

Understanding the Mass

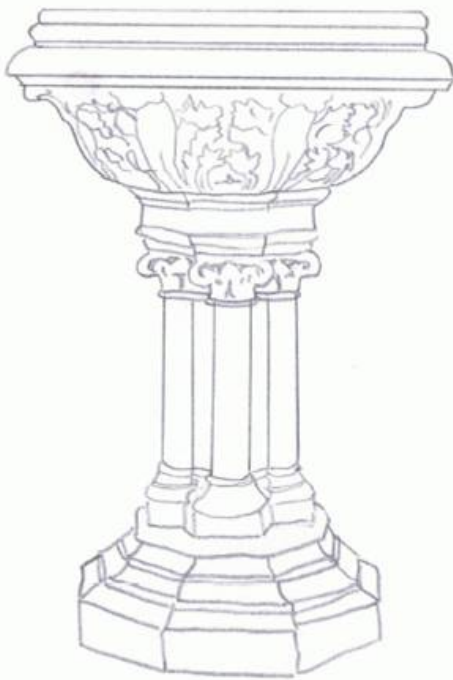
Baptismal Font

Each week, we are explaining the different parts of the Mass - what is in the church, what we use in the Mass, and why (and how) we celebrate Mass the way we do.

*Today our topic is the **Baptismal Font**.*

The **baptismal font** holds the holy water used for the Sacrament of **Baptism**, a term that comes from the Greek word βάπτισμα or *váptisma* ("immersion" or "dipping in water"). Baptismal fonts date back to the earliest days of Christianity, and can be found in the catacombs in Rome!

The main moment of baptism takes place when the priest pours blessed water over the head of the person being baptised, into the baptismal font beneath them, and proclaims: "I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."



Some baptismal fonts are three-sided as a reminder of the Holy Trinity to represent the unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three persons

Others are in octagonal shape, with 8 sides. This is both as a connection to the Old Testament practice of circumcision (which traditionally occurs on the eighth day after a baby boy is born) and with the Resurrection. Saint Ambrose and Saint Augustine reflected that "by rising, Christ loosens the bondage of death and receives the dead from their graves".

Baptismal fonts are often placed at or near the entrance to a church's **nave** - the central part of the church.

As we enter the church to pray, and we see the baptismal font, we are reminded that the Sacrament of Baptism was how we entered into the family of God: the Church, And we are also reminded that through Baptism we are all called to love and serve God, and one another.

1. Where is the baptismal font in your church? _____
2. What shape is your baptismal font? _____
3. What church were you baptised in? _____