

INSTRUCTION ON INFANT BAPTISM FOR PARENTS, GODPARENTS, & WITNESSES

WELCOME

On behalf of the parish and all our parishioners here in Fleet and Church Crookham, I most warmly welcome you into our community. You are among friends and fellow brothers and sisters.

WHAT IS THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church **#1213** defines Baptism thus: "Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission. Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water in the word."

PART OF THE SACRAMENT OF INITIATION: Baptism is the foundation of the Christian life and the door to the other sacraments. Without that foundation, no other house can be built. It is the beginning of the person's journey of faith and Christian life. Baptism, together with the Sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Eucharist, make-up the Catholic Church's Sacrament of Initiation.

WHY DOES THE CHURCH BAPTISE INFANTS?

According to ***PASTORALIS ACTIO*** issued by the Congregation of Doctrine and Faith in 1980, it addressed the above by stating that it has always been the practice of the Church to baptize infants. From the earliest days, when an adult was baptized so was everyone else in that person's household (see Acts 10). After the Second Vatican Council the adult Catechumenate (RCIA) was restored, but in keeping with the long-standing tradition of the Church, infant baptism is still normative.

BUT INFANTS HAVE NO SINS SURELY?

Although infants have not committed any personal sins, they are tainted by the ORIGINAL SIN of Adam according to the Catechism **#402** since the whole humanity is in Adam **#404**.

Since this Original Sin of Adam is transmitted to all humanity, the Church baptizes for the remission of sins even tiny infants who have not committed personal sin **#403**.

Through BAPTISM, the Church fulfils the command of Christ in Matthew 28:19, to make disciples of all nations and baptise them in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

IS BAPTISM NECESSARY?

Absolutely YES!

The Catechism #1257 puts it thus: "Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament. The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude; this is why she takes care not to neglect the mission she has received from the Lord to see that all who can be baptized are "reborn of water and the Spirit." God has bound salvation to the sacrament of Baptism, but he himself is not bound by his sacraments."

WHO CAN BAPTIZE?

According to the Catechism #1256, the ordinary ministers of Baptism in the Latin Church are the bishop and priest and the deacon.

However, in danger of death or necessity, any person, even someone not baptized, can baptize, if he/she has the required intention of doing what the Church does when she baptizes, and apply the Trinitarian baptismal formula, that is, In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

That person must then inform the parish office and have the details entered in the *BAPTISM REGISTER* for posterity.

WHAT ARE THE BAPTISMAL SYMBOLS?

- ❖ **Baptismal font:** The baptismal font is a large basin, usually placed on top of a pillar or stand, but it may emanate from the floor. Years ago, it was customary to place the font in a baptistery, a separate room apart from the body of the church, but today it is more common to position the font in the entryway or a prominent location within the church.
- ❖ **Water:** Water is a symbol of divine life, grace, new birth, growth, power, deliverance, cleansing and the covenant.
- ❖ **Oil:** Two kinds are used. The Oil of the Catechumens is used after the prayer of exorcism and applied to the chest. It represents salvation as well as the strength and power that come from Christ our Saviour. After Baptism, Sacred Chrism is used to anoint the crown of the head, and it represents salvation, participation in the priesthood of Christ, membership in the body of Christ and a share in eternal life.
- ❖ **White Garment:** It is an outward sign of the person's Christian dignity. It also signifies that the person has become a new creation and has been clothed with Christ.
- ❖ **Paschal Candle:** The baptismal candle is lit from the Paschal Candle. The candle represents the risen Jesus, who is the light of the world (Jn 8:12). Jesus is the light

that guides every baptized person. It also represents the flame of faith, which is to be kept burning brightly.

THE VARIOUS PARTS OF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

- Introduction, Reception, and Interrogation
- Liturgy of the Word and Intercessions
- Prayer of Exorcism and Anointing before Baptism
- Blessing of the Baptismal Water
- Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith
- Baptism proper
- Anointing with Chrism
- Clothing with White Garment
- Giving of Lighted Candle
- The Lord's Prayer
- Conclusion and Blessing

THE EFFECTS OF BAPTISM



THE FIVE EFFECTS OF BAPTISM

-  **We are granted justification or sanctifying grace**
When we're baptised, our original sin is forgiven and, in the case of adults, personal sins.
-  **We receive the three theological virtues**
Faith, hope and charity, the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the other virtues are received.
-  **We receive the sacramental grace**
It offers the necessary help to live a Christian life. It makes us capable of believing in God, of waiting on Him and loving Him.
-  **A sacramental character is imprinted in us**
It is an indelible spiritual mark that is imprinted during Baptism. It makes us part of the Church, Body of Christ.
-  **It makes us part of the common priesthood of the faithful**
Participation is in two forms: active, through evangelization and sanctifying all temporal realities and passive, by receiving the other sacraments.

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS  **CatholicLink** SOURCE: CATHOLIC.NET

WHO ARE THE GODPARENTS AND WITNESSES?

The sponsor (**GODPARENT**) is to assist the parent and the infant at baptism and help the baptized to lead a Christian life in harmony with baptism, and to fulfil faithfully the obligations connected with it” (**Canon 872**).

One sponsor, male or female, is sufficient; but there may be two, one of each sex (**Canon 873**). Sponsors must: be sixteen (16) years of age, “be a Catholic who has been Confirmed and has already received the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with the faith and role to be undertaken” and “not be the father or mother of the child being baptized” (**Canon 874**).

However, “a baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community may be admitted as a WITNESS to baptism, together with a Catholic sponsor” (**Canon 874.2**)

THE ROLES OF THE PARENTS OF THE INFANT/S BEING BAPTISED

- It is based on the faith of the parents that the child is baptised. Hence, the parents have a lot to do. **Canon 868n2**
- They will attend Baptism Preparation Session **Canon 852n2**
- They will bring up the child in the practice of the Faith
- They will be present and punctual on the day of Baptism
- They will follow the instructions of the minister on the day like, tracing the cross on the forehead of the child etc.
- They will bring with them all the things required like: White Cloth, Candle, etc.
- They will profess the Faith of the Church.

WHAT NAME HAVE YOU GIVEN YOUR CHILD?

As a minimum, the Church requires that no name "foreign to a Christian sensibility" be given to the child (**Canon 855**). Consider, however, choosing a name for the child from the rich tradition of models of the Christian life. There are materials to help you in that.

IS THERE A FEE FOR BAPTISM?

The Church never charges for the celebration of a Sacrament. However, Catholics give out of gratitude for what they have received from God. A minimum donation of £30 is recommended to be given to the minister after the celebration of the baptism. You can definitely give more if you can afford it.

Parish of Fleet and Church Crookham