

Our Lady of the Woods Catholic Parish, St. Peter Chapel

**116 S. West Street, P.O. Box 5590
Woodland Park, Colorado 80866**

Dear Friends,

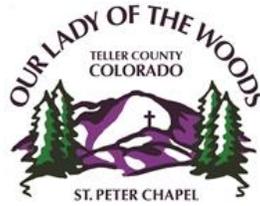
Congratulations! God has blessed you! Now you are preparing to celebrate Baptism in the Catholic Church for yourself or your son or daughter. Through Baptism, we become a disciple, part of the Body of Christ. Through Baptism, we affirm that we are committed to the practice of the faith. Our Lady of the Woods Parish rejoices with you as we prepare to welcome a new member who will grow in faith, serve others, and join us in the praise of God. This booklet will assist you in understanding and preparing for the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism. The guidelines contained within are part of the laws and theology of the Church contained in Canon Law. This law governs all Catholics of the Latin Rite.

Not all your questions can be answered in a small booklet. However, we have attempted to address as many of your questions as possible. Know that the parish staff and clergy are available to you to answer any questions that surface for you. We also want to make your pilgrimage into the baptismal waters as positive as possible. It is also important for you to understand that the requirements and regulations contained in this booklet are deeply grounded in the Catholic theological tradition and need to be understood and respected. There are important theological reasons for various customs and traditions of our parish and we request your generous attention and respect for these age old practices. Moreover, there may be some practices that appear different to how you experienced the Sacrament of Baptism in the past. Vatican II has invited all the faithful to celebrate the sacraments in their fullness and not to minimize any of the rich symbols of our faith tradition. Therefore, all the practices contained in this booklet are an attempt to answer the call of the Church to celebrate all the sacraments in the fullest and richest manner.

When we begin the Baptismal Rite the presider will ask you an important question, "What do you ask of God's Church?" The correct answer is faith or Baptism. However, the intensity of this question is strengthened if you give some serious consideration to this question. Baptism becomes a beautiful and meaningful ritual if it is grounded in your conviction to follow Jesus Christ and become a beacon of light to all who you encounter.

Peace,

Rev. Dr. Timothy L. Corbley, I.V. Dei



Baptism Preparation for Infants (0 - 6 years old)

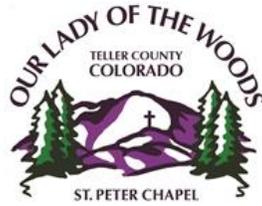
Preparation for Baptism of children normally takes three months and is best completed before the birth of your child. Expectant parents should contact the parish office to begin the preparation process as soon as possible. The parish office phone number is 687-9345.

If you are not already registered in the parish, this is the time to do so. Registration forms are found on our website, in the administration office, or in the back of the church. After registration, you will receive offertory envelopes. To be a full member of the church is to contribute financially on a regular basis to its mission.

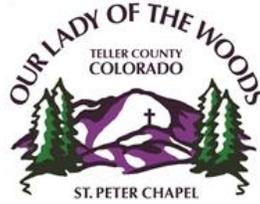
The date and time of the Baptism is usually scheduled after all steps for Baptism have been completed. Keep in mind that we do not have more than one special celebration scheduled per Mass. There are no Baptisms scheduled during Lent or Advent.

Steps for Baptism

1. First download and fill out the Infant Baptism Forms found on our website under Sacraments → Baptism and return the completed forms to the Parish office 719-687-9345.
2. Since the Catholic faith does have guidelines regarding the choice of godparents, it is important that you review the qualifications for godparents in the Frequently Asked Questions on page 15 to help you with your decision. Make sure the chosen godparents have filled out the form in the Baptism packet. The form must be signed by the godparents' pastor and sealed by their church. Have the godparents return these forms as soon as possible to the office. (You may make copies of the forms you need.)
3. Call the Baptismal Preparation host couple and set an appointment for a home visit. Our Baptismal host couple is Mark and Kim Montague. Their phone number is 781-789-3789. Our host couple will help you through the process of Baptismal preparation. Both parents must be present at the home visit even if one parent is not Catholic. You will review a 30 minute video with them called A Video guide to What Catholics Believe about Baptism. After viewing the video you will have an opportunity to discuss questions that you may have regarding Baptism from a Catholic perspective. As Catholic parents, your host couple has a wealth of experience upon which you can draw. Therefore, it is a wonderful opportunity to have a conversation with them about your questions regarding Catholic parenting.
4. Complete the online Baptism preparation class. To register for the course, please visit: <http://www.agapecatholicministries.com/baptism-prep>. The cost of the class is \$49.99 and we have scholarships available to those in need. This class takes between one to three months to complete.



