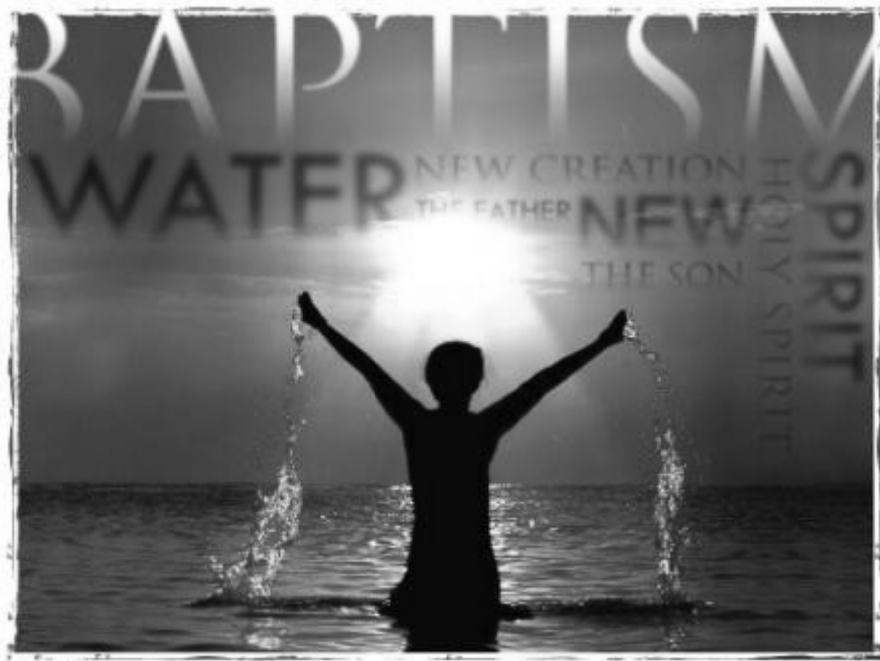


The Catholic Parish of St John the Evangelist, Horsham

Thinking about a Baptism for your child?



*“Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the
Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ... ”*
(Matthew 28: 19)

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Many congratulations on taking the first step towards planning a baptism in the Catholic Church. This leaflet will help you with the plans and arrangements that you need to make concerning the necessary preparation and the ceremony itself.

Baptism, very specifically, is the sacrament by which a child or an adult becomes a member of the Catholic Church. It is the beginning of the Christian life and the gateway to eternal life. The Church rejoices in the precious gift of baptism and takes it very seriously.

Generally speaking, you may request baptism for your child in the Catholic Church if:

- at least one of the parents is a Roman Catholic;
- you are willing to bring your child up as a practising Roman Catholic;
- you are a practising Roman Catholic.

If you are an adult seeking baptism for yourself, please contact Fr Terry or Deacon Tom directly (details at the end of this document).

To celebrate a baptism in the Roman Catholic parish of Horsham, you will normally reside in the parish or be regularly attending Mass in Horsham.

You will need to give us at least four months notice of your intention to celebrate a baptism.

The process of planning your baptism with us will take the following pattern:

- 1 Please contact the Parish Office by telephone or email and request the appropriate application form. Contact details below. If you telephone, the secretary can complete the form for you over the telephone.
- 2 You will be informed of the date of the next **Baptism Preparation Evening**. These are usually on the first Thursday of each month, at 7pm in St John's Church (finishing by 8pm at the latest).
- 3 Your request for a baptism will be noted in our parish records.

- 4 Please attend the Preparation Meeting as discussed with the secretary. Ideally, both parents attend the meeting (bringing baby if necessary!). Potential Godparents are welcome too.
- 5 At the Preparation Meeting you will be invited to complete a tear-off slip stating that you would like to have your child baptised.
- 6 Following that meeting, a parish *Faith Friend* will visit you at home to discuss your child's baptism further and in greater detail. This person has been trained to help you think about the baptism and to answer any questions which you may have. After having met with you, the *Faith Friend* notifies the parish of the date that has been agreed/set for the baptism.
- 7 A **Rite of Welcome** is celebrated at a Sunday Mass for your child. This is invariably the first Sunday of each month and takes place during the Mass that you normally attend.
- 8 Your child's **baptism** will usually take place at 2.30pm or 3.30pm on the first Sunday of the month (though not the same Sunday as the Rite of Welcome). Very often, two babies are baptised during the same ceremony. This cannot be avoided owing to the large numbers of infant baptisms that take place in the parish.
- 9 There is always at least one reading from the Bible at a baptism. More are possible, if you wish, but not necessary. Usually, only Bible readings are acceptable. Texts from other sources, or poems, are best reserved for use at another time. One of your party may wish to read the Bible at the baptism, and the priest, deacon or *Faith Friend* can help you choose an appropriate reading.
- 10 There are no fees, as such, for a baptism in the parish. However, it is customary, if you can afford it, to make a personal offering to the priest/deacon. You must decide how much you'd like to give. A starting point of about £30 is usually considered an appropriate figure.
- 11 You may, of course, have your child baptised if you are not married.
- 12 The Church's Canon Law states that a child to be baptised will need one or two Godparents. You may have more if you wish. Godparents need to be Roman Catholics, but Christians of other churches may stand as Christian Witnesses. Godparents and Christian Witnesses publicly state their belief in Jesus Christ.

Finally

We are delighted that you want to celebrate a baptism with us and will do everything we can to make your day a happy and memorable one. Most importantly, we promise to pray for you and to keep praying for you between now and the baptism. Please do not hesitate to contact us, using the details listed below: