



Saint Paul's
CATHOLIC PARISH ALBION PARK

The Sacrament of Baptism

In the sacraments of initiation - Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist - we are freed from the power of darkness. We are joined to Christ's death, burial and resurrection. We receive the Spirit of adoption making us God's sons and daughters. With the entire people of God we celebrate the memorial of the Lord's death and resurrection.

What is the Sacrament of Baptism?

Through Baptism a person is welcomed into the Church community. The person - infant, child or adult - enters into the life of God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit – through the waters of Baptism. He or she is dedicated to God and all that is good.

The bond of Baptism binds a person to God forever; the bond is unbreakable and unrepeatable.

What happens during the Baptismal Ceremony?

You've been invited to the Church to attend the Baptism of your or a friend's baby, and you're wondering what to expect. This is what will unfold:

❖ Sign of the Cross

The cross is a reminder of the love that Jesus Christ showed by giving his life for his friends. The tracing of a cross on the forehead of the person being baptised is an invisible 'marking' that says 'they belong to Jesus'. It is the priest who will trace the cross on the forehead of the baby and invite the parents and godparents to do the same.

❖ **Baptismal Promises**

The family will gather around the baptismal font - a large bowl, usually made of stone, marble or glass which holds the water used for baptism. One parent holds the child while the priest asks the parents what they ask for their child. They reply “Baptism”. Then the parents make the baptismal promises on behalf of their child. These promises are based on the Apostles Creed.

❖ **Anointing**

The priest anoints the baby on the chest before the baptism with the Oil of Baptism (Catechumens) and then after the baptism on the forehead with the Oil of Chrism.

The Oil of Baptism is olive oil. It is associated with the days when athletes used to rub oil into their bodies before events to strengthen them and make their skin more supple. The first anointing symbolises strengthening for the challenges of life ahead. The Oil of Chrism is a combination of olive oil and balsam, and symbolises the sealing with the Holy Spirit. It marks that the child will now be identified with Jesus in his ministry as priest, prophet and king.

❖ **Baptism with Water**

The priest pours water over the baby’s head (or immerses the baby in the water) and says “I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”.

The water is a sign of cleansing, symbolically washing away all the sin of the person being baptised. It is also a sign of life, because without water nothing can grow. And it is a sign of the new spiritual life into which the baptised person is entering.

❖ **Candle**

A candle will be lit as a sign of this new life. It is lit from the Easter Candle which symbolises the light of Christ, and will be held by a parent or godparent. The child is commissioned to be a bearer of light in a world that is often quite dark.

❖ White Garment

The child is clothed in a white garment which is a symbol of purity and innocence. Sometimes families like to use a Christening gown or shawl that has been used by previous generations while others will use a white baptismal gown, a stole or a white bib – or simply dress the child in white beforehand.

❖ Baptismal certificate and Baptismal register

You will be given a Baptismal Certificate which you will keep as a record of their child's initiation into the Church and be presented at future sacraments. The baptism will also be recorded in the Baptism Register in the parish.

Why are there several babies baptised at the one ceremony?

Those who are baptised are welcomed as members of the Church. The gathered community is a sign of the Church. In fact, the priest says to the child, calling him or her by name, "The Christian community welcomes you with great joy. In its name I claim you for Christ our saviour by the sign of his cross."

About the Catholic Church

Welcome to the Catholic Church, a community of believers professing faith in Jesus Christ. There are almost six million Catholics in Australia, the largest single denomination representing a quarter of the population. The Catholic community includes people of every nationality.

Bishops and priests, religious men and women as well as families and single people make up the Catholic Church. The Catholic community has a place for everyone, whether young or old, married or single, and of all races and nations. Each person is invited to personally encounter the love of Jesus through his Church.

The Catholic Church seeks to live its mission by supporting all sectors of the community – through prayer and worship, education, health and care for the poor and marginalised.

People are welcomed into the Catholic family through the Sacrament of Baptism which is how you've found yourself in touch with the Catholic faith.

I am not baptised but I would like to find out more?

If you or a member of your family is not yet baptised, the first step is to make an appointment to meet with your parish priest or pastoral associate. You may be asked to come along and talk about the meaning of baptism and what it is you are asking of the Church.

Adults will probably be asked to participate in instructions. Sometimes the priest does this himself; some churches have a program - the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) to prepare people for baptism.

Am I alone in wanting to become Catholic?

Many people are Catholic because they were born into a Catholic family. But others make the decision to become Catholic during their adult life. Each year thousands of people enquire about the Catholic faith and go on to be received into the Catholic Church. Find out more by visiting: **catholicenquiry.com**

Prayer of Commitment to Jesus Christ

Lord Jesus,
I am seeking more meaning in my life.
I seek happiness and peace for myself and my loved ones.
Up until now You have not played a big part in my life.
But little by little as I look back over my life,
I can see you have been calling me to yourself.
Through all the events and people that have come into my life
I can see your presence, your guiding hand through it all.
Help me not to be afraid
as I resolve to learn more about You and your Church
and make you more a part of my life.
Amen.

 Visit the parish website **stpaulsparish.org.au** or call the parish office on **02 4256 2038** to find out more or talk to Fr Richard after any Sunday Mass.