5. Contact the BeFriender ministry and explain you are preparing for infant Baptism. Maura Hall's phone number is 719-685-6740. Meet with a BeFriender three times after Mass for coffee and donuts or at your own home. A BeFriender is someone to discuss what it means to be an active Catholic parent and will walk through the journey of baptismal process with you.
6. Email Father Timothy at the frtimothyow@outlook.com to schedule an appointment with him for the upcoming Baptism. Both parents must be present at your appointment. It is best to arrange for a babysitter so that you are able to engage in an in-depth conversation with Father. This is also an opportunity for you to discuss any questions you might have about Catholic belief and practice. **Please read the complete Baptism handbook prior to your appointment with Father Timothy.**
7. Once you have completed your home visit with the Baptismal Preparation couple, completed the online baptismal preparation course, your meetings with a BeFriender and your meeting with Father Timothy then we can set a date for the Baptism. Please bring the completed Request for Infant Baptism form and the Godparents/Christian Witness form to the office at least three weeks in advance. Our Faith Formation Director will verify that all requirements and paperwork are done and the baptismal date has been set on the church calendar.



The Theology of the Sacrament of Baptism: Celebrating the Embrace of God by Sandra DeGidio, O.S.M.

Wendy was 12, Rick was 9, Joel was 6 and Karleen was 2. They were all from one family whose parents had been away from the Church for several years. Now Mom and Dad were returning and the four children were being baptized at the same time. The whole family had spent several months preparing for their return and for the celebration, which took place at the parish Sunday Eucharist. The homily, which preceded the ritual, emphasized the seriousness of Baptism and that it calls us to live the faith that we profess in the rite.

As the baptismal rite began, the family and their sponsors gathered around the font, and the presider addressed the children. "You and your parents and sponsors have spent a long time preparing for this day. Is it your desire to be baptized?" As the three older children responded with an affirmative answer, 2-year-old Karleen shouted, "NO!" There was an audible community chuckle at the little one's spontaneity, followed quickly by a visible sense of seriousness. The youngster's response carried more import than might be initially thought. Children have an uncanny way of cutting quickly to the essence of theology. Although moments later Karleen changed her response to "Yes," her "No" serves to remind us that Baptism is, after all, not to be taken lightly. In a sense Karleen was saying, "Wait a minute, this is serious business, I gotta think about it!" In so doing, she made everyone else think a second time, too.

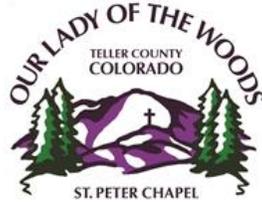
The Sacrament of Baptism

Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as children of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: "Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1213*)

What is this Sacrament Called?

This sacrament is called *Baptism*, after the central rite by which it is carried out: to baptize (Greek: *baptizein*) means to 'plunge' or "immerse", the 'plunge' into the water symbolizes the catechumen's burial into Christ's death, from which he or she rises up by resurrection with Christ, as "a new creature."

Baptism is God's most beautiful and magnificent gift ... We call it gift, grace, anointing, enlightenment, garment of immortality, bath of rebirth, seal, and most precious gift. It is called *gift* because it is conferred on those who bring nothing of their own; *grace* since it is given even to the guilty; *Baptism* because sin is buried in the water; *anointing* for it is priestly and royal as are those who are anointed; *enlightenment* because it radiates light, *clothing* since it veils our shame; *bath* because it washes; and *seal*, as it is our guard and the sign of God's love. (*CCC 1214 - 1216*)



Baptism in God's Plan of Salvation: Prefigurations of Baptism in the Old Covenant

In the liturgy of the Easter Vigil, during the *blessing of the baptismal water*, the Church solemnly commemorates the great events in salvation history that already prefigured the mystery of Baptism:

Father, you give us grace through sacramental signs, which tell us of the wonders of your unseen power. In Baptism we use your gift of water, which you have made a rich symbol of the grace you give us in this sacrament.

Since the beginning of the world, water, so humble and wonderful a creature has been the source of life and fruitfulness. Sacred Scripture sees it as "overshadowed" by the Spirit of God:

At the very dawn of creation Your Spirit breathed on the waters, making them the wellspring of all holiness.

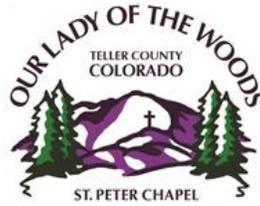
The Church has seen in Noah's ark a prefiguring of salvation by Baptism, for by it "a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water."

The waters of the great flood, you made a sign of the waters of Baptism, that makes an end of sin and a new beginning of goodness.

If water springing up from the earth symbolizes life, the water of the sea is a symbol of death and so can represent the mystery of the cross. By this symbolism Baptism signifies communion with Christ's death. But above all, the crossing of the Red Sea, literally the liberation of Israel from the slavery of Egypt, announces the liberation wrought by Baptism:

You freed the children of Abraham and Sarah from the slavery of Pharaoh, bringing them dry-shod through the waters of the Red Sea, to be an image of the people set free in Baptism.

