

Baptism

Baptism is the first of the sacraments of initiation into the Catholic Church. It makes us adopted children of God, incorporates us into Christ, pardons all our sin, and forms us into God's people.

It confers a permanent relationship ("character") with Christ and his Church. For this reason a validly baptized Christian is never re-baptized and has the right to a Christian funeral.

The original and normative order for celebrating the sacraments of initiation is Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, and for many centuries the sacraments of initiation were celebrated in that order: baptism followed immediately by confirmation, followed by sharing in Holy Communion within the celebration of Eucharist. Adults, infants and children were initiated into the Church in this manner.

As time passed, for a variety of reasons, a separation between the sacraments of initiation developed. The initiation ritual which had included the water bath (baptism), anointing (confirmation) and welcome to the Eucharistic table (first communion) was now stretched out over a period of weeks and then eventually years.

After the Second Vatican Council, the Church restored the ancient practice of initiation being celebrated at one liturgy for adults and children of catechetical age (6). It does not matter how old we are when we are baptized, the Church's teaching on baptism does not change according to the age of the person. Baptism is always the first sacrament of initiation.

Today, if the person seeking baptism is under the age of six the three sacramental moments are celebrated over a period of years. Preparation for Baptism of young children including infants formally begins by asking for a Baptism Preparation Package after a Sunday (Saturday) Mass in the Parish office and continues when the parents attend the baptism preparation course. Baptisms are celebrated one weekend a month during a Sunday Mass.

Adults or children over the age of 6 seeking baptism are invited to speak with their parish priest about the the **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)**

We would like to thank Catherine Ecker, Liturgical Catechist (catherineecker56@gmail.com) who is the principal author.