



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CATHOLIC CHURCH

535 Rucker Road
Alpharetta, GA 30004
P: 770-475-4501
F: 770-772-0355
www.sta.org

January 9, 2022



The Baptism OF THE LORD EL BAUTISMO DEL SEÑOR



CONFESSION

Confessions are held on Mondays from 3 - 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 3 - 4 p.m. All confessions take place in the Confessionals.

CONFESIÓN

Las confesiones se realizan los lunes a partir de las 3 - 4 p.m. y sábados a partir de las 3 - 4 p.m. Todas las confesiones tendrán lugar en los confesionarios (dentro del Templo a la izquierda).



PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

The Parish Pastoral Council is accepting applications for new members. We now have open positions available. Please see page 4 for more details.

EL CONSEJO PASTORAL

El Consejo Pastoral aceptando solicitudes para nuevos miembros. Tendremos puestos vacantes para feligreses a partir de 2022. Consulte la página 4 para obtener más detalles.



KOFC FREE THROW CONTEST

The Knights of Columbus are hosting their annual free throw contest later this month. Winners in each age group will receive a plaque, a basketball, and STA bragging rights for the next 12 months. See page 4 for more details.

Los Knights of Columbus son organizará su concurso anual de tiros libres a finales de este mes. Los ganadores de cada grupo de edad recibirán un plaquw y una pelota de baloncesto. Consulte la página 4 para obtener más detalles.

WELCOME TO OUR FAMILY

Office Hours / Question of the Week

CLERGY



Msgr. Daniel Stack
Pastor



Fr. Jaime Rivera
Parochial Vicar



Fr. Paul W. Berny
In Residence

FOLLOW US



**GIVE ONLINE
DONAR EN LÍNEA**

MASS SCHEDULE

MASS TIMES

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday:

- Noon - English*

Wednesday:

- Noon - English - Senior Mass (62 and older) *

Jueves

- 7 p.m. - Misa en español*

Saturday Vigil/Vigilia:

- 5 p.m. - English
- 7:30 p.m. - Español

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Sunday/Domingo:

- 8 a.m. - English
- 11a.m. - English*
- 2 p.m. - Español*
- 5 p.m. - English

**Mass is livestreamed through our Facebook page and posted on our website and YouTube following each Mass.*

** La misa se transmite en vivo a través de nuestro pagina de Facebook y se publica en nuestro sitio web y en YouTube después de cada misa.*

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

OFFICE HOURS

Parish Office: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Monday - Friday

Sunday: 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Faith Formation: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Monday - Thursday

HORARIO DE OFICINA

Oficina Parroquial: 9 a.m. a 4 p.m. Lunes a viernes.

Formación de fe: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Lunes a Jueves

La Oficina de atención al público en español:

3 p.m. - 7 p.m. Lunes a jueves

Question of the Week

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Reflect on your baptism or on the baptism of your children. Share the experience with someone who was present. Gather articles from that baptism: candle, baptismal certificate, garment. Imagine how God rejoiced over you that day!

Each week, members of the staff gather to study and reflect on the upcoming Sunday's Gospel, and from that study and reflection they prepare the Question of the Week. Refer back to today's Gospel to reflect on your personal response. **Lucas 3-15-16, 21-22**

PREGUNTA DE LA SEMANA

Piensa en el día de tu Bautizo o en el de tus hijos y plática con alguien que estuvo presente. Reúne los artículos religiosos que se usaron (vela, certificado, rosario, vestimenta, etc.). ¡Ahora piensa cuán alegre estaba Dios por ti en ese día!

Cada semana, miembros del personal se reúnen para estudiar y reflexionar en el próximo evangelio del domingo y en base de ese estudio y reflexión ellos preparan la Pregunta de la Semana. Usa el evangelio y las lecturas para encontrar tu respuesta personal a la pregunta. **Lucas 3-15-16, 21-22**



BEYOND OUR 40 ACRES

St. Thomas Aquinas extends its outreach far beyond these 40 acres. In this new section, you will find some of the many ways we are actively giving back to our communities. If you participate in any active charities, let us know by e-mailing us at STAreplay@sta.org.

