

It is a beautiful tradition among pious Catholics to have holy water fonts in the entrance to their homes and in common rooms. God chooses the simple things of the world for his purposes (1 Cor. 1:27), and holy water is his unique gift to fight the spiritually unclean with the spiritually clean.

“The Church encourages us to use holy water because it can yield many graces and blessings in our lives:

- It helps us to overcome temptations. The rite of providing holy water in the Roman Ritual includes an exorcism prayer: “May all evil fancies of the foul fiend, his malice and cunning, be driven afar from the place where you are sprinkled. And let every unclean spirit be repulsed by him who is coming to judge both the living and the dead and the world by fire.”
- It drives away sickness and future illnesses. Holy water can help keep away illnesses of the body, mind, and soul. One of the prayers of blessing a priest says asks that the water become “a medicine for body and soul for all who make use of” it.
- It removes venial sins. St. Thomas Aquinas wrote, “By the sprinkling of holy water the debt of venial sin is wiped out; but not always, however, are all temporal punishments relinquished.”
- It drives away the devil. St. Teresa of Avila once said, “I often experience that there is nothing the devils flee from more, without returning, than holy water.””



A simple prayer to say when using holy water:
“By this holy water and by Your Precious Blood, wash away all my sins, O Lord. Amen.”
There is no specific prayer to pray when using holy water, other than making the Sign of the Cross: “In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.”

The Baptism of Jesus

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8 Ways to use Holy Water

Holy Water is a Sacramental

Holy water is water that has been blessed by a priest. There are varying kinds of this blessed water, the principal ones of which are ordinary water, used in common sprinkling and in the wall fonts of churches and homes; and water from a holy sources, such as Lourdes.

The Roman Catholic Church currently defines sacramentals as "sacred signs which ... signify effects, particularly of a spiritual nature, which are obtained through the intercession of the Church. By using them people are disposed to receive the chief effect of the sacraments, and various occasions in life are rendered holy."

The sacramental of holy water is used in baptism, in exorcisms, at certain Masses throughout the liturgical year, at each Compline prayer in certain liturgical rites, and in funerals. It is also sprinkled on the sick. From this list, which omits several other common uses of holy water (it is used to bless just about anything), we can see that this sacramental is an integral part of Catholic life.

Any Catholic may use holy water to gain corporeal and spiritual benefits. A clean and suitable container may be brought to and filled at a Catholic parish, where holy water is almost always available in a large container, typically near the sacristy or confessionals.

8 Ways to Use Holy Water

1. Bless yourself. This suggestion is obvious, but if we are only blessing ourselves with holy water on Sunday, then aren't we missing out on the rest of the week? You can never have too much grace or blessing in your life. Use holy water daily. Keeping a holy water font in the home is a great idea so that you, your family, and guests can be blessed in the comings and goings from your home. Keep the font right by the front door to ensure you never leave home without it.

2. Bless your house. If you haven't taken the time to bless your house with holy water, then no time is better than the present. Your home is the domestic Church and is in need of spiritual protection. You can sprinkle holy water in your home yourself, or have a priest formally bless your home using holy water as part of the house blessing ceremony.

3. Bless your family. Use holy water to pray and make the Sign of the Cross over your spouse and children before they go to sleep at night. Bonding the family to each other and to God in this way is a great family tradition to adopt. Keep a holy water bottle by the bedside for this purpose.

4. Bless your work space. If you work outside of the home, sprinkling your work space with holy water is a great idea, not only for spiritual protection on the work front, but also as to sanctify your daily work for the glory of God.

5. Bless your car. The car is probably the most dangerous place where you spend a significant amount of time each day. Never underestimate the power of holy water applied to your vehicle to keep you safe from harm's way, when used in faith and trust in God. In fact, you can also have a priest bless your car with holy water.

6. Bless your vegetable garden. It was a common practice in the Middle Ages for people to sprinkle their vegetable gardens with holy water. In times when people were very dependent on crops for their livelihood, lack of rain or early frosts could be devastating. Using holy water to bless and sanctify the plants that would be used for the family's sustenance showed their reliance on God's grace.

7. Bless the sick. If you know of any sick friends or family, then blessing them with holy water probably counts as a corporeal *and* a spiritual work of mercy. If you visit the sick in a hospital or nursing home, bless their living space with holy water and leave a holy water bottle with them as a comfort in their time of need.

8. Bless your pets. Many parishes on the feast of St. Francis of Assisi have a rite of blessing for pets. Pets are loved companions for individuals and families and often provide a great service to them, and even these can be blessed with holy water because all creation has the end of giving glory to God. This also applies to livestock and farm animals that provide labor, livelihood, and nourishment to humans.