

## St Mark's Guidelines for the Sacrament of Baptism

### Baptism of a Child/Infant

For a baby to be baptised there must be 'a founded hope' that the child will be nourished in the knowledge and practice of the Catholic faith. Parents might ask themselves about the 'dream' they have for their children and how belief in Jesus Christ and the practice of faith is going to be nurtured in their child's life.

**At St. Mark's, the baptismal preparation program for a child is in three parts:**

1. **Baptism Preparation Programme.** Please complete the Baptism Record Form at <https://www.pakurangacatholic.org.nz/forms/baptism-record-form-new/> or contact the Parish Office to book into the preparation course. This is essential.

2. **Presentation of your child to the Christian community of St Mark's at the 10:30AM Mass.** The presentation is a simple ritual within the Mass that involves presenting your child, the naming and the anointing with the Oil of Catechumens (no special clothing is required and godparents are not required to be present but are most welcome). Please sit towards the front so we are able to easily identify you. The priest will guide you through the ceremony itself at 10:30 AM Sunday Mass.

3. **The Celebration of Baptism then takes place the following 1<sup>st</sup> or 3rd Saturday of the Month, 11:00 am.** Because of the large number of requests for baptism at the parish, the Rite of Baptism is celebrated communally. The parish accommodates Individual baptisms but you will need to provide your own priest, and speak to the Parish Priest or Pastoral Coordinator about the appropriate baptismal preparations.

If this is not your first child to be baptised and you have already completed a preparation programme, you are NOT required to participate in another programme. You will need only to take part in the Presentation and Baptism steps as out lined above. Please book directly with the Parish Office and send in the completed form so that office can prepare the Certificate.

We would ask that if you are able, you make a donation of \$100 which would help us cover expenses and donation to our Clergy Trust Fund – to help our retired, elderly and sick priests of our diocese.

Please enclose this with your booking form. (If for any reason this causes hardship please do not hesitate to speak to the Parish Priest).

If St Mark's is not your usual place of worship, we recommend you contact your local parish. Baptism is an important way of making a connection with your local parish and priest, and the future support your local community offers. This is especially important if you will be looking to send your child to the local Catholic school. If you already belong to another

parish, then the baptism should take place there. If you are just having your child baptised so that they can attend a Catholic school, then please contact your Parish Priest for further information.

### **Baptism of an Adult**

The majority of Catholics are baptised into membership of the Church as a baby or child and grow up in an environment where the Church is always part of their lives. Some people, however, are moved by the Holy Spirit to consciously and freely seek Baptism later in their life journey. During the first centuries, the growth of the Church came very largely through the Baptism of adults. In recent years, the Church has returned to many of these first century ceremonies for welcoming adults who seek baptism into the life of Christ.

This journey of faith, this period of reflection and discovery, and the ceremonies that accompany it have been brought together in a programme the Church calls 'The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults' or 'RCIA'.

Please contact the Parish Office for more information regarding the RCIA Programme.

### **The Celebration of Baptism**

**Gathering** – those who are being baptised, their families, friends and the church community gather together.

**Welcome** – words of welcome are exchanged. The names that have been chosen for Baptism are announced and the parents desire to have their child baptised is expressed.

**The Word** – everyone present listens to the Word of God (Readings from Sacred Scripture)

**Prayers** – prayers are offered to those who are to be baptised, for their families, friends and all who are present.

**Oil of Catechumens** – to prepare for Baptism, the candidate is anointed with Oil of Catechumens as a sign of Christ's protective power.

**Vows** – all present renew their own baptismal vows. Therefore, all godparents need to be baptised Christian with at least one a practising Catholic.

**Water** – the Baptism takes place as the priest pours holy water over the forehead three times as he says the words of Baptism.

**Oil of Chrism** – the newly baptised are then anointed with Sacred Chrism as a sign of sealing with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Like Christ, the one baptised in now an "anointed one".

**White clothing** – as a sign of being a new creation clothed in Christ, the one who has been baptised is now covered with a white cloth.

**Candle** – as a sign of the light of Christ now present in the newly baptised, a candle is presented and lit from the paschal or Easter candle.

**Blessing** – final prayers and a blessing are given that all present may love and serve the Lord in peace and goodwill.