

ST GERTRUDE'S PARISH

6 JUSTIN STREET
SMITHFIELD

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

"Baptism, the gateway to the sacraments, is necessary for salvation, either by actual reception or at least by desire. By it, people are freed from sin, are born again as children of God and, made like to Christ by an indelible character, are incorporated into the Church. It is validly conferred only by a sharing in real water with the proper form of words." (Can. 849, The Code of Canon Law)

When are Baptisms Celebrated?

Baptisms are celebrated on the 1st Sunday of each month during the Saturday 6pm Vigil Mass and 10.30am Sunday Mass at St Benedict's Church, Smithfield; also at the Sunday 9am Mass at St Theresa's Church, Fairfield West. On the 3rd Sunday of each month it will be celebrated at 12 noon (not within the Mass but a Service only). *Exceptions to these times occur from time to time e.g. during Lent, Solemnities and First Eucharist Ceremonies.*

Parents are obliged to see that infants are baptised with the first weeks after birth (cf. Can. 867).

In case of urgency (i.e. a child is ill); a Baptism may take place anytime.

The possibility to baptise a child in St Gertrude's parish exists for parishioners living within the boundary of this Parish. **If you live outside of our parish boundary then parents are requested to obtain a Letter of Permission from the Parish Priest of the parish where you live.**

How to Choose a Baptismal Name

"Parents, sponsors and parish priests are to take care that a name is not given which is foreign to Christian sentiment." (Can 855).

A name of a Christian Saint should be given to the child, either as a first or second name, or both. This Saint then becomes the Parton Saint of the child.

Information about Christian names and Saints is available on line.

Who can celebrate Baptism?

The present Parish Priest, and Assistant Priest/s are the normal ministers of Baptism. However, special arrangements may be made for relatives who are clergy to celebrate Baptism. (Prior permission from the Parish Priest must be obtained for outside clergy to perform the Sacrament.)

Preparing for Baptism

All parents are asked to attend a Baptismal preparation Class before their child is baptised. These classes are held on the Tuesdays before the date of Baptism at 7pm in the Parish Office at 6 Justin Street, Smithfield. (It is compulsory for one parent to attend a meeting prior to the Baptism)

Please bring a copy of the child's Birth Certificate, the completed enclosed 'Baptismal Application Form' and a copy of the 'Catholic' Godparents Baptismal Certificate to this meeting.

The preparation class is important for the information it provides regarding the ceremony and for a broader understanding of the significance of the Sacrament of Baptism.

Role of Parents in Baptism

- A least one parent or legal guardian must give consent to the baptism of the child.
- There must be a founded hope that the infant will be brought up in the Catholic faith/religion. This means that the parent/s demonstrate their commitment to insure that the child receives the Sacraments and be instructed in the catholic faith.
- A least one of the parents must be practicing Catholic

Role of Godparents in Baptism

Along with parent/s a godparent/sponsor is to present the child at baptism, to assist the parent/s in raising the child in the Catholic faith and to serve as a role model, according to the General Introduction to Christian Initiation. The Code of Canon Law suggests, but does not require, that the sponsor for baptism also be the sponsor for Confirmation.

There are five qualifications a godparent/sponsor must meet, according to the Code of Canon Law (Can. 874):

- be chosen by the parents or guardians of the child, or, in their absence, by the Parish Priest or Minister of the Sacrament.
- normally must be at least 16 years old
- have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation and be a Catholic of good standing, leading a life in harmony with the faith
- be someone other than the child's parents
- not bound by any penalty imposed by the Church

How many Godparents can a person have?

According to Canon 873, one godparent/sponsor, male or female, is sufficient, but there may be two (or more). If you choose two or more godparents/sponsors for your child then they must not all be of the same sex (Can 873).

Can a Christian who is not a Catholic serve as a Godparent?

A non-Catholic cannot serve as a godparent/sponsor (according to Canon 874, §2), but he or she can participate in the baptism as a witness. However, it remains the responsibility of the Catholic godparent/sponsor to ensure a Christian upbringing for the child, according to the New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law.

If a non-Catholic Christian witness is chosen, the other Godparent/sponsor must be a practicing Catholic.

Private Baptisms

If you have been given permission to have a private ceremony and using a Priest outside of this parish then a Sacristan Fee of \$50 per hour minimum applies to set up and close the Church.

❖ *Please include a copy of the catholic godparent's 'baptismal' certificate with the application form.*