



Frank Mastrodonato and Anna Guerrieri watch their godson Frank Joseph Mastrodonato receive the baptismal waters.

The Sacrament of Baptism

Born Into the Church

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Few of us can remember one of the most important events in our lives.

The Church teaches that Baptism leaves a permanent mark upon the soul; experience shows that it leaves an ineradicable impression upon the personality.

His name and his cultural heritage are both conferred upon the infant at the same time, linking the two together, a Christian name and a Catholic Baptism.

The godparents who sponsor the child upon his entrance into the Church represent the tradition which adopts the child, for they are responsible for guaranteeing that he will be raised a Christian.

The essence of Baptism will never change; however, a recent Baptism shows some of the changes made in modern times, and it points up the meaning of the sacrament.

Performing the baptism of three infants, Father Richard Brickler met the parents and godparents with the babies at the door of Holy Family Church.

The ritual begins with the priest asking what name has been chosen for the baby. He makes a sign of the cross on the forehead of each, a blessing which is repeated by the godparents and members of the family. A procession then goes to the font, which in Holy Family is a table set up in the middle of the sanctuary.

After an explanation of the sacrament by Father Brickler, prayers were said. Next, the throat of each child was anointed with oil.

The water was poured over each child's head, the method of baptism known as infusion. (The other two consist of total immersion and of sprinkling.) The words, "I baptise you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit," complete the key part of the ritual.

After the Baptism it used to be a custom to dress the new Christian in a white baptismal gown, symbolizing his new innocence and freedom from original and temporal sin. Now, since most of those baptized are infants, a white cloth is often held against the child to symbolize the robe. This was done at Holy Family.



Blessing of the throat precedes the Baptism.