



Celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism

The rites for entry of children and adults into the Catholic Church have been revised. We are reminded that initiation consists of the following Sacraments: Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation.

Baptism is not merely a personal event in the life of the person being baptised, nor is it a private family celebration. It is also an important event in the life of the community into which they are being initiated.

Baptism incorporates us into the risen life of Christ and gives us membership into the faith community. There is mutual responsibility involved:

- the worshipping community expresses its pastoral responsibility to its members and
- the family accept its responsibility by nurturing the faith offered in the sacrament.

To achieve a pastoral practice which is consistent with the church's new emphasis on belonging and initiation, the following guidelines are offered:

1. The local community will support parish families in nurturing the faith of its new members (Canon Law 857/2). Thus, children who live within the parish of Melton Area, will be baptised into the Catholic Community of Melton.

Families living outside the normal parish boundaries who have no link with our community are encouraged to celebrate the baptism within their own parish.

Likewise former parishioners of Melton parish who have not maintained some active involvement/ministries are encouraged to celebrate the baptism within their own parish.

We are happy to introduce families to their proper community given that they will most likely be attending their own parish school and receive the next two sacraments of initiation, First Eucharist and Confirmation, there.

2. Parents should be prepared for the celebration by instruction in the understanding of the Sacrament (Canon Law 851/12).

3. The Sacrament will always be celebrated in St Catherine of Siena Church and not in a private house or hospital, except in danger of death.
4. Baptism dates and times are advertised on the Parish website. Rarely will there ever be more than six families at any one ceremony.
5. The role of the godparent, together with the parents, is to help the child to live a Catholic life befitting the baptised. One godparent, male or female, is sufficient but there may be two or more.

The godparent needs to be:

- at least 16 years of age
- a Catholic who has received the Blessed Eucharist, been confirmed, and
- who lives the life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken.

A non-Catholic person may be admitted only in company with a Catholic godparent.

6. A person cannot be re-baptised. If a child has been baptised in another denomination, or if non-Catholic parents want to have their child become a Catholic to get them into a Catholic school, a personal discussion with the Parish Priest about the faith of the parents is essential.
7. In the Parish of Melton, Baptisms *are never* arranged through grandparents or others!

Please Note:

- Dates, process and application form are available on the Parish website <https://www.melbcatholic.org/melton>
- You must attend one Information Night prior to the Baptism date.
- On the day of the Baptism please remember to:
 - Bring back the completed Baptism certificate which will be signed by the celebrant after the ceremony
 - Your child must have something white on him/her
 - Bring your Baptismal candle
 - Bring a white hand towel/face washer to wipe your child's head after the pouring of water
 - Place your donation (\$125) in the provided envelope, write your name on the envelope and give to the team member at the Information desk upon arrival.



Ten ways to Prepare for your Baby's Baptism

To experience the power of baptism we need to be immersed in the love of the baptised. The baptism of a child is an opportunity for the whole family to reflect upon the sacred meaning of this sacrament. Here are ten practical ways to prepare for the baptism and to grow in faith as a family.

1. Gaze upon your child

Gaze upon your child often. Reflect on the miracle of creation. A 'sense of the sacred' is fundamental to opening ourselves to the presence and action of God.

2. Pray with water

Invite the family to gather around as the baby is being bathed. Say a simple prayer together and talk about how water is a symbol of cleansing and new life. At the baptism the Church will use water to signify the child's immersion in the death and resurrection of Christ, and life in his Spirit.

3. Pray with oil

When you rub moisturiser or ointment on your baby during the course of a normal day, take a moment to reflect on the symbol of oil to be used during the baptismal ceremony. The Church uses oil as a sign of the strength and protection given to Christians by the anointing of the Holy Spirit in baptism and confirmation.

4. Pray with light

Your baby's baptismal candle, symbolising the light of Christ, will be an important feature on the big day. But even now, light a candle each night (or if it's winter, light the fire) and reflect on ways this family can 'light the way' for its newest member as he/she grows up as a child of God.

5. Write words of love

At baptism the Church community proclaims the Word of God. The Gospels are the testimonies of our ancestors in faith. They wrote out of love so that all might know and believe in the risen Lord. What words express your love for our child? Write a baptismal 'love letter' to your child which will be opened at his/her Confirmation.

6. Tell stories of belonging

Baptism is an immersion in a community of faith. Reflect on this by displaying photos of your child's ancestors; e.g. grandparents and great aunts/uncles. As well as blood family, include pictures of people from your wider faith family, past and present. Include a picture of the saint after whom your child is named. Remember and talk about these special people.

7. Start a family tradition

Is your baby's baptismal garment a family heirloom? Tell the story behind it as a way of passing on the faith. If the garment is not a family tradition, why not start one? Make or buy a garment which will be worn one day at the baptism of this child's grandchild.

