

# CATH FAMILY

Making the Home the Heart of the Church

**SACRAMENT  
ESSENTIALS**  
*Baptism*

**AUGUST 2014!**

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# From the Editor...

Hello and welcome to our new format! We will be using Issu to publish CathFamily for the next few months as we look for ways to deliver a better experience for our readers. We'd love to hear your feedback so please let us know what you think!

This month is the second in our **Sacrament Essentials** series. The featured sacrament is Baptism and we have written this with a mind to provide a bit of theology and also practical and simple ways of doing it in every day life. After all, theology that does not move us to action is not much use at all!

A Baptism, especially of a new baby, is a wonderful time to welcome a new little one into the family, and to initiate the parents into a new phase of life. Whether you have kids or not as a Catholic we are responsible for the spritual growth of all our children. So without further ado... turn the page, maybe learn a thing or two and get inspired!

Kiara Pirola  
Editor



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**This Month**  
**August 2014**

Fr 1	St Alphonsus Ligouri
Sa 2	St Eusebius of Vercelli
Su 3	<b>Ordinary Time 18</b> <b>Loaves &amp; Fishes</b>
Mo 4	St John Vianney
Tu 5	Dedication of the Basilica of St Mary Major
We 6	<b>Transfiguration of the Lord</b>
Th 7	St Dominic
Fr 8	St Mary MacKillop
Sa 9	St Teresa Benedicta (Edith Stein)
Su 10	<b>Ordinary Time 19</b> <b>Walking on Water</b> St Lawrence
Mo 11	St Clare of Assisi
Tu 12	St Jane Frances de Chantal
We 13	Sts Pontian & Hippolytus
Th 14	St Maximillian Kolbe
Fr 15	<b>The Assumption of Mary</b>
Sa 16	St Stephen of Hungary
Su 17	<b>Ordinary Time 20</b> <b>Take Pity on Me</b>
Tu 19	St John Eudes
We 20	St Bernard
Th 21	St Pius X
Fr 22	Our Lady, Queen of Heaven
Sa 23	St Rose of Lima
Su 24	<b>Ordinary Time 21</b> <b>Unstoppable Faith</b> St Bartholomew
Mo 25	St Louis of France
We 27	St Monica
Th 28	St Augustine
Fr 29	Beheading of John the Baptist
Su 31	<b>Ordinary Time 22</b> <b>Take up your Cross</b>



SACRAMENT ESSENTIALS

# Baptism



# Initiation Rituals

A common thread in human cultures, tribes and societies is ritualistic initiations that mark the various stages of life. They relate to all kinds of stages, such as; welcoming a new baby, introducing boys to manhood, marriage, grandparenthood and death. Catholicism has always supported the fundamental wisdom of the human need for ritual and initiation and it is woven into a rich tapestry of faith and culture.

Every culture has rich and unique practices and expectations in the details, but they all essentially point us towards this universal truth: our life here is a process of change.

Why do so many non-practicing or marginal Catholics seek to have their children baptised? Some cynics would say it is so they can get their children into a Catholic school or to appease grandma. However, that kind of dismissive assumption in many cases is not only wrong; it misses a precious moment of invitation.

## The Miracle of Life

Catholics on the edges come knocking on our Church door with a new baby because we have a very special gift to offer them: recognition of the birth of a unique, precious human being whose very existence is a miracle. New parents are searching for a way to meaningfully welcome their child to the world and present them to the family and the wider community.

Whether or not the parents understand all the theology about Baptism, they intuitively know that a Baptism is not merely about ticking boxes on a school enrolment form. It's a part of their family heritage and culture. It is a precious gift that they can give to their child and a way of recognising the divine hand that was at work in the creation of this wondrous child.







# What is a Sacrament?

A Sacrament is a sign of God's love. This sign is not like a traffic sign that announces the speed limit or parking rules which can be changed at will by lawmakers or ignored entirely by drivers. Nor is it simply like a smile that can be a sign of welcome. A Sacrament is more; it involves a profound relationship between the sign, the action of Grace, and the person who receives it. It is not only a sign of God's love, it also makes God's love real and concrete in our lives.

God's love is a vast mystery, complex and rich beyond full human comprehension. Nonetheless, the Sacraments help us to understand this love, however imperfect and incomplete that understanding may be. Each Sacrament illuminates a dimension of God's love with particular clarity. Baptism shines the spot-light on the love of the Father for his sons and daughters.

In its essence, Baptism is a spiritual rebirth where your child enters into kinship with God. No longer is she simply a daughter in the human family, she is now a beloved daughter in God's family, a princess in the Kingdom of God; your son a prince

# The Waters of Birth

There are many symbols used in a Baptism ceremony, but only one is the critical, sacramental gesture. Each Sacrament has both sacred words and a sacred gesture and both need to be present in order for the Sacrament to take place and to be considered valid.

