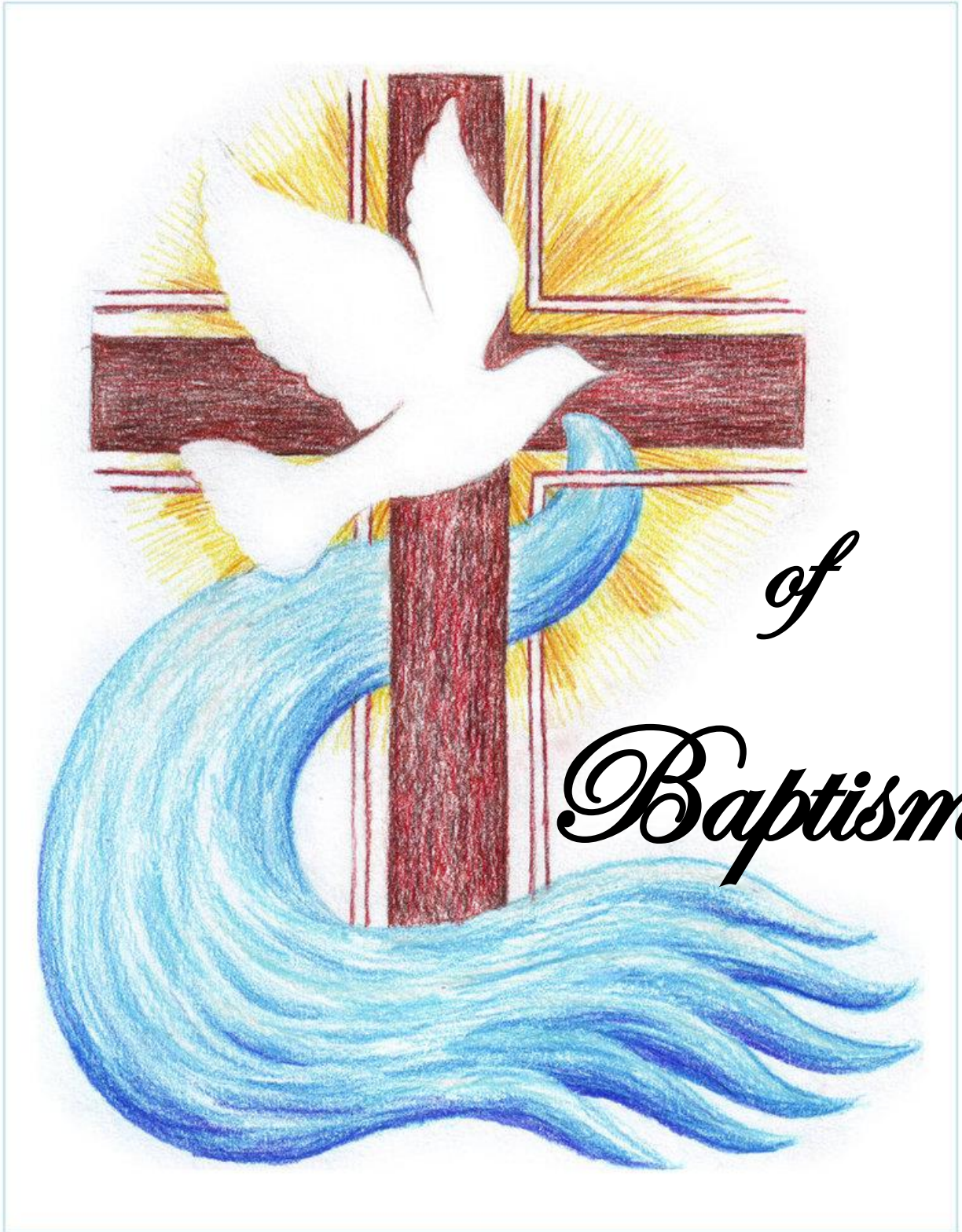


Celebrating the Sacrament



St Christopher's Catholic Church, Holsworthy NSW

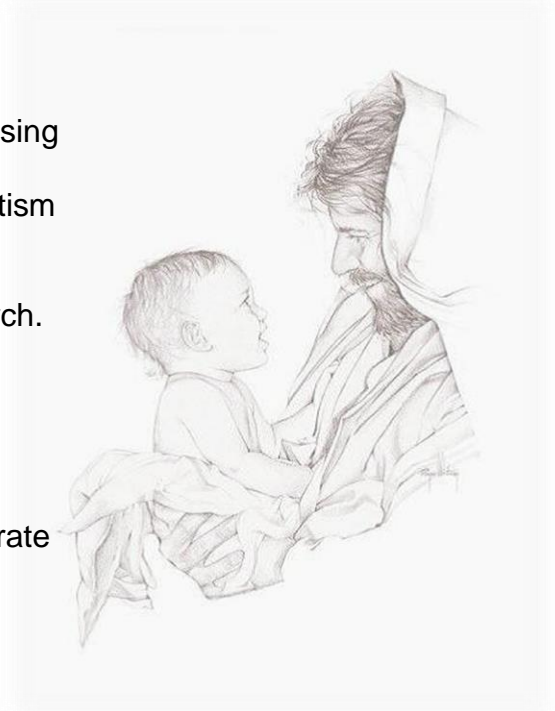
The Baptism of Children

Christian Initiation

Baptism is not simply a "naming ceremony" or even just a blessing for a new baby. It is the beginning of the Christian life and the gateway to eternal life. Because of this, the sacrament of Baptism is taken very seriously in the Church.

Baptism is the beginning of a process of belonging to the Church. We know that children need time to grow and develop. The Catholic Church spaces the process of Christian Initiation over many years.

Christian Initiation for children begins with the Celebration of Baptism. Over the next eleven years your child will also celebrate First Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation which completes initiation into the Catholic Church.