Nuestra Parroquia de Santo Tomás de Aquino se extiende mucho más allá de los 40 acres que la forman. En esta nueva sección del boletín, encontrará información de algunas de las muchas formas en que estamos apoyando activamente a las comunidades que tenemos a nuestro alrededor. Si usted participa en alguna organización de beneficencia que esté ayudando/apoyando a alguna comunidad, háganoslo saber para que podamos compartir esas buenas noticias con el resto de la comunidad. Envíe ésta información a través de un correo electrónico a STAreplay@sta.org

ST. JOSEPH CAFASSO PRISON MINISTRY

This ministry responds to the needs of those in prisons throughout the State. Working in conjunction with St Joseph Cafasso Ministry, we visit prisoners, share the Eucharist, and teach the catechism. We also participate with the Kairos weekend retreats.



Paul Caruso, Ministry leader, was named 2022 St. Dismas Awardeed recipient. See page. 5 for more details.

MINISTERIO DE LA PRISION DE SAN JOSE CAFASSO

Este ministerio responde a las necesidades de las personas en las cárceles de todo el estado. Estos voluntarios visitan a los prisioneros, comparten la Eucaristía y enseñan el catecismo. También participan en los retiros de fin de semana de Kairos.

UPCOMING SECOND COLLECTIONS

- Jan. 9 | St. Vincent de Paul - STA
- Jan. 16 | Archdiocesan Hispanic Ministry
- Jan. 23 | Sister Parish Haiti Semi-Annual
- Jan. 30 | GA Bulletin Semi-Annual
- Feb. 6 | STA 50th Anniversary Event June 2022

Donations for second collections may now be placed in the white drop box in the Narthex.

Yellow envelopes in the pews are available for your second collection donations and can be placed in the collection basket or in the dedicated box in the Narthex.

SVdP FOOD PANTRY NEEDS:

- Canned chicken
 - Canned fruit
 - Pasta sauce
 - Cereal
 - Rice
- Crackers
- Please note that expired food will not be accepted. Thank you for donating!

MASS ATTENDANCE

- Dec. 27 - Jan. 2**
- Wednesday Mass for Seniors | 57
 - Thursday Spanish | 40
 - Saturday 5 p.m. (English) | 132
 - Saturday 7:30 p.m. (Spanish) | 102
 - Sunday 8 a.m. (English) | 125
 - Sunday 11 a.m. (English) | 360
 - Sunday 2 p.m. (Spanish) | -
 - Sunday 5 p.m. (English) | 147

TOTAL | -

RACE RELATIONS DIALOGUE

RRD will meet Thursday, Jan. 13, in Alpharetta City Hall at 7 p.m.

Alpharetta Police Officer Vinny Sarrantonio will discuss policing, followed by Q&A. Zoom participation is available.

Further info at www.RaceRelationsDialogue.org



DOT MINISTRIES - THE 2022 WHITESVILLE MISSION TRIP

After a two year pause due to the pandemic, DOT Ministries is excited to bring back this amazing, fun-filled, and spiritually enriching mission trip, designed specifically for high school teens. This week-long experience will enable participants to put their faith into action. The 2022 Whitesville Mission Trip is June 18 - 26 and is open to all high school teens. Teenagers must be a rising high school freshman for the 2022 / 2023 school year.

For all interested teens and their parents, there will be a mission trip information and signup meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 11, at 7:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Signups begin at 7:30 p.m. and the meeting starts at 8 p.m. Spots are limited, so please plan on attending this meeting with a \$75 deposit to secure your place on the trip. For more information, please visit dotministries.org.



PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL IS NOW ACCEPTING NEW MEMBERS

The Parish Pastoral Council is accepting applications for new members. If you are passionate about the success of our parish, then the Pastoral Council is the team for you! Please prayerfully consider this ministry and reflect upon your own strengths, talents, and gifts to serve the needs of our Parish. A link to the application for Pastoral Council members can be found at sta.org on the home page. Interested parishioners and those with nominations to recommend should contact Mimi Madrid at mmadrid@sta.org.

