**The Sacrament of Baptism**

**St Mary’s Pro-Cathedral**

For those bringing a child for baptism we congratulate you on the birth of your child! The parish of St. Mary’s Pro-Cathedral rejoices with you and looks forward to welcoming your child into the local Roman Catholic community.

For adults who have been moved by the Holy Spirit to become a member of the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, the Church also rejoices, and we look forward to welcoming you into the local Roman Catholic community.

**Q. How does the Church welcome your child, or an adult, into the parish, into the Church, into the community of believers?**

**A.** Through the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism**.**

**Q. What is the Sacrament of Baptism?**

**A**. The Church tells us that the Sacrament of Baptism is the first of the three Sacraments of Initiation, the others being Holy Communion (Eucharist) and Confirmation. Baptism is the beginning of the sacramental life of a Christian:

*“Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments”* ***Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC #* 1213)**

Baptism is the foundational Sacrament and the prerequisite for all other sacraments. It unites us with Jesus Christ, incorporates us into his redemptive death on the Cross, thereby freeing us from the power of Original Sin and all personal sins, and causes us to rise with him to a life without end. Since Baptism is a covenant with God, the individual must say **“Yes”** to it. In the baptism of a child/children, the parents confess the faith on behalf of the child/children.

**Q. How is Baptism administered?**

**A.** In the Sacraments we meet Jesus. Sacraments use familiar, everyday things, (like water, oil, bread, movement) to make real for us the presence of Jesus. Each day we use words and signs to communicate with one another. God also communicates with us in the sacraments through words and signs. The signs used in Baptism are water, oil, white garment and light. When someone is baptised, that person is joyfully made a child of God the Father, a brother or sister of Christ, and a member of the people of God, the Church.

The baptism ceremony for adults and teens is similar to baptism of children except that you make the baptismal promises yourself. Instead of godparents, adults have sponsors whose role is to encourage you in the Catholic Faith.

**Q What is the effect of Baptism for the baptised person.**

**A.** From this moment onwards, the faithful will be united with Christ, in his death, resurrection and glorification. The ‘old’ person as it were will no longer exist, now there will be a ‘new’ person, a Christian freed from evil and an effective member of the Christian Community, the Church. One who has in all respects become a Son/Daughter of God, reborn through the water and the Spirit, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, enlightened by the light of Christ and saved from the darkness of sin, made a participant in the new people of God.

Baptism transforms us. It marks our soul for life and eternity and that mark cannot be removed. In baptism, the Holy Spirit moves us to answer Christ’s call to holiness. In baptism, we are asked to walk by the light of Christ and to trust in his wisdom. We are invited to submit our hearts to Christ with ever deeper love.

**Do you wish to receive the Sacrament of Baptism?**

Baptism is a Sacrament of faith, and the Church asks for a serious and loving commitment by the parents and godparents of a child to live the life of the Sacraments.

**For children aged 6 and below:**

At least one **parent** should be a practising Catholic.

**Godparent,** one or two (one male and one female), who is a confirmed Catholic over the age of 16

**Practical Information**

Baptism requests will be considered if the family live in the parish of the Pro-Cathedral or if there is a strong pastoral reason(s) indicated.

**Making a Booking**

Baptisms take place on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month at 12:30 in St Kevin's Oratory, which is part of the Pro-Cathedral. No more than two families will be present for the celebration of the Sacrament.

Step 1 – Contact the parish secretary for availability.

Step 2 – A Parent or Parents must fill out the baptismal request Form themselves (see link) and return it with a copy of the Birth Certificate.

***NB:*** *this is to be done in advance, preferably about 4 weeks prior to the preparation meeting (see below).*

**Preparation for Baptism in the Parish of the Pro-Cathedral**

All families, who ask the church to baptise their child, will be requested to attend a preparation meeting which will take place in St Kevin's Oratory on the second Wednesday of each month (access via Thomas Lane off Cathedral Street). This meeting helps parents/guardians to gain a deeper understanding of the significance and meaning of baptism. The team will also briefly give an outline of the *Rite of Baptism* (ceremony). The gathering also provides an opportunity to meet other parents whose children are being baptised.

***Day of Baptism – Things to remember***

* A White Shawl
* A Baptismal Candle

**For children aged 7 to 18:**

Please contact the parish for more information. Contact details are listed below.

**For adults**:

If you would like to be baptised as an adult you will need to participate in some accompaniment and instruction through the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA). Traditionally adult baptisms take place during the ceremony of the Easter Vigil. For information on the RCIA programme please contact the parish (see below).

If you are not Catholic but have received Baptism as described above, we consider your baptism valid. So, you will not be baptised again if you choose to join the Catholic Church. Rather, you will be initiated into full communion with us through the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.

Please contact the parish for more information

Parish Office: Monday to Saturday 09:30 – 14:00

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