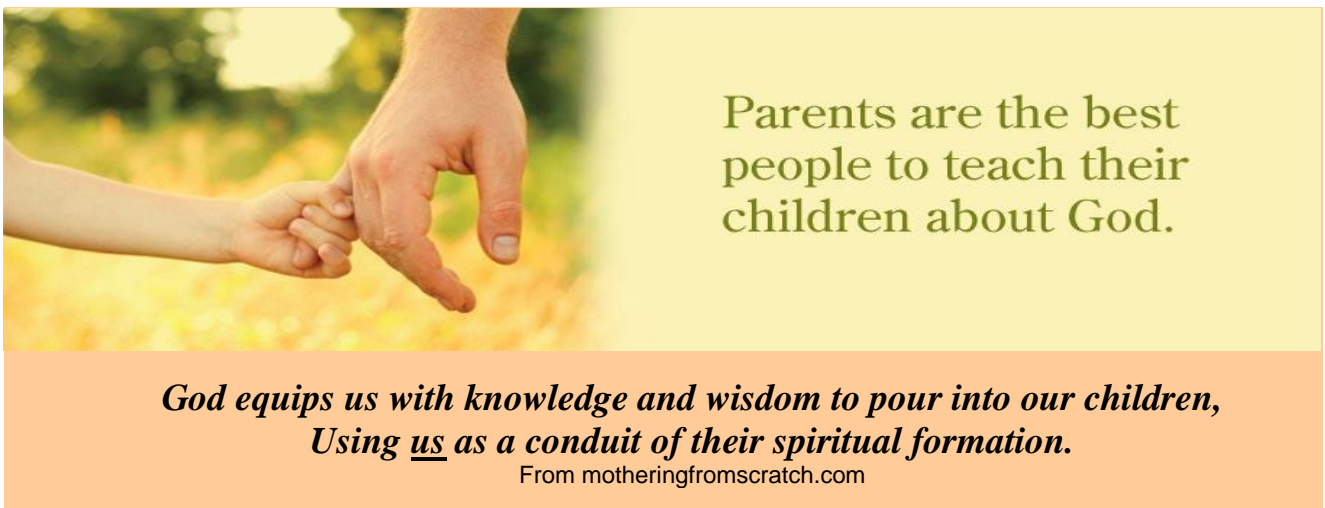
A Sacrament

We believe that Baptism is a sacrament, an action of Jesus Christ in his Church. In this sacrament, Jesus Christ forgives original sin and opens the gates of heaven for us, welcomes us into his Church and makes us the sons and daughters of God

Parents' duties

The ceremony of Baptism assumes a well-founded hope that you will bring your child up in the practice of the faith. This means:

- ✧ you teach your child to pray
- ✧ you teach your child to lead a good Christian life
- ✧ you come to Mass each Sunday
- ✧ you teach your child the Catholic faith



Parents are the best
people to teach their
children about God.

