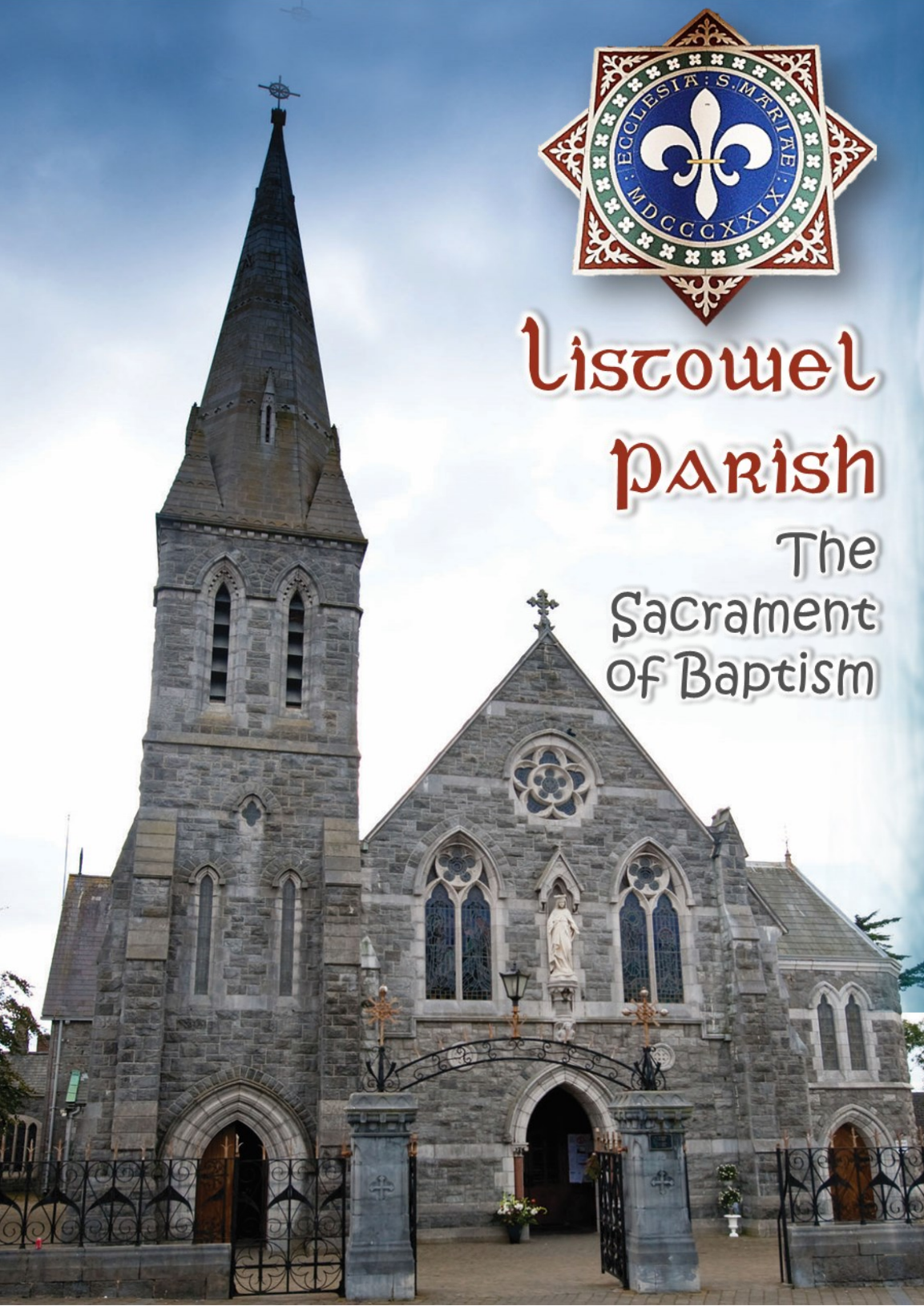


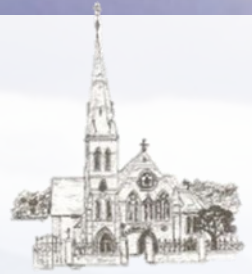


Listowel Parish

The
Sacrament
of Baptism



God welcomes you into His Family



Dear Parents/Guardians,

Congratulations on the birth of your baby. We celebrate your decision to be a Catholic family and to have your baby join our Parish Church. Each person who joins becomes God's child, and is a great blessing for the whole community.

We hope the following information will help you feel involved, supported and welcome as you take this step as a Christian family, in the Baptism, and spiritual development of your child.

The Sacrament of Baptism is sometimes called the 'Door of Jesus' Church' because it is the first step in belonging to God's Family. Baptism is their first public expression of faith in Jesus and makes a person eligible to meet him in the other six sacraments of his church; Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Reconciliation/Confession, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony and Holy Orders.

Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons and daughters of God... (From the Catechism of the Catholic Church.)

At the start of your child's Baptism Ceremony the priest proclaims 'The Christian Community welcomes you with great joy'. This welcome is at the heart of Baptism. *Your baby is becoming part of the Church family; loved and cherished by God.* Baptism celebrates this love and the welcoming of your child.

Things to think about in preparing for Baptism...

Baptism is a sacrament, a graced moment in which we meet God, and the decision to celebrate this sacrament deserves careful consideration. *It is the first step in your child's journey to God, the first public event in which God expresses His love and mercy towards us by making us His children.*

The Baptism ceremony is a beautiful opportunity for family, friends and the whole church to be with you, as you seek God's presence, blessings, guidance and protection, when you publicly present your child and promise to love and protect him/her in the light of the Catholic Christian Faith.

