

St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church

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Dear Parents,

The whole reason that we here at St. Joseph Church exist as a Catholic church is to know Jesus, to love Jesus and to serve Jesus. Jesus is central to everything we are and everything we do. That's because we believe that Jesus Christ is God's love in the flesh! He reveals to us that God is love. He also reveals to us the truly loving way to live. In fact, that's what the "Kingdom of God" is—the world made brand new and whole, filled with justice, love, and peace for all, and Jesus is the one who shows us the way to this Kingdom!

For us, the sacraments are gifts of God's love that help us to carry on the work of Jesus. So, this means that before we receive any sacrament, we have made a personal choice to follow Jesus because we believe he is the WAY OF LOVE and we have made a real commitment to live his WAY OF LOVE at every moment of our lives: at home, at work, in the marketplace—everywhere! The sacraments fill us with His love so that we can keep committed to the WAY OF LOVE and grow in that way. Baptism is the entrance way into this WAY OF LOVE. It is an outpouring of the Spirit of God on those who have made a real choice and commitment to live the way of Jesus.

So, to help us celebrate this great sacrament with authenticity and truth, we look for the following in those who come to us requesting this sacrament for their children:

- The parents themselves have made a personal choice and real **commitment** to Jesus Christ and his WAY OF LOVE and they are consciously trying to live that commitment each day.
- As part of that commitment to Jesus, the parents are also committed to the family of Jesus, the Church. They express this relationship with their brothers and sisters in Christ by regular participation in the life of the parish, most especially by **regular participation in Sunday worship, the Mass.**
- The parents have chosen **godparents** on one basis only: the godparents themselves are actively committed Christians, fully living their faith, and willing and able to help guide your child on Jesus' WAY OF LOVE.
- The parents are open to learning about the Sacrament of Baptism and attend a **Baptism Workshop.**

We at St. Joseph Church ask for all of these above elements to be in place before we celebrate the sacrament of baptism, so that we can be sure that the celebration is not just a "custom" or "tradition." We want to be sure that the baptism to be celebrated isn't something being done just because "we've always done it this way," or "we thought we had to baptize our child in case, God forbid, anything would happen to our child, he or she will be able to get into heaven." We don't want to baptize a child into the family of God and then never see that child or his/her parents again....until it's "time for another sacrament!"

No, we truly desire to help our parents to understand the true nature and purpose of baptism, so that they, as the primary teachers of JESUS' WAY OF LOVE to their children, are making a real, conscious, sincere and lasting commitment to enter into a life-long relationship with Jesus and with his family—all of us brothers and sisters who make up the Church. To be sure, none of us is a "perfect" follower of Jesus, but we are all committed to constantly strive to follow Jesus faithfully.

If a parent's mentality is, "Let's just do what we have to so we can have the baptism," then I strongly suggest those parents NOT baptize their child until a more mature, decisive, authentic decision is reached.

This is an awesome moment in your family's life! Through baptism your child is going to be ushered into the family of Jesus and filled with the life of Jesus' Spirit so that he/she can live Jesus' WAY OF LOVE and be a part of God's amazing eternal Kingdom of justice, peace and love!

If these commitments are those you are willing to make, we look forward to helping you prepare for this most important moment in your child's life! Please contact the Parish Office to indicate you have read and understood this letter, to register for an upcoming Workshop and to provide your child's information that will be recorded in the official Baptism Registry of the Church following the baptism.