*God equips us with knowledge and wisdom to pour into our children,
Using us as a conduit of their spiritual formation.*

From motheringfromscratch.com



Godparents

Each child may have a godfather (patrinus) and a godmother (matrina), the word "godparents" is used in the rite to describe both.

Godparents represent the wider spiritual family of the child. As such, they are an ever-present sign of the Church's care for the child and its involvement in his or her spiritual and religious development.

The primary role of the Godparent is to help the child develop a living faith and to persevere in living this faith as he or she grows and develops.

Godparents should be constantly involved in the life of your child and, in particular, when your child celebrates the other Sacraments of Initiation: Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation.

In order to do this, at least one of the Godparents must be a practising Catholic who witnesses to Christian faith in word and action in their daily lives.

Baptised Christians of other faiths can be Christian witnesses at the Baptism ceremony.

Nurturing Faith in the Community

Part of nurturing your child's faith is the regular attendance to Sunday Mass so that you and your child can practice being members of the Church.

The Church is the 'school' in which we learn to practice love by reflecting on and celebrating God's love for us, and by trying to imitate that love as a community.

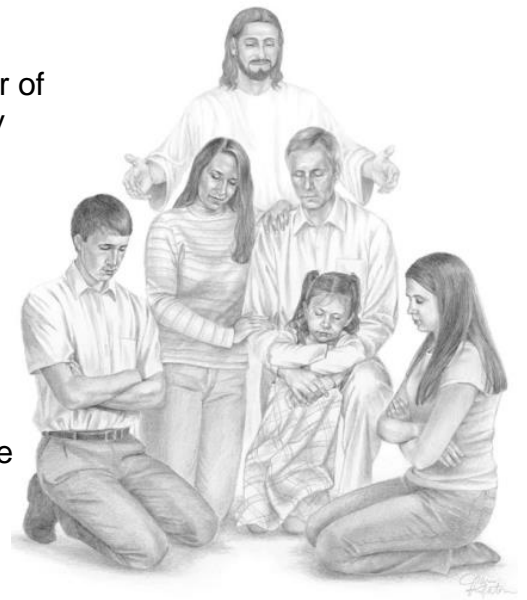
It is at Mass that we are formed as the people of Christ through listening to the Scriptures, praying the prayers together, remembering what Jesus did for us through his life, death and resurrection and receiving the Body and Blood of Christ which sustains us on the journey.

Children cannot relate to what they do not experience. For example, no one would expect a child to learn about football by simply signing them up as a member of the local football club, and never letting them train or play the game.

So how can they ever learn about what it means to be a member of a community if they rarely or never experience it? How can they learn the full extent of our Catholic faith if they never have the opportunity to practise it?

As parents, you regularly take time and trouble to introduce your child to new experiences. You know that they need to repeat experiences in order to understand and value them.

It is exactly the same with their faith and religious development. They need regular, repeated experiences. They need to practice love and membership in the church.



Baptism Symbols



Water is the central symbol of baptism. Because water is essential to all life, the water of baptism symbolises the life-giving grace that sustains those who have become children of God.

Oil is used twice in the ceremony. Before the baptism, the child's breast is smeared with the oil of catechumens as a sign of healing and strengthening. Afterwards the crown of the head is anointed with perfumed chrism as a symbol of joy and thanksgiving.



