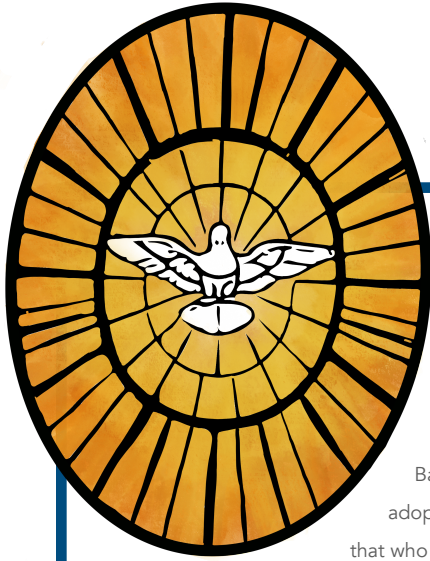


BAPTISM & CONFIRMATION



Do you know the date of your Baptism? It was the greatest day of your life! Baptism is the primary sacrament which leads us into relationship with God through Jesus Christ; we are spiritually born again, as we die to the old, unredeemed self and rise in the power of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Baptism literally changes our identity; we become an adopted son or daughter of the Father. God loves us so, that who Jesus is by nature, i.e. the Son, is generously shared with us in the waters of Baptism. Our sonship or daughtership in the Father is called the divine filiation.

Through Baptism, Christ welcomes us into the Church, His Mystical Body; from the Church, we hear God's saving Word, we share in the sacraments, we receive moral direction and enjoy the prayers of the saints in the sacred communion of Christ's Bride. The Church is our Mother, our family, our home—the sacred place where we become the missionary disciples, the saints that God calls us to be. Like any good mother, the Church births, feeds, heals, forgives, directs, and loves us unto eternal life. It all begins in Baptism.

In this first sacrament, we are washed clean of original sin. We are born into a fallen world, warped and misshaped by generations of sin, selfishness, and wrong moral choices. Moreover, we experience that fallen nature within us; left to our own devices, we will often choose naturally for selfishness over God and others. Christ saves us from all of that—the unredeemed self—as He picks us up and puts us on the path of salvation, grace, and holiness.

Originally the final anointing of Baptism, the sacrament of Confirmation has evolved over the centuries as a completion of the first sacrament and a full reception of the Holy Spirit. Our participation in the grace of Pentecost, Confirmation powerfully equips us to go forth as missionary disciples to live out the Great Commission of witnessing to Jesus and His saving Gospel. These two sacraments are fundamental, joining us to Christ and the Church and grounding our very being in the universal call to holiness and our life as participation in the Blessed Trinity.

A NOTE FROM BISHOP HYING

“

**IN VIRTUE OF BAPTISM
WE BECOME MISSIONARY
DISCIPLES, CALLED TO
BRING THE GOSPEL
TO THE WORLD.
- POPE FRANCIS**

”

YEARLY FORMATION NEWSLETTER TOPICS

EASTER 2020

The Paschal Mystery

JUNE 2020

Evangelization

JULY 2020

Discipleship

AUGUST 2020

Baptism and Confirmation

SEPTEMBER 2020

Reclaiming Sunday

OCTOBER 2020

Interior Life: Prayer

NOVEMBER 2020

Interior Life: Mortification

DECEMBER 2020

Confession

JANUARY 2021

Goodness

FEBRUARY 2021

Beauty

MARCH 2021

Truth

APRIL 2021

New Methods

SANCTIFYING GRACE AND EVANGELIZATION

LINDSAY FINN

For many of us, the two most important days of our lives are ones that we have no memory of. On the day of our birth, we took our first breaths in the world, and on the day of our Baptism—for many of us as infants—we were re-created as beloved children of our Heavenly Father and called into the family of the Church. This was accomplished through the gift of sanctifying grace.

On this day of our Baptism, we were taken up into a story and adventure, which is the mystery of God made man in Jesus Christ. As St. Ambrose wrote in his *Treatise on the Sacraments*, “See where you are baptized, see where Baptism comes from, if not from the cross of Christ, from his death. There is the whole mystery: he died for you. In him you are redeemed.”¹

The gift of faith given to us in Baptism is meant to grow into adulthood, with the Easter Vigil calling forth our recommitment to our baptismal promises.² In Confirmation, the gifts and graces of our Baptism are increased and deepened. These sacraments are given to help us live within the story of our salvation, in union with Jesus Christ.

A particular effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is a “special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses to Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross.”³

Both Baptism and Confirmation specifically empower us, through grace, to be missionary disciples. As missionary disciples, we are called to bring the gospel to the world through the work of evangelization. This mission we are given in Baptism is not accomplished by following a program or prescribed set of instructions. Missionary disciples know Jesus Christ as their beloved, and they desire to make him known to others.

Pope Francis has preached, “*No one is saved by himself. We are the community of believers, we are the People of God and in this community we share the beauty of the experience of a love that precedes us all, but that at the same time calls us to be “channels” of grace for one another, despite our limitations and our sins.*”⁴

Having meditated on the graces given to us in these great sacraments and given gratitude to God for them, we should spend time praying about who in our life God wants us to share him with—boldly, in word and action.

There is no greater gift to have received than to be called into God’s family at Baptism, set free from original sin and destined for life eternal in heaven. The more one embraces this sacramental reality, the more one’s life changes—pushing one forward in the adventure of making the mystery of Christ known to others.