Finally, Baptism is prefigured in the crossing of the Jordan River by which the People of God received the gift of the land promised to Abraham's descendants, an image of eternal life. The promise of this blessed inheritance is fulfilled in the New Covenant. (CCC 1217 - 1222)



Christ's Baptism

All the Old Covenant prefigurations find their fulfillment in Christ Jesus. He begins his public life after having himself baptized by St. John the Baptist in the Jordan. After his resurrection Christ gives this mission to his apostles. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

Our Lord voluntarily submitted himself to the baptism of St. John, intended for sinners, in order to "fulfill all righteousness." Jesus' gesture is manifestation of his self-emptying. The Spirit who had hovered over the waters of the first creation descended then on the Christ as a prelude of the new creation, and Abba revealed Jesus as his "beloved Son." (*CCC 1223-1224*)

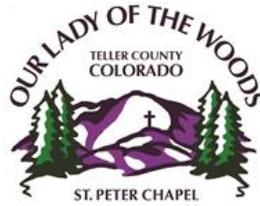
History of Baptism in the Church

In the first three centuries of the early Christian Church, adult Baptism was the norm. Those who were interested were invited to join the Christian community on a journey of faith. Those who accepted the invitation became candidates for the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist). The candidates were called catechumens and entered into a step-by-step process toward full membership in the Church. Joining the Church in the early centuries was no easy matter. The baptismal commitment was not to be taken lightly. The entire Church would pray for and with the catechumens, instructing them in gospel values, sharing with them the faith life of the Church, and celebrating the stages of their faith journey with special rituals of welcoming and belonging. A person's coming to faith—or conversion to Christianity—was looked upon as a community responsibility. The final Lent before the initiation was a special time for catechumens. It was like a 40-day retreat including prayer, fasting and other forms of self-scrutiny as they prepared to accept the faith and be received in the Church. Lent started out as the Church's official preparation for Baptism, which was celebrated only once a year at the Easter Vigil. That is why the Scripture readings for the liturgies of Lent and Easter are so heavily filled with baptismal allusions.

Baptism was done through immersion into living (a stream) water. One symbolically was plunged into the death and resurrection of Jesus and came forth as "new"-- a Christian. The newly baptized was then clothed in white, anointed (Confirmation), and brought into the community where the Eucharist was celebrated. Thus, the three sacraments of initiation into the Christian life were celebrated: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

This beautiful, community-supported journey to faith was short-lived. With the conversion of the Emperor Constantine in 313, joining the Christian Church became fashionable, the thing to do. The standards of the Catechumenate were relaxed, and people were simply baptized on request.

By the beginning of the fifth century, the Catechumenate process itself had virtually disappeared. The sacraments of initiation became three separate sacraments celebrated at separate times. Soon



adult Baptisms declined, infant Baptism became the norm and the process and theology of Christian initiation of adults as practiced in the early Church became a lost art. The sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist were delayed until later in life when a person was mature and could understand the meaning of Holy Communion and Confirmation.

The Second Vatican Council in 1962 instituted liturgical reforms that restored the ancient symbolism of the Rite: such as immersion into flowing water, immediate Confirmation and Communion for adult converts and preparation of those over 7 years old in a process called the Catechumenate.

Thus the practice of immersion is the custom of our church and is approved by Canon Law. However, parents may choose pouring after discussion with the pastor.

How is the Sacrament of Baptism Celebrated? Christian Initiation

From the time of the Apostles, becoming a Christian has been accomplished by a journey and initiation in several stages. This journey can be covered rapidly or slowly, but certain essential elements will always have to be present: proclamation of the Word, acceptance of the Gospel entailing conversion, profession of faith, Baptism itself, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and admission to Eucharistic communion.

The Catholic Church celebrates Baptism in two different ways:

Baptism for Infants (ages 0 – 6 years old)

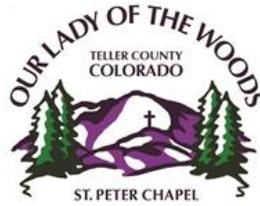
The Rite of Baptism for Children is for newborn infants and for children who have not yet reached the age of discernment, or catechetical age (around age seven).

Baptism for Adults (ages 7 years old and up)

If your child is of catechetical age (around age seven), he or she should celebrate Baptism as part of the other form of Catholic baptism, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, adapted for children. This process provides a period of age-appropriate religious education giving the child a basic understanding of the Catholic faith, including the Eucharist. Children in this program celebrate the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and First Communion in one celebration at the Easter Vigil. Contact our Director of Faith Formation & Sacraments for more information.

Baptismal Name

The baptismal liturgy begins with a simple question, "What name do you give (or have given) your child?" Our names become the primary symbol of who we are. The Catholic Church has a tradition of naming children after saints or virtues. The Church does request that any name chosen not be



foreign to a Christian mentality. However, the name you give your child can impact their future. Therefore, we invite you to consider the name of your child with prayerful and attentive discernment.

