



Parish of Bledlow with Saunderton and Horsenden

Princes Risborough Team Ministry

Baptism Policy

1. Canon Law requires that no parish priest may refuse to baptise a child whose parents are resident in the parish. The priest may delay baptising a child for the purpose of teaching the parents or godparents, unless a child is in danger of death, when the priest should baptise the child straight away. A priest may baptise a child whose parents are resident in another parish but the agreement of the priest of the parish in which the parents are resident must first be sought. In this case, the parents must have strong connections with this parish and the parish priest must be satisfied that if, because of distance, the parents will not be bringing the child up within the worshipping family of this parish, they will seek to do so at a church near their home.
2. Therefore under normal circumstances, ahead of baptism, the priest must ensure that the parents and (as far as possible) godparents are fully aware of the implications of the promises that they will make at the baptism service. This will necessitate several baptism preparation meetings.
3. In addition, all parents will be made aware that, besides the baptism service, there is the possibility of a service of thanksgiving for the gift of a child. This service does not preclude baptism at a later date. Parents will be encouraged to think seriously about the commitments they are making in presenting their child for baptism and whether opting for a service of thanksgiving for the gift of the child may not lie more within their own integrity.
4. Every child should have three godparents, though two of these may be the child's parents. Two of the godparents should be of the same sex as the child and one of the opposite sex. It is Canon Law that godparents must be baptised, and preferably also confirmed.
5. Through baptism, the child becomes a member of the family of God and is welcomed into the worshipping community of the parish. The worshipping community at the baptism service promises that with the help of God they will welcome the child and uphold the child in his/her new life in Christ. It is preferred that baptisms take place within the context of a normal Sunday service. If the child is baptised in a private baptism service, the parents are asked to bring the child to church in the week or weeks immediately following the baptism so that the child may be introduced to and welcomed by the worshipping community, and the worshipping community asked to make their commitment to the child.
6. When an adult wishes to be baptised, it is expected that confirmation will follow immediately, or at the next Deanery confirmation service. The adult will therefore be required to attend a confirmation or Christian basics course ahead of baptism. These courses are generally held in advance of Deanery confirmation services.
7. No fee is charged for baptism, though if a service of baptism takes place outside a normal Sunday service, a donation towards the cost of the opening of the church would be gratefully received.

Reviewed and re-adopted on 16 May 2019