

Celebrating Holy Baptism



What is baptism?

Baptism is a ceremony of washing in water, practised by Christians since the time of Jesus. It is a sign of turning to God and of faith in Jesus Christ our Lord. At the same time, baptism symbolises Jesus' own death and resurrection. Those who ask for baptism recognise that their spiritual salvation depends on what Jesus did for them by His dying and rising again.

All who are baptised are received into the family of the Christian church.

Jesus formed this family, which we call the church, because he knew that we could not truly follow him by ourselves. Just as we need a human family for love, support and intimacy, so we also need a spiritual family where God is at the centre – a family that can support, teach and nurture us in our whole life, especially in our relationship to God.

When should we be baptised?

Baptism is right when there is a genuine desire to be a part of God's family. This can happen at any age, be it at six months or ninety-six years of age.

What are the responsibilities for parents who choose to have their children baptised?

From one point of view, baptism represents what God does for us. God gives us new birth through the Holy Spirit. This is what we pray for when we are baptised. The one essential thing on the part of the person being baptised is sincere faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the case of a child, a sponsor [usually one or both of the parents] must make this response of faith in the name of the child until such time as the child can make it his or her own.

Baptism is something we live out. It is a **journey** into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. While we can still pray to God at home or work, to fully live out our faith we need to worship God and this happens at church on Sunday and other days during the week.

Baptism is being a member of God's family. It is in God's family that we learn and experience God's love for us. Baptism cannot express its fullest meaning if we never become a part of God's family and attend worship.

BAPTISM - A JOURNEY OF FAITH

Baptism is a journey and we are all at different stages in that journey. Here are some questions to ask that may help in your inquiry about celebrating Holy Baptism for your child.

- **Where am I on the journey?**

Have a look at the two leaflets on God's revelation that may help you in answering this question. If you would like to seek more understanding of what the Christian faith is all about or have questions please don't hesitate to ask Fr Alan or contact one of our baptismal ministers. We are here to help you on the journey.

- **Can I take on the promises and responsibilities of bringing my child on the journey?**

Read carefully the Baptism service and the questions that you will be asked.

- **Am I already on the journey?**

This is something only you can answer. You may need to take some time to think about this and explore your own faith and journey first before doing so with your child.

- **What if I am not ready?**

Then that is fine. Consider having the Thanksgiving, naming and blessing service first which gives thanks to God for your child and celebrates his/her birth and your new family. In this service you are not asked to make promises or commitments that you feel you cannot make.

HOLY BAPTISM

The Presentation

I invite the parent/s and sponsors of these candidates to present them for baptism.

1/We present [full name of candidate] **for Holy Baptism.**

Will you accept the responsibilities placed upon you in bringing *name/this child* for baptism?

I will.

Are you willing to answer on behalf of *name/this child* ?

I am.

By your own prayer and example, by your friendship and love, will you encourage *him/her/them* in the life and faith of the Christian community?

I will, with God's help.

The Decision

The Presider says to the candidates able to answer for themselves, and to the sponsors of other candidates.

Before God and this congregation, you must now declare your repentance:

Do you turn to Christ?

I turn to Christ.

Do you repent of your sins?

I repent of my sins.

Do you reject selfish living and all that is false and unjust?

I reject them all.

Do you renounce Satan and all evil?

I renounce all that is evil.

Almighty God deliver you from the power of darkness and lead you in the light of Christ to God's everlasting Kingdom.

Amen.

Will you each by God's grace, strive to live as a disciple of Christ, loving God with your whole heart, and your neighbour as yourself, until your life's end?

I will with God's help.

The Presider says to the people.

You have heard these our brothers and sisters respond to Christ. Will you support them in this calling?

We will.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The people remain seated for the prayers. The Presider says

Let us pray for the world and for the church.

God of grace.

Hear our prayer.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The Presider invites the candidates and sponsors to stand and reaffirm their baptismal profession in the words of the Apostle's Creed.

I ask you now to reaffirm as yours the faith of the Church.

Do you believe in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in God the Son?

**I believe in Jesus Christ,
God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended to the dead,
on the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come again to judge
the living and the dead.**

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith:

We believe in one God:

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*The people sing the following hymn while the ministers
candidates and sponsors process to the font.*

**Baptised in water, sealed by the spirit
cleansed in the blood of Christ our king
heirs of salvation, trusting his promise,
faithfully now God's praise we sing.**

**Baptised in water, sealed by the spirit
dead in the tomb with Christ our king
one with his rising, freed and forgiven
thankfully now God's praise we sing.**

**Baptised in water, sealed by the spirit
marked with the sign of Christ our king
born of one Father, we are his children
joyfully now God's praise we sing.**

The people turn towards the font and water is poured into the font.

THE BAPTISM

The Presider says the prayer of thanksgiving over the water.

The Lord be with you
And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The following response is said by the people after each section.
Thanks be to God.

*The candidates are brought to the water. Water is poured over the candidate three times in the name of the Holy Trinity. After the third time the people say **Amen.***

The newly baptised are anointed with holy oil and signed with the cross.

Then the Presider says

Live as a disciple of Christ:
fight the good fight,
finish the race, keep the faith.

**Confess the faith of Christ crucified
proclaim his resurrection
look for his coming again.**

A lighted candle is presented to the candidate by the sponsor who says.

God has called you out of darkness into marvellous light.
**Shine as a light in the world
to the glory of God the Father.**

God has called you into Christ's Church.
**We therefore receive and welcome you
as a member with us of the body of Christ,
as a child of the one heavenly Father,
and as an inheritor of the kingdom of God.**

The candidates are welcomed with applause.