

# The Sacrament of Baptism



Baptism is a sacrament of initiation, which brings a person into union with Christ as a member of the Catholic Church. Parents who are seeking Baptism for their children are asking that their son or daughter be initiated into the Catholic Community and the local Church Community.

The ideal is that parents have a deep faith, which they actively live out in the experience of the Catholic Church Community – and as a result, the child's faith is learned from their parents.

The Sacrament of Baptism marks the beginning of the journey of faith. For all Christians it is the defining moment that reflects a deep union with Jesus Christ.

In this sacrament, Jesus Christ :

forgives original sin and opens the gates of heaven for us  
welcomes us into his Church  
makes us the sons and daughters of God

The day of Baptism is a great day for your child and your family. Your child joins a large family of faith which stretches back to the Lord Jesus and his early followers.

Baptism occurs only once in the life of a Christian. It is the beginning of the journey that leads to everlasting life with God.

## The Ceremony

The Sacrament of Baptism usually takes place within the Church, sometimes during Mass but it can take place as a ceremony on its own. There can be several baptisms during one ceremony.

It is an occasion for celebration, but it is not to be taken lightly. Appropriate dress needs to be worn.

The Baptismal Candle presented during the ceremony could be lit on the Anniversary of the Baptism and would be a living symbol of the promises made.

Our Father who art in Heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name;  
Thy kingdom come  
Thy will be done  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
And forgive us our trespasses  
As we forgive those who trespass  
Against us;  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.

Hail Mary, full of Grace,  
The Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou amongst women,  
and Blessed is the fruit of thy  
womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
Pray for us sinners,  
Now and at the hour of our death.  
Amen

## BAPTISM SYMBOLS

Before we begin to discuss the baptismal process, we would like you to have an understanding of the symbols of baptism: water, a white garment, oil and fire, so that when the time comes for the actual baptism to take place, you will have a better understanding of how these symbols relate to this very important sacrament of initiation.

### **Water:**

Water is a symbol of both life and death. When we are baptized into the death of Jesus, we die with him upon the cross. When Jesus dies so does all sin and death. Our baptism does not end in death but continues with life. As Jesus is raised from the dead by the Father and given new life, so are we through the waters of baptism, raised to life in Jesus Christ. The waters of Baptism wash away the darkness of Original sin and make us a new creation in Christ.

### **The White Garment:**

Once we have been claimed for Christ through the water of life, we are clothed in a white garment. This white garment, the Church, tells us an outward sign of our Christian dignity. Once we have put on Christ, we are to always walk as His followers.

### **Chrism:**

Chrism is a perfumed olive oil consecrated by the bishop during Holy Week. This oil is used to anoint the crown of the head of the person being baptized. In ancient times, men and women were anointed to be proclaimers of God's message to the world. We are anointed to bring the good news to others by the way that we live our lives. We are anointed priest, prophet and king just as Christ was thousands of years ago.

### **Candle:**

The Light of Christ is passed on to us in the form of a lit candle, which was lit from the Paschal Candle that was blessed at the Easter Vigil. We are called to be the light of Christ in the world, and we are asked by the Church to keep that light burning brightly.



## Basic Guidelines and Information for Infant Baptism

Parents are responsible for bringing their child to the Sacrament of Baptism.

In order that a child be baptized, it is necessary that...

- the parents' consent, or at least one of them, or someone legally standing in their place,
- and that there is reasonable hope that the child will be brought up in the Catholic Faith.

### **GODPARENTS:**

A person may only have one or two godparents (also called sponsors); if two are chosen, they must be male and female.

In order for someone to be eligible as a godparent, these are the requirements...

- they be chosen by the parents,
- have the ability and the intention to fulfil the role,
- be at least 16 years of age, and...
- be a confirmed Roman Catholic, who has already received the Most Holy Eucharist, is leading a life in harmony with the Catholic Faith (including Marriage) and will be a good role model for the one being baptized,
- and be neither the father nor the mother of the child.
- A baptized person who belongs to another Christian community may be admitted only as a "Christian witness" (not a godparent) provided that there is at least one Roman Catholic godparent who fulfils the above criteria. A non-baptized person cannot be a witness.

### **Baptismal Classes**

It is customary for parents to attend Baptismal classes so that they can fully understand the significance of the symbols and the meaning of the Sacrament. These classes will be arranged with the priest.