

BAPTISM

‘The Christian Community welcomes you with
great joy’



The Catholic Church
of
Christ the King
Walkden

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Baptism, which is necessary for salvation, is the sign and the means of God's love; that love which, by freeing us from original sin and communicating to us a share in divine life, makes our hearts ready to search for Him.

To help you to understand better what baptism means and entails we have prepared this question and answer booklet for you and the godparents. It will, we hope, answer some of your questions and remove any fears or doubts you might have. Please do feel free to ask if there is something you do not understand or is unclear. To help you to fulfil the responsibility that baptism brings and to have a greater understanding of what it means to be Christian parents and godparents you will be asked to attend three preparatory sessions. The godparents are asked to come to the third session.

Please do not make any arrangements regarding the baptism – such as godparents or the reception – until you have spoken to the parish priest.

More information about the choice of godparents and who can be a godparent is available in the leaflet, *Baptism – being a child's Godparent*.

A time and date convenient to yourselves will be arranged so that the programme and what it entails can be explained; this could be at your home or at the presbytery.

Q...When will we be able to have our baby baptised?

A...A date will be set, if this is appropriate, after you have attended the third of the three sessions and you have shown that you take seriously the commitment of your own baptism. Assurances must be given that the gift thus granted can grow by an authentic education in the faith and Christian life, in order to fulfill the true meaning of the sacrament. The reason for this is because the Church must have a well-founded hope that the baptism will bear fruit...But if these assurances are not really serious there can be grounds for delaying the sacrament. An example of such assurance is the choice of godparents who will take sincere care of the child

Any delay in the baptism of your child is meant for the good of all concerned and should be seen as an educational delay...helping the family to grow in faith or to become more aware of its responsibilities.

In the case of Catholic parents you will, if you were not baptised at Christ the King, need to provide a certificate of your own baptism. This can be obtained from the parish where you were baptised.

Q...We are not married, will this matter?

A...Your child is a gift from God, bringing a shared responsibility. Their baptism is an opportunity for you to reflect on the importance of the Sacrament of marriage and

what this Sacrament brings to both your relationship with each other and your role as Christian parents.

Q...I am not a Catholic, will I be expected to take part in the ceremony?

A...You may take as much a part as you are comfortable with.

Q...We do not live in the parish of Christ the King, Can our child be baptised here?

A... 'As a rule and unless a just reason suggests otherwise, an adult is to be baptised in his or her proper parish church, and an infant in the proper parish church of the parents.'

Q...How much will it cost?

A...There is no charge for any of the Sacraments; you may, if you wish, make a donation to the church.

Q...Can we take photographs or use a video camera?

A...Not during the actual baptism ceremony. You may take photographs afterwards.

Q...What will we need for our child's baptism?

A...You will need faith, godparents, a white garment and a lighted candle; the reasons for these are as follows.

Faith

Although your child will be baptised 'in the faith of the Church' your own personal faith is vitally important. For without faith the baptism would not bear fruit. The Church recognises that it is your natural right and duty as parents to be the first teachers of your child in the ways of faith. 'Parents above others are obliged to form their children in the faith and practice of the Christian life by word and example; godparents and those who take the place of parents are bound by an equivalent obligation.'*(Canon 774§2)* The Church does not admit a child to Baptism without its parents' consent; and there must be a serious assurance that after Baptism the child will be given a Catholic upbringing.

At the baptism of a child the priest begins by saying to the parents: You have asked to have your child baptised. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training him/her in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him/her up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbour. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking? After this he asks the godparents: Are you ready to help the parents of this child in their duty as Christian parents?

It is only after you and the godparents have made an assurance that your faith is strong enough, and that you have a serious commitment to bringing your child up in the practice of the Catholic faith, does we move to the next step, which is the baptising of your child.

Godparents

'In so far as possible the one to be baptised is to be given a godparent who is...together with the parents, to present an infant at the baptism, and who will help the baptised to lead a Christian life in harmony with baptism, and to fulfil faithfully the obligations connected with it.'*(Canon 872)*

Who can be a godparent?

The Church states: 'To be admitted to the role of godparent, a person must: 1. be designated by the parents and have the intention of performing this role; 2. have completed the sixteenth year or it seems to the pastor or minister that an exception is to be made for a just cause; 3. be a **Catholic** who has been **Confirmed** and has **already received the sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist** and leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken. §2. A baptised person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community may not be admitted except as a witness to baptism and together with a Catholic godparent.'*(Canon 874§1)*

How many godparents?

The number of godparents, by tradition, in the Catholic Church is: 'Only one male or one female godparent or one of each sex is to be employed.'*(Canon 873)*. For Catholic godparents you will need to provide proof of their Baptism and Confirmation (this can be obtained from the church where these Sacraments were received); for Christian witnesses, i.e. non-Catholics, only proof of baptism is required.

A White Garment

This symbolises how, through baptism, the newly-baptised has become a new creation. The Christening shawl – or a plain, white scarf – may be given as a gift from your family or friends to your child on this special occasion. The garment is given to the child to wear after the actual baptism. As the garment is wrapped around your child the priest says: *See in this white garment the outward sign of your Christian dignity. With your family and friends to help you by word and example, bring that dignity unstained into the everlasting life of heaven.*

A lighted candle

The candle is a symbol of Christ the Light of the World and of the light of faith. As the priest gives you the candle he says: *Receive the light of Christ. Parents and godparents, this light is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly. This child of*

yours has been enlightened by Christ. He/she is to walk always as a child of the light.

The candle – the symbol of the faith which is to be passed onto to your child – is given to you, the parents, as you are their first teachers in the ways of faith.

By Baptism your child has begun a journey of initiation into the Christian community. This journey will come to its completion in the Sacraments of Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist.

All the above is to help you to understand the importance of the Sacrament of Baptism and to help you recognise the responsibilities you are undertaking.