EL CONSEJO PASTORAL DE SANTO TOMÁS ESTÁ ACEPTANDO NUEVOS MIEMBROS

El Consejo Pastoral aceptando solicitudes para nuevos miembros. Si te apasiona el éxito de nuestra parroquia, ¡el Consejo Pastoral es el equipo para ti! Por favor considera este ministerio, reflexiona y ora sobre tus propias fortalezas, talentos y dones para atender las necesidades de nuestra parroquia. Si estas interesado, puedes encontrar el enlace para aplicar en sta.org en la página de inicio. Los feligreses interesados y aquellos que deseen nominar a alguien más como candidato a estas posiciones deben comunicarse con Mimi Madrid en mmadrid@sta.org.

COMING SOON: CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM

An Introduction to the Faith and Practices of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

In today's world, knowing something about what other religions believe and practice can be essential to making sense of the daily news – around the globe and within our own community. **How would you rate your religious literacy?**

If you're one of those people who have said, "Someday, I'd like to learn more about" (name the religion of your choice), then this study is for you!

Class size is limited. Registration is OPEN NOW @ ignatiushouse.org
Tuesday evenings from 7-9 p.m. - 13 weeks, beginning Jan. 18 at Ignatius House Jesuit Retreat Center. For more information, contact Kathy Hoffman at kdhoffman53@gmail.com.



KOFC FREE THROW CONTEST

The annual basketball free throw contest is Sunday, Jan. 16, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. It is open to all boys and girls ages 9 -14 as of Jan. 1. To provide a safe environment for all participants, the event will be held outside at the basketball hoops in the back parking lot. All non-vaccinated participants are requested to wear a mask.



Come and have some family fun! Winners in each age group will receive a plaque, a basketball, and STA Champion bragging rights for the next 12 months. These winners also qualify for the District Playoffs to be held here at St. Thomas Aquinas on Feb 5th.

El concurso anual de tiros libres de baloncesto es el domingo 16 de enero, de 9 a.m. a 1 p.m. Está abierto para todos los niños y niñas de 9 a 14 años a partir del 1 de enero. Para proporcionar un ambiente seguro para todos los participantes, el evento se llevará a cabo afuera en los aros de baloncesto en el estacionamiento trasero. Se solicita a todos los participantes no vacunados que usen una máscara.

¡Ven y diviértete en familia! Los ganadores de cada grupo de edad recibirán una placa, una pelota de baloncesto y los derechos de fanfarronear de STA Champion durante los próximos 12 meses. Estos ganadores también califican para los Playoffs del Distrito que se llevarán a cabo aquí en St. Thomas Aquinas el 5 de febrero.



JOB SEARCH MINISTRY

Job seekers, recent college graduates, or those looking to enhance their careers are invite to our job assistance session the next time we meet.

Our first meeting of the year will be Tuesday, Jan. 25 at 7 p.m. in room 202. This is a great opportunity to meet and network with other job seekers. Everyone is welcome.

If you need assistance in your job search or know someone who does, you are welcome to join us for this free meeting. Come learn our "4 Strategies of Job Seeking Success".

We are in need another VOLUNTEER with a business background including Human Resources and or Recruiting. For more details, please contact one of our Co-Chairs, by emailing them at:

Gladys Tejada: gltejada24@gmail.com

Julie Mullaney: jmc06820@yahoo.com



**PAUL CARUSO NAMED 2022 ST. DISMAS
AWARD RECIPIENT**



The Board of Directors of Dismas Ministry, Inc. is pleased to announce the recipient of the 2022 St. Dismas Award. Paul Caruso will be presented with the award in spring 2022 at a special event in suburban Atlanta, GA.

Caruso has served the incarcerated and indigent for over 32 years, and currently is the leader of the St. Joseph Cafasso Prison Ministries in Georgia, which he founded in 1999. Caruso has said that inmates, though often “treated like lepers,” are in fact “chil-

dren of God,” and that “conversion of hearts” is his main mission.

