

**FAITH** is the womb that conceives this new life, **BAPTISM** the rebirth by which it is brought forth into the light of day.

The **CHURCH** is its nurse, her teachings are its milk, the bread from heaven is its food.

It is brought to maturity by the practice of virtue: It is wedded to wisdom; it gives birth to hope. Its home is the kingdom; its rich inheritance the joys of paradise; its end, not death but the blessed and everlasting life prepared for those who are worthy.

Gregory of Nyssa (4th century)



## A PARENT'S PRAYER



*Heavenly Father,  
Giver of life and all the  
gifts we share, look with  
love and tenderness on us.  
Bless our lives, and help  
us to reflect the love Christ  
has for us.*

*Fill us with your love,  
and let us bring your light*

*into our family.*

*Help us to nurture love in our child's life,  
and offer guidance on their journey of faith.*

*Bless us, Father, in our own journey, as we  
give you praise and glory.*

*We ask this grace through Christ our Lord,  
in the love of your Spirit, now and  
forever. Amen.*

## St. Francis Xavier Baptism Programme

The Baptism preparation is a positive and hopefully an enjoyable experience for parents and, if possible, godparents and other family members who may support the child in the ways of faith. You will participate with other parents in a program led by experienced people who will cover topics including:

- rite of baptism, symbols and practices
- parent opportunities and responsibilities
- belonging to the Church
- sharing faith with your children

There will be opportunities for you to discuss issues and ask any questions.



We hope that both the steps leading to Baptism, the Celebration of Baptism and what follows after the Baptism Celebration will help you to:

- Feel a warm welcome from the parish family;
- Reflect on what Baptism means to you;
- Discuss how this will affect your life as a parent;
- Meet other parents and share ideas, worries and concerns;
- Find support and encouragement from those in a similar situation;
- Explore the Sacrament of Baptism and the meaning behind what we do in the Baptism;
- Link Baptism to your life as a parent;
- Live up to your commitment both to bring your child up as an active member of the Church.

## Steps to Baptism at St. Francis Xavier

1. Baptisms are celebrated on the first and fourth Sunday of the month, either at the 10.30am Mass or at 11.30am.
2. Call the parish office, 9783 3484 to make your request for Baptism.
3. This brochure, an application form and a Baptism Offering envelope are mailed out (there is no cost for Baptisms but a donation is traditional).
4. Return the completed form to the parish office.
5. The parish office will confirm receipt of your application and confirm both dates ie Baptism and Preparation.
6. Attend the Baptism Preparation Session at which the meaning of Baptism and the ceremony will be discussed with you.
7. Celebrate the Baptism with joyful hearts!
8. After the Baptism keep in touch with the parish as you begin to help your child to know, love and worship God, our Father.



## Who do you chose as a Godparent?

The choice of appropriate godparents often presents a problem for parents. It is a great blessing for your child to grow up with a suitable godparent who is a real role model for your child.

The following points can help you in your choice:

- Consider Catholic relatives or friends who will serve as Christian role models for your child.
- Give preference to someone who gives witness to God in their everyday lives.
- Choose as godparents those who will be likely to maintain a long-term relationship with your child.
- Ask yourself the question, "Would you trust this person to raise your child for life?"
- A "stand-in" (proxy) for the ceremony may be chosen if the godparent cannot attend.
- Church Law requires that at least one godparent must be baptized; confirmed an active member of the Catholic Church. The other must at least be a baptized Christian.

*If you have any questions about the choice of godparents do not hesitate to speak to the Parish Priest.*

## JUST WHAT IS INFANT BAPTISM?

Baptism is a significant step in the life of a family.

In Baptism a child is born again by water and the Holy Spirit. The child in a real sense becomes a son or daughter of God and is born into God's family. At the same time the child becomes a member of the Church and of the family of his or her parish.

Celebrating a baptism is more than a private family celebration. Sometimes this sacrament is called the sacrament of '*christening*' by which a child becomes a member of the Christian family who will support parents in their responsibility for the Christian upbringing of their child.

Today, infant baptism is seen as the parents and the whole community witnessing a celebration of the presence of Jesus continuing in the world. Parents and the community commit themselves to walk in faith with the child and renew their own relationship with Jesus Christ.

Parents are the first educators of their children. It is their responsibility to bring their child up in the faith by their guidance and example. In the baptism ceremony, parents renew their own commitment to Christ in the Church. They pledge to live out the ways of Christ in their daily lives. They promise to bring their child up to know, love and serve God.

Godparents agree to assist and support the parents in leading this child into the ways of Christ. They represent the community of believers into which the child is being baptized. They also renew their commitment to Christ in the Church in the same way as the parents, promising to follow Christ.

The parish community promises to be supportive of the child, the parents and godparents in the child's growth in faith.

## To Baptize: A Parent's Decision

Even before your baby is born, you are busy preparing. You want to be sure that everything is ready for the new life that will come to your family.

You realize the responsibility you have of raising your child. This infant will be dependent upon you. The child will learn and grow by your example. The responsibility is great, but you accept it in love. It is the first great act of love for your child.

At baptism, with the support of godparents and of the whole church, your child enters a community of people committed to living the beautiful teachings of Jesus Christ. This community tries to live a life of goodness and love even as it struggles to avoid and overcome sin.

At the celebration of baptism, you pledge yourselves to rearing your child in the loving Christian ways and teaching him or her to avoid sin and evil.

### Your Decision

Your decision to have your baby baptized must come only after serious reflection.

Why? Because baptism does not end once the ceremony is over. Nor is baptism something which only touches the child alone. You are deeply involved.

Bringing your child to the baptismal font expresses your commitment to raise your child in the Christian faith. Your own faith needs to be awakened, strengthened and developed while your child grows. To present your child for baptism is to accept responsibility for the growth of that faith expressed in the commitment you make during the Baptism.

Parents who ask that their child be baptized into Christ have the most significant part to play in passing on the Christian faith to their child. It is through them that the child will come to know the love of God. It is through them that the child will learn to be beyond the family circle and become involved in the larger community in which he/she lives. Through the parents, the child will acquire an awareness of being a living and active member of the church.

Christian parents do not force their faith upon a child. By their lives they witness to belief in Jesus. Parents should baptize their child not because it is the custom, but because they sincerely desire their child to be a Christian. Parents who value their own faith and baptism will want to share the life of Christ they have inherited.



*Baptism  
A Time of  
New Life  
and  
Welcome*

*Introducing you to  
St. Francis Xavier's Parish  
Baptism Preparation  
Programme  
60 Davey Street, Frankston  
Tel: 9783 3484*