

Sacraments

The Sacraments

Christ instituted the sacraments of the new law. There are seven: Baptism, Confirmation (or Chrismation), the Eucharist, Penance, the Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony. The seven sacraments touch all the stages and all the important moments of Christian life:¹ they give birth and increase, healing and mission to the Christian's life of faith. There is thus a certain resemblance between the stages of natural life and the stages of the spiritual life.

Paragraph 1210, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Baptism

Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (*vitae spiritualis ianua*),⁴ and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: "Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word."⁵

The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation.⁶⁰ He also commands his disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to baptize them.⁶¹ Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament.⁶² The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are "reborn of water and the Spirit." *God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments.*

Paragraphs 1213 and 1257, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Infant baptism is intended for minor persons below the age of seven. Those who are age seven or above will be baptized as adults: see also, Confirmation and Eucharist.

Parents' responsibilities for infant baptism

- A child can be baptized only once. If a child has been baptized previously by anyone, even by a lay person or in a non-Catholic church, parents must inform the minister of Baptism.
- Parents are required to be registered, active and contributing parishioners of Saint Bernard for at least 3 months at the time of Baptism.
- They are required to go through Sacramental Formation (1 class) provided by the parish prior to Baptism.
- Parents are responsible to choose the Godparent(s) for their child, in keeping with the guidelines that are listed below.
- They are responsible to accept the Catholic faith which we profess in the Creed, attend Mass regularly, and live their faith by being active in the life of the Parish.
- If registered at another Parish, they must provide a written permission from the pastor of that Parish.

Godparents' Responsibilities

- Only one Godparent is required for Baptism, either male or female, and must be at least sixteen years old.
- If two Godparents are chosen, one must be male and one female.
- Godparents are expected to be practicing, active Catholics in order to be good examples of living a good Catholic way of life for the child; be capable of helping the parents in the upbringing of the child in the Catholic faith, therefore if they are married, they must be validly married in the Catholic Church.
- A Godparent must be a fully initiated, practicing Roman Catholic (One who has received the three Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and First Holy Communion). They must provide documentation from their home parish that they are practicing and active Catholics.

- A non-Catholic Christian may be chosen as a Christian witness, provided that there is at least one Catholic Godparent.

To arrange for a baptism, please contact the parish office (480-661-9843) and we will be happy to assist you with the preparation.

Confirmation

Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the “sacraments of Christian initiation,” whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace.⁸⁹ For “by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.”⁹⁰

Paragraph 1285, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Eucharist

The holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation. Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by Baptism and configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation participate with the whole community in the Lord’s own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist.

“At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet ‘in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.’”¹³⁵

Paragraphs 1322 and 1323, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

At St. Bernard’s, we practice worship of the Holy Eucharist in several forms: in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, in Holy Communion, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and Benediction. Those baptized members of the Church seeking their First Holy Communion should contact the Religious Education department for sacramental preparation. Otherwise, see our liturgy schedule for a complete list of times for Mass, Adoration, and Benediction.

Penance

“Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God’s mercy for the offense committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labors for their conversion.”⁴

Paragraph 1422, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Those baptized members of the Church seeking the sacrament of Penance, also known as Confession or Reconciliation, should consult our listing of confession opportunities. Alternatively, contact the parish office to make a private appointment with a priest.

Our schedule for the Sacrament of Penance is at 4 pm- 4:30 pm on all Saturdays.

Anointing of the Sick

“By the sacred anointing of the sick and the prayer of the priests the whole Church commends those who are ill to the suffering and glorified Lord, that he may raise them up and save them. And indeed she exhorts them to contribute to the good of the People of God by freely uniting themselves to the Passion and death of Christ.”⁹⁸

The Anointing of the Sick “is not a sacrament for those only who are at the point of death. Hence, as soon as anyone of the faithful begins to be in danger of death from sickness or old age, the fitting time for him to receive this sacrament has certainly already arrived.”¹³⁰

Paragraphs 1499 and 1514, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Those baptized members of the Church seeking the Anointing of the Sick should check the bulletin for dates and times that communal anointing is offered. We offer it each month, typically at the beginning of the month. If you have scheduled surgery, or are suffering from an illness, you may receive this sacrament. Contact the Parish office if you need the sacrament, but are unable to come to us.