In Baptism the sacred words are: I baptise you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The sacred gesture is the immersion in water. Why water? Water is a symbol of birth. When we are born naturally, the amniotic sac bursts and the water drains away as the child emerges from it. Similarly, the baptismal waters give us a tangible, sensory expression of a spiritual reality: we are reborn spiritually as children of God.

We can't actually see the child being spiritually reborn, but we know it happens because we hear the words and see the child emerging from the water.

In Baptism the symbol of water signifies your child's birth into the life of Christ. As the water flows and the words of Baptism are prayed, a deeper reality is taking place: your child is being embraced by God the Father as one of his own.

Baptism comes from a Greek word meaning "to plunge" or "immerse". By being immersed in water we enter into the 'tomb' with Jesus and rise again with him as a 'new creature.' (CCC #1214)







# Signs & Symbols of Baptism

Baptism has many symbols that are used in the ceremony. Here's a run down of what they mean.

## SIGN OF THE CROSS

The child is claimed for Christ by the priest, parents and godparents who make the Sign of the Cross on his forehead. The Sign of the Cross reminds us that while Christ saved us from evil by his death on the cross, our lives will also include suffering and temptation.

## ANOINTING WITH OIL

Before Baptism, the child's breast is smeared with the 'Oil of Catechumens'. It is a sign of the Lord's strength given to the child to assist him on his journey in faith.

## WATER

Water is the central symbol and reminds us of the waters of birth. It is also a sign of spiritual cleansing. Through Baptism, the mark of original sin (and all other sins committed to that point), are washed away. Some churches have facilities for the full emersion of the Baptism candidate in water. Others have a smaller font and use a jug or shell to pour water over the head of the child.

## WHITE GARMENT

The early Christians would wear a white robe to demonstrate that they had 'put on Christ'. Similarly today, the newly baptised child is clothed in white symbolising their new life in Christ and is an outward sign of Christian dignity.

## ANOINTING WITH CHRISM

After Baptism, the crown of the head is anointed with a perfumed oil called 'chrism'. It is used to anoint kings and monarchs and it sets the child aside for a mission.

## CANDLE

The baptismal candle is lit from the paschal (or Easter) candle and is a symbol of hope. It represents how Christ conquered evil and darkness. The candle is presented to the new member (or his parents) as a sign of the Light of Christ by which the newly baptised now live.



# Baptism is about belonging



If there is one word which sums up the essence of Baptism it would be 'belonging'. Through Baptism, we become members of God's family, a son or daughter of the Father. We belong to God for all eternity. As a consequence, we also belong to the family of God here on earth – our brothers and sisters in Christ.

This belonging is not like joining a local sports club which must be renewed annually. Baptism is more like a marriage – the ceremony is just the beginning of a new life and a new family identity. The 'membership' never expires; it endures throughout our entire life and into eternity.

In some ways, when we are baptised, we take on a new family name; Catholic!

And just like all human families, we have our good times and bad. There are some relatives that we like better than others and some that even drive us crazy! But we are still family together and we can celebrate each other's weddings and births and cry at each other's funerals. That's what families do. Even when we annoy or hurt or betray each other, those wounds cannot break our bond of connection; we are still brothers and sisters through our common kinship.



# 'Terms and Conditions'

Like all memberships, Baptism involves an agreement between parties. As a parent, you agree to raise your child in faith, teaching them about the life of Jesus and helping them to come to know Jesus personally through prayer and the Sacraments. For our part, the Catholic family, we agree to support you in this task, to nourish the faith of your child through our community gatherings and prayers.

This relationship we have with you and your child is based on love, trust, and is a covenant relationship rather than a legal contract. It will never be imposed and you will never be 'forced' to participate. But you will always be welcome, even if you, or your child, chooses to leave our faith community.

Baptism is a Sacrament of Initiation (entry, welcome, membership) within the Catholic community. It is the first of three Sacraments of Initiation which form a unity: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

## Busted Halo: Sacraments 101

- Why, exactly, do Catholics have the practice of baptising infants?
- What is the purpose of Baptism and who can celebrate the sacrament of Baptism?
- Do the godparents of our child need to be married to each other?

These questions and more are answered in this edition of "Sacraments 101," a web video series geared for those who'd like an introduction or refresher course on these important, tangible Catholic experiences of God.

[Watch the Video >](#)



# God liked it so he put an Indelible Seal on it...

Some years ago, Irish pop singer, Sinéad O'Connor declared herself no longer Catholic and wanted to have her Baptism 'reversed'. This is simply impossible. It would be like trying to change one's paternity by changing the name on a birth certificate; no matter what is recorded on the certificate, there is a biological relationship between a person and their genetic father that cannot be erased.

