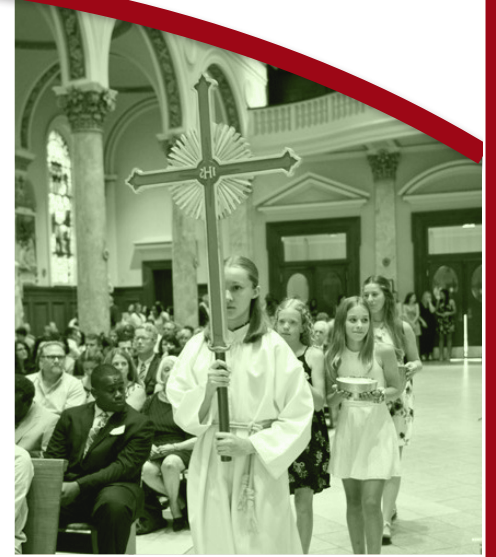




**SAINT TERESA OF
CALCUTTA PARISH**
CHURCHES OF IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
AND OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

2020-2021 Sacraments



THE *Journey* TO YOUR *Spiritual* HOME



THE Importance OF THE SACRAMENTS

Why Baptize?

One of the important questions asked of parents at the moment when their child is presented in church during the ceremony is “what do you ask of the Church for your child?”. Parents usually respond that they wish to have their child baptized, but another question remains unanswered, at least publicly. Why do you want your child to be baptized?

While some parents have the natural inclination to respond to that question with the acknowledgment of their own baptismal journeys and their desires to raise their children in the faith, all parents who desire baptism for their children make this decision to offer their children the foundation for a meaningful life and a relationship with Christ. The responsibilities of parenting are very serious ones that parents accept with the birth of their child. Many realize that the child they've been given is a miracle from God. Our faith teaches us that God is the creator who gives life and forms life in the womb (Ps. 139:13). As the Catechism teaches us, Baptism “accords with parents’ role as nurturers of the life that God has entrusted to them” (CCC 1251). Thus, parents’ decisions to baptize their newborn is a way in which to honor and give thanks for the miracle bestowed onto their family from God. The decision to have children baptized must come only after serious reflection. Baptism involves the pledge of parents to raise and educate their children in the beliefs and practices of the Catholic faith, and thus it is vital for parents to realize the importance of that commitment. Baptism is seen as a journey, an answer to God’s call through the ways in which we live our lives. It is not a sacrament that only pertains to the child, rather it is an invitation to the entire family to draw closer and deeper to our faith.

Why Confirm?

Confirmation is a time of great hope. It is the recognition of the wonderful gifts already present in our young people. Confirmation deepens our baptismal life that calls us to be missionary witnesses of Jesus Christ in our families, neighborhoods, society, and the world. Through Confirmation, a personal relationship with Christ is strengthened. Our young people receive the message of faith in a deeper and more intensive manner with great emphasis given to the person of Jesus Christ, who asked the Father to give the Holy Spirit to the Church for building up the community in loving service. While it is a special occasion, Confirmation must be treated as another opportunity to grow in faith. It is an opportunity to focus on assisting our young people to develop a relationship with Christ and attachment to the Church while empowering them to take on responsibility in the Church.



Why Join The Church As An Adult (RCIA)?

As Catholics, we believe that the Seven Sacraments are moments in which we encounter God and receive his grace. When we celebrate the Sacraments, we invite God into our lives, regardless of how messy they are, to help us be the person he has called us to be. This begins by celebrating the three Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. By celebrating all three of these Sacraments, we are drawn closer to God, made a full participant in the life of the faith community, and given support for life’s journey. Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) is a process through which adults 18 and older can ask questions, wrestle with faith, and learn more about the Catholic faith. While RCIA is an opportunity to reflect upon and discern questions of faith, individuals who feel ready and want to take the next step are welcome to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation upon completing RCIA in the Spring. Through RCIA, the Catholic Church extends an invitation to those who are not associated with a community of faith and who wish to become Catholic; those who want to convert to Catholicism from another faith (for them, RCIA is the process through which they will become full fledged Catholics); and those who want to learn about the Catholic faith.

