



## THE CHURCH OF SAINT PETER SARATOGA SPRINGS, NEW YORK

Saint Peter's is always happy to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism, which is a moment of joy for the whole Church. Whether we are sharing in the Baptism of adults at the Easter Vigil, or sharing in the Baptism of infants and young children throughout the liturgical year, we know that we are celebrating a journey of faith that has reached a new milestone. We know too that we are also pledging to journey together even further, that together we might experience more intimately the love of God who summons us ever closer.

Since Baptism, like all sacraments, involves the action of the whole Church, those approaching The Church of Saint Peter for the Baptism of their children are expected to be Christian believers and members of the parish. Since it is often the birth of a child that prompts a young couple to approach the Church community for the first time as independent adults, it is often a good time to establish a relationship with a parish community as a new Christian household. That relationship of course means more than merely filling out a form. Joining a parish means bonding with other Catholic Christians through weekend worship, lifelong faith formation and ministry. It is in fact your participation in these things that serve as the first phase of the sacramental preparation for Baptism.

At The Church of Saint Peter we try to make the celebration of Baptism part of an initiation into a church community that will strive to share our faith in the Gospel of Jesus which we hold sacred, and where that faith can be nurtured. If you would like to consider celebrating your child's Baptism at The Church of Saint Peter, please call us at the parish office at 584-2375. Once you make that call, you will be invited to meet with the Pastor or one of the members of our Parish Baptismal Team. If you have not been a member of our parish you will have an opportunity to ask any questions about parish life or Baptism, and hopefully begin to feel more at home at The Church of Saint Peter. When you do you will also have an opportunity to officially register as a parish member.

Once you have made your initial inquiries and commitments, you will be invited to be a part of the more immediate Baptismal preparation. Expectant mothers who will be seeking Baptism, are invited to celebrate God's love and care for their unborn child with a Blessing of

Pregnancy. This blessing is a liturgical sign of God's Grace and support of our parish community during this special time in the life of your family.

In order to make the celebration of your child's first sacrament as meaningful as possible for all involved, The Church of Saint Peter hosts a two-session preparation program. These sessions allow parents, godparents and sponsors, and even grandparents to discuss the history and evolution of the sacrament, the significance of the symbolism, and their own personal experiences, understandings, and feelings. Although these sessions are open to all family members, parents seeking the Baptism of their child are expected to attend. Parents may attend these sessions prior to the anticipated arrival of their newest family member.

Much like Baptism itself is lived out over time, so too is Baptism celebrated over time. At the Church of Saint Peter the community aspects of our Baptismal Rituals take place in two parts. Recognizing that Baptism is most fittingly celebrated when a community is present, The Church of Saint Peter celebrates these two liturgical moments at weekend liturgies scheduled throughout the year.

The first part, the Rite of Enrollment, normally takes place once a family has determined that they will seek Baptism for their child and have completed at least the first of the two preparation sessions. By entering the child's name in the Book of the Elect, he or she becomes a member of the parish. It is also at this time, that this child receives the Church's First Blessing.

The second part, the Liturgy of Baptism, takes place once the preparation program has been completed. At this liturgy, the child being baptized, together with the parent, godparents, families and friends are called to the font in the presence of the worshipping community. During the Baptismal Liturgy, the parish community offers its continued support with faith and prayer, as the parents strive to be not only the *first* but the *best* teachers of the faith, in fact becoming a "domestic church". This liturgy is clearly the high point in the process, celebrating the life of God in your child and in the Church Community.

We look forward to welcoming your child into the Catholic Church and celebrating with you the wonder of God's love revealed here at The Church of Saint Peter. Once again, welcome!