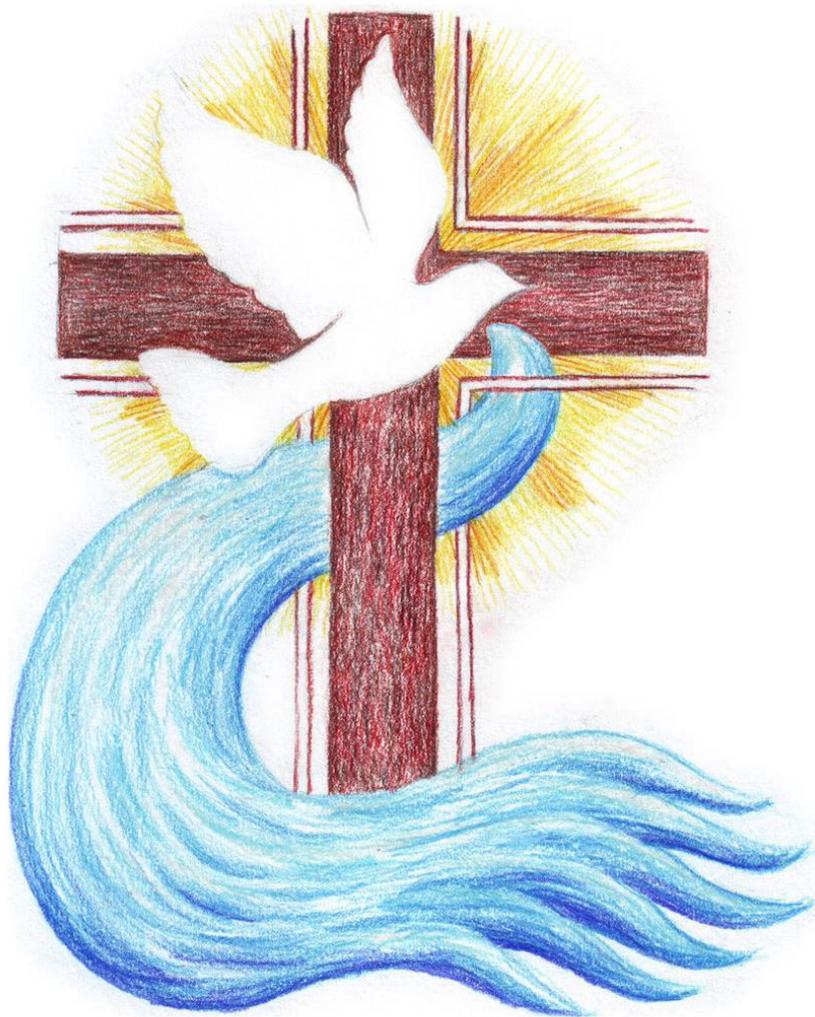


# **CATHOLIC PARISH OF ST BERNADETTE**

## **The Sacrament of Baptism**



Dear Parents,

## Welcome to St Bernadette's Parish!

If you are reading this, then it is most likely that you have a new member of the family; a beautiful child. What a precious gift from God. Congratulations!

As parents, you will always want what is best for your child. You will want them to grow up to be healthy and strong. You will want them to be good citizens. As you are hopefully a good example to them, so too you will want them to grow up to be a shining example to others of the goodness and generosity of God. Baptism is a great starting point on this journey.



### What is baptism?

Surely the answer to this question is obvious you might say - baptism is a celebration of new life; an opportunity to celebrate this fact with family and friends in the midst of the Church. This is correct but there is a lot more to baptism.

The Sacrament of Baptism finds its root in the command of Jesus to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptising in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." Baptism is about following Jesus.

Baptism is the "gateway" Sacrament by which the new life of grace, won for us through the death of resurrection of Jesus Christ, is given to the person being baptised. Baptism claims us for Christ and makes us a temple of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is the Sacrament

which makes us truly a member of the Church and opens for us the way to grow in holiness. God comes to dwell with the person being baptised.

## Baptism Preparation

Because there is such a great gift given in baptism, parents are asked explicitly at the beginning of the rite of baptism whether they fully understand the responsibility they are undertaking as their child is baptised. Here are the words:

***You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training him/her in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him/her up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbour. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?***

Here at St Bernadette's, we want to ensure that parents are well prepared for promising, before God and the Church, that they are ready to bring their child up in the practice of the faith. To this end, we offer baptism preparation to all parents. This normally takes place after the Sunday Mass and may include 2-3 short sessions with some friendly parishioners.

## But I don't attend Mass very often, if at all

If it is the case that you rarely come to Mass, then please don't worry. Bringing your child up in the practice of the faith is an opportunity for you to re-engage with the life of the parish. After all, it will be extremely difficult to bring your child up in the Catholic faith, and to fulfil your promises as parents, without that connection to the Church. You will always find a generous welcome here.



Very importantly, baptism preparation will be about you growing and deepening in your relationship with Jesus, who loves you and wants to nourish you through the Church. Please look at baptism as an invitation from God for you to deepen in faith.



## **What are the requirements for baptism?**

Firstly, one of the parents must be Roman Catholic (proof is sometimes required). The other parent, if not Catholic, needs to be in agreement that your child can be baptised. Normally there are two godparents. These are people who are to be good examples of virtue and goodness to your child. One of these godparents must be Roman Catholic and attend Mass regularly. Also, you need to live in the parish. If not, you will require permission from your local parish.

## **When do baptisms take place?**

Our preference is that all baptisms take place during Sunday Mass because your child is being baptised into the Church community. This witnesses to us all the connection between this beautiful sacrament and the community of believers and gives us all encouragement.

## **What next?**

Just get in touch with the office by phone or email. We will then put you in contact with one of our parishioners, who will help to arrange your preparation sessions. Please allow at least three months from enquiry until the date of baptism.

God bless!

St Bernadette's Church, 731 Wells Rd, Bristol, BS14 9HU  
01275 833699 - [bristol.stbernadette@cliftondiocese.com](mailto:bristol.stbernadette@cliftondiocese.com)