

Baptism

This is a brief introduction to the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism in the Parish of St Michael's in Huntingdon. The following questions will be answered.

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What is Baptism about?

Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as children of God; we become members of Christ, we are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: (Catechism of the Catholic Church)

There are two major parts to this. Baptism frees us from sin, including original sin. The human race is tainted by sin and evil, and all who are born into it are affected by that, even before they get to do anything wrong themselves. We call this 'original sin'. Baptism cleanses us of this sin, and any personal sins we may have committed before we were baptized, in order to make us fit to share God's life.

Baptism also makes us members of the Church. Indeed it is through becoming part of the Church, through entering into the Body of Christ (for the Church is Christ's Body—we are the presence of Christ on earth), that we are given this new life free from sin. So being baptized and being part of the Church are two sides of the same coin. Those who are baptized take on an obligation to live as part of the Church, participating in the other sacraments, especially the Mass

How do I get my baby baptised?

First you must contact the parish office on the number given on the website. You don't have to wait until the baby is born! You will have to fill out a form with details about your child and the parents and godparents, the forms are below. You will also be expected to come to a couple of preparation sessions before the baptism.

Baptisms normally take place on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon.

Baptism is the beginning of the Christian life of a child. During the baptism ceremony, the parents will make a commitment to bring their child up in the practice of the faith. This is a serious commitment made before God and should be considered carefully. Without a well-founded belief that this will happen, the clergy are obliged to recommend that the baptism be postponed.

What if my child is older?

If your child is not yet at school we follow the procedure detailed above. If your child is 7 years old or more, she/he will need to be prepared for the sacrament. If the child is in year 3 or above then we would normally recommend that the child join the first Holy Communion programme and that the baptism take place sometime before the First Communion. If the child is in school year 10 or above then we would recommend joining the Confirmation preparation programme.

Contact the parish office for further details and if necessary arrange an appointment with the priest to discuss the best option for your child.

What about godparents?

You need to have at least one godparent who is a Catholic and who has been confirmed and is an active member of the Catholic Church. Your godparents will need to fill in the form on this website and have it signed by their local priest. The Church permits two godparents.

Baptised Christians of other denominations may stand as Christian witnesses provided there is at least one Catholic godparent. Godparents do not have to be present at the baptism but in their absence, someone will have to stand as proxy.

You can find the form and further information on this website.

How does an adult go about getting baptised?

Adults seeking baptism normally join the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). This is an open process, meeting regularly to discuss aspects of the Catholic faith with parishioners and others who are seeking to join the church. Baptism (and Confirmation) of adults normally take place at the Easter Vigil on the Saturday night before Easter Sunday, having undergone a final phase of preparation during Lent. However other arrangements are also possible.

Anybody seeking to become a Catholic who has been baptised in another denomination will not usually need to be baptised. However they normally join the same RCIA process and will be confirmed when they are received into Full Communion with the Church.

If you have any further questions, or if you are seeking baptism for yourself or your child, please contact the parish office.