



Church of St. Raphael

7301 Bass Lake Road, Crystal, MN 55428
(763) 537-8401

Dear Parents,

Congratulations on your child's upcoming baptism!

What a gift you are about to give and receive. If your child's natural life can be so amazingly beautiful already, how incredible must be the supernatural, eternal life that our awesome God created us for!

When you offer your child to God in baptism, you are declaring your faith that your life and their life is *more* than just natural...more than just a stable home, food on the table, a good education, friends, a career... all good things! Yet, you have chosen something more. In baptism, we will open our hands to receive God's gift of supernatural life *as his children*.

Yes, every human being you will ever meet is a beloved child of God our Creator, but it requires a *free choice* to become a child of God *in His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ*. This free choice marks a baptized Christian forever with the Cross. All the natural goods we desire for our children are no longer the ultimate standard of success. A Christian's standard is the cross. Success is the degree to which we pour out our lives (dying to ourselves in the water) so that we may rise to new life. Baptism joins us to the Cross, and for your child who cannot yet receive this mark as a conscious, rational choice, they receive the mark of the cross *on their home, YOUR home!* Your home is the place marked by the standard of the cross, a place of that new life, a place of dying to ourselves. This is a still a *free choice*, not forced on your child, because baptism breaks the chains of original sin (which turns us inward to selfishness by default) and *liberates* your child to make a truly free decision to embrace the cross one day by their own choice.

Opening your family to this gift requires preparation. Each time a family at the Church of St. Raphael welcomes a new child to baptism, they are asked to **attend Baptism Prep, held every second and fourth Sunday of the month at noon in the main church.** It is less than an hour. This session is not just informational. It includes prayer, sharing faith with other growing families, refreshing our minds and hearts with God's Word, brushing up on the teachings of the Church, and a chance to connect with your parish priest. It is a little different every time, so it will not just repeat the same information you may have heard in the past. No registration is necessary, but you will sign a certification with the priest at that session to lock in your baptism date. Feel free to attend when you are still expecting or once your child is born. You are welcome to either bring your children or find a babysitter if you prefer. Lastly, you must **bring two items with you to the Baptism Prep: a copy/photo of your child's birth certificate and a copy/photo of the completed Godparent Affidavit,** which they will have had signed by their parish priest. As you select godparents, be sure to read the Godparent Affidavit yourselves so that you know the requirements and choose wisely!

I am looking forward to seeing you soon in person at the Baptism Prep! Do not hesitate to call me with any questions at the parish office: (763) 537-8401. My extension is #205.

-Fr. Nick Hagen
Parochial Administrator of the Church of St. Raphael