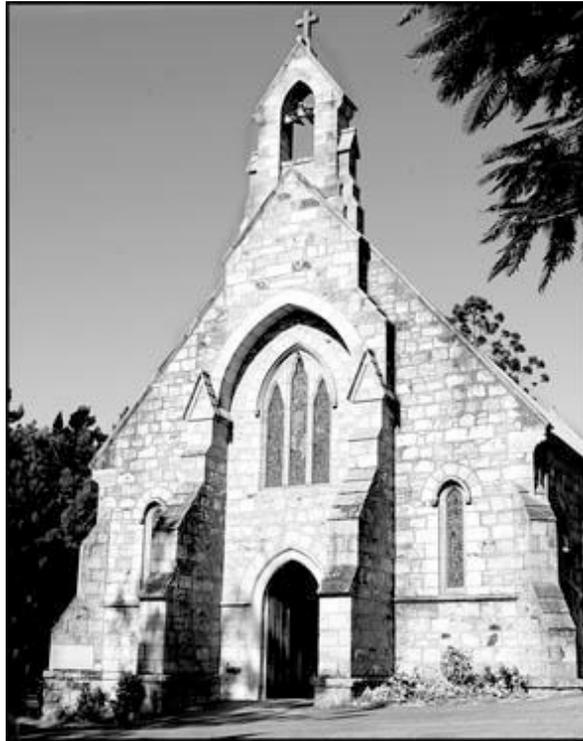


# **THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM**



**ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA  
CHURCH OF SAINT MARY THE VIRGIN  
Kangaroo Point**

## **What is Baptism?**

Baptism marks the beginning of Christian life within the worldwide Church. The Church baptises in response to Jesus' command to his Apostles:

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28.19)*

Through Baptism we enter into the loving relationship that exists between God and his people through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a starting point directed towards growth in the faith community (Church).

Baptism is the ceremony which transfers and acknowledges the gift from God of an inward and spiritual grace to the person who receives it. That gift brings many blessings:

1. The blessing of a new life of belonging to God
2. The blessing of a new life enlivened and guided by the Holy Spirit
3. The blessing of new life enfolded in the love and life of Jesus Christ.

## **What happens at a Baptism?**

Those requesting Baptism are acknowledging a need to engage with God and commit themselves and their children to his love. The Baptism service identifies this as a calling, a turning point, a new beginning. It recognizes the commitment of God to his people and them to him through his Son, Jesus Christ. Those to be Baptised, parents, godparents and the faith community come together as participants in the exchange of these promises. The Church uses tangible things to help us understand the mystery and sacredness of what is taking place. In Baptism these are water, the signing of the cross, oil and candles.

## **The Signs and Symbols of Baptism**

### ***Water***

The word 'baptise' is derived from the Greek and is associated with the dipping into or pouring over of water as an act of cleansing. In Baptism, water is used to symbolize the purifying change that comes with forgiveness and the promise of support and nourishment in a new life as members of the faith community of the Risen Christ.

The water is blessed to signify the sacred nature of its pouring onto the head of the Baptised in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

### ***The sign of the Cross***

A sign on something shows its origin or ownership. The sign of the cross is the mark of Christians for Jesus who died on the cross. It is traced with the thumb on the forehead to show that the Baptised belongs to Christ and His Church.

### ***Oil***

Oil of Baptism is also known as Oil of Chrism. It is a mixture of oil and balsam and has been blessed by the bishop. It is used to signify the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In his letter to the Galatians, Saint Paul indicates that the Spirit brings love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control (Galatians 5:22).

### ***Candles***

Candles symbolize Christ, the Light of the World. In Baptism a candle is lit from the Paschal or Easter Candle which stands near the altar at Easter as a sign of the Risen Christ and is given as a reminder that the Light of Christ has entered the life of the newly baptised person. Its flame symbolizes the faith which will burn through the life of the Baptised.

### **Baptism and Parents**

The ceremony of Baptism reflects the love parents have for their children, in wanting all that is good for them. God shows love in the same way as loving parents by signs and gestures. The ceremony of Baptism is full of them. The most important of them is the pouring of water in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. This sign reminds us that as a child is born of the love and in the likeness of parents, so are we born of the love of God and recreated in his image. This opens the way for growth of the spiritual along side the physical nature. That is why in Baptism, parents along with godparents and the faith community accept responsibility for nurturing the child in the faith. This means being actively involved in a faith community and thus encouraging and teaching the child by example what it means to be baptised.

### **Baptism and Godparents**

In the past, godparents have fulfilled two major roles, as additional members of the extended family providing support and care, and as sponsors for Baptism. It is a common misconception that godparents become legal guardians. This is not true. Godparents are usually valued and trusted friends of the family. They themselves

need to be baptised members of the Church and be able to give a good example of Christian living to their godchild. They are asked if they will seek God's support in their responsibilities through prayer, through following Christ's teaching and through seeking forgiveness when they fail. They are asked to affirm their belief in the Faith.

### **Baptism and the Community of Faith**

When a child or an adult is baptised in the midst of the faith community, it is a powerful act of welcome and witness into the Faith. It reminds the members of their own Baptism and of their responsibilities to support and nurture the newly Baptised. It also reminds them of the dynamic nature of the community.

### **Cost**

Baptism is a sacrament of the Church and the policy has been that families offer a 'Thanksgiving Offering' to the Church. The Parish suggest that this offering could be in the vicinity of \$50. However, it must be stressed that St Mary's in no way wishes to place economic hardship upon any family.

### **Times**

Baptisms are normally conducted on the first Sunday of each month, at a Baptism only service commencing at noon. Baptisms can also take place during the 9am main Sunday service. This option needs to be separately arranged for a suitable date. The office will confirm with you, on receipt of your application, the date and time of your Baptism.

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