Visiting both men’s and women’s prisons, Caruso and his team of 20 volunteers conduct weekly communion services, catechism classes, and faith discussions, as well as RCIA with an attending deacon. He and his team also visit inmates in solitary confinement and have witnessed many conversions even there. Caruso has been present at over 150 baptisms and confirmations during his time in prison ministry.

In the recommendation from the award committee, Board Member Joshua Stancil stated: “The committee was particularly struck by Paul’s response to a life-threatening battle with COVID earlier this year. At 78 years of age, Paul was quite vulnerable to the virus, and spent nearly two months on a ventilator, in a coma. He has since recovered, and recently met with the Archdiocese of Atlanta to assume responsibility for three more prisons.”

Throughout more than three decades in prison ministry, Caruso estimates he has served nearly 40,000 people.

“In all my life, I have never seen a humble ‘servant of God’ like Paul, who serves as effectively as he does. He has taught me so much about my faith, and how to serve others. All on his volunteer team feel deeply about Paul and his ministry that he performs humbly and selflessly,” said Kevin Reidy, a prison minister who nominated Caruso for the award.

Article from Dismas Ministry
https://dismasministry.org/paul_caruso/

*Thank you for
Joining us at Mass!
Let’s keep in
touch!*

*!Gracias por
celebrar la misa
con nosotros!
¡Mantengámonos
en contacto!*

Name: _____

Contact Information

E-mail: _____

Phone Number: _____

I am interested in:

- registering at the parish
- receiving the electronic newsletter
- knowing more about ministries at STA

Nombre: _____

Información del contacto

Correo electrónico: _____

Número de teléfono: _____

Estoy interesado en:

- registrarme en la parroquia
- recibir el boletín electrónico con las noticias de la parroquia
- recibir más información sobre los ministerios en Santo Tomás de Aquino

**Please tear off this form
and place it in the
offertory basket and
someone will contact you
within a week.**

**Por favor arranque esta
sección con sus datos y
colóquela en la canasta
de la ofrenda, alguien se
pondrá en contacto con
usted durante la semana.**



The things that matter most in our lives are not fantastic or grand. They are moments when we touch one another, when we are there in the most attentive or caring way. This simple and profound intimacy is the love we all long for.

Jack Kornfield, American Author

SMALL FAITH COMMUNITIES AT ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

Remember the popular television show “Cheers”? Its opening song went like this:

*Sometimes you want to go
Where everybody knows your name,
and they're always glad you came.
You wanna be where you can see,
our troubles are all the same
You wanna be where everybody knows
Your name.*

That song is a great description of a Small Faith Community. People who were once strangers come together, get to know one another and, before long, become friends. They know they are accepted as they are and are supported in their struggles as well as their joys.

What is a Small Faith Community?

A Small Faith Community (sometimes called a Small Christian Community, a Small Church Community, or in Spanish, Comunidad de base) is a group of 8-12 adults who gather together to share their life experiences and to grow in their faith. A Small Faith Community is a smaller, more intimate experience of church. Small Faith Communities provide a safe place where you can be open and honest.

Who is invited to join a SFC?

You are invited to be part of this exciting and enriching model of parish life! It's our hope that everyone would be a part of a small faith group.

What are the benefits?

Here are just a few:

- feeling like you belong to the parish
- having the opportunity to be listened to in a trusting and non-judgmental atmosphere
- making the connection between what we believe—what we celebrate at Mass—and your own life
- having your abilities and talents encouraged and appreciated
- feeling supported during trying times and sharing joys during the happy times
- deepening your faith and your relationship with Jesus Christ
- finding ways to serve the parish and the wider community as an individual and as a group

What is the importance of joining a SFC today?

