

Baptism is the Sacrament whereby a person enters the tomb with Christ and rises again, symbolized by the very waters into which He once descended and from which He rose. It is the first Sacrament of the Christian Life as it begins the process whereby the Christian disciple follows in the footsteps of the Lord.

Requirements for Baptism:

- (1) Be a registered member of the parish, having established a record of Mass attendance for at least three months prior to scheduling the Sacrament. Registration forms may be found in the back of the church. Establishing a “record” of Mass attendance is explained in item 3.
- (2) Attend Mass weekly and on all Holy Days of Obligation, thereby fulfilling Christ’s injunction to “do *this* in memory of Me.”
- (3) Use the parish’s offertory envelope system as a record of attendance. This has NOTHING to do with money. On Baptism day the parish would like to say in good conscience, on behalf of the parents, godparents, and child to be Baptized, that the one being Baptized is surrounded by a good example of living the Catholic Christian life. With 500-600 worshipers praying in our church on any given Sunday, it is an undue burden to place on the parish staff to expect that we “see” and recognize every family at every Mass on every Sunday. The use of envelopes is required to ensure fairness to all, even if your life’s circumstances do not permit any donation, in which case empty envelopes can be, often are, and will always be welcomed. We would rather you be at the Lord’s Sacrifice with willing hearts than to be extorted in difficult times for a Sacrament. Some families choose to donate online, in which case we ask that you check “gave online” on the envelope that you deposit into the offertory basket during Mass.
- (4) Select two godparents of good moral rectitude. Both must be practicing Catholics in good standing. If married, the godparent(s) should be living the witness of a Sacramental marriage in the sight of the child they wish to sponsor. A Sacramental Marriage is defined as one between a Baptized male and Baptized female not tied to any previous marital bond(s), witnessed by a Catholic clergyman, or, if not, with the Church’s dispensation.

Again, in the interest of a clear conscience, both godparents will be asked to obtain a letter from their parish testifying to their activity in their current faith community. Since godparents help the Baptized person to lead a Christian life

and to fulfill the obligations inherent to it, godparents as well as parents should be active in their faith communities, shown minimally by weekly Mass attendance. The Church's Code of Canonical Rights also stipulates that: (a) one godparent be male, one female; (b) that the child's mother and/or father not also serve as a godparent; (c) that godparents be at least 16 years of age; and (d) that godparents should be Confirmed Catholics and have received first Holy Communion.

- (5) Obtain the Baptism Registration form from our parish website, or by calling the parish office. It should be turned in to us either at Mass, or by mail, or by drop-off in the office only after all Sacramental certificates and letters of good standing have been obtained for the parents and godparents.
- (6) Sign below and submit this form with those mentioned in item 5 as acknowledgement of and compliance with these requirements.

In summary, the use of Our Lady of Good Counsel Church is available FREE OF CHARGE to *ACTIVE MEMBERS* of the parish. Three points determine active membership: 1) registration in the parish for a sufficient period of time (3 months for Baptism; 6 months for marriage) and use of the envelope system; 2) faithful attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation; 3) volunteer and participate in Parish activities with time, talent, and resources as means permit. The only exception is made for the Catholic children of our active parishioners, i.e. their children who live outside of Charleston and who are themselves active Catholics in their own parishes elsewhere and wish to marry, or Baptize their child, at Our Lady of Good Counsel.