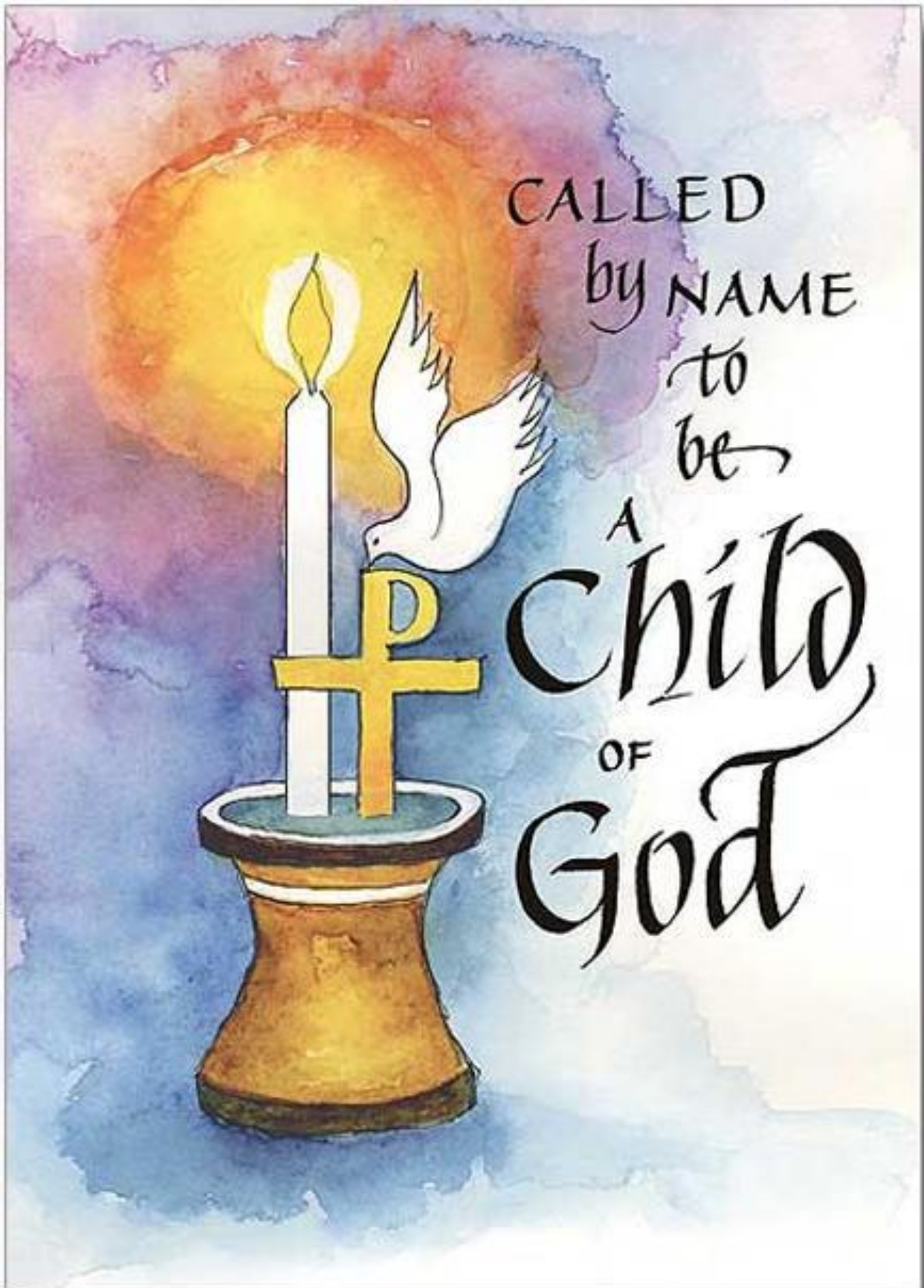
The **white garment** with which the newly baptised is then clothed symbolises their new life in Christ and is "the outward sign of Christian dignity". Our parish provides a white Stole to the family on the day of your child's baptism.

A **baptismal candle is lit** from the paschal candle beside the font and presented to the new member as a sign of the light of Christ. Our parish also provides a candle to the family on the day of your child's baptism. However families are free to and some have opted to organise their own 'personalised' candle as well.



*"Baptise in the name of
the Father and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit."*





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