

BAPTISM INFORMATION FORM

(To be handed to one of the Priests)

FULL NAME OF CHILD

DATE OF BIRTH

FULL NAME OF MOTHER

Catholic () Other ()

MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER

FULL NAME OF FATHER

Catholic () Other ()

ADDRESS OF PARENTS

TELEPHONE NUMBER

EMAIL ADDRESS

NAME OF GODPARENTS

(1) Catholic Y/N

(2) Catholic Y/N

Office Use only:

Agreed Date for Baptism Preparation Class.....

Proposed Date for Celebration of Baptism

PRESBYTERY CONTACT DETAILS

Tel: 385-3459

380 Innes Road, Mairehau, Christchurch

Email: s.eccleton@xtra.co.nz

HAVING YOUR BABY BAPTISED AT MAIREHAU PARISH

Why does the Church baptise children?

From the very beginning, the Church has always baptised children as well as adults. Our Lord said: "Unless a person is reborn in water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."



This means that children should not be deprived of baptism. Children are precious to Jesus. He loves them dearly. He wants to save them by giving his blessings to them as they grow up in the spiritual family he began, the Church. We experience the Church and belong to the Church in our local parish. It is there that we gather to worship God and to learn together about the ways of God. So baptism takes place in our parish Church for it is there that the parish family gather.

Is "Christening" the same as "Baptism"?

The word "baptism" means washing or cleansing in water. It comes from the Greek language. In the Church, baptism does not mean just ordinary washing or bathing with water. It has a sacred meaning. Baptism always means the washing with water that has the spiritual meaning given to it by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. That is why it is also called **CHRISTENING** but more correctly it is called the **Sacrament of BAPTISM**.

What is the spiritual meaning of Baptism?

When a child is baptised by the Church, Jesus baptises that child. He sends the Holy Spirit into that child. The Holy Spirit makes this child a **child of God**. No man or woman can do that. Only God can make someone his son or daughter. God does this in the Sacrament of Baptism, and that is why we should ensure that our children are baptised.

When is the right time to baptise my child?

Ordinarily, once baby has been born and you have settled back at home, you should make contact with the parish to see about Baptism Preparation (*see next page*) and arranging the date of the baptism of your child (*see next page*).

How do I prepare for the Baptism of my child?

We ask that mother, father, and the godparents attend a preparation session to explore the meaning of this sacrament which you are requesting for your baby. Ideally you would arrange a baby-sitter for that meeting. It is important, where possible, that the godparents attend this session with you as their role is very important. The Sacrament of Baptism can only take place once the preparation evening has been attended.

When is the Sacrament of Baptism celebrated?

In our parish we celebrate baptisms together on the last Sunday of the month after the 10.30am Mass (i.e. about 11.30am). This is because the rite of Baptism is a celebration for the whole family of the Church, not just your family!

How do I choose the godparents?

To be a child's god-parent is an honour and a privilege. It means that the parents want this person to be an influence for good on their child; to be a good example; to be a guardian and helper "in the things of the Holy Spirit and of faith".

For this reason, a godparent should be a Catholic over 16 years of age, who has received the Holy Eucharist and who lives a life of faith. A Christian person who is not Catholic may also be chosen, although they are what is known as a "Christian witness" and not strictly speaking a god-parent.



STEPS TO TAKE

1. Make contact with one of the priests after Mass on Sunday and give him the completed form overleaf
2. He will arrange to include you in the next Baptism Preparation Programme. This is held on the third Thursday of the month, 7.30pm, at St Joseph's parish centre, corner of Main North and Vagues Roads.

Note:

- If you live outside our Parish boundary and do not worship at Mairehau Parish, you should have your child baptised in the parish where you live. Contact should be made with your local Parish Priest
- If you were once a parishioner here and are coming back to Mairehau Parish (e.g. for Christmas or holidays) and wish to have your child baptised, you should obtain a letter **of permission** from your parish for the baptism to be celebrated here. This should be forwarded to us in good time before you arrive.
- It is customary to make an **offering** (called a "stole fee") after a baptism (as with a marriage or funeral). This is not retained by the Priest personally but goes towards the upkeep of all the priests of the Diocese. People often ask what is appropriate for a Baptism- we suggest **\$40.00** but this is an offering and is never insisted upon, as we do not "pay" for sacraments. No-one is ever refused the sacraments because of a difficulty in making an offering.

