

**THE SACRAMENT
OF
BAPTISM**

**ST. JAMES CHURCH
SEAFORD, N.Y.**

REV. JOHN DERASMO, PASTOR

Dear Parents:

Congratulations on the birth of your new child.

The Sacrament of Baptism is a very important event in the life of your child, and in your lives as well. Through baptism, original sin is washed away, we receive God's sanctifying grace for the first time, and we become members of His Catholic Church. Because of the importance of this sacrament to your family, we here at St. James conduct a special class to assist parents in understanding the nature of Baptism, and the important role you will play in your child's faith.

I invite you to attend our 10:00 a.m. Mass on the first Sunday of the month. Every Sunday of the year the 10:00 a.m. Mass is our Family Mass, and you will likely see many of your neighbors and friends, and certainly many children there. Immediately following the Mass, the baptism class will be conducted in the Parish Center. We ask that you attend the class before the baptism takes place. Godparents and others are welcome to attend as well.

In this packet, I have included a guide to the sacraments and ministries offered at the parish, a booklet on the sacrament of confession, and information regarding programs for young mothers and their children here at St. James.

We are very pleased to be here to serve you and your family in whatever way we can.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. John Derasmo
Pastor

◆If an adopted child has been baptized before the adoption, then there is no second baptism, but we would be happy to give the child a blessing as you welcome him or her into your lives.

Emergency Baptisms

◆Sometimes, due to medical complications at or shortly after birth, children may be baptized under emergency circumstances. That emergency baptism is valid, and is all that is necessary for the child's salvation. However, after the child recovers, the Church can supply those parts of the baptismal ritual which were not performed during the emergency baptism.

◆If your child was baptized in a hospital, the baptism will be recorded in the local parish. You may have the baptismal record transferred to your home parish by applying to the Office of the Diocesan Chancellor (Tel. 516-678-5800). Having the records transferred will simplify matters for you when your child begins religious education at the parish or enrolls in our regional Catholic school.

the Diocese. To arrange for such permission, please contact Mrs. Barbara Sposato in the Parish Office (tel. 516-731-3710) between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

- not have left the Catholic Church and joined another Church;
- not be either parent. **Canon 874.**

◆If the other godparent is also a Catholic, the same requirements apply.

◆If the other person is not a Catholic but is a baptized Christian, then he or she is called a Christian Witness. That person must:

- be at least sixteen years of age;
- be a validly baptized Christian;
- be living an upright life;
- not be a Catholic who has left the Catholic Church and joined another Church;
- not be either parent. **Canon 874.**

◆An unbaptized person (i.e., one who is Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, etc.) may not be a Godparent, or a Christian Witness. The reason for this is that at the baptism a godparent or witness is required to renew the promises made at their *own* baptism and profess their belief in Jesus Christ. For obvious reasons, non-Christians cannot make this statement of belief, and so may not be Godparents or Christian Witnesses. **There are no exceptions to this law. Canon 874.**

◆Once the baptism has been celebrated, the names of the godparents may not be changed for any reason whatsoever.

Adoptions

◆If there are two godparents, one *must* be male and the other *must* be female. A child who has been adopted may be baptized before the adoption is final, but this requires the permission of the Chancellor of

Baptism Instruction Classes for Parents

At St. James there is a requirement that parents of a child to receive the sacrament attend a baptismal class. Parents are invited to attend the 10:00 a.m. Family Mass on the following dates:

November 6, 2011	June 3, 2012
December 4, 2011	July 1, 2012
January 8, 2012	August 5, 2012
February 5, 2012	September 9, 2012
March 4, 2012	October 7, 2012
April 1, 2012	November 4, 2012
May 6, 2012	December 2, 2012

Immediately after the Mass, the baptismal instruction class will take place in the Parish Center, across the parking lot from the church, and located on the lower level of the old school building.

If the baby has been born, please bring the child to the Mass and to the class. Godparents and other family members are welcome to attend if they wish.

If you are unable to attend one of our parish sessions, you may complete a baptismal preparation instruction at another parish. Please make sure that the other parish gives you a letter of completion which you may drop off at the parish center.

Other Questions Regarding Your Baby's Baptism

Generally speaking, a newborn infant should be baptized in the first weeks after birth. You may arrange for and take the baptismal class before the child is born.

The Sacrament of Baptism is celebrated every Sunday of the year (with a few exceptions) at 2:30 p.m. in the parish church. We do not currently limit the number of children baptized on a given Sunday.

Remember that there are some requirements for godparents. Please consult the section entitled: “*Requirements for Baptism from the Catholic Church’s Code of Canon Law*,” below.

The enclosed envelope is for a free-will donation which you may bring on the day of the baptism, and the amount is entirely up to you.

Please fill out the card marked “Confidential Parish Census.” This will help to insure that our parish records are up to date. You may drop this off at the Parish Center Office, or bring it completed on the day of the baptism.

If you have any further questions, any one of our parish priests would be happy to answer them. Please call the Parish Center Office at 516-731-3710.

REQUIREMENTS FOR BAPTISM FROM THE CATHOLIC CHURCH’S CODE OF CANON LAW

General Issues

For an infant (a child under the age of six) to be baptized in the Catholic Faith the following requirements must be met:

- ◆There must be a “founded hope,” that the child will be raised a Catholic (i.e., some reason to believe that the child will be raised as a Catholic.) **Canon 868, §1^o2.**
- ◆The parents (at least one) must consent to the baptism. **Canon 868, §1^o1.**
- ◆The child should be baptized as soon as possible after birth. Parents are obliged to see to it that infants are baptized *within the first weeks* after birth. **Canon 867, §1.**
- ◆An infant in danger of death is to be baptized without delay. **Canon 867, §2.**
- ◆A saint’s name is strongly encouraged, but is not a requirement. Old Testament names are permissible. However, no name offensive to the Catholic Faith is permitted (i.e., Lucifer, Kareem, etc.)
- ◆The child of parents married outside the church, parents unmarried, or unwed mothers *may* and *should* be baptized. Parents are encouraged to speak to a priest.
- ◆Baptism must occur in the parish church.

Godparents (sponsors)

- ◆There may be one or two godparents (sponsors) to assist the child in leading a good Christian life. There can be no more than two godparents. **Canon 872.**
- ◆If there is to be only one godparent, the person may be either male or female.

◆If there are two godparents, one *must* be male and the other *must* be female. Two godparents of the same sex are not permitted in church law. **There are no exceptions to this law. Canon 873.**

◆At least one godparent *must* be a Catholic, and must:

- be at least sixteen years of age;
- have received Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation;
- be living an upright life;