

# LITURGY BYTES

## Baptism

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM



As we re-enter into Ordinary time in the Church's liturgical year, I have noticed an increase in the number of scheduled Baptisms taking place at our parish. Baptism, the first Sacrament and so meaningful throughout our lives, has many beautiful symbols. For our reflection today, let us take a look at a few of the symbols used at Baptism: water, light, and oil.

**Water** - is an essential aspect of any Baptism. The water of Baptism can be either poured over the child's head or, in some places, the child can be totally immersed in the water. The water is blessed by the priest or deacon during the baptismal rite. The water itself is a sign of new life as it calls us to die to our sinfulness, only to rise to the fullness of life offered by Christ. Its gentle waves wash away the stains of original sin.

**Light** - the "light of Christ" is represented by a lit baptismal candle. This light is entrusted to the child's parents and godparents to be kept burning brightly, a representation of the child's faith being protected from the darkness of sin. By accepting the baptismal candle, the parents and godparents of the child are promising to offer an example of faithfulness to the child.

**Oil** - typically, the Baptism of a child will include two anointings with oil. The first oil known as the Oil of the Catechumens is applied to the child's chest invoking Christ's power and protection in the life of the child. The second anointing is with Holy Chrism, which is oil that has had an aromatic perfume called balsam added to it. The chrism is placed on the crown of the child's head in an ancient sign of kingship. It represents the royal priesthood of the baptized and the child's enrollment into God's people.

So the next time you have the opportunity to attend a Baptism, think about the importance of these three beautiful symbols of our faith, which we all received at the time of our own Baptisms! We are crowned priest, prophet, and king by virtue of this beautiful Sacrament of Initiation.

*Have a blessed, healthy, and safe week! ~~~Michele Hahn*