8. Make the sign of the cross

The Cross is a bold declaration of faith: we believe in Jesus Christ, crucified and risen! This is the faith in which your baby is immersed at baptism. Ensure that your home is marked with a cross. Invite family members to trace the sign of the cross on your baby's forehead.

9. Pray for the godparents

Pray for the godparents of your child. Invite the godparents over for a meal and talk about your hopes and dreams for this child. Explain to them why you chose them for this special role.

10. Visit the church

If you have other young children, take them to the baptismal font in your parish church to show them where their little brother or sister is to be baptised. Help them to anticipate this sacred event.

Helpful Hint

Establish a 'sacred site' in your home: a focal point for prayer and displaying symbols of our Catholic faith. This might be a small table or shelf with a bible, candle and crucifix. For your baby's baptism, place baptismal symbols at your sacred site: a bowl of water, a candle, a green branch or a decorated egg (symbol of birth and new life). Involve young children in gathering and placing the symbols.

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THE RITE OF BAPTISM FOR CHILDREN

RECEPTION OF THE CHILD

The people may sing a psalm or a hymn while the celebrating priest goes to the entrance of the church or to that part of the church where the parents and godparents are waiting with the child.

The celebrant greets all present. Then he questions the parents:

Celebrant: What name do you give your child?

Parents: N.

Celebrant: What do you ask of God's Church for N.?

Parents: Baptism.

The celebrant addresses the parents in these or similar words:

You have asked to have your child baptized. 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?

Parents: We do.

Then the celebrant turns to the godparents:

Are you ready to help the parents of this child in their duty as Christian parents?

Godparents: We are.

Celebrant: N., the Christian community welcomes you with great joy. In its name I claim you for Christ our Saviour by the sign of his cross. I now trace the cross on your forehead, and invite your parents (and godparents) to do the same.

He signs the child on the forehead, in silence. Then he invites the parents (and the godparents) to do the same.

CELEBRATION OF GOD'S WORD

One or even two gospel passages are read, during which all may sit.

After the reading the celebrant gives a short homily.

Intercessions

(The Bidding Prayers)

Celebrant: My dear brothers and sisters, let us ask our Lord Jesus Christ to look lovingly on this child who is to be baptized, on his (her) parents and godparents, and on all the baptized.

Reader: By the mystery of your death and resurrection, bathe this child in light; give him (her) the new life of baptism and welcome him (her) into your holy Church. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Reader: Through baptism and confirmation, make him (her) your faithful follower and a witness to your gospel. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Reader: Lead him (her) by a holy life to the joys of God's kingdom. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Reader: Make the lives of his (her) parents and godparents examples of faith to inspire this child. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Reader: Keep his (her) family always in your love. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

Reader: Renew the grace of our baptism in each one of us. Lord, hear us.

All: Lord, graciously hear us.

The celebrant next invites all present to invoke the saints.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, **pray for us.**

Saint John the Baptist, **pray for us.**

Saint Joseph, **pray for us.**

Saint Peter and Saint Paul, **pray for us.**

The names of other saints may be added.

The litany concludes:

All holy men and women, **pray for us.**

PRAYER OF EXORCISM AND ANOINTING BEFORE BAPTISM

After the invocation, the celebrant says:

Almighty and ever-living God, I you sent your only Son into the world I to cast out the power of Satan, spirit of evil, I to rescue man from the kingdom of darkness, I and bring him into the splendour of your kingdom of light. I We pray for this child: I set him (her) free from original sin, I make him (her) a temple of your glory, I and send your Holy Spirit to dwell in him (her). I (We ask this) through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The celebrant continues:

We anoint you with the oil of salvation I in the name of Christ our Saviour; I may he strengthen you I with his power, I who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

He anoints the child on the breast with the oil of catechumens.

CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

All proceed to the Baptistry. A hymn or psalm may be sung.

Celebrant: My dear brothers and sisters, we now ask God to give this child new life in abundance through water and the Holy Spirit.

Blessing and Invocation of God over Baptismal Water

(Other forms of this blessing may be used)

Celebrant: Praise to you, almighty God and Father, for you have created water to cleanse and to give life.

All: Blessed be God.

Celebrant: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, the Father's only Son, for you offered yourself on the cross, that in the blood and water flowing from your side, and through your death and resurrection, the Church might be born.

All: Blessed be God.

Celebrant: Praise to you, God the Holy Spirit, for you anointed Christ at his baptism in the waters of Jordan, so that we might all be baptized into you.

All: Blessed be God.

Celebrant: Come to us, Lord, Father of all, and make holy this water which you have created, so that all who are baptized in it may be washed clean of sin and be born again to live as your children.

All: Hear us, Lord.

Celebrant: Make this water holy, Lord, so that all who are baptized into Christ's death and resurrection by this water may become more perfectly like your Son.

All: Hear us, Lord.

