



## SAINT JOHN FISHER PARISH

July 15, 2018

Dear Parishioners:

Recently, a parishioner commented to me that we need more holy fonts like other churches, for when people leave with only one font it gets pretty crowded.

Allow me to comment on why we bless ourselves with holy water. In our church it is true that there is only one font in which we bless ourselves: the baptismal font. This is by intent when we designed the church. The blessing with holy water has everything to do with baptism. Each time we bless ourselves with holy water, we are renewing our baptismal promise. At times we have a rite of sprinkling at Mass. It begins at the baptismal font. As the priest goes around the church, you make the sign of the cross as a sign of your baptismal renewal.

The rite of baptism for children begins at the doors of the church when the priest asks the parents the name of their child and then what they ask of God's church for their child. Once he assures the parents' and the godparents' commitment, he seals the child with the sign of the cross and asks the parents and godparents to do the same. It is only then that they enter the church. The first place they pass is the baptismal font.

You will notice that there are two parts to the baptismal font. The upper part is a circular bowl. This is where we ordinarily bless ourselves with the holy water. It is also used for pouring water over the heads of the children at baptism. The water flows into the lower pool. This is used for the baptism of older children, youths, and adults at the Easter Vigil. I actually go into that lower pool, receive the candidates for baptism, and immerse their bodies completely as I say the words of baptism. This is a powerful symbol of dying and rising with Christ as St. Paul describes in his letter to the Romans (6:3-4). The candidates descend the steps closest to the doors of the church and after baptism ascend the steps closest to the altar.

Feel free to take home some water from our baptismal font for your own holy water font at home. It is blessed and gives you an added opportunity to renew your baptismal commitment. As you enter our church it is appropriate that you bless yourself with the holy water and renew the promise you made the first time you entered the church. I only dip my hands in the font when I enter church, not when I leave. So don't feel guilty when you leave church that you can't bless yourself with holy water. You have already done it when you entered the church as you did when you first entered the church at baptism.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. David A. Sork  
Pastor