



BAPTISM & BEYOND

LITURGY BYTES *by Michele Hall*



Recently, there has been some very positive information in the news regarding the number of new Catholics that have come into the Church this past Easter. For us locally here at Holy Cross, we had eight wonderful souls who joined us at the Easter Vigil back in early April. Perhaps, were you present and witnessed this most inspiring and joy-filled moment?

Most of us were probably baptized as infants and received Eucharist and Confirmation at various times during our youth. There is something very different when an adult is baptized. First of all, they make that decision through days or even years of desiring a relationship with God and His Church. They spend time learning about our Faith, participating as much as possible at Mass, feeling a part of a new community as their special day draws closer and closer.

The after time for the newly baptized is a time for reflection and deepening of the Paschal Mystery and how they will make it part of their lives by pondering the Gospel, sharing in the Eucharist, and doing works of charity in different ways in their new parish.

Those of us baptized as infants are encouraged to move beyond viewing baptism as a one-time formality. We are called to embrace it (Baptism) as a daily reality that marks us as belonging to Christ. Here are a few key aspects to help us embrace our Baptisms: Baptism is a constant source of grace throughout our lives; we are called to remember our Baptisms by renewing our baptismal promises a few times during the Easter season; Baptism also transforms us to see our role in the mission of the Church calling us to live out the Gospel in our daily lives; Baptism made us members of a community, showing us that faith is not meant to be lived alone.

So, taking up Pope Francis' call a few years ago, he reminded us of the following: "As Catholics we should discover the date of our Baptism and celebrate it. Embracing this sacrament will help us live out our vocation to holiness engaging with the whole world through faith and charity."

Have a blessed, grace-filled week ahead!