

The Sacrament of Baptism

Why do Catholics Baptise?

Because Jesus told us to. On the day of the Ascension, Jesus gathered his disciples on the mountain in Galilee just outside Jerusalem and commissioned them to, “make disciples of all nation’s, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

What does this mean?

Baptism is the sign of our unity with Christ’s community, the body of Christ, the church, and witness to the discipleship of Jesus. Baptism is a sacrament of Faith and commitment by which we respond to the gospel of Jesus who is the Christ and enter into a holy covenant with God.

Reflection when choosing Baptism for my child.

- What does it mean for you to be a member of the Body of Christ?
- How do you live out your Baptismal commitment today in love and service to God and neighbour?
- Are you ready to be a Christian parent, training your child in the practice faith, teaching them to keep God’s commandments?

A few things to keep in mind.

Sometimes parents ask to have their child baptised because of:

- *Fear*: fear of God, fear of what grandparents will say, fear of what family and friends will think.
- *Superstition*: believing that if their child is not baptised something bad will happen, or God will punish them for not doing so.
- *Their cultural heritage*: tells them that this is what you do, babies are always baptised and then you have a party in their honour.

When motivated by fear, superstition or cultural heritage, baptising our child could be a hypocritical action.

Baptism does not change God. God already loves your child, God will love us whether we celebrate Baptism or not. But Baptism, thoughtfully and reflectively celebrated, changes us and the one we bring for Baptism.

So when we choose baptism for our child it should be because you understand what Baptism is all about and you fully intend to live the Christian life. When bringing your child to the church for Baptism, your Parish Community would love to know that you are a faith-filled member:

- Sharing regularly in Mass
- Accepting the teaching of the Creed we profess to believe

- Committed to a way of life influenced by the Lord Jesus, a way of life that values prayer and service to others.

Godparents

Godparents are companions for our Journey of Faith from the waters of our Parish Baptismal font to the fullness of life in Christ Jesus. In choosing Godparents for your child, you need to consider fully initiated members of the Catholic Church who are at least 16 years of age. You want someone who knows that being a Catholic has to do with prayer, with justice toward the poor, with kindness for friends and strangers and being an active member of the faith community. *Parents may not serve in this role.*

Traditionally parents will have to choose a godmother and godfather for their child, only one sponsor or godparents is required for baptism. It is also possible to invite a person baptised in another Christian tradition (Anglican, Uniting, Church of England, Presbyterian, Lutheran etc) to be a witness at the child's baptism, along with the Catholic Godparent.

To be a Godparent means:

- To accompany the godchildren on their way;
- To discover the wonders for the world with them;
- To be their friend, whenever they need a person who has got time to play, to talk, or just be there.
- To be a Mother or Father, if the parents are missing or don't understand, if they fail or cannot cope with their task as parent or as Christians.
- To bear witness of what it means to live a Christian life, of the reliability of faith, of the endeavour to be good, of how to deal with weakness, failure and guilt, of forgiveness offered or received.
- And to pray for them and to be with them as a friend, and for a lifetime.

Can a person who has been baptised in another Christian religion be baptised again in the Catholic Church?

A person may only be baptised once. To appreciate this, you might consider the effects of Baptism. When you are baptised you become an adopted child of God, a new creature, and were given a share in God's nature. You become a member of Christ. This great gift is permanent and cannot be repeated, therefore baptism cannot be repeated.

For more information on Adult Baptism, see the RCIA information page.

Once you have considered all of the above and are ready to have your child baptised, please contact the Parish Office on 95812061. You will make an appointment with the Father or Sister, and attend an information evening. Then once you are fully prepared you will book the baptism of your child.