



# The Catholic Parish of Pittwater

Sacred Heart & Maria Regina. Neighbourhoods of Grace, entrusted to the care of the Salvatorians.

To help you prepare for your child's baptism, we have provided answers to some frequently asked questions. If there is something not covered or you are unsure of, please don't hesitate to contact the parish office on 9157 0999 (ext 0).

## **How do I register my child for the sacrament of Baptism?**

We need you to complete some forms in order to register your child for the sacrament of Baptism. Forms are available to collect from the parish office or can be downloaded here. Once the forms have been completed, bring them into the parish office to confirm the date of your child's baptism.

## **Where is the parish office located?**

The parish office is located opposite the Sacred Heart Church, at 1 Keenan Street, Mona Vale. The parish office is open from 9.00am to 4.00pm, Monday to Friday.

## **When can we have our child baptised?**

The Catholic Parish of Pittwater celebrates the Sacrament of Baptism on the third Sunday of each month at 11 am at Maria Regina Church Avalon, and the fourth Sunday of each month at 11.30 am at Sacred Heart Church, Mona Vale. However, please check our Baptism calendar or contact the office for specific dates. We only have a small number of families each time in order to help make this a more personal ceremony, so please contact the Parish office to check that your preferred date is available.

## **Do I need to be a member of Pittwater Parish in order to have my child baptised here?**

No, you don't need to live in Pittwater Parish in order to have your child baptised here. We are frequently honoured to baptise children of families who were once members of the parish, still have family in this area, or simply desire to return here so that a specific priest may perform the baptism. However, we would like a permission letter from the Parish where you reside and confirmation that you have completed the Baptism Preparation Program in your parish, if you are unable to complete the Baptism preparation in our Parish.

## **What are the rules for choosing Godparents?**

The role of the godparents is to represent both the Church community in presenting the children for baptism, and to act as a supporter of you, the parents, in your role of nurturing your child's growth in faith. Baptism is the beginning of a lifetime journey in faith as a disciple. The godparents are people whom you believe can support your child in that journey of faith. Each child must have a Catholic Godparent who has received the three sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist), and is actively practicing their faith. Their role is to join you in presenting your child for baptism and, as has been said above, to help your child live their faith in the Catholic community. There is usually a second Godparent who is Catholic; however, it is also possible to have other people associated with the godparent role who are members of other Christian Churches. In formal terms they are referred to as Christian Witnesses, however their role is essentially the same as that of the Catholic godparent – to support your child in their growth in faith. Ideally they would be

### **PARISH OFFICE:**

1 Keenan Street Mona Vale NSW 2103 Phone: (02) 9157 0999 Fax: (02) 9012 0509 email: [office@pittwaterparish.org](mailto:office@pittwaterparish.org)  
website: [www.pittwaterparish.org](http://www.pittwaterparish.org)

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committed members of their Church, who, from their own experience and living of faith, can support you in your role and share that faith with your children. Because of this role of the godparent it is never possible for someone who is not themselves baptised to take on this role, even though they may be wonderful spiritual individuals.

The central question to ask yourselves when choosing Godparents, is “Will the Godparents support you as parents in a commitment to raise your child as a Catholic?”

If either or both of the Godparents are unable to attend the Baptism, a proxy may be named to stand in during the ceremony.

### **How should I prepare for my child’s baptism?**

The best way to prepare for the sacrament of Baptism is through prayer, reflection, reading and faith sharing. To assist parents, the Parish also requires attendance at the Baptismal Preparation Program.

### **What is involved in the Baptism Preparation Program?**

We ask parents to take part in a preparation program in order to enable them to understand the process of the sacrament of Baptism and also to understand the commitment that they will make to support the child’s growth in faith and life.

There are two steps to the Baptismal Preparation Program.

The first step is for the parents to attend a preparation evening. These evenings aim to provide parents with information about the Sacrament of Baptism and about the practicalities of the baptism itself.

These sessions are held one evening of each month in the Sacred Heart Church, Mona Vale. Please check our Baptism Calendar or contact the office for specific dates. These sessions start promptly at 7.00pm and are expected to run for approximately 1 hour. These sessions are aimed at the parents but we understand that you may need to bring your child/ren along. If you do have the opportunity to leave them with someone, you may gain more from the session, but we leave this decision up to you.

The second step is to have your child anointed during our Sunday morning mass. This anointing takes place on the second Sunday of each month. Once again, please check our Baptism calendar or contact the office for specific dates. You have the choice to either attend our 9.00am Mass at Maria Regina Church, Avalon or our 10.00am Mass at Sacred Heart Church, Mona Vale. We will ask you to inform us of your choice at the preparation evening.

### **Can we have our child baptised if we are not married, or were married outside the Church, or if I am a single-parent?**

Your child is always welcome to baptism, given a commitment to raising him/her according to the Catholic faith, and we welcome your entire family to our parish community. The Church recognises that, for whatever the reason, people will make choices in life that lead them in many different directions. The fact that you are here, demonstrates that God is at work in your life.

### **What should my child wear?**

As part of the liturgy of baptism there is a prayer which points to the white garment of the newly baptised as a sign of the new life that they share with Christ. White is a sign of innocence, purity and freshness. Clothing your child in white expresses the dignity and beauty of new life in Christ. For that

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reason we ask either that your child be dressed entirely in white for the whole liturgy or otherwise that you have a white garment (for example a white shawl) which the godparents would wrap around your child at this time while the prayer is being prayed.

### **What else do I need to for to the Baptism?**

Our Paschal (Easter) candle in the church, symbolises Christ our Light who shows us the way to God. Throughout the whole of the liturgy of baptism the Paschal (Easter) Candle is burning brightly. Your child will need a baptism candle that will be lit to from the Paschal candle during the baptism liturgy. This baptism candle signifies that your child has been enlightened by Christ who is light to the world. You will need to provide a candle for this occasion. The candle should be white or gold. If you wish it may be decorated and may even have your child's name written on it. The candle should be a reasonably large one – it's intended to last a lifetime! The candle may be lit each year on the anniversary of baptism when your family might like to share a prayer over the family meal. It can be lit again on important occasions in your child's life – for example Confirmation and First Holy Communion. You may choose to order your own personalised candle from our Parish office or at the baptism preparation evening.

### **How much does the Sacrament of Baptism Cost?**

As a sacrament of the Church, no charge is made for the celebration of baptism. However, it is customary to give a donation which helps to support the life and the work of the parish. The donation can simply be placed in an envelope and handed in to the office along with your completed Baptism forms or at the preparation evening.

### **What about after the Baptism?**

Baptism of course is not the end of the journey – it is only the beginning. Baptism is the first of the three sacraments which together we name as "Sacraments of Initiation". Baptism leads on to the celebration of Confirmation, a deepening of the gift of the Holy Spirit to help us continue our journey as disciples; and Confirmation leads on to the Eucharist, when we become full members of the Church and come forward with the rest of the community to share in the body and blood of the Lord, to be united through that sharing, and strengthened again to live as disciples.

### **How else I can become involved in the Parish?**

Our Parish Pastoral Council invites all parishioners to be registered in our Parish. This allows us to give you useful information about the different ministries in our parish. We welcome you to share your gifts and talents in these ministries.

We would like to encourage you to consider contributing financially to assist with the necessary costs that occur as we serve the community, either by direct debit, planned giving envelopes, available at the back of the Churches or by giving at the second collection during weekend Masses. Please contact the parish office for more details.

If there are any questions about baptism for your child, especially if you are in a special situation of some sort, please don't hesitate to contact the parish office on 9157 0999 (ext 0) so that we may help you.

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