The celebrant touches the water with his right hand and continues:

Lord, make holy this water which you have created, so that all those whom you have chosen may be born again by the power of the Holy Spirit, and may take their place among your holy people.

All: Hear us, Lord.

If the baptismal water has already been blessed, the celebrant omits the invocation Come to us, Lord and those which follow it, and says:

You have called your child, N., to this cleansing water that he (she) may share in the faith of your Church and have eternal life. By the mystery of this consecrated water lead him (her) to a new and spiritual birth. (We ask this) through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith

Celebrant: Dear parents and godparents: You have come here to present this child for baptism. By water and the Holy Spirit he (she) is to receive the gift of new life from God, who is love.

On your part, you must make it your constant care to bring him (her) up in the practice of the faith. See that the divine life which God gives him (her) is kept safe from the poison of sin, to grow always stronger in his (her) heart.

If your faith makes you ready to accept this responsibility, renew now the vows of your own baptism. Reject sin; profess your faith in Christ Jesus. This is the faith of the Church. This is the faith in which this child is about to be baptized.

The celebrant questions the parents and godparents:

Celebrant: Do you reject Satan?

Parents and godparents: I do.

Celebrant: And all his works?

Parents and godparents: I do.

Celebrant: And all his empty promises?

Parents and godparents: I do.

Next the celebrant asks for the threefold profession of faith from the parents and godparents:

Celebrant: Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

Parents and godparents: I do.

Celebrant: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

Parents and godparents: I do.

Celebrant: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting?

Parents and godparents: I do.

Celebrant: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All: Amen.

Baptism

The celebrant invites the family to the font and questions the parents and godparents:

Celebrant: Is it your will that N. should be baptized in the faith of the Church, which we have all professed with you?

Parents and godparents: It is.

He baptises the child, saying:

N., I baptize you in the name of the Father,

He immerses the child or pours water upon him (her).

and of the Son,

He immerses the child or pours water upon him (her) a second time.

and of the Holy Spirit.

He immerses the child or pours water upon him (her) a third time.

Anointing with Chrism

Then the celebrant says:

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people. He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life.

All: Amen.

Then the celebrant anoints the child on the crown of the head with the sacred chrism, in silence.

Clothing with the White Garment

Celebrant: N., you have become a new creation, and have clothed yourself in Christ. 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.

All: Amen.

The white garment is put on the child.

The Lighted Candle

The celebrant takes the Easter candle and says:

Receive the light of Christ.

Someone from the family (such as the father or godfather) lights the child's candle from the Easter candle. The celebrant then says:

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. May he (she) keep the flame of faith alive in his (her) heart. When the Lord comes, may he (she) go out to meet him with all the saints in the heavenly kingdom.

[The *Ephphatha* (Prayer over Ears and Mouth) may now follow. The celebrant touches the ears and mouth of the child with his thumb, saying:

The Lord Jesus made the deaf hear and the dumb speak. May he soon touch your ears to receive his word, and your mouth to proclaim his faith, to the praise and glory of God the Father.

All: Amen.]

CONCLUSION OF THE RITE

Next there is a procession to the altar, unless the baptism was performed in the sanctuary. The lighted candle is carried for the child.

The following or an appropriate hymn may be sung.

**You have put on Christ,
in him you have been baptized.
Alleluia, alleluia.**

The Lord's Prayer

The celebrant stands in front of the altar and addresses the parents, godparents, and the whole assembly in these or similar words:

Dearly beloved, this child has been reborn in baptism. He (she) is now called the child of God, for so indeed he (she) is. In confirmation he (she) will receive the fullness of God's Spirit. In holy communion he (she) will share the banquet of Christ's sacrifice, calling God his (her) Father in the midst of the Church. In the name of this child, in the Spirit of our common sonship, let us pray together in the words our Lord has given us:

All present join the celebrant in singing or saying:

**Our Father, | who art in heaven, |
hallowed be thy name. | Thy kingdom**

come. | Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. | Give us this day our daily bread. | And forgive us our trespasses | as we forgive those who trespass against us. | And lead us not into temptation, | but deliver us from evil.

The Blessing

The celebrant first blesses the mother, who holds the child in her arms, then the father, and lastly the entire assembly:

Celebrant: God the Father, through his Son, the Virgin Mary's child, has brought joy to all Christian mothers, as they see the hope of eternal life shine on their children. May he bless the mother of this child. She now thanks God for the gift of her child. May she be one with him (her) in thanking him for ever in heaven, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: God is the giver of all life, human and divine. May he bless the father of this child. He and his wife will be the first teachers of their child in the ways of faith. May they be also the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: By God's gift, through water and the Holy Spirit, we are reborn to everlasting life. In his goodness, may he continue to pour out his blessings upon these sons and daughters of his. May he make them always, wherever they may be, faithful members of his holy people. May he send his peace upon all who are gathered here, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All: Amen.

Celebrant: May almighty God, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit, bless you.

All: Amen.

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