



## A NEW LIFE IS BORN INTO YOUR HOME.....

You gaze at that little creature with emotion and tenderness.

You feel that you are in the presence of something holy. Here is a new person. All from you and all entrusted to you.

## FOR THAT CHILD YOU WANT TO BEAUTIFUL HUMAN LIFE.....

But you know s/he would miss the very best if in the heart of his/her human life s/he did not receive the divine life that God would like him to share with Him. That's why you are going to ask that s/he be Baptised.

You want this not because it is a beautiful ceremony, or to please his granny, but because you want him to be a Christian a member of the Church of Jesus, a child of God for all times.

The day he was born was a wonderful day, when you took him into your arms for the first time. His Baptism is also going to be a special event to be celebrated with happiness and joy. This little one will be born **A CHILD OF GOD.**

*"All you who are baptised in Christ, have clothed yourselves in Christ" (Gal. 3:27)*

These words of St Paul will come true for our child too. By his baptism he will be united to Christ so closely that in God's sight he will be *ONE* with Christ. He will be *'Christian'*.

**TOGETHER IN THE CHURCH**...you have given your child more than life; you have given him a home, a family, people around him who love him, who will help him. He would not have been able to live alone. His life as a human person will expand through all sorts of relationships. In the same way, through Baptism he will enter a **NEW COMMUNITY**, a family, the **CHURCH OF JESUS**. Entry into the Church, will involve your child in a way of life summed up in this commandment of Jesus:

**"Love one another as I have loved you".**

It is to live for others, through strength which Christ gives us through the Church, for he is present in His Church, especially through his Word and his sacraments.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- Why do you wish your child to be baptised into the Catholic Faith?
- What kind of Catholic are you? How important is your faith for you?  
Is the Lord Master of your life?
- Do you intend sharing your faith with your child?
- What does belonging to the Church really mean to you?
- What religious values do you most hope to pass on to your child?
- What evil do you most hope to keep from your baby?
- What kind of person do you most hope your 'child will be?
- Does the name you have chosen, reveal something of that wish?

## QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK

### 1. My husband's family are not Catholics but he would like his sister to be godmother to our baby son. Is this allowed?

**A.** The Church insists that at least one godparent is a practising, responsible Catholic whose primary role remains that of supporting the parents in bringing up the child in the Christian faith. But most parents choose two. When this happens, provided one godparent is a Catholic, it is allowable for a non-Catholic to act as a witness to the baptism. It remains important, however, that this person is baptised, upright, of sufficient age and maturity. Godparents must not be less than sixteen years -of age, and be Catholics who are confirmed, receives the blessed Eucharist and lives a life of faith.

### 2. How soon should I have my baby baptized?

**A.** Babies born into Catholic families should be baptized as soon as possible after birth. This is because of 'Christ's teaching on the importance of baptism. If there is any danger of death the baby must be baptized immediately and anyone can baptise. You pour water over the head, at the same time saying the words: I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Usually, a baby should be baptized four to six weeks after the birth. The time will depend on the time needed for the preparation of the parents. If you have difficulties with the practice of your faith; you may need to allow a little longer in order to rebuild a life of faith within your family.

### 3. My mother says I have to give my baby girl the name of a saint but I don't agree.

#### Who is right?

**A.** Parents should not give their children strange, laughable names. You are not obliged to call your daughter after a saint (although there are plenty to choose from) but the Church still expects you to choose a name which reflects your own Christian faith. When you give a name, you make a statement for your child.

### 4. My friend's baby was stillborn. What will happen to the baby?

Your friend's baby is entrusted to the mysterious but infinitely kind and powerful love of God. If any one has any doubts about such love then look at the crucifix. The cross proves that God's love is greater than any human mind can understand or follow. Jesus told us that "unless a man is born through water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John 3:5) This has led people to question whether the unbaptised are saved? Unbaptised infants, some suggest, pass into a state of "Limbo" - where the baby is excluded from heaven and hell. But this latter suggestion has never been universally taught by the Church, whose primary insistence, like that of Jesus himself, is to call every person to repentance, to belief and to baptism.

**5. My baby was baptised at birth because of illness. Can he be rebaptised in church?**

**A.** Baptism is a once-in-a-lifetime event. It means that we become a member of God's family; we become a Christian. We cannot become what we already are. The baptism can't be repeated but it is desirable that you have a celebration in church and share in the prayers and blessings which are part of the baptismal ceremony. You may also wish to appoint godparents at the same time. Such a service is a lovely "thanksgiving" for the safety and well-being of your baby.

**6. I have been lapsed for a number of years and my seven year old daughter has never been baptized. Could I have her baptized at the same time as our baby?**

Yes, but you will need to allow time for her preparation. She will need to be given some instruction about baptism in order to understand what is happening. You will also find some form



of preparation helpful in order to clarify any points about the faith which have given you difficulties. It may be helpful, for example, to speak to the priest about this. People sometimes wonder about how to approach a priest. After Sunday Mass is not always the best time as there are usually crowds of people around. Try to book a time convenient for both of you in order to meet in an atmosphere of quiet and peace.

**7. I'm an unmarried mother. I want my baby baptized but I am anxious about the kind of reception I'll get.**

You will be given a friendly welcome by the priest who will be happy to arrange for the baptism of your baby in the privacy which you may, perhaps, prefer. So don't worry at all. The priest will simply want to be assured of your child's Catholic up-bringing.

**8. Why does the Church insist on the baptism of babies? "Wouldn't it be better to wait until the child can make up its own mind?"**

The Church has always baptized children soon after they are born as a sign of God's love.

We have already seen how baptism is God's way of showing his love for a child of his. Baptism is the sign by which he loves us and "re-creates" us in his own image. To suggest that a child should be left alone until old enough to make his or her own decision is really to miss the whole point of what baptism is about. Just as we need the love of our parents to grow as a human being so do we need the love of our heavenly Father to grow as his child.

Baptizing a baby, before the baby can make the slightest effort to do anything for his or her own salvation, says very dramatically that all salvation is from God. Clearly, in the adult there must already be an element of faith - some sign of accepting God's love. But the infant is carried to the font by the faith of the family.

**STEPS TO BAPTISM IN OUR PARISH**

1. Parents, (even before a child is born), notify the Priest or Deacon of their desire to present the child for baptism. They arrange for an interview.
2. Parents are presented to the Parish Community during a Sunday Mass.
3. Both parents and godparents attend a Pre-Baptism Class to prepare for this important event in their lives. Details of this class are given in the Parish Sunday leaflet.
4. The Baptism takes place in the Parish Church usually on the fourth Sunday of each month.

**ASSUMPTION CATHOLIC PARISH  
UMBILO, DURBAN  
TEL: 2053385**



**THE BAPTISM  
OF YOUR CHILD**