Adoption

In the case of children who are in the process of being adopted, the Baptism may be celebrated with the written consent of the natural parents; otherwise, the Baptism is to be postponed until after the adoption has been finalized, except in the danger of death. Foster parents do not have the authority to present a foster child for Baptism. **Keep in mind that both legal parents must consent before a Baptism may be celebrated.**

Baptismal Preparation Class

Every parish asks parents to attend a class to prepare them for the Baptism of their child. You will have an opportunity to meet a couple who will host you through the Baptismal preparation process. They are people like yourself, raising children in a complicated world and wanting to do the best they can to raise their children in the Catholic faith.

What is a BeFriender?

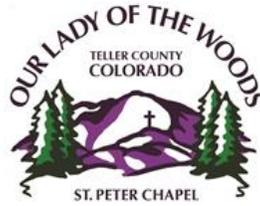
The BeFriender Ministry is a listening ministry of committed parishioners who will answer your faith questions and walk with you as you bring your child into the Catholic faith.

What about Faith Formation?

Faith formation should begin as soon as a child is old enough to listen to stories about God. As primary educators of your child, you are expected to begin to teach your child about our faith. The Church will provide formal faith formation for all children starting at the age of four years old. And there is always ongoing Faith Formation for adults at the church. Please see our website for more information. This will enable you as parents, to further your own faith formation and assist your children as they learn the faith from you.

The ritual of Baptism does not bring God's love into being as if that love did not exist before the ceremony. Baptism is the Church's way of celebrating and enacting the embrace of God who first loved us from the moment of our conception. Baptism is a ritualization and manifestation of something real— of the outpouring of God's Spirit and of our acceptance of that transforming love. It remains for us to grow into what we already are: daughters and sons of God. Baptism celebrates a family's and a community's experience of that love in the baptized.

Considering the future orientation of Baptism and the fact that we are marked for a lifelong journey of discipleship, it is important that parents be strong role models and lead the way. It is equally



important that the children's sponsors (godparents) do the same. They are significant supporters of parents and the ones who can first begin to reveal to their godchildren the value of the Christian community.

Children learn to be Christian by osmosis, by experiencing Christianity at home. The "domestic church" prepares children for the local and world Church. It is in the home, in the domestic church, that children first learn basic trust, which is the foundation of faith. Without the experience of faith, hope, and commitment in the home, children will not be able to know and understand the larger Church.

Vatican II's Declaration on Christian Education points this out quite emphatically: "Since parents have given children life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators. This role in education is so important that only with difficulty can it be supplied when it is lacking....It is particularly in the Christian family...that children should be taught from their early years to have a knowledge of God according to the faith received in Baptism, to worship him and to love their neighbor."

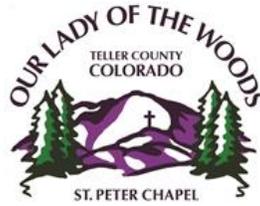
Baptism and the Christian community

Sacraments can only be spoken of in relational terms. The new sacramental rites repeatedly speak of how the sacraments affect a deeper "relationship" or greater "conformity" with Christ and with the Church. Baptism happens not only to the individual, but also to Christ's body, the Church. That's why the rite insists that we celebrate Baptism in the Christian assembly, with the community present and actively participating. It is the community, after all, who is welcoming the new members, journeying with them, providing models for them, supporting and nourishing them.

Baptism begins with God's love and care revealed to us through Christ. It continues with us, the Church, living and enacting God's love and care through Christ to the world. That's a serious commitment.

Faith and Baptism

Baptism is the sacrament of faith. But faith needs the community of believers. It is only within the faith of the Church that each of the faithful can believe. The faith required for Baptism is not a perfect and mature faith, but a beginning that is called to develop. The catechumen of the godparent is asked: "What do you ask of God's Church?" The response is "Faith!" For all the baptized, children or adults, faith must grow after Baptism. For this reason the Church celebrates each year at the Easter Vigil the renewal of baptismal promises. Preparation for Baptism leads only to the threshold of new life. Baptism is the source of that new life in Christ from which the entire Christian life springs forth. For the grace of Baptism to unfold, the parents; help is important. So too is the role of the *godfather* and *godmother*, (*sponsor*) who must be firm believers, able and ready to help the newly baptized - child or adult on the road of Christian life. Their task is a truly ecclesial function which is why we require that they attend a baptism preparation class. The whole ecclesial



community bears some responsibility for the development and safeguarding of the grace given at Baptism. (CCC 1253 -1255)