Why First Communion?

First Holy Communion is one of the most central experiences in the Catholic faith. As one of the 3 essential sacraments that completely initiate a person into the catholic church, reception of First Holy Communion is a holy and important occasion in the life of our children and their families. Thus, the preparation of our children to receive the precious Body and Blood of Christ for the first time is especially important. Our program helps our children and their families understand and celebrate the joy of Jesus who comes to us in the Eucharist. Our preparation program invites the children who are preparing for their Sacraments to be open to being united with Jesus in the Real Presence. Parents are important to the experiences in preparing for First Communion, and in accompanying their child in the faith formation process children come to understand more profoundly their relationship with Christ in these beautiful sacraments. The presence and accompaniment of parents during this important period in a child’s journey of faith will have significant impacts on their life in Christ.

GENERAL Components

MASS



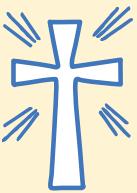
The Mass is the “source and summit” of our Christian lives. Without the Mass, our relationship with God suffers, and any formation or preparation is impossible. By making Mass available at various times, we seek to help individuals encounter Jesus, draw them into the life of the Church, and engage in prayer and worship.

REMOTE LEARNING



Families come with different needs and, certainly, the unexpected in our world can always occur. As a result, we offer a hybrid approach to preparation that offers opportunities for both in-person and virtual formation. From digital faith formation modules to in-person sessions that are also streamed for digital viewing, our goal is to make faith formation accessible, meaningful and transformative.

EXPERIENCING FAITH



When we experience God firsthand, powerful things occur. Throughout the year, participants and families are invited to various experiences, from retreats, to speakers, to Parish functions, to prayer experiences, that are geared to both help them encounter God and understand that they are part of the wider Church community.

SERVING OTHERS



The opportunity to serve with the Church in the community allows participants and families to recognize their ability to bring positive change while developing their sense of empathy. Whether it is by partnering with our Church ministries, such as Mary's Pantry, Refugee Ministry, or the Parish Garden, we hope that they not only learn from the wealth of the Church's social teaching but also learn to advocate for the needs of others.

Connect with us Online!



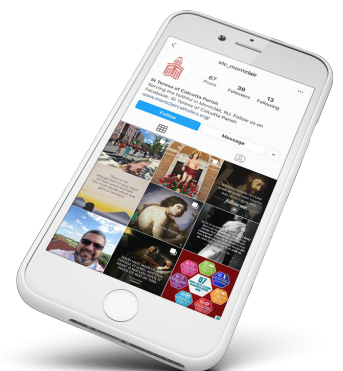
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SACRAMENTS *Foster* DISCIPLES

Just like we need to learn the right skills to excel in school, at a sport, or at a job, developing the right skills in our faith are essential for having life-long faith. Below are six skill-set areas our Faith Formation focuses on to help our community live their baptismal calls to discipleship through the sacraments. We invite families and participants to take each step throughout their journey of faith formation with us.

A Disciple is one who...

