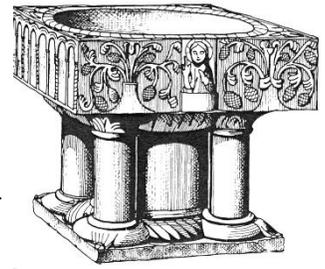


Infant Baptism Policy for St. Mary's Visitation Parish



Baptism is the celebration of the love of God for each of us. Baptism incorporates us into the mystery of the person of Jesus Christ. Baptism is a celebration of the loving embrace of God. It is this sacrament which opens Christian life to us, affirming us as sons and daughters of a loving God. Baptism is, as are all sacraments, an act of God and an action of the Christian community.

According to the Roman Ritual for the Rite of Baptism, baptism may be celebrated on Sunday with the Christian community during Mass, but this is not to be done too often. At St. Mary's Visitation Parish, Baptisms during Mass are typically scheduled every other month on the first Sunday of the month. Baptisms outside of Mass are scheduled on the second Saturday of the month at 10:00am.

The baptism of an infant presumes that the faith of the parents, the family, and the godparents together with the Christian community will nurture and form the child in experiences of faith.

Parents are the first and primary teachers of faith; they help form a 'domestic' church within their home. Just as raising a child is an enormous responsibility, so is raising a child in faith. In order to help parents with this responsibility from the start, the Church asks every parish to offer assistance to parents so that they might continue their own faith formation as they raise their child.

Parents are invited to affirm and strengthen their commitment to the Christian faith and the religious practices of the Church through a period of preparation which emphasizes spiritual and moral formation as well as instruction in the Scriptures. This preparation period offers parents a wonderful opportunity to assess their own understanding of the faith and to renew their commitment to our Christian Catholic way of life.

Recognizing the need for such baptismal preparation and for a greater involvement of the entire community in the faith lives of the children of St. Mary's Visitation Parish, we establish the following policy for the baptism of children:

1. Prior to the celebration of Baptism, parents are expected to participate in the parish's established baptismal preparation program. Parents who have participated in a parish baptism preparation in the five years prior are invited, but are not required, to re-take the preparation class.

2. We recommend that parents participate in the preparation program prior to the birth of their child. Baptismal preparation will consist of a one-session presentation lasting about one hour. Registration is necessary. Call the Parish Liturgy and Music Office to register at 262-782-4485.
3. Those seeking to have children baptized should be registered, active members of St. Mary's Visitation Parish. Special arrangements for non-parishioners must be arranged through the Pastor.
4. Parents are encouraged to give careful attention to their choice of godparents. Although it is customary to have two godparents, only one is required. That primary godparent must be a confirmed, practicing Catholic. If there are two godparents, a second godparent can be Catholic or Non-Catholic, but must be a practicing Christian.
5. Priests or deacons who are related or friends of the family may preside at the Baptism with the Pastor's permission and a "Letter of Suitability" if they are from outside the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.
6. All registrations for Baptism and baptismal preparation will be made through the Parish Liturgy and Music Office at 262-782-4485 or email Jenny Dascoli at jdascoli@stmaryeg.org. Baptism dates can be found on our website <http://www.stmaryeg.org/baptism.html>.