Symbols Used in the Baptism Experience

The *sign of the cross*, on the threshold of the celebration, marks with the imprint of Christ the one who is going to belong to Christ and signifies the grace of the redemption Christ won for us by the cross. The proclamation of the *Word of God* enlightens the candidates and the assembly with the revealed truth and elicits the response of faith, which is inseparable from Baptism. Indeed Baptism is "the sacrament of faith" in a particular way, since it is the sacramental entry into the life of faith. The *baptismal water* is consecrated by a prayer of epiclesis (either at this moment or at the Easter Vigil). The Church asks God that through his Son the power of the Holy Spirit may be sent upon the water, so that those who will be baptized in it may be "born of water and the Spirit." The *anointing with sacred chrism*, perfumed oil consecrated by the bishop, signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit to the newly baptized, who has become a Christian, that is, one "anointed" by the Holy Spirit, incorporated into Christ who is anointed priest, prophet, and king. The *white garment* symbolizes that the person baptized has "put on Christ," has risen with Christ. The *candle*, lit from the Easter candle, signifies that Christ has enlightened the neophyte. In Christ the baptized are "the light of the word." (CCC 1235 -1243)

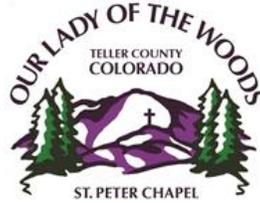
Water

Water and Spirit are strong and important symbols of Baptism. To be baptized is to be plunged into the waters and to open oneself to the Spirit of Jesus. To be baptized is to have the Spirit help us make order out of the chaos of the sinful world into which we are born. To be baptized is to be welcomed into the Church (the new Promised Land) and to be nourished there as we journey with each other and with Jesus in his ministry.

Water is the obvious symbol that we associate with Baptism, representing life, death, cleansing and growth. It is interesting to note that some of the early baptismal fonts had the shape of "a womb," to emphasize the new birth/new life aspect of the sacrament.

It is interesting that our initiation process begins with water just as the beginning of time portrayed in the very first pages of Scripture also begins with water—chaotic waters that are put into order by the Spirit hovering over them. That life-death meaning of water continues through the pages of Scripture. Consider, for example, the flood waters of Noah's day and the saving waters of the Red Sea parted by Moses. Those waters of the Red Sea, even if they killed the Egyptians, opened the way for the Israelites to pass from slavery to freedom, and later crossing one more body of water (the river Jordan) to pass into the Promised Land.

In the New Testament, then, it is appropriate that John the Baptist was baptized in the Jordan River,



symbolizing that the baptized were also to leave the slavery of sin for the freedom of a new Promised Land. Nor is it without significance that Jesus began his ministerial journey by being baptized in the Jordan, and that the Spirit was present.

Then there are the references to fruitful, life-giving waters offered by the prophets. For example, speaking for Yahweh, Ezekiel announces: "I will sprinkle clean water on you and...give you a new heart" (see 36:24 ff), and Isaiah promises, "I will pour out my spirit on your children" (44:3). In the Acts of the Apostles, we see how the Spirit of Jesus, poured out on the new Church at Pentecost, brings order and strength (Acts 1 and 2).

Oil

Baptism is initiation into the mission and ministry of Christ (1 Peter 2). Like Christ, baptismal candidates are anointed for this purpose. They are anointed with the Oil of Catechumens and the oil of the Chrism of Christ's salvation. As such, they are strengthened for the lifetime journey of commitment to discipleship with Christ. To be a disciple is to be a learner, a journeyer with others who learn together along the way. Discipleship is built on the concept of Church as a community of followers who support one another in sharing the Spirit and mission of Christ as found in the New Testament. It suggests that life is not a static condition, but a continual movement toward making real the actions of Jesus in today's world. That's what we agree to when we say "Yes" to Baptism. We publicly acknowledge that we have been chosen, marked and set on our way. Most of the real business of Baptism comes after the ceremony.

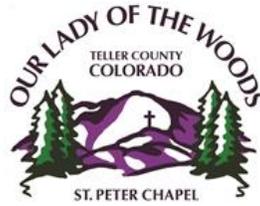
White Garment

Baptism ushers us into a new era. We no longer need be slaves to sin. We put our allegiance with God and good (Romans 6 and Colossians 3:9). To symbolize this old/new theme, the newly baptized is dressed in a white garment during the ritual of Baptism.

In the early Church, the newly initiated were expected to wear the white garment and keep it unsoiled for the 50 days of Easter. Today, in most cases, it has become a symbol that is present only for the duration of the ritual and then is packed away with other family memorabilia. Among other things, the white garment symbolizes the Church's belief that Baptism sets us free from Original Sin.

But just what is Original Sin? Original Sin is a doctrine of the Church and its focus is on the world—a point clearly echoed in our daily newspapers. The killings, violence, greed and dishonesty we see mirrored in the media are reminders that all human beings inherit the sinful tendencies and structures passed on to us by previous generations, beginning with our first parents.

Part of the beauty of Baptism is its assurance that through this sacrament we share in Christ's victory over the power of darkness in the world. Yet, the doctrine of Original Sin does not eclipse the good news that God's mercy and saving love are stronger than the power of sin—even before the baptismal waters are poured. In other words, we must be careful not to look upon unbaptized infants



and adults as outside the scope of God's saving power.