By asking to have your baby baptised and received into the Catholic Church;

- You are making a commitment to bring up your child in the Catholic Christian Faith, which needs to be nurtured in order for it to grow. One way of doing this is to introduce the child to regular practice of the faith. You are the primary teachers of your child in their faith.
- Your promises and efforts now and in the future, will not only help your child to grow but will also help you to grow in God's love. As you teach your child to pray you too will deepen your prayer.
- You are promising, on your own behalf and on behalf of your baby, to reject the things that destroy us as people, and to renew your trust in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and being an active Christian yourself.
- You are asking the Parish Church family to help you. We will give you and your family our wholehearted and prayerful support now and in the future.

Things to do...

Parish Preparation

Since baptism is not merely a naming ceremony for your child, but rather the welcoming of a new Christian into our Parish Church, it is a community celebration. The community is represented by the Parish Baptism Team who has received training in this ministry. Two members will arrange a meeting with you prior to the ceremony during which they will explain the proceedings, the requirements for the Sacrament and answer any questions you may have.

Celebrant

The ordinary celebrant of the sacrament is the Parish Priest. If a guest priest or deacon is requested, permission must be received from the Parish Priest.



Choosing Godparents



In the case of a child it is the parents and godparents who make the baptismal commitment on his/her behalf; therefore they should be able to commit themselves to teaching the child what it means to be a follower of Jesus in His Church by witnessing and living the faith themselves. The custom of having two godparents, one of each sex is a fairly established practice though it is perfectly acceptable to have just a godmother or a godfather. A non-Catholic can be a witness at Baptism but not a godparent since the godparent has to promise before God to help raise the child as a faithful Catholic Christian through his/her example.

Material Requirements

Baptismal Candle

You will need a baptismal candle for your child. This can be purchased in a religious /stationary shop. Keep the candle safe after baptism as it will be used again at the services in preparation for First Holy Communion.

White Garment

Many families have the tradition of passing a Christening white garment from one generation to the next. If your family has not had this tradition perhaps you could start it for this generation.

On The Day

Arrive at the church in plenty of time to meet the priest/deacon and Baptismal team members. Encourage family members to become familiar with the surroundings and ensure everyone is able to have a couple of moments of quiet reflection before the ceremony begins. *This is a sacred and special time when God is present, and it is important to be conscious and reverent of this during the ceremony.*

The Celebration of the Sacrament

Welcome – At the door

The priest/deacon greets the parents, godparents and friends who are waiting with the child, inside the door of the Church.

The parents are asked to declare that they want Baptism for their child; they give the baby's name and promise that they will bring the child up in the Catholic faith and be practising Catholics themselves.

Sign of the Cross

The priest then signs the baby's forehead with the Sign of the Cross and invites the parents and godparents to do the same.

Liturgy of the Word – At the Ambo

Those taking part in the ceremony now go to the front of the Church. If there is more than one family, each family is seated together, with the parents holding the baby. We are invited now to listen to the readings from Scripture and Prayers of the Faithful. (Ministers of the Word and/or family members may read the scriptures and prayers). We then ask the saints to pray for us and to be with us as we begin our journey of faith with this child.

Oil of Catechumens

The priest/deacon anoints the child on the chest with the Oil of Catechumens as a sign of being strengthened by God and set aside for a special relationship with Jesus. (Please have the top buttons undone to make it easier to anoint the child).

Water – Celebration of Baptism at the Font

The pouring of water over the head reminds us of the cleansing and life-giving power of God's love, literally, being poured into the child. After the water is blessed, parents and godparents and all present are asked to renew their Baptismal vows, identifying them as God's family. Then the parents and godparents are invited to assemble around the Baptismal Font. The celebrant pours water on the child's head three times, saying: "I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."





Oil of Chrism

The child is then anointed on the forehead with the Oil of Chrism, a sacred oil signifying that your child is truly an 'anointed Child of God' for life, with a part to play in the work of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

White Garment

The Godmother assists in wrapping the child in a white Baptismal shawl signifying new life in Christ. Your child has become a new creation, cleansed of Original Sin.



Candle

The baptismal candle is lit by the Godfather from the Easter Candle. That symbolised Christ's Resurrection. This is handed to the parents with the words: "Receive the light of Christ." The Celebrant touches the child's ears and mouth and prays that the child may soon hear God's Word and praise Him in prayer and especially in the Holy Mass.

At the Altar

In the final part of the ceremony, the family is invited to bring the baby to the altar of God sharing in the Mass is the privilege of the baptised. The Sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation will complete the child's entry into the Christian community. The Rite concludes with the Lord's Prayer and the blessing of the parents and Godparents with the sign of the Cross.



Checklist

- Confirm dates for baptism preparation meetings with the priest/ deacon and Baptismal team ✓
- Confirm date of Baptism ✓
- Choose Godparents ✓
- Choose Christening Shawl ✓
- Purchase a Baptismal Candle ✓
- Choose readings, prayers of the faithful, and readers ✓

Blessing of the newly baptised

This year, all families who have celebrated the Baptism of their child are invited to a 'Blessing of the Babies' in the church on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord in January. The Parish Office will confirm the date and time of this Ceremony in due course. It is a great privilege and responsibility to raise God's child.



The Parish Office
Bridge Road,
Listowel,
Co. Kerry.

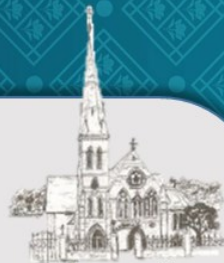
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