

***The Parish of the Sacred Heart and St Aldhelm  
Sherborne***

**Information for Baptism  
*Becoming part of God's family***

**The Christian community welcomes you with great joy**

*Baptism is the sacrament by which we become members of the church, the Body of Christ. This is the first – and the most important step in the life of a Christian. It is something which is a great privilege and to be taken most seriously.*

*The community here rejoices that new members are brought into the church through baptism, and wishes to support and encourage you in your faith by its prayer and example.*

*This leaflet will offer you some information regarding baptism - whether for an adult, a child or a baby.*

**Baptism of Infants**

Having your baby baptised is quite a simple process. You need to go to see your parish priest and ask him to make the necessary arrangements. If for any reason you wish the baptism to take place elsewhere, the permission of your parish priest should be sought.

Baptisms are normally carried out in the parish church on Sundays during Mass or in the late morning after Mass. The normal length of a baptism service outside of Mass is 25-40 minutes.

You will be expected to have some form of preparation before the baptism with the priest or a catechist. This is partly to enable you to participate actively in the service, but also because baptism has always been seen by the Church as connected with personal faith and repentance. Babies

cannot repent or have faith themselves, but from earliest days the Church has baptised them in the expectation that their parents will nurture the gift of faith as they nurture the physical and mental life of their children. The priest or deacon performing the baptism is therefore obliged to make sure that there is a well-founded hope that your child will be brought up in the faith.

Baptism can only be administered when at least one parent is a Catholic. If the other parent is not a Catholic, they are under no obligation to assist in the Catholic upbringing of the child, though it can be a great help if they do. You will be required to choose at least one godparent to assist in the Catholic upbringing of the child, but can have two if you wish. The godparent should normally be 16 or over and a practising Catholic who has been confirmed. Baptised Christians of other Churches can be witnesses in addition to the Catholic godparent. If the godparent cannot attend the baptism, they can act by proxy.

## **Older Children**

Children over the age of seven will undergo preparation for baptism differently, through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Children. Baptism cannot be repeated, and baptism carried out in other Christian Churches is normally recognised as valid by the Catholic Church.

## **Baptism of Adults**

In the case of an adult who seeks baptism, a period of discernment and preparation is normal. This is to ensure that the person is fully aware of what it is to be a Catholic Christian. Please contact the parish priest or deacon for further information

*By God's gift, through water and the Holy Spirit we are reborn to everlasting life. In his goodness, may God pour out his blessings upon you. May he make you always, wherever you may be, faithful members of his people.*