Light

To be baptized is to be given new birth and new life (John 3:5). In birth we emerge from the darkness of the womb to the bright light of a new world. Some early initiation liturgies had the baptismal candidates first turn to the west—where the sun sinks into darkness—to renounce Satan, and then turn to the east—the direction of dawning light—to accept Christ.

The new life motif of Baptism is intimately associated with Christ's passion, death and resurrection. In discourses with his disciples regarding his approaching death, Jesus said, "I have a baptism to receive. What anguish I feel till it is over!" (Luke 12:50). When asking James and John if they really knew what they were requesting by wanting to sit at his side, he asked if they were ready to share in his death. "Have you the strength...to be baptized with the baptism I am to be baptized with?" (Mark 10:38). Paul reiterates Jesus' questions when he asks: "Are you not aware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?...we were buried with him so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead...we too might live a new life" (Romans 6:3). It is not an accident that the baptismal liturgy of the year is the Easter Vigil, the grand celebration of Christ's Resurrection. Through Baptism we become an "Easter people." The giving of a candle lighted from the paschal candle helps spell out this reality. It is also the way that the Church, through baptismal sponsors who represent the total community, "passes the torch" of Christian commitment to those being baptized.

An Indelible Spiritual Mark...

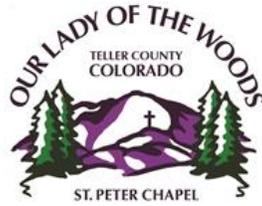
Incorporated into Christ by Baptism, the person baptized is configured to Christ. Given once for all, Baptism cannot be repeated. (CCC 1272)

"A New Creature"

Baptism not only purifies from all sins, but also makes the neophyte "a new creature," an adopted child of God, who has become a "partaker of the divine nature," member and co-heir with Christ, and a temple of the Holy Spirit. The Most Holy Trinity gives the baptized sanctifying grace, the grace of justification:

- Enabling them to believe in God, to hope in God, and to love God through the theological virtues;
- Giving them the power to live and act under the prompting of the Holy Spirit through the gifts of the Holy Spirit;
- Allowing them to grow in goodness through the moral virtues.

Thus the whole organism of the Christian's supernatural life has its roots in Baptism. (CCC 1265 - 1266)



Who Can Baptize?

The ordinary ministers of Baptism are the bishop and priest and, in the Latin Church, also the deacon. In case of emergency, any person can baptize provided that they have the intention of doing that which the Church does and provided that they pour water on the candidate's head while saying: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The Church finds the reason for this possibility in the universal saving will of God and the necessity of Baptism for salvation. (CCC 1256)

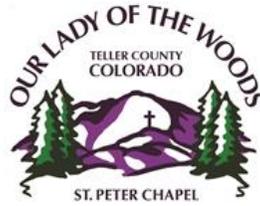
The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation. Christ also commands the disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to baptize them. Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament. The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are "reborn of water and the Spirit." *God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but God is not bound by the sacraments.*

The Church has always held the firm conviction that those who suffer death for the sake of the faith without having received Baptism are baptized by their death for and with Christ. This *Baptism of blood*, like the desire for Baptism, brings about the fruits of Baptism without being a sacrament. For *catechumens* who die before their Baptism, their explicit desire to receive it, together with repentance for their sins, and charity, assures them the salvation that they were not able to receive through the sacrament.

As regards *children who have died without Baptism*, the Church entrusts them to the mercy of God, as she does in her funeral rites for them. Indeed, the great mercy of God who desires that all should be saved, and Jesus' tenderness toward children, which caused him to say: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them." (CCC 1257 -1261)

Incorporated into the Church, the Body of Christ

Baptism makes us members of the Body of Christ: "Therefore ... we are members one of another." Baptism incorporates us in the Church. From the baptismal fonts is born the one People of God of the New Covenant, which transcends all the natural or human limits of nations, cultures, races, and sexes: "for by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body." The baptized have become "living stones" to be "built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood." By Baptism they share in the priesthood of Christ, in his prophetic and royal mission. They are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that [they] may declare the wonderful deeds of God who called [them] out of darkness into his marvelous light." *Baptism gives a share in the common priesthood of all believers.* (CCC 1267 -1268)



The Sacramental Bond of the Unity of Christians

Baptism constitutes the foundation of communion among all Christians, including those who are not yet in full communion with the Catholic Church: "For all who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are put in some, though imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church. Justified by faith in Baptism, [they] are incorporated into Christ; they therefore have a right to be called Christians, and with good reason are sacramental bond of unity existing among all who through it are reborn." (*CCC 1271*)

Final Reflection for Parents

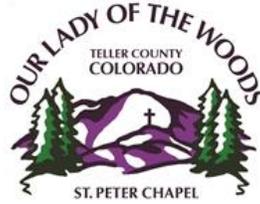
Thank you for welcoming Christ into your child. May God bless you in your role of raising and caring for your child. You are the first teachers they will encounter. They will learn many things from you and others throughout their lives, but none as important as living a Christian life. A life as a member of a community of worship, commitment, and service will enrich them in their life in Christ.

