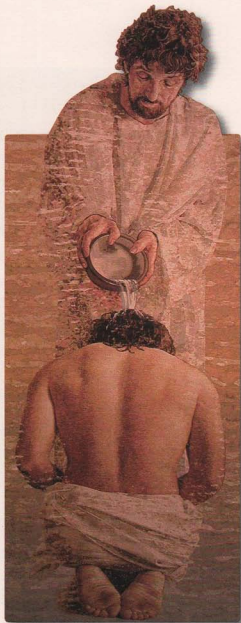


✂— Grace and Sin —✂

During the Baptism liturgy, the celebrant will say to your child: “[Name], the Christian community welcomes you with great joy. In its name I claim you for Christ our Savior by the sign of his cross.”

Being claimed for Christ is being claimed by God. God’s grace is first. From all eternity God desires to share divine life. The Son of God became man to share God’s life and God’s grace with us in a very real way.

Christ’s Baptism,
John Nava, 2002,
tapestry at the Cathedral of
Our Lady of the Angels



Like every human being born since our first parents (with the exception of Christ himself and Mary, the Mother of God), your baby is born into the human condition. Sadly for everyone, sin is part of that condition.

Original sin is part of human life. No one can avoid it. But Jesus Christ has overcome sin and evil. No one need be trapped forever in sin. Jesus lived, died, rose from the dead, and ascended to the Father to free us from death and sin. In Baptism we receive that salvation in Christ.

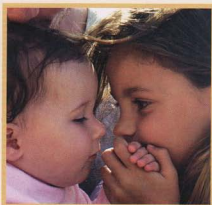
Your baby will be claimed for Christ and washed clean of original sin in Baptism.



Sacraments

Signs That Are Real

How can we know anything about God or the life of a person? Probably the best way to know things is to experience them—seeing,



touching, hearing, tasting. Experiencing things through the senses is part of being human. God communicates to us in these very human ways. Through the Church we have tangible, physical signs that not only tell us about God but also manifest his presence to us. We call these very special signs *sacraments*. They are God's mighty works.

Any sign points to something real, but sacraments do more than merely point. Sacraments *cause* what they signify. The Church's seven sacraments give us seven ways to experience God, to receive his life, to meet him.

The Church itself is lovingly described as the sacrament of communion that brings us to Christ (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1108).

Because the Son of God became man, all of human life can point to God. We can find something sacramental about many things in our everyday lives. Being a parent can be sacramental.

How has becoming a parent helped you encounter God, experience God, meet God?

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