Matrimony

“The intimate community of life and love which constitutes the married state has been established by the Creator and endowed by him with its own proper laws. . . . God himself is the author of marriage.”⁸⁷ The vocation to marriage is written in the very nature of man and woman as they came from the hand of the Creator. Marriage is not a purely human institution despite the many variations it may have undergone through the centuries in different cultures, social structures, and spiritual attitudes. These differences should not cause us to forget its common and permanent characteristics. Although the dignity of this institution is not transparent everywhere with the same clarity,⁸⁸ some sense of the greatness of the matrimonial union exists in all cultures. “The well-being of the individual person and of both human and Christian society is closely bound up with the healthy state of conjugal and family life.”⁸⁹

God who created man out of love also calls him to love the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. For man is created in the image and likeness of God who is himself love.⁹⁰ Since God created him man and woman, their mutual love becomes an image of the absolute and unfailing love with which God loves man. It is good, very good, in the Creator’s eyes. And this love which God blesses is intended to be fruitful and to be realized in the common work of watching over creation: “And God blessed them, and God said to them: ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.’”⁹¹

Holy Scripture affirms that man and woman were created for one another: “It is not good that the man should be alone.”⁹² The woman, “flesh of his flesh,” his equal, his nearest in all things, is given to him by God as a “helpmate”; she thus represents God from whom comes our help.⁹³ “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.”⁹⁴ The Lord himself shows that this signifies an unbreakable union of their two lives by recalling what the plan of the Creator had been “in the beginning”: “So they are no longer two, but one flesh.”⁹⁵

Paragraphs 1603 through 1605, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

General Information

Couples who wish to be married at St. Bernard of Clairvaux must meet certain criteria and adhere to specific policies. Some policies are set by the Diocese of Phoenix and some are specific to our Parish.

St. Bernard only prepares active and registered parishioners for the Sacrament of Matrimony. (Active means attending Mass, using tithing envelopes, and/or volunteering at St. Bernard of Clairvaux).

We typically reserve the use of our church for the weddings of parishioners. In keeping with our Catholic understanding of the sacramental life, it is most appropriate for couples to prepare and wed at the church they attend.

Eligibility

To be eligible for marriage preparation at St. Bernard of Clairvaux:

- If not registered and living within parish boundaries, couples must register prior to seeking permission from the pastor to begin marriage preparation. The pastor reserves the right to prolong preparation based on circumstances..
- Marriage preparation is at minimum a nine-month process. The first step in preparation should be contact with the pastor for approval and admission to the program.

Couples are strongly advised to refrain from setting a date with venues/vendors until the pastor approves and confirms the date at the church.

Please note that we only work with the couple. Phone calls from friends and family will not be accepted.

Prenuptial preparation

The goal of the marriage preparation process is to educate couples on the full truth of the Church's teaching on the sacred and sacramental nature of marriage and family life and provide them with the tools for a fulfilling and successful marriage.

The diocesan marriage preparation is a 9-month program and includes but is not limited to the following...

- Natural Family Planning classes
- Love for Life or Remarrying retreat
- Our Covenant of Love

For more information about the program, please visit <http://www.ourcovenantoflovephx.org/>
To begin marriage preparation, please contact the parish office to request an appointment.

Holy Orders

Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to his apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time: thus it is the sacrament of apostolic ministry. It includes three degrees: episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate.

Paragraph 1536, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Those baptized members of the Church seeking ordination or discerning a vocation to the religious life should contact the Diocese of Phoenix Director of Vocations, Fr. Paul Sullivan.

Funerals

All the sacraments, and principally those of Christian initiation, have as their goal the last Passover of the child of God which, through death, leads him into the life of the Kingdom. Then what he confessed in faith and hope will be fulfilled: "I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come."¹⁸⁴

The Christian funeral is a liturgical celebration of the Church. The ministry of the Church in this instance aims at expressing efficacious communion with *the deceased*, at the participation in that communion of *the community* gathered for the funeral, and at the proclamation of eternal life to the community.

Paragraphs 1680 and 1684, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Please call the Parish office (480-661-9843) if you would like to schedule a funeral Mass for a loved one. We will meet with you to help you through the process.