Baptism is a serious step—a step we spend much time getting ready for. We get new clothes, we get a candle to light the way, water to help us grow, oil for strength, even companions for the journey. But that is only the beginning of a much longer journey, a lifetime journey of commitment and discipleship. Our journey begins with an invitation, a call from God through the Christian community to live the gospel as committed disciples of Christ. When we accept the invitation, that call and response are ritualized and made visual and "real" for us in the celebration of Baptism. It is our firm Catholic belief that the Sacrament of Baptism expresses the wonderful gift of God by which we are "made holy," become "children of God" and "temples of the Holy Spirit." We must take care, however, not to restrict God's gift to one single moment (the pouring of water) or overlook that part of the sacrament that is our lifelong response to God's gift.

Final Thoughts

Please only request Baptism for your child only if...

1. You have made a firm commitment to attend Mass weekly. Young families can sit in the Narthex of the Church which is reserved for families with small children.
2. You fully intend to educate and raise your child Catholic.
3. You are resolved to deepen your relationship with Christ by regularly celebrating the Sacraments, committing to personal prayer, and serving the parish with your time, talent, and treasure.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT BAPTISM

1. **How old should my child be to be baptized?**

Any child at any age is welcomed for baptism, as long as the parents have committed to raising the child according to the Catholic faith.

2. **Can we have our child baptized if we are not married, or were married outside the Church, or if I am a single-parent?**

Your child is always welcome to baptism. The Church recognizes that, for whatever the reason, people will make choices in life that lead them in many different directions. The fact that you are here, demonstrates that God is at work in your life.

3. **Must I be a member of Our Lady of the Woods Parish in order to have my child baptized here?**

Yes. Membership in the parish at which a child will be baptized is required. It shows commitment to raising your child in the faith. However, we are frequently honored to baptize children of people who were once members of the parish or still have family in this area.

4. **How many godparents may I have or must I have?**

Strictly speaking, you are required to have at least one, who must be Catholic. Most people have two, one of each sex. The Church offers no provision for more than two.

5. **Who should be the Godparents?**

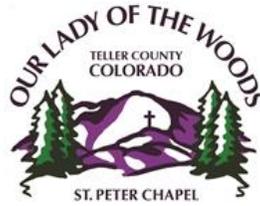
Before infant baptism, one of the most important issues is the choice of godparents for your child. You are only required to have one godparent. However, normally there are two godparents. Careful consideration should be given to choosing godparents, as they must meet certain qualifications.

A person to be admitted as a godparent must:

- Be designated by you and must have the intention of performing this role.
- Be at least sixteen years of age.
- Be a Catholic who is fully initiated in the Catholic Church, having received Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.
- Be a Catholic who leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken.
- Must be a practicing Catholic.
- Not be the father or mother of the child.

Please save embarrassment for all concerned by NOT choosing a godparent who does not fulfill the above requirements.

In view of these guidelines, the pastor of the designated godparent is normally responsible for determining these qualifications. For those of you choosing godparents who are registered member of Our Lady of the Woods Parish, your choice(s) will be reviewed and approval communicated to



you. If you choose a godparent who is a member of a parish other than Teller County Teller Community, they must obtain a letter of eligibility from the pastor of that parish. This letter should have the pastor's signature and the church seal on it and be sent or delivered to the parish office prior to setting the Baptism date.

A baptized person who belongs to some other non-Catholic community may be asked to serve not as a godparent but as a Christian witness as long as a Catholic godparent is also present. Catholics who have abandoned the faith may not act as a Christian witness or a godparent. If you need the Church to provide a godparent, please ask.

The Church does make accommodations for a godparent whom, who for good cause is not able to be present at the ceremony. A proxy may be chosen to stand-in for the godparent at the liturgy.

1. Does that mean that I can't have a non-Catholic serve as a godparent?

Technically, a non-Catholic may not serve as "godparent." However, a baptized non-Catholic Christian may serve as a "Christian Witness" to the baptism as long as the other godparent is Catholic.

2. May we have a Private Baptism?

Actually there is no such thing as a private baptism in the Catholic faith. Since our theological understanding of Baptism is initiation into the Catholic faith, the community plays an important role in the baptismal liturgy. Vatican II has requested that we focus on celebrating the fullness of the sacraments; therefore the local community must be present. We celebrate the rite of Baptism during the Saturday Vigil or Sunday Masses. Exceptional circumstances can be discussed with the pastor.