Catholic parishes are meant to foster an experience of love and an experience of faith. In a large parish like St. Thomas Aquinas, that can be a challenge. Among so many, it is easy to feel isolated and alone, especially during a pandemic. Gathering in Small Faith Communities allows the church to become smaller and more intimate. These communities offer what everyone desires: the experience of being known and being loved. SFCs also offer an experience of faith. We all have faith, but most of us need help from others to learn to trust the faith within us and learn to recognize and describe our experience of faith. The more our experiences of faith and love are shared—and this can only happen in a small group—the more we notice God and God's call to be church for one another. SFCs enable us to be who we are—the loved and cherished faith-filled people of God.

What is faith sharing?

It is the simple sharing of our experience that gives us the opportunity to reflect on and recognize God's activity and presence in our daily lives.

What about the programs used by the groups?

Groups begin with Come as You Are, a 12 session program that is an invitation to slow down and become more reflective about life. It helps people connect with one another beyond the usual “news, weather, and sports” conversations so that they will want to stay together and go beyond this introductory program.

“... Anytime I have a challenge, I have this group of people that I can just e-mail [and ask them to pray for me] and they can e-mail me and say, “Pray for me.” ...Also, it is great to share the joys in our lives.It's true joy looking around and seeing the faces of people who are happy for you.”

“I love the way that our small faith group comes together to serve others.”

“I love my small faith group because it has allowed me to have a safe place where there is no condemnation or judgment of anything I share...only love and encouragement.”

SMALL FAITH COMMUNITIES AT STA CONT.

How do the groups meet?

- In homes
- Online
- Outside around a fire pit
- In parks
- Wherever!

How do Small Faith Communities remain connected to the parish?

Each group has a leader who keeps the community connected to the parish just as the pastor is the connector to the diocesan church and the bishop is the connector to the Pope and the universal church.

How do I join?

There are several options:

- Sign up cards will be available on the weekend of Jan. 15-16.
- Sign up at the Small Faith Community lunch after the 11 a.m. Mass on Sunday, Jan. 23.
- Sign up online using the QR code to the right or visit www.sta.org



A Small Faith Community's Fourth Annual Small Faith Family Feast. The caption that came with the picture read: "So here's what we do every now and then. Gather at table..." Brenda Sevcik



Annual Small Faith Community Leaders' Retreat at Ignatius House

SOME TESTIMONIES:

"During the winter five couples and two individuals met to create a small faith group. The only thing we had in common was that we were parishioners of St. Thomas Aquinas Church. Over the past ten weeks we have prayed together and shared experiences as Catholics. All of us have enjoyed each other's company and respect what the other members of our group have to say. It has been great to see each other at church events and meet everyone's families. We all agree that we would like to continue our small faith group on in the fall. If you have been thinking about doing this we feel it is a great way to connect with other members of St. Thomas Aquinas Church."

- A Small Faith Community Member

"Since I don't have a family in Georgia, they are my family. I know I can count on my small faith group for all kinds of support."

- A Small Faith Community Member

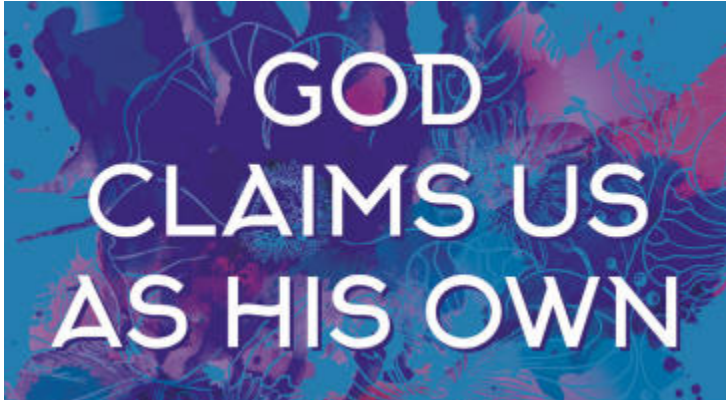
"I think I can sum it up. It's a place to be known and to be loved, and I think it is important as part of our Christian journey."

- A Small Faith Community Member

"I love the way that our small faith group comes together to serve others."

- A Small Faith Community Member





GOSPEL MEDITATION

January 9, 2022

The Baptism of the Lord

"We are called to live our baptism every day, as new creatures, clothed in Christ."

