

Understanding of the Sacrament of Baptism

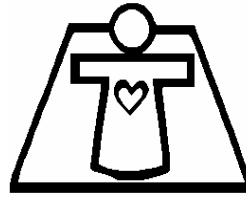
The celebration of the sacrament flows from the commandment of Christ when he said: “Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt. 28: 19-20). This celebration of baptism has been the practice of the Church for many centuries.

In order for sacraments to be valid, they must be received in freedom. Parents who seek to have their child baptized do so in the freedom of faith they once received in their own baptism and with the intention of raising their child as Roman Catholic.

Our understanding of baptism is twofold. Before you bring your child to the church for baptism, we recognize that he or she is already a child of God. Baptism marks the beginning of the child’s new life in Christ as God’s own child. As such, we ritualize or “make real” what we already believe about the child and we actualize the rebirth, which we receive through our baptism in Christ Jesus. We are thus made members of the Catholic Church.

The seed of faith sown and watered in baptism needs your love and care if it is to flourish. The way you live your life and your beliefs will contribute to your child’s experience of what it means to be a Catholic. For this reason, it is very important to recognize that you take the responsibility of making sure that your child lives in the ways of faith. In the words of the Second Vatican Council: “It is therefore, the duty of parents to create a family atmosphere inspired by love and devotion to

God and humanity which will promote an integrated personal and social education of their children” (Declaration on Christian Education, nos. 3).



How To Prepare For Your Child’s Baptism?

▪ Meeting and Registration

The initial contact will be made by the parents to one of our parish staff who will personally assist and give the baptismal pamphlet and other information pertinent to the baptism of your child. You will be asked to register your name for the baptismal class.

▪ Pre-Baptismal Class

The class for baptism is held every first Wednesday of each month in the St. Elizabeth room. We require both parents and the **principal godparent** to attend this class. Children are not allowed in class. The class begins at 7:00pm and ends at 9:00 pm.

A discussion about the Sacrament of Baptism and the Role of Parents and godparents will take place.

▪ Set the Date of Baptism

Only after attending the baptismal class can you set the date for the baptism of your child. Baptism in English are held at 10:00 am on the first and third Saturday of each month.

What about the Godparents?

Godparents (Sponsors) should be at least 16 years of age and a model of Christian living, that is, believing and practicing Catholics who have received the three Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation. Godparents participate in the child’s Christian life and formation and assist parents in their responsibility in seeing that the child comes to know God through experience, prayer, and worship.

Can a non-Catholic serve as godparent?

No, since one of the requirements under church law for godparenting is having celebrated Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation in the Catholic Church. The reason is that our church sees the godparents as more than a concerned relative or friend who encourages Christian behavior. The godparent will represent the community into which the child is being baptized and will help the child grow in that community. For Catholic baptism, only a Catholic can do that. A non-Catholic may serve as a “witness” to the ceremony as long as a Catholic godparent is present.

Out of parish godparents may attend baptismal preparation at their own parish or the parish of their choice. Just provide us with a Certificate attesting that you have attended the baptismal class and that you have already received the three Sacraments of Initiation.

What about a Donation to the Parish?

A donation reflects your commitment to responsible Christian stewardship. A suggested donation of \$50.00 is greatly appreciated. The donation should be given on the day you register for the class.

Why Must We Go Through Preparation?

Whenever someone receives a sacrament, it is appropriate to prepare. Preparation before baptism will help you know what you are celebrating in the Sacrament and understand the responsibility of raising your child in the life of the Church.

Furthermore, this will give you the opportunity to meet the priest, the parish staff, and some volunteers who assist in preparing the baptism of your child. As you prepare, remember the importance of your decision to have your child baptized. This whole baptismal preparation process is to help you reflect on the seriousness of what you are asking.

Additional Information

The parish provides candles for the Rite of Baptism but feel free to bring your own. Children 7 years or over must be prepared through the RCIC process when they may celebrate all three Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Holy Eucharist, Confirmation) by enrolling them in the **Rite of Christian Initiation for Children**.

Please discern well about choosing godparents. They are considered witnesses to the baptism and representatives of the Christian Community. Once witnesses at baptism, godparents are assigned as such permanently. They cannot be changed.

If parents have not completed their sacraments of initiation or are not married in the Church, they should inquire as to how they may complete and celebrate these sacraments for themselves. If you have other questions, please do not hesitate to call our office.

St. Elizabeth Parish and Staff

Rene and Cecie Briones

English Baptism Coordinators

750 Sequoia Drive, Milpitas, CA 95035

408.262.8100

408.946.8703 fax

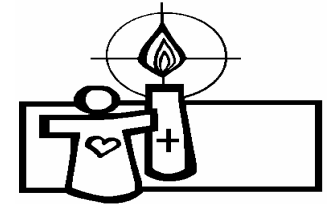
M-F 9:00am – 4:00pm

www.separish.org

St. Elizabeth Church A Roman Catholic Community

The Celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism

Welcoming Us
Into the Family of God



Welcome

The Parish Community of St. Elizabeth is very glad to welcome you as you prepare for the baptism of your child. We are here to help you in this important event because we believe that your child's baptism is a time for celebration and joy.

For this reason, the Clergy, the parish staff and the baptismal volunteer team will guide you through the entire process of your child's baptism. We ask that you read this brochure before setting a date for your child's baptism.

We thank you in advance for choosing our community to be the venue of the baptism of your child. We pray that this occasion would be a good opportunity to renew your faith in God and to commit yourself to Him and to his Church.