[1] St. Ambrose, *De sacr.* 2, 2, 6

[2] CCC 1254

[3] CCC 1303

[4] General Audience, 15 January 2014

FURTHER STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

CATECHISM

- Baptism, 1213 - 1284
- Confirmation, 1285 - 1321

TO READ

- Pope Paul VI, [*Voi Forse Sapate*](#)
- Marcellino D'Ambrosio, [*Confirmation and Our Lord's Baptism*](#)
- Pope Saint John Paul II, 09 1998 [*Audience on Confirmation*](#)
- Pope Francis, 01 2014 [*Audience on Baptism and the New Evangelization*](#)
- Pope Francis, 12 2020 [*Homily - Baptism of Our Lord*](#)
- St. Ambrose, [*On the Mysteries and Treatise on the Sacraments*](#)
- Scott Hahn, [*Swear to God*](#)
- Archbishop Luis Martinez, [*The Sanctifier*](#)

AUDIO + VIDEO

- Fr. Mike Schmitz, [*We Must Go Out*](#)
- Bishop Barron + Word on Fire, [*The Sacraments*](#)

TIPS FOR PARISH LEADERSHIP

Spend this month considering the profound mission you were entrusted with at the day of your Baptism, which was strengthened in your Confirmation. Pray about the gifts and effects of Baptism and Confirmation daily. Make a plan to go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, as it will help to activate more of the baptismal graces in your life.

Consider what your engagement with families bringing their children to your parish for these two sacraments of initiation. Talk with your parish and school staff about how to best teach about this precious gift.

If you or others in your family were received into the Church at Baptism but were never Confirmed, know that it is never too late to approach the subject. Reach out to your Pastor to begin the conversation about what the process looks like at your parish.

FORMATION IN THE PARISH

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- What does it mean to be an adopted son or daughter of God? When's the last time you went to Confession and restored that relationship?
- Do you think of Baptism as the greatest gift you have ever received?
- How do you live differently each day as a baptized person?
- If you are a parent, how are you helping to nurture the graces and gifts given at Baptism to your children?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

- What stands in the way of you fully and enthusiastically living your life as a baptized and confirmed Catholic?
- What gaps do our parishioners and families have in their knowledge of the sacraments? How can we share about them more effectively?
- What can we do to help our parishioners understand the great gift they have received at Baptism and Confirmation, as well as the demands it places on them?

What is the day of your baptism? How can you celebrate it each year as a little feast day?

TIMELINE UPDATES AND ACTION ITEMS

PHASE ONE

LEADERSHIP FORMATION | Begins Pentecost 2020

- Principals and school staff members should be preparing for the SOWDI year, which will consist of studying along with these monthly newsletters according to an adapted schedule.
- This summer, pastors and the parish Evangelization Lead will begin to invite staff and/or parishioners to join your Evangelization Team. Take advantage NOW of 3 months FREE training courses for your parish staff and leaders at [Revive Parishes](#). Start with the course on [missionary discipleship](#), and then we would recommend the course on [evangelization](#). Browse the other [courses available](#) and ask other key leaders in your parish or school to take the course most applicable to them.

PHASE TWO

SEEKING HOLINESS | Begins Advent 2020

Beginning Advent 2020, the Bishop is asking every parish to make concerted efforts to help all members of their community to do four things: (1) re-claim Sunday as the Lord's day; (2) pray 15 minutes every day, especially with Scripture; (3) observe Fridays as days of penance throughout the year; (4) make a monthly confession.

Reflect on your own fidelity to these basic Catholic practices and start thinking about how they could be cultivated more effectively in your own parish and/or school.

PHASE THREE

CREATING PARISH PLANS | Pentecost 2021 - Advent 2021

PHASE FOUR

IMPLEMENTING PARISH PLANS | Begins Advent 2021

HOW CAN THE DIOCESE HELP?

VICARIATE COORDINATION

Diocesan staff will be planning and working with vicariates to offer opportunities to coordinate between parishes in various phases of the GMD plan.

MENTOR MEETINGS WITH PASTORS

By now, a diocesan mentor has reached out to every pastor to begin meeting regularly with pastors and their parish evangelization lead. In particular, during Phase One, mentors will help parishes stay accountable for leadership formation and for preparing the launch of Phase Two in their parish.

GO MAKE DISCIPLES WEBSITE

The GMD website will become invaluable by offering resources and ideas to read and process with your leaders in this time of formation. Phases Three and Four will be continually updated throughout this year, so visit regularly to see what has been added.

Also, on the GMD Phase One page, these newsletters are available in both English and Spanish each month.

CONTACT INFORMATION

ON THE WEB:

WWW.MADISONDIOCESE.ORG/GMD

E-MAIL:

EVANGELIZE@MADISONDIOCESE.ORG





**HOLY SPIRIT
WINDOW, 1660**

BERNINI

From Italy, Bernini was a sculptor and architect credited with creating the Baroque style of sculpture. A pilgrim to the Eternal City sees his work throughout town, from his *Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi* in Piazza Navona to *The Ecstasy of St. Teresa* in Santa Maria della Vittoria, but some of his most famous and crowning achievements are seen within St. Peter's Basilica, of which he was appointed the chief architect in 1629. Upon entering the basilica, you cannot miss the St. Peter's Baldacchino standing above the bones of St. Peter in the center of the Church. Behind the main altar, within the apse is Bernini's *Chair of St. Peter*, which contains the *Holy Spirit Window* depicted above. Fire has been a symbol of the Holy Spirit throughout the history of Church, as written so beautifully in poetic form by St. John of the Cross: *Oh, living flame of love / That tenderly woundest my soul in its deepest centre / Since thou art no longer oppressive, perfect me now if it be thy will / Break the web of this sweet encounter.* This window draws one in, asking one gazing upon it, to ponder if they are aflame with this divine love. In the work of evangelization, are we, through the gifts we received at Baptism and Confirmation, animated by the Holy Spirit and eager to share this great treasure we have received?