**The Theology of the Sacrament of Baptism**

Baptismis the one sacrament that all Christian denominations share in common. In the Catholic Church, infants are baptized to welcome them into the Catholic faith and to free them from the original sin they were born with.

To the Catholic Church, original sin isn’t a personal sin of the unborn, but a sin transmitted from generation to generation by birth. All men and women are born with original sin, and only Baptism can wash it away.

**The ritual of baptism in the Catholic Church**

Baptisms here at St. Luke usually take place on Sundays in the early afternoon after all the Masses are over. In most cases, the parish priest or deacon administers the sacrament, anointing the person being baptized with oils, and pouring blessed water over the child or adult’s head not just once but three times.

In the eyes of the Catholic Church, any Baptism that uses water and the invocation of the Holy Trinity, as in “I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” is a valid sacrament. So if a follower of a Christian church that performs Baptism to these standards wants to become Catholic, he doesn’t have to be re-baptized.

There 4 symbols of Baptism: Water, Sacred Oil, Candle and White garment.

**The Rite of Baptism**

**What name do you give your child? What are you asking?**

We are all called by name by God. So we begin with the name that the child will be addressed by.

Baptism!

**Addresses the Parents and Godparents.**

Do you parents accept the responsibility to bring your child up in the ways of the Catholic Faith?

Do you Godparents agree to assist the parents is raising the child in the faith? This is why we receive letters of good standing on your Godparents. Their marriages have to be valid. They must attend Church regularly and live lives of example for their little Godchild.

**Sign of the Cross**

Then the Priest will make the sign of the cross on the child’s forehead claiming him/her for Christ. Then parents and Godparents are asked to do the same. Oil of the Catechumenate is placed on the chest of the child by the Priest.

**Celebration of God’s Word**

All that we do is steeped in the Word of God. A Gospel reading will be proclaimed by the Priest or Deacon. There may be a homilette.

Then Prayer of the Faithful follows. These are intercessions on behalf of the child, parents, Godparents and Church.

**Prayer of Exorcism and Anointing before Baptism**

We pray for the child and that he/She will be freed from original sin. The priest will take some of the Sacred Chrism which is the oil of kingship. Just as Kings and Queens were anointed we too are an anointed people…

(Remember the song “Priestly people, Kingly people God’s Holy People”?)

**Celebration of the Sacrament**

The water should be already blest...if it is not then the Priest will bless it.

**Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith**

You are presenting this child for baptism. By the water he/she is made free and will receive a new life from Gid, who is love. Both parent and God parent are taking on the mission of raising this child in the faith…so you then are asked to renew your baptismal vows and a Profession of Faith…Do you believe in God the Father, Do you reject Satan..etc.

**Baptism**

The child is held over the Baptismal Font and baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The waters of Baptsim are cleansing waters. Just as water washes away dirt the waters of baptism wash away sins.

Then the child received the Oil of the Catechumenate.

**White Garment**

A person being baptized in the Catholic Church is expected to dress in white to symbolize purity of faith and the cleansing power of Baptism. The white garment symbolizes the white garments Jesus wore when he was placed in the tomb after his death on Good Friday. An infant may wear a baptismal gown handed down for generations; an adult typically puts on a full-length white gown known as an *alb.* The baptism ritual is a participatory one, with all attendees rejecting Satan and professing their faith, with parents and of an infant and the godparents and immediate family members of the person being baptized being a bit more involved.

**A Candle**

The Godparents are presented with the baptismal candle signifying that they on behalf of the child receives the light of Christ. The candle is lit from the paschal candle which was lit for the first time at the Easter Vigil.

**Concluding Rite**

Recite the Lord’s Prayer and then blessing is extended over the Parents and then the Godparents.

Each child receives his/her own baptismal certificate.

Like the Sacrament of Confirmation and the Sacrament of Holy Orders, as a Catholic, you’re baptized just once. These three sacraments confer an indelible mark on your soul. No one can ever be un-baptized or re-baptized.

**Recognizing the role of godparents**

Every person being baptized must have a sponsor, traditionally called a godparent. You must have at least one sponsor, but usually infants get one of each gender and often from each side of the family.

The role of godparents has a very practical history. Godparents took over rearing children orphaned when their parents died prematurely. Today, being a godparent carries with it no legal right or ecclesiastical authority to the custody of children. Being a godparent, besides giving Christmas and birthday gifts every year, really means actively giving good Christian witness and example and being a role model and support by regularly and faithfully practicing the religion.