IS ROOTED IN GOD	SERVES OTHERS	KNOWS AND SHARES THE FAITH	HAS AN ACTIVE PRAYER LIFE	IS A GENUINE CHRISTIAN FRIEND	IS CONNECTED TO THE CHURCH COMMUNITY
STEP 1					
Has Encounter Experiences	Realizes the necessity of serving others	Has a basic knowledge of the Faith & Scripture	Learns basic forms of Prayer and Worship	Has models of Christian Friendship	Attends Mass and feels welcome here
STEP 2					
Desires a relationship with God	Realizes their effect on others through service	Grows in their knowledge of the Faith & Scripture	Understands what Prayer is and grows their toolkit of Prayer	Has Friends here that they identify with	Attends Mass and feels that they belong here
STEP 3					
Turns to God and sees life through a Christian Lens	Makes connection between service and Catholic Social Teaching	Can articulate key aspects of the Faith & Scripture, learns application	Develops habits of Prayer in their life	Knows how to be authentic and have healthy relationships	Sees Church as important to life
STEP 4					
Turns to God and the Faith to influence their life and decisions	Can identify areas in need and how to address them with Catholic Social Teaching	Shares the Faith with others, including peers, and integrates the Gospel message into their lives	Has an active Prayer Life that is supported through tool, people, and the life of the Church	Knows who they are, goes outside of their comfort zone, and helps create a friendship culture	Is active in the life of the Church beyond programs



BEING A SPONSOR (Godparent)

THE SACRAMENTS OF BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION HAVE AN ADDED DIMENSION AS PARENTS AND CONFIRMANDI ARE ASKED TO SELECT SPONSORS (GODPARENTS) FOR THEIR CHILDREN WHO ARE ABOUT TO BE INITIATED INTO THE CATHOLIC FAITH. The role of sponsor began as a way to verify the genuineness of a candidate's desire to enter the Church. The role of the sponsor is to attest to the integrity of the person, oftentimes an adult, seeking admission into the Church as well as to assist him during the catechumenate in preparing for these sacraments and in living a Christian life.

The sponsor would then be responsible for helping to prepare the candidate for full initiation.

In agreeing to be a sponsor for Baptism or Confirmation, the sponsor not only is taking responsibility for the religious education and spiritual formation of the candidate, but also is representing the Church - the community of faith - into which the candidate is being received. As a result, sponsors must be faithful and practicing Catholics who are ready to accept the responsibility of being a part of a godchild's life for the rest of their life.

Technically, only Catholics can be godparents or sponsors. A Christian of another denomination, whether Orthodox or Protestant, however, may be a "Christian witness" to Baptism along with the Catholic godparent. The reason for this distinction and restriction is that the godparent not only is taking responsibility for the religious education and spiritual formation of the baptized person, but also is representing the Church, the community of faith, into which the person is being baptized. A Christian who is not Catholic, although perhaps a very holy, Christian, cannot fully attest to the beliefs of the Catholic Church.

In all, godparents/sponsors serve a special role in the life of the child and candidate. Therefore, each parent should choose a godparent/sponsor not just because of a blood relationship or friendship; rather, a godparent/sponsor should be an honest and trustworthy witness of the faith who will help the godchild attain salvation.

What are the requirements to be a sponsor (Godparent) for Baptism or Confirmation?

- ◀ At least 16 years old
- ◀ Fully initiated in the Catholic Church (Received Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation)
- ◀ Leads a life in harmony with the Catholic Church and its teachings
- ◀ Is a registered and active member of their Parish
- ◀ Attends Mass every Sunday and participates in the Sacramental life of their Parish

(cf Code of Canon Law, 874)

Do sponsors need to provide anything?

Sponsors who are not St Teresa Parishioners are asked to submit a sponsor certificate from their home parish to St Teresa's. Doing so not only ensures that the Church can verify that sponsors meet the qualifications set forth by Canon Law, but also that there is an understanding that the role of a sponsor is serious and not simply ceremonial.

NOTES:

- ◀ Parents of the child cannot serve as sponsors. (Code of Canon Law, 874.1).
- ◀ While traditionally individuals have two sponsors for Baptism, at least one sponsor is needed. If there are two sponsors, one must be male and the other female. (Code of Canon Law, 873).

- ◀ There is only one sponsor for Confirmation.
- ◀ While it is not required, it is encouraged that the Confirmation sponsor also be the sponsor from Baptism, so as to highlight the unity of the two sacraments (CCC 1311).
- ◀ In the case that the sponsor cannot be present during the Sacrament, a proxy can stand in their stead.