

Baptism in the Traditional Rite

The priest greets the baptismal sponsors and the catechumen in the narthex of the church prior to the Baptism with a simple inquiry: "What do you ask of the Church?" The catechumen (or his sponsors) responds: "Fidem", that is "Faith". After an additional question and brief exhortation, the priest breathes three times on the candidate in the form of a Cross. He commands the unclean spirit to leave and give place to the Holy Spirit, then makes the Sign of the Cross on the candidate's forehead and heart. Placing his hands on the candidate's head, the priest prays that the Lord remove all blindness of heart from him so that he may grow in grace from day to day. These prayers and the exorcisms that follow are designed to free the candidate from the power of Satan, who has power due to original sin.

Next the priest places blessed salt in the candidate's mouth. Salt symbolizes the wisdom that relishes the Divine nourishment. He makes the Sign of the Cross three times over the candidate, and says a prayer of exorcism. After a final prayer, he lays the end of his stole on the candidate as a symbol of his priestly authority, and admits him into the church.

Upon entrance, the candidate (or his sponsors) recites the Credo and the Pater Noster. This is followed by a solemn exorcism, Ephpheta, and the renunciation of Satan, after which, the candidate is anointed with holy oil in the form of a Cross. The priest replaces his violet stole with a white stole and invites the candidate to the baptismal font. After the candidate (or his sponsors) professes his faith, he is baptized with holy water and anointed with chrism. The priest then places a white linen cloth on his head. The white linen cloth symbolizes purity of the soul after Baptism. The candidate, or his sponsor, receives a candle lit from the Paschal candle. This candle symbolizes hope for eternal life, and is kept for use in certain other religious or sacramental occasions.

The faithful renew their baptismal vows every Easter.

After the Baptism, the family may choose to consecrate their children to the Blessed Virgin Mary. At an infant Baptism, they may also choose to have a blessing of the mother, known as the "churching".



*Top row, in the narthex: the Exultation (breathing), Sign of the Cross, Imposition of Salt
Bottom row, after Baptism: the Churching, Consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary*