

# **Baptism**

*The holy Baptism* is the first and it is the foremost of all the Sacraments. It is the cornerstone and the entrance into the Life of Faith, for it is the gateway to our encounters with Christ. Through this Sacrament of Baptism, our Lord Jesus Christ gathers to Himself new disciples. Thus, Baptism is our reception into the Family of God, the Body of Christ, the Church. In Baptism we are reborn as children of the Father. We are made into the image of Jesus, and we become His living Body in the world today. We become sisters and brothers to one another with God as our Father. And, we become heirs to heaven and eternal life with the Most Blessed Holy Trinity.

Just as the power of the Holy Spirit overshadowed the Blessed Ever Virgin Mary, when the Holy Spirit intimately united the Son of God with the body offered by Mary, so through the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit in Baptism we are united to Jesus. Baptism makes us become “other Christ” whereby we become God's Holy People, His Royal Priesthood, His Church, the Mystical Body of Christ and temples of his Holy Spirit. We share in the priesthood of Jesus Christ and we commit ourselves to make his mission our own mission.

The Sacrament of Baptism requires that we surrender ourselves over to a new life in the footsteps of Jesus, which includes walking with Him as He carried the Cross. To become baptize takes much, much longer than the few seconds that the water is washed over us. Rather, to become baptized takes a lifetime. It takes a lifetime of hard work. It takes a lifetime of effort. It takes a lifetime of an awful lot of perseverance, commitment and starting over when we fail. It is not easy! Baptism does not require, rather it demands “dying to self” to “live for Christ”. Thus, Baptism requires a firm commitment from the older child or youth or adult whenever they seek to be baptized. It requires that same firm commitment from parents when they seek to have their child baptized. The parents solemnly promise God to do all in their power to raise their child as a Maronite Catholic Christian beginning with their daily example and encouragement in the ways of tile Faith. It also includes doing all that is possible to have this child educated in that same Faith by faithful attendance at religious education classes and by faithful participation in the Sunday Eucharist.

As parents and godparents of a child to be baptized, you are making the first step for this child to become incorporated into the Church. On behalf of Our Lady of Lebanon we value your effort and welcome your newly baptized child into our Parish Community.

## Parents

Congratulations on sharing your faith commitment and spiritual journey with your child. The baptismal ceremonies clearly make evident that you, father and mother, are the primary religious educators of your children. Some parents shrink from this responsibility for fear of what it requires. Some make the promise to God and His Community of faith, then go out and forget what they promised. What does it require?

Your responsibility calls for the development of a set of Christian values and spirituality based upon primary knowledge of God. As Saint John Paul XXIII said, “Intellectual schooling will be of little value if it is not accompanied by an education that takes in not the intellect but also the will and the heart”. Your task then is a long-range, everyday program. It begins as soon, as your child is capable of receiving sense impressions, and must continue everyday even after they leave the nest. Your child's sense of values, attitudes and convictions are formed more by the climate and atmosphere in which they live, than by cool reasoned explanations by outsiders.

From infancy, your child catches character traits, absorbs ethnic values, principles and life action, in imitation of you, father and mother. You teach more by what you are and what you do, than by what you say. Yes! Saying is important, but it must be accompanied by lived out your daily examples in word and deed. Your daily reactions to everyday life situations teach your child. If your daily reactions, deeds and words are Christian attitudes, then those of your child will be the same.

So please do all you can do to allow Jesus Christ to grow in your hearts and lives. Then, share these with your child, and you will do well at raising a future saint for God's heavenly kingdom. No greater gift can you give your child after life itself than to give your child eternal life. Your child will never bless and love you more than the day they thank you in heaven for helping reign eternally with the Lord.

## Godparents

The Church gives us a second set of parents to help us live-out our life-long task of becoming other “Christ”. Since Godparents are given to us to help us along the way by their words and their example. Godparents should be shining examples of Christian living, so we can study their example and seek their assistance in becoming better disciples. Godparents, on their part, should never forget their responsibilities to help their Godchild live a Christian Life, no matter how old their Godchild may be. Godparents are very special people with a unique and important role. Godparents are like having a second set of parents.

The Church has established certain qualifications, which must be met in order to be a valid Godparent (See CCEO # 685):

- 1.** Be initiated with the three sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation and the Holy Eucharist: That means being baptized, confirmed and received Holy Communion.
- 2.** Be an adult and practicing the Catholic Faith and have the intention of carrying out the responsibility of Godparent.
- 3.** Be designated by the person to be baptized or the parents or guardians, or, if there are not any, by the Pastor.
- 4.** Not be the father, the mother or the spouse of the person to be baptized.
- 5.** Not be bound by any canonical penalty, excommunication, suspension, deposition or deprived of the right of acting in the function of a Godparent.
- 6.** Godparents can never be changed, since they are the historical witnesses to the Baptism and have entered into a permanent spiritual relationship with the baptized.
- 7.** It is customary to select two (2) godparents. If this is done, one must be male and one must be female.

## **Guidelines**

- 1.** Parents must meet with the Pastor at least two weeks prior to the Baptism to prepare the celebration of this Holy Sacrament and to make sure that all the requirements are met or could be fulfilled.
- 2.** Completed Application Form
- 3.** Birth Certificate of the child to be baptized
- 4.** Baptism Certificate and Confirmation Certificate of the Godfather
- 5.** Baptism Certificate and Confirmation Certificate of the Godmother
- 6.** In our Parish, the Sacrament of Baptism is usually administered on Sunday after the 11:30 am Mass. If you request a different time, this could be arranged. Please contact the Parish Office.
- 7.** A formal baptismal certificate, signed by the celebrant and sealed with the church seal is provided for each child at the Baptism.
- 8.** If the Baptism is arranged to be celebrated at Our Lady of Lebanon Church and the family of the child to be baptized is planning to invite a visiting priest, the family must consult the Pastor of Our Lady of Lebanon Church before making any arrangement with the visiting priest. All expenses of the visiting Priest(s) such as travel, lodging, stipend and the like are the responsibility of this family.
- 9.** A customary donation to the Church is highly appreciated to cover the expenses incurred by the facilities operation and to continue the Church's ministries.
- 10.** Photographs may be taken at any time during the ceremony in a tasteful and dignified manner. At NO time or for any reason will the photographer ascend the steps to the Altar or be on the sanctuary area surrounding the Altar.
- 11.** No candles, other than those on the Altar, are permitted.
- 12.** If you are not one of our registered parishioners and you want to have your Child to be baptized at Our Lady of Lebanon Church, you must get permission from the Pastor of your Parish.