— Pope Francis

What reference point do you use when making decisions? Many times, impulse takes control and decisions are made based solely on emotion and desire. We all know that these types of decisions can often get us into trouble. When a person has a confident sense of who they are and a real understanding of what is important and of value, the likelihood of kneejerk impulsive choices diminishes. Baptism gives us what we need to make well informed and purposeful decisions. By this simple gesture, God claims us as His own and provides us with the identity and

purpose we need to properly live life.

It is tremendously reassuring, when we truly embrace this revelation and realize that we no longer have to wonder about the purpose of our lives or struggle to find our way. The answer of who we are in God has been given to us. We no longer have to fumble around, trip over ourselves or walk aimlessly about. Issues surrounding the sacredness of life, the meaning of death, the protection of those most vulnerable, care for the weak and the poor, offering hospitality to those in search of a home, the purpose and proper place of work, how to create a just social order, caring for creation, and understanding our roles as heralds and stewards are just a few of the wonderful gifts baptism brings. When we make decisions based on things such as these core Gospel truths we really act as Christ himself, revealing to others the new creations that we are. This is how we live our baptism.

It is difficult to walk against the tide. Yet, that is precisely what baptism calls us to do. Although we are sinners, in need of mercy and far from perfection we are called to order our life and make decisions based upon the wisdom and guidance of Almighty God. He alone is the one who can claim us as His sons and daughters. Standing up for our principles will not make us popular. But who ever said Christianity is a popularity contest? Baptism calls us to stand up for that which goes against the grain of secularism. Standing in line with other sinners, we have our anchor to steady us in the tempests of life and God is very pleased. Forge ahead. There is nothing to fear.

©LPi



MEDITACIÓN DEL EVANGELIO

9 de enero de 2022

El Bautismo del Señor

Con la celebración del Bautismo del Señor se da por terminado el tiempo de Navidad. El Bautismo de Jesús es como una nueva epifanía, es decir, una nueva manifestación de Dios por medio de Jesús ahora en el Jordán. "El Espíritu Santo bajó sobre él y se

manifestó exteriormente en forma de paloma, y del cielo vino una voz: Tú eres mi Hijo, hoy te he dado la vida" (Lucas 3,22). La revelación del Padre se manifiesta proclamando a Jesús como su Hijo.

El Papa Francisco en una de sus catequesis lo muestra en tres puntos muy importantes para todos los que hemos sido bautizados en Cristo Jesús: "Jesús quiso recibir el bautismo predicado y administrado por Juan el Bautista en el Jordán. ¡Cuánta humildad tiene Jesús! Y al hacerlo, manifestó lo que hemos celebrado en Navidad: sumergirse en el río de la humanidad". Jesús, va con todo a lo que refiere la cuestión humana, menos en el pecado. "El Evangelio subraya que Jesús, apenas salió del agua vio rasgarse los cielos y el Espíritu que bajaba hacia él como una paloma. El Espíritu Santo desciende en plenitud sobre Jesús para darle la fortaleza de cumplir su misión". Por medio de nuestra vocación es que tenemos nuestra misión en la vida. ¿Cómo la estamos cumpliendo? "La fiesta del bautismo de Jesús invita a cada cristiano a recordar su bautismo". ¿Sabes, o recuerdas la fecha de tu bautismo? Hay que preguntar sobre ese día y de cómo se celebró la fiesta de hacernos hijos e hijas de Dios. (Papa Francisco 1/7/2018).

