

# Baptism Policy

Celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism at our Parish

The rites for entry of children and adults into the Catholic Church have been revised.

We are reminded that initiation consists of a number of sacraments: Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation.

Baptism is not merely a personal event in the life of the person being baptised, nor is it a private family celebration. It is also an important event in the life of the community into which they are being initiated.

Baptism incorporates us into the risen life of Christ, and gives us membership into the faith community. There is mutual responsibility involved: the worshipping community expresses its pastoral responsibility to its members, and the family accept its responsibility by nurturing the faith offered in the sacrament.

In order to achieve a pastoral practice which is consistent with the church's new emphasis on belonging and initiation, the following guidelines are offered:

1. The local community will support parish families in nurturing the faith of its new members (Canon Law 857/2). Thus, children who live within the parish of Melton Area will be baptised into the Catholic Community of Melton. Families living outside the normal parish boundaries who have no link with our community are encouraged to celebrate the baptism within their own parish. Likewise former parishioners of Melton parish who have not maintained some active involvement/ministry are encouraged to celebrate the baptism within their own parish. We are happy to introduce families to their proper community given that they will most likely be attending their own parish school and receive the next two sacraments of initiation, First Eucharist and Confirmation, there.
2. Parents should be prepared for the celebration by instruction in the understanding of the Sacrament (Canon Law 851/12)
3. If non-parishioners want to hire our church for a baptism, they must arrange for their own celebrant who is responsible for the preparation, paperwork and

pastoral follow-up. A date can only be confirmed when their parish priest has given permission.

4. The Sacrament will always be celebrated in St Catherine of Siena Church and not in a private house or hospital, except in danger of death.
5. Children who live within our parish boundary ought not be baptised in another Parish, without the written consent of the Parish Priest or without adequate baptismal preparation.
6. Generally, Parish Baptisms will be held at 12.30pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month after the 11.00am Mass on a Sunday. Rarely will there ever be more than six families at any one ceremony. Families and guests are warmly invited to participate in the 11.00am Mass before the ceremony, as it fosters the link between the worshipping Community and the newly welcomed member.
7. Parents who are regular worshippers are more than welcome to have their children baptised at any of our weekend Masses. This highlights the connection between “initiation” and Eucharist.
8. The role of the godparent, together with the parents, is to help the child to live a Christian life befitting the baptised. One sponsor, male or female, is sufficient but there may be two or more. The sponsor needs to be at least 16 years of age and to be a Catholic who has received the Blessed Eucharist, been confirmed, and who lives the life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken. A non-catholic person may be admitted only in company with a Catholic sponsor.
9. A person cannot be re-baptised. If a child has been baptised in another denomination, or if non-Catholic parents want to have their child become a Catholic in order to get them into a Catholic school. A personal discussion with the parish priest about the faith of the parents is essential.
10. At the Parish of Melton, Baptisms are never arranged through grandparents or others!