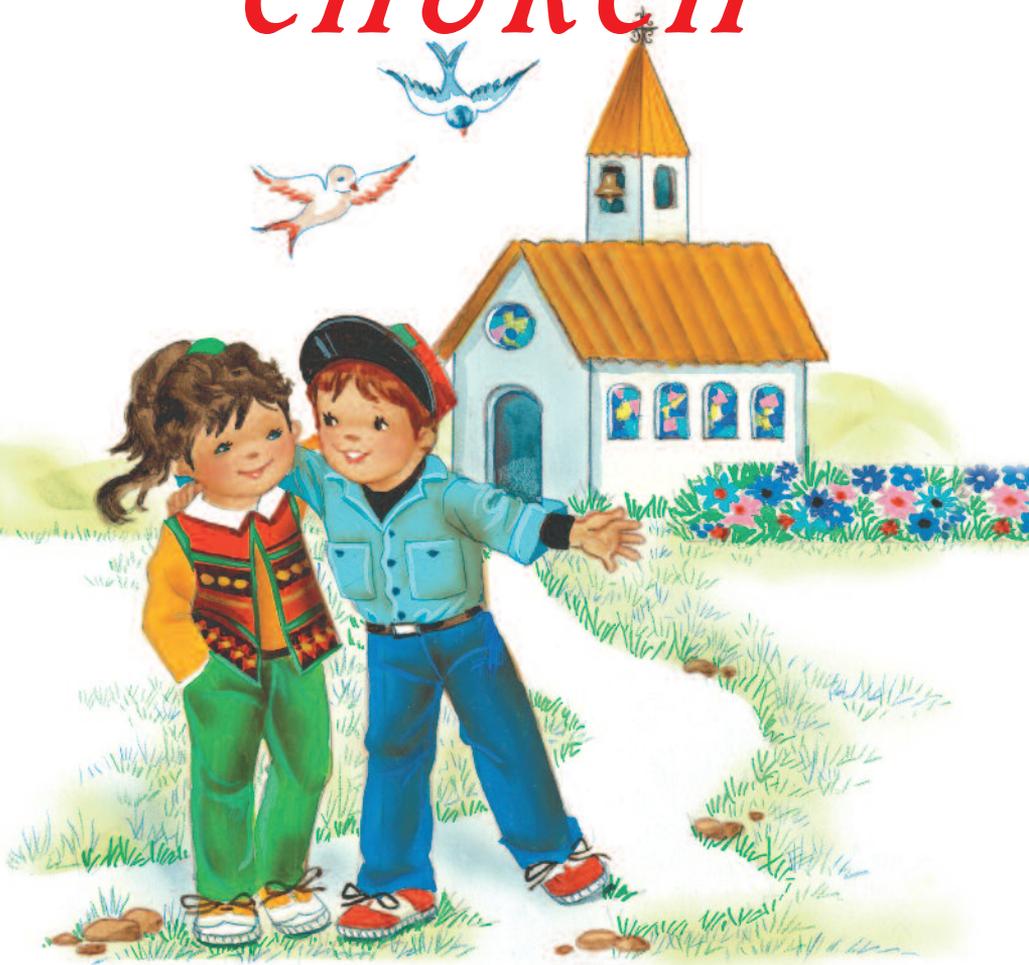


Our Parish **CHURCH**



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Printed in China CPSIA March 2015 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 U/P



GIFTS FOR GOD

AT the Preparation of the Gifts at Mass, two or three members of the community bring our *gifts* to the altar. There these gifts are lifted up to God, and we pray that God may send the Holy Spirit upon them so that they might become the Body and Blood of Jesus.

In the old days, people who went to Mass would bring all kinds of different gifts. These gifts were intended for the use of those in the community who were in need. They were also the support of those who were serving the community as priests and deacons.

Long ago, people did not use money as much as they do today. They would give their loaves of bread, their chickens, their bowls of beans, and whatever else they wanted to give to the Lord.

Because many of the gifts were a bit dirty, the priest would wash his hands after he had finished accepting the gifts. We still have the washing of hands, but now it is more to ask God to wash us free from our sins so that we can be worthy to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass.

Today, the gifts we bring to the Lord are our bread, wine, and the money that was collected from the community.

THE BAPTISMAL FONT

MOST of the people who are baptized today are babies, but there are also older people who decide that they want to become Catholic. When babies are baptized, their parents answer all the questions for them, but when adults are baptized, they answer the questions for themselves.

Before someone is baptized, the person is asked to profess his or her faith. The community prays for that person, even asking the Saints to join us in our prayers. The person to be baptized is then anointed with a special oil to prepare him or her for the Sacrament.

The main moment of the Sacrament of Baptism takes place when the celebrant pours blessed water over the head of the person being baptized. He proclaims, “I baptized you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

The blessed water is stored in a *baptismal font*. It is a holy site, for it is the birthplace of the Children of God. After this, the celebrant once again anoints the person with blessed oil. Then he gives that person a piece of white clothing and a candle, symbols that the newly baptized person belongs to God.