

Baptism Information from the Baptism Team

This is to replace the meeting we normally have prior to the Baptism Day but which is not now possible to have due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Welcome to the Ceremony of Baptism—here is some helpful information about Baptism and also some practical details for the day of your child's Baptism

Two members of the Baptism team will be there on the day to help you celebrate the beautiful sacrament of Baptism

It is not a naming ceremony—it is a sacrament

□ Baptism -The Sacrament

What is a Sacrament?

The sacraments instituted by Jesus are channels of God's grace into our lives. Each sacrament is meant to draw us closer to God, often at important times in our lives such as birth marriage and death. The grace we receive helps us to keep the commandments and live good lives as God intends for us. In this way we fulfill our mission as baptised Christians to bring the Light of Christ into our world (families/workplaces, community).

The Sacrament of Baptism

The word Baptism is of Greek origin meaning to wash or immerse. It is the basis of the whole Christian life. To be baptised is to become Christian and experience for life both the blessings and responsibilities of that commitment. It is a sign of life-God's life, eternal life.

Baptism is for your child the gateway to all the sacraments. It is through Baptism that we are reborn as children of God. It is one of the sacraments of initiation -for example, you must be Baptised to receive the sacraments of Communion and Confirmation.

□ Baptism- the Ceremony

On the day, you will be given a laminated sheet with the important responses on it –normally we have a booklet but we cannot use this due to Covid restrictions

The Celebrant will ask parents

- ✓ what names have you given to your child ? (usually individually) and
- ✓ what do you ask for your child? Collectively (all the parents present)

(IT IS IMPORTANT TO ANSWER OUT..... THE NAME ...AND BAPTISM

At this stage of the baptism ceremony, parents make a solemn promise to bring up their child in the faith. Nobody can be a Christian on their own - we need to be part of a faith community. (See content of booklet)

Parents and Godparents are now asked to make the sign of the cross on the child's forehead

The Readings

We listen to the word of God and this sets the scene for the beginning of your child's life of faith. These words guide and assure us of God's love for us. The word Gospel means Good News and in the Gospel, Jesus speaks to us personally.

Prayers of the Faithful

On the day, a member of the Baptism Team will ask if any member of their family would like to participate by saying one of the Prayers of the Faithful-these are all written on the laminated sheet. Some members of your families may add their words in the form of Prayers of the Faithful.

First Anointing

Your child will be anointed with the oil of Baptism ,also known as oil of Catechumens. A Catechumen was a person preparing for Baptism in the early Church.

It is a simple olive oil which has been blessed by the Archbishop on Holy Thursday in the Pro-Cathedral and distributed to the parishes. It is the oil of purification before the pouring of water. It is rubbed on your child's chest and it signifies strength and prepares them for the challenges of life ahead.

*****Make sure that the garment the baby is wearing is open at the front so that the priest can anoint the chest easily.*****

Because of Covid-19, the celebrant will use cotton wool or a cotton bud for the anointing

Blessing of the Baptismal Water //Renewal of Baptismal vows

The priest will now bless the water which has been boiled and sufficiently cooled –the water with which your baby will be baptised

Jesus Himself was baptised in the river Jordan by John the Baptist. If you happen to have water brought from the Jordan, it can be added to the font as has happened recently here. (Just let the Baptismal team know)

You will get a small bottle of the baptismal water before you leave the church

In the early church, adults only were baptised and therefore made their promises. You now make the promises on behalf of your child –these are again on the laminated sheet

Pouring of the water

Each family, Parents + Godparents, will be invited to come to the Baptismal font for the pouring of the water. If there are any siblings they are welcome to come forward as well. Photographs can be taken at this stage –limited to one or two.

Water brings life to our world in a million different ways. In Baptism water signifies grace gifted to us in this sacrament.

Water is poured three times on the baby's head –In the name of the Trinity-God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This is a sacred moment of initiation. As parents you must now guide your child in the Christian way of life.

Anointing with Chrism

The oil of Chrism is olive oil to which balm has been added. It's a sweet smelling oil. Your child will be anointed on the crown of its head—remove any head covering as necessary. The next time your child will be anointed with chrism is at Confirmation. **We are anointed for mission** - just as in Old Testament times people were anointed for a special role - as priest, prophet and king. Anointing with oil is an ancient eastern tradition –Kings and royalty were anointed for strength for the journey ahead

White Robe—Duty of the Godmother

Traditionally in the early church , people were submerged in pools and when they came out they were clothed in a white robe signifying new life in the Spirit. People wore this garment for a full week.

This robe can be a simple blanket—doesn't have to be new—and can a family heirloom handed down from previous generations. This is a nice way to signify the handing on of the faith. The clothing of the child in the white robe is the Function of the Godmother. She swaddles the baby completely in the garment

Baptismal Candle—Duty of the Godfather

The Candle is lit from the Pascal candle—which represents the Light of Christ. This Light will guide your child throughout its life.

The role of the Godfather is to light the candle from the Pascal candle

***Remember to remove the plastic paper wrapping from the candle*

Blessing of Ears and Mouth--Ephpheta

Ephpheta means be opened –spoken by Jesus when he cured a man who was deaf and could not speak.

The Priest blesses the ears and mouth of the child –our prayer for them as they grow up is that they will always be able to hear God's word of Love and give God's praise in all they say and do

The Our Father

WE now pray for the newly baptised. Together everyone present joins in the family prayer of Christians, the Lord's Prayer.

Blessings

The Celebrant prays blessings for the Parents, Godparents, Grandparents and the wider Christian Community

Some important practical information

- Times—check which Church and the time—you need to be there 15mins in advance
- Church Seating will be reserved for Parents/ Godparents (Names on Seats)
- Baptismal Cert will be given out on the day
- If non attendance, must let us know by coming to church
- If any item is forgotten, spares are available in the sacristy—just ask baptism team member ie The Candle or Christening Robe
- If baby is upset, feel free to walk around
- Webcam—in St. Marys. Anyone at home or abroad can watch the ceremony
- Health and Safety – Please make sure young children are kept away from the sharp marble Altar steps
- Sanctity of the Church / altar area—children shouldn't be allowed to run around the altar—it is a sacred space.

Enjoy the Day—from the Baptism Team