3. When is the Most Appropriate Time to Celebrate a Baptism?

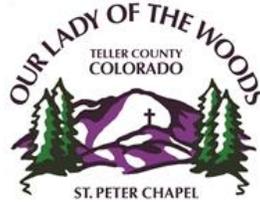
The Easter season, after Easter Day, is a very appropriate time for the celebration of baptism. There are no baptisms scheduled during the liturgical seasons of Advent and Lent, because they are penitential seasons and those tone colors those seasons. Note no more than one event may be celebrated at one Mass. Therefore, we recommend that you attend a class and make your arrangements early for the liturgy that you request.

4. What about Photography?

Please feel free to take any pictures or videos during the baptismal liturgy. However, no additional lighting or flashes are permitted. Please remember that the baptismal liturgy is a sacred moment and nothing should distract from the elegance and beauty of the liturgy. You may also remain after the Baptism to take additional pictures in the Church.

5. Is there a cost for the Baptism?

There are never any fees or costs associated with the celebration of sacraments. However, parishes always need contributions for the upkeep, utilities, insurance, etc. All parishes depend primarily on your regular Sunday offering. A tradition within the Church has been to make a



donation at the time of Baptism in the name of the new member. This usually is given by the parents or godparents. If you can make a special gift to the parish at the time of your child's Baptism, it will be gratefully received. Please present your donations directly to the parish office.

6. Is there anything that I need to bring for the Baptism?

Our Lady of the Woods Parish will provide the "baptismal candle" for the ceremony. The family brings a special "white garment" to be used in the ceremony. A new garment, a garment made especially for the occasion or, some parents may wish to use a white garment that has some sentimental value--perhaps it was used by one of the parents, or is a family heirloom that has been used for the baptisms of several children, possibly spanning generations within a family. This is your choice.

7. What if my child begins to cry?

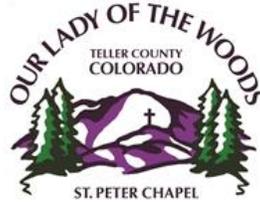
The Rite of Baptism occurs after the Homily. If your child starts to cry before or after the Rite, you are invited to take your child to the back of the church in the Narthex where you can continue to see and hear the Mass celebration.

Rite of Baptizing Children At Our Lady of the Woods Parish – During Mass

Beginning of Mass

The Rite begins with the reception of your child – near the front door of the church. This is to indicate the desire of the parents and godparents, as well as the intention of the Church, concerning the celebration of the sacrament of baptism. Beginning the Rite at the entrance of the Church also symbolizes the child becoming a member of the Church through Baptism. These purposes are expressed in action when the parents and the celebrant trace the sign of the cross on the forehead of their child. Please do not come to the Church with your child dressed in his/her Baptismal gown. The white garment will be presented later in the Rite. After the Opening Rite you will process in with the priest while the Gloria is being sung.

Liturgy of the Word - This part of the celebration consists of the reading of passages from Holy Scripture; a homily, followed by a period of silence.



Rite of Baptism:

1. The immediate preparation consists of:
 - a. The solemn blessing of the water, wherein the presider recalls God's use of water in His plan of salvation.
 - b. The baptismal promises, spoken by the parents, godparents and the whole community. All renounce sin and Satan and then profess the faith of the church.
 - c. The presider then asks the parents if they desire to have their child baptized in the faith they just professed.
 - d. The sacrament itself consists of the washing in water - by way of immersion and the invocation of the Blessed Trinity. The practice of immersion is the custom of our church and is approved by Canon Law. However, parents may choose pouring after discussion with the pastor.
2. The completion of the sacrament consists of:
 - a. The anointing with the oil of chrism
 - b. The bestowal of the white garment
 - c. Giving of a lighted candle
3. You will take your child in the rear of the Church to be dressed in his/her Baptismal garment.
4. Offertory
5. Parents and godparents will process up with your child and the offertory gifts.

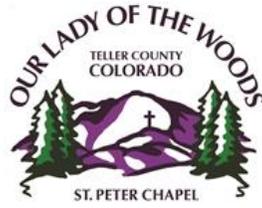
Liturgy of the Eucharist and Communion Rite

End of Mass

A prayer of blessing is said over the mother, father, and all present, to ask the outpouring of God's grace upon them. Parents, godparents and family members participate in the liturgy in the processional and bringing of the gifts.

Suggestions to make your child's baptism special

1. **Choose godparents** who will be a real and long-lasting help in the Christian formation of your child. It would be helpful if they could participate in the Baptism preparation with you. They are meant to be more than "honorary" sponsors.
2. **Track down the family christening dress.** Or consider making or decorating the white baptismal garment used near the end of the ritual. If there are other children in the family, they can help.
3. **Make the ceremony a community event.** Invite relatives, friends and neighbors to participate



in the Baptism liturgy. Some could serve as Scripture readers or musicians; just let us know in advance.

4. **Celebrate every year.** Keep the white garment, the candle, the prayers, photos, the certificate and other symbols of the baptismal ceremony to share with your child in future years. Bring these keepsakes out on the child's anniversary of Baptism or birthday and serve as powerful reminders of the ongoing importance of the event.