When a person is baptised something happens that can never be undone. God adopts that person as his own beloved son or daughter. From that moment on, for all eternity, God and they belong to each other in an eternal covenant.

But God loves us too much to ever impose or force us to be in relationship with him. As the perfect Father, he stands by his covenant commitment but he gives us the freedom to grow deeper in love or to reject him as we choose. And if we choose to leave, he waits patiently, like the father of the Prodigal, attentively, urgently longing for our return to his embrace. (Luke 15: 11-32)



# A child of God

When a person is baptised into the Church, he or she enters into a relationship. He or she no longer lives as an individual entity but as a member of the Body of Christ.

The baptismal ceremony marks the beginning of this new life of union and ongoing commitment. A baptised adult says “Yes, I want to be one with you, I want to live a life faithful to the Gospel.” When a child is baptised, the parents and godparents make this commitment on the child’s behalf. At the same time, we, the Christian community, pledge ourselves to be in relationship with that person.



# Godparents:

## Choosing Wisely

Godparents are more than just parental back-up or a nominated guardian should parents die while their children are still young; they are specially chosen spiritual mentors for your children. They have a special role to play in your child's upbringing and especially their faith journey.

Don't choose someone simply because you owe them a favour or there is family pressure to ask a particular person. Prayerfully turn to God and ask him to help you identify someone who can really support your child's faith, especially in their teenage years when many young people turn away from their faith.

So here are some things to consider when choosing the godparents for your child:

- **Longevity:** what is the long term outlook of this person's relationship with your child – that is, are they likely to still be around when your child is entering adolescence?
- **Access:** while overseas godparents can be present and active via family visits and technology, consider if remoteness will diminish the strength of their connection to your child.
- **Spiritual Role Model:** Godparents are spiritual mentors and guardians so look for someone who can role model the spiritual life and encourage your child in his/her faith.



## THANK GOD FOR GODPARENTS

Parenting is hard work. It's even harder when we are isolated and without a community. Raising your children in the faith has additional challenges. There will be times when your children just won't be willing to hear things from you or won't take you seriously.

The Catholic and Orthodox tradition have long recognised that it takes a village to raise a child. Parents should not be left to struggle on their own. This is why the Christian tradition of naming spiritual guardians for their children exists.



Ways to

# Prepare

for your child's (or Godchild's)

# Baptism

## 1. Pray for them

Place a photograph or memento of your child in your Prayer Space and pray for them each day. Ask family and friends, and especially their godparents, to pray too.

## 2. Prepare a Baptismal Candle

Many parishes and Catholic bookshops provide candles already decorated with baptismal symbols but you can also make your own. Here are some tips.

1. Print the decal on tracing paper and attach to a white pillar candle using pins or studs.
2. Use puffy fabric paints to write your child's name and the date of baptism on the candle.
3. Decorate with ribbons and lace using pins to hold them in place.
4. Cut out the picture on a holy card and fix to the candle with pins. Use puffy paints to decorate the edge.

## 3. Prayer that lasts

Write a prayer (or copy a favourite one) that expresses your heartfelt longing for your child to know how deeply loved and treasured they are by you and by God. Write it out in a beautiful card or print it and frame it for your child's room.



# Ways to Celebrate!

## Gifts

A Baptism is a wonderful opportunity to give a gift that will have spiritual significance for this child's life. Don't be afraid to give something that will have to be put away. Here are some basic ideas and more can be found on our Baptism pinterest board:

- A Bible: It could be a children's one or an adult one.
- Rosary beads.
- Saint's medals- their patron saint, or a really special one for you.
- A small photo album or scrapbook of their Baptism
- A Sunday Missal
- A Cross or crucifix: Jewelry or artwork for their wall
- A special icon or statue.
- A white garment: This is a special part of the Sacrament. If you are crafty, a handmade one is always extra special!

## Food & Feasting!

If there is one theme that is essential for a Baptism party it's water. Try these ideas to make your after party something unique.

1. Have a picnic at the beach or poolside.
2. Set up a water game for the older kids: sprinkler, water balloon fights, water pistols.
3. Make a water feature for your table – a low glass bowl with flowers and candles floating in the water.
4. Serve water ice treats.
5. Make a watermelon cake. Click below for ideas and recipes.



6. Make Rosary fruit skewers using balled melon, grapes and strawberries.
7. Make a Watermelon Baptismal Font. Click below for the recipe.





