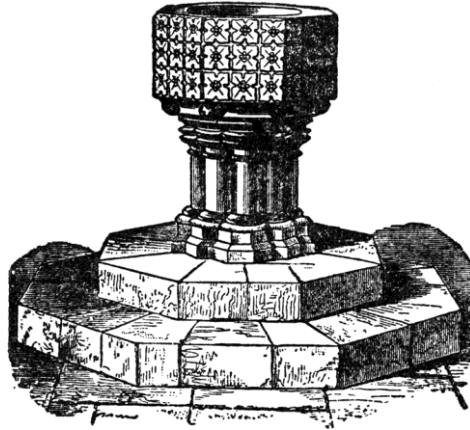


# **BAPTISMS at ST THERESA'S and ST JOSEPH'S Catholic Churches**



**Baptism is not simply a “naming ceremony” or even just a blessing for a new baby. It is the beginning of the Christian life and the gateway to eternal life. Because of this, the sacrament is taken very seriously in the Church.**

## **A sacrament**

We believe that Baptism is a sacrament, an action of Jesus Christ in his Church.

## **What Baptism does for your child**

In this sacrament Jesus Christ

- ⊕ forgives original sin and opens the gates of heaven for us
- ⊕ welcomes us into his Church
- ⊕ makes us sons and daughters of God

## **Your duties**

The ceremony of Baptism assumes a well-founded hope that you will bring your child up in the practice of the faith. This means that you will

- ⊕ teach your child to pray
- ⊕ teach your child to lead a good Christian life
- ⊕ come to Mass on Sundays
- ⊕ teach your child the Catholic faith

## **Preparation**

Dates for baptism will normally be agreed after the completion of the preparatory programme in order to provide opportunities for discussion of any queries and resolution of any issues that might arise.

While “the faith required for (adult) Baptism is not a perfect and mature faith”, it is “a beginning that is called to develop.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1253) Parents need a faith which is mature if they are to pass it on to their children and this programme is aimed at assisting parents (and godparents) to reflect maturely on their faith. For infant baptism, parents must be practising Catholics attending mass every Sunday in order that there be “a realistic hope that the child will be brought up in the catholic religion. If such hope is truly lacking, the baptism is ... to be deferred and the parents advised of the reason for this.” (*Code of Canon Law* 868)

Godparents “must be firm believers, able and ready to help the newly-baptised – child or adult – on the road of Christian life.” (*Catechism* 1255) Only “a catholic who has been confirmed and has received the blessed Eucharist and who lives a life of faith befitting the role to be undertaken” (*Code* 874) (i.e. only a practising catholic) may be admitted as a godparent. The parish priest will advise as to the suitability of a proposed godparent.

A baptised member of a non-catholic community (e.g. Church of England or other Christian denomination) may not be a godparent at the baptism of a catholic but may stand as a witness as long as there is a catholic godparent. Note that a catholic may not be godparent to a non-catholic child or adult but may be a witness together with the non-catholic godparent.

“Parents are obliged to see that their infants are baptised within the first few weeks. As soon as possible after the birth, indeed even before it, they are to approach the parish priest to ask for the sacrament for their child, and to be themselves duly prepared for it.” (*Code* 867)

## **The ceremony**

Since Baptism is never a private affair but entry into the family of the Church, your child might well be baptised with other children.

Baptisms will normally take place on Saturday mornings at St Joseph's at 11.00am and Sunday at 12.15pm at St Theresa's. Some may occur during one of the Sunday Masses in the presence of the parish community.

During the Baptism there are various ceremonies that the priest will explain. If you have a white shawl, this will be used as a part of the ceremonies. A candle is also given as a sign of the resurrection of Jesus. The Church will provide this.