

ST GABRIEL PIMLICO



Baptism for you
and your children

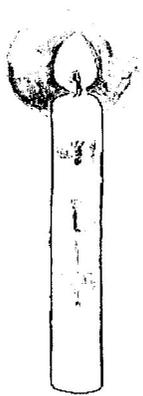
White garment

This garment (usually a shawl) is a relic of the clothes worn by Christians after baptism in the first centuries. It is a sign of innocence and putting on a new life of resurrection.



The lighted candle

Any light burns away darkness. The candle given to the child at baptism represents the light of Christ burning away the darkness in our lives, to bring us new light and life, assuring us that Jesus is always with us. The baptismal candle is lit from the great Easter Candle which is a sign of the risen Christ. We pray that your child's life will illuminate others with the spirit Jesus.



Your efforts will not only help your baby to grow up in the love of God: they will also help you grow. As you teach your child to pray, you yourself will also deepen in prayer; as you teach your child to appreciate the Mass, your own faith will be enriched. Your baby's baptism is the beginning of a new life in which you will grow close to one another and to God.

The Parish of St Gabriel's welcomes you, and your family. We are here to offer help and to pray for the future happiness and peace of your family in the years ahead.

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What is Baptism?

Holy Baptism makes us Christians, which is why it is sometimes called "Christening." It is the first of seven sacraments and absolutely essential—we cannot become Christians without it. When someone is baptised they become members of Christ's body, which is the Church. Baptism marks a new beginning of a person's life as a Christian.

Why bother being baptised?

Those who care for us want us to have the very best start in life. From the moment we are born we are dependant upon others to feed us, clothe us, care for us and love us. Without this care we would quickly perish. We also need our spiritual well being looked after until we are able to look after ourselves, which is why baptism is so important. When you smile at your baby it brings them to life. God's smile comes in baptism. It is a sign that we are precious and valued.

What is your role?

Very often the child to be baptised is too young to understand what is happening at their baptism, so as your child grows he or she needs your support. This is done through:

- Your prayers—** asking God to help you and your child.
- Your example—** showing your child how to live in love and compassion.
- Your teaching—** telling your child about Jesus and the Christian way of life.

Don't worry! The Church is here to help. If you have any questions about faith and prayer, or simply want advise on choosing Christian books, or would like to know more about activities for the young children, just ask.

What about Godparents?

You will need support in bringing up your child as a Christian. The Church asks for three Godparents to help with this responsibility—so choose them carefully. They must be baptised and it is a good idea to have people who go to church regularly. Choose people who are willing to accept the same responsibilities as you in bringing up your child as a Christian.

How do Godparents help?

Godparents share responsibility in a number of ways: for example, remembering your child on the anniversary of their birthday, at Christmas, Easter and on the anniversary of their baptism with appropriate gifts such as Bible story books etc.. They also encourage by their own example of going to church regularly, praying with your child and perhaps even teaching your child prayers, such as the 'Our Father'.

The big day

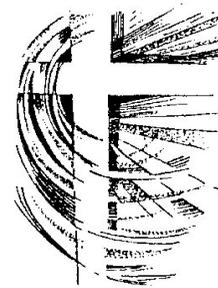
The day of Baptism is a great day for your child and the family, and for the Church as it welcome as new member. Because baptism makes us members of the Church the rest of God's family will want to get to know you and welcome you, so please come to church regularly before and after the baptism so that you can begin to learn what it means to be a member of the Christian family.

How much does it cost?

Nothing. There is no charge for baptism. If you wish to make an offering that is at the total discretion of the family—but this is a purely voluntary contribution.

The signs and symbols of baptism

During the baptism service many signs and symbols are used to indicate the presence of God and his love for us.

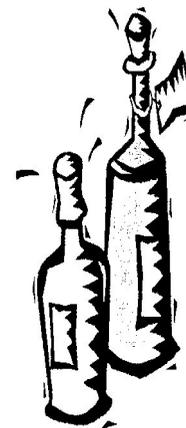
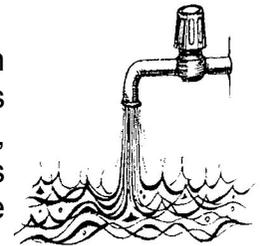


The Cross

A sign on something shows its origins or ownership. The sign of the cross is the mark for Christians of Jesus Christ who died on the cross. The sign of the cross is traced on the child's forehead to show that the baby belongs to Christ, who now offers his help and grace to face and overcome the trials of life.

Water

This is for washing and refreshing, a sign that our sins are washed away. Water is also necessary for life and so is a sign, too, that the life of the risen Christ is ours. It is through the waters of baptism that we are 'born again.'



Oils

Oil of Baptism is olive oil blessed by the Bishop. Just as athletes used to rub oil into themselves to strengthen and prepare them for the race ahead so it is used in baptism to prepare us for the Christian race. The oil of Chrism is also used. It is a mixture of olive oil and sweet smelling balsam. It is rubbed onto the crown of the head just as it is used when the monarch is crowned. It is a sealing of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and a sign that we belong to Jesus' royal family.