# SMARTLOVING

Francine & Byron Pirola

Baptism as a

## Wedding

*Matchmaker, matchmaker, make  
me a match.*

*Find me a find, catch me a catch.*

*Matchmaker, matchmaker, look  
through your book*

*And make me a perfect match.*



These lyrics from the famous musical, *Fiddler on the Roof*, capture the strong tradition of marriage and matchmaking in Jewish culture. Even in the time of Jesus, Jewish fathers were responsible for arranging marriage partners for their children. As Jesus was, and still is, a Jew, it raises the question of whether Jesus' father is typical of other Jewish fathers urgent to find a bride for his son. As Jesus often spoke of himself as a bride groom and we as his bride, it seems reasonable to assume that our heavenly Father also seeks to embrace us as his own child, as the beloved bride of his son.

There are three ways that we can acquire parents. The first is simply through our conception. The second is via adoption. And the third is via marriage where we become the son or daughter in law to our spouse's parents. Baptism has many nuptial overtones, for example:

1. We wear a white garment at Baptism and a bride wears a white garment at a wedding.
2. We take vows: in a wedding we say "I have/I will" in response to the questions of consent. In a Baptism we say (or our parents say on our behalf), "I do" in response to the 'Renewal of Baptismal Promises', a question and answer form of the Statement of Faith or Creed.
3. In Baptism we become a son or daughter of the Father. In a wedding we become sons or daughters in law of our spouse's father.
4. In Baptism, we begin a new life as a Christian. In a wedding we begin a new life in our Christian vocation of marriage.

In Baptism we become permanently and irrevocably bonded to Christ. In a wedding we become permanently and irrevocably bonded to our spouse.







The background of the page is a soft-focus photograph of a snowy landscape. In the foreground, there are patches of snow and small, dark evergreen trees. The middle ground shows a line of trees and a body of water, possibly a lake or a wide river, covered in snow. The sky is a pale, overcast blue. Scattered throughout the image are several large, stylized white snowflakes. A large, white rectangular box is centered on the page, containing the title text.

# SEASONAL NOTES

# St Mary of the Cross

Feast: August 8<sup>th</sup>

August the 8th is the feast day of Australia's first saint! CathFamily has a number of little activities inspired by this cheerful saint.



## FOOD & FEASTING

### **A MacKillop Feast!**

Australians are always looking for an excuse to roll out the festive foods that our Northern hemisphere brethren enjoy in their Winter season. Instead of 'Christmas in July', how about celebrating a MacKillop Thanksgiving? It is the perfect opportunity to gather family and friends to give thanks for this wonderful woman.



## CRAFT

### **Mary Mack Chatter Box**

A chatterbox is an origami paper craft that is fun to fold and even more fun to use. Perched on top of two thumbs and two fingers, It requires only a single sheet of paper and a simple folding technique. We have a free template to download and is full of inspiring quotes from St Mary of the Cross.



## FOOD & FEASTING

### **Mary's Sweet Treats**

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop is known for her habit of carrying sweets in her pocket to reward good effort in her students. Try this recipe for some traditional style sweets typical of those eaten in Mary's time.



All this and more can be found at  
[www.CathFamily.org](http://www.CathFamily.org)

# Ordinary Time

It is that time of year again! A nice long period between hectic periods of fasting and feasting that is aptly called Ordinary Time. That being said, there is plenty to do to foster a simple, steady prayer routine to bridge the seasons. Here are some featured activities, recipes and prayers.



PRAY

## Family Prayer & Vocations

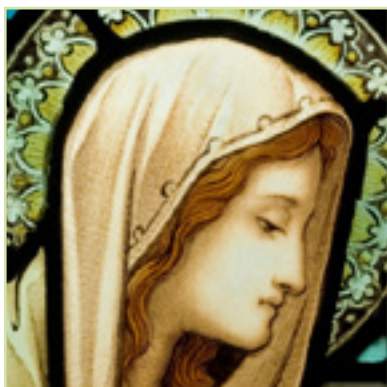
You hear it consistently in many vocation stories from priests and religious; a family that prays together gives birth to vocations of all kinds. Like many family traditions, they require effort and an active choice. However starting such a habit can be daunting so we've put together some simple prayer cards and pooled together the other prayer rituals we have created over the years to help you get started.



CRAFT

## Make an Oil Lamp

Oil Lanterns were the main source of light in Jesus' time. Make your own oil lamp and use it at family prayer times to have a sense of Jesus' presence.



PRAY

## The Angelus

With the feast of the Assumption on the 15th, it is the perfect time to start a new habit with this simple Marian prayer. Set your mobile phone to chime each day at one or more of the three set hours. The traditional hours are 6 am, 12 noon and 6 pm. You might like to synchronise your Angelus prayer with a friend or family member.

**Visit [www.CathFamily.org](http://www.CathFamily.org) for ideas and inspiration**