

THE FONT

This font was consecrated by Bishop John Howe of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane on 14th August 1960. It was gifted to St Michael and All Angels Church by Colonel and Mrs Wilson of Ashmore. Their granddaughter Virginia Valerie Wilson was the first person to be baptized in it. To date another 46 people, have since been baptised in this font.

SIGNIFICANCE and DESIGN

The word font comes from the Latin word *fons* meaning fountain or source of living water. The water in a font is blessed by a priest to perform the rite of Holy Baptism. The Christian life begins with baptism, this water symbolizes cleansing from the candidate's old life, and their rebirth to a new life following Christ on a pilgrimage through life. Whilst fonts have varied in shape and size, the eight-sided font is traditionally the most popular design. In the late medieval period, in cold regions of northern Europe, as infant Baptism became more common and an individual's affirmation of their faith became separated from water baptism, in-ground pools for immersion were largely replaced by above-ground containers, and eventually by fonts on pedestals that could accommodate only baptism by aspersion.

This eight- sided design acts as a visible reminder that Baptism, this blessed washing, is the means by which believers enter into a new and eternal life. The Christian concept of time is marked with the Lord's presence as He enters our lives, time, and space. In the old Testament, creation took "six days" and the "seventh day" was celebrated on a Saturday to give thanks to God for the gift of creation and His continued sustainment of it. Following Jesus' resurrection from the dead, on Sunday morning, the eschatological "eighth day", the followers of Jesus gathered on Sunday to celebrate their Lord's resurrection victory, and the renewal of life found only in Him.

Thus, Baptism is the octave day of the candidate's new birth and for those baptised the hope of resurrection, though not yet realised, is sure and certain, because they have received the sacrament or sign of this reality, and have been given the pledge of the Spirit. It is through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism that believers enter into the life of Christ.

Locating the font at the church entrance means that as people walk in, they are met with the architectural reminder that they are baptized. They have not come to meet with just any random "god", but the God who has made them heirs with Christ by virtue of their baptismal adoption.

INTERPRETATION of the FONT CARVINGS

Each face of the octagon is decorated with a symbolic carving.



A column, whip and reed - Flagellation was a form of brutal punishment executed by Roman soldiers using a flagrum - a whip consisting of three or more leather tails that had small metal balls at the end of each tail. Jesus would have been stripped naked and shackled by His wrists to a low column for the soldier to strike repeatedly in an arc-like fashion across His exposed back. The reed was placed in Jesus hand as a sceptre in mockery.

A crown of thorns and nails - emblems of the suffering and death of Jesus. According to biblical accounts, a crown of thorns was placed on the head of Jesus during the events leading up to His crucifixion mocked Christ's claim to the throne of David. The nails were used to inflict wounds into his hands and feet.



A heart pierced with a spear and nails - The gospel states that the Romans planned to break Jesus' legs, a method of hastening death during a crucifixion. Just before they did so, they realised He was already dead, but to make sure, a Roman soldier stabbed him in the side. The nails represent his other piercing wounds to hands and feet

A seamless robe - The soldiers who crucified Jesus did not divide his tunic after crucifying him, but cast lots to determine who would keep it because it was woven in one piece, without seam. In the Old Testament, God commands the High Priest to wear a seamless robe.

This is a reminder that Jesus wore the uniform of the High Priest



A ladder with hammer and pincers - these aren't mentioned in biblical accounts of the crucifixion, but are the tools used to remove Christs body for burial, and to drive the nails into his hands and feet and are often used in art to represent the sorrow of those who had loved and followed Him.

An empty cross with shroud or rope symbolises the resurrection, and triumph over death. The belief being that the crucifixion was not the end but the beginning of a new spiritual life. This instrument of torture has now become a symbol of salvation and forgiveness.



The *thc* Monogram IHC are the first letters (iota-eta-sigma) of the name Jesus (IHC OYC) in Greek alphabet – a symbol of God the Son, Jesus Christ

A descending dove makes reference to the spirit of God which is described in the Gospels as descending like a dove as Jesus was himself baptised – A symbol of both the Holy Spirit and of baptism.