©LPi



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Monday, January 10

Noon (+) Catherine Hoy by Robertson Family

Tuesday, January 11

Noon (+) Chuck Clement by Paul & Peg Daniels
(+) William Voigt by Dejarnette Family
(+) Ted Weyn Sr. by Jim Hynes

Wednesday, January 12

Noon (+) Jennifer Horst Sanders by Tom & Karin Horst

Thursday, January 13

Noon (+) Valerie Casey by Bernard Casey
(L) Lia Armistead by STA Staff
(+) Romeo Miranda by Tessa Willis
7p.m. (L) Zamorano Family intentions

Friday, January 14

Noon (+) Isabel Marino by Madelene Lipinski

Saturday, January 15

5 p.m. (+) Fr. Austin Fogarty by STA Staff
7:30 p.m. For the Intentions of the Parish Family

Sunday, January 16

8 a.m. (+) Francis Percarpio by N.T. Marinelli Jr.
11 a.m. (+) Max Cleland by N.T. Marinelli Jr.
2 p.m. (L) Familia Vicente Perez by Unity & Diversity Ministry
5 p.m. (+) Edward Masterson by Ann Masterson

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE REPOSE OF THE SOUL OF:

Carol Bradach

Prayer for Carol

Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her.

May the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace.

Amen.



REMEMBER

in your prayers

PRAY FOR OUR SICK

Fabio Alvarez
Rose Marie Barnes
Lynn Brady
Charlie Carrio
Paul Carrio
Mercel Carrio, Jr
Ellen Reuland Coons
Sally Clark
Peter Gallagher
Deacon Ed LaHouse

Lucretia Hart
Winifried Hofmann
Tashone Hypolite
John Kraw
Bob MacPhee
Andrea Miller
Marqarita Munoz
Peter Quintana
Ann Rodreguiz
Jackie School

Ed Sembera
Sandy Soltau
Roxanne Spillet
Mary Stephens
Deacon John Strachan
Tonya
Wendy Weissman
Bill Wickham

This list of those suffering illness is a ministry of Forever Young Friends and is updated at noon on Thursday every week. To be listed for six weeks, removed or extended, contact Marianne Fronek at mariannefronek@gmail.com.



Why Do We Bless Ourselves with Holy Water upon Entering the Worship Space?

Kristopher Seaman

Upon entering the worship space, we usually dip our hand into the baptismal font and bless ourselves with the Sign of the Cross. “In the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

At our Baptism, the priest or deacon either poured water or immersed us three times, while stating, “[Name], I baptize you, in the name of the Father [dip], and of the Son [dip], and of the Holy Spirit [dip].” Baptism made us Christians. This holy water cleanses, renews, and refreshes us along our Christian journey. The Sign of the Cross is a mark of the One to whom we belong—to whom we are conformed—the Triune God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Having been washed, renewed, and conformed to the image of God, the newly baptized is now a Christian.

By dipping our hand into the holy water, we renew our baptismal covenant. We participate in the life of the one who calls us to a life of discipleship, whereby we carry forth the mission of Christ by renewing the face of the earth. It is in these baptismal waters that one journeys to the eucharistic table, where we renew our baptismal covenant each Sunday. We also pass these waters on our way out of the worship space as we take leave of one another in order to live the mission of Christ as faithful disciples.

It is for this reason of renewing our baptismal covenant that the placement of the baptismal font is typically close to the entrance of the worship space or in the narthex. Just as one enters the Christian faith through Baptism, so, too, do we enter the church by renewing our entrance into the Church. Some communities have built or renovated their worship spaces to make a place for a large font. Such fonts signify the lavish and flowing love of God for his people. Some older churches have little dishes of holy water—taken from the font—by other doors than the main entrance. While these are convenient, we are invited to enter the worship space through the main doors, walking to the font, dipping our hand in holy water, signing ourselves in the Sign of the Cross, and processing in our entrance journey to reunite ourselves to the Sunday assembly. The font is the place of Baptism and has pride of place in our worship spaces.

The blessing of baptismal water contains rich imagery. It states, “By the power of the Holy Spirit give to this water the grace of your Son, so that in the sacrament of baptism all those whom you have created in your likeness may be cleansed from sin and rise to a new birth of innocence by water and the Holy Spirit” (*Rite of Baptism for Children*, 91). The three persons of Divine Mystery work through baptismal waters to refresh and renew us in our call to carry out Christ’s mission in the world. ♦

KRISTOPHER SEAMAN is the associate director of the Office of Worship for the diocese of Gary.

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