



Baptism

Policies at a Glance

Candidates for Baptism

Baptism may be celebrated at any time, but the preference is Sunday or the Easter Vigil. As a rule, the infant is baptized into the parish church of the parents.

The Rite may be celebrated at a special Mass, a regularly scheduled Sunday Mass, or a Liturgy of the Word.

Keeping to the true meaning of the Sacrament, children should be continually formed in the faith. Helping parents maintain a regular practice and growth in the faith is advised.

Parents

Parents should be interviewed before a child is baptized. This is to help parents to gain awareness of the rights & responsibilities of Baptism as well as an opportunity for evangelization and catechesis. In-person conversations are the preferred.

Parents should present a minimal effort to live the Christian life, including:

- Intention and capacity to raise the child in the Catholic faith.
- Acceptance of the doctrine of the Creed.
- Regular participation in worship, especially weekly Mass attendance.
- A personal prayer life.
- Concern to show charity to others.
- A commitment to the way of life Jesus invites us into.

Serious lack of the above could constitute legitimate reason for **delaying** the Baptism. The purpose of which is to allow time for the Church to help the parents come to a fuller understanding of their own faith-life and their responsibilities.

A priest or deacon will not baptize a child whose Baptism has been delayed for legitimate reasons in another parish.

Preparation

Parents should be instructed properly on the meaning of the Sacrament and the obligations they are undertaking. Ultimate responsibility for preparation falls to the priests, assisted by others, and is coordinated by the bishop.

Parents should be given resources and examples to follow. They should be enabled to show genuine commitment to the faith on their own behalf and that of their child. Parents should be involved in planning for the celebration and informed of the options available to them as a part of the Rite.

It is better if the preparation begins before the child is born as life will change drastically after. However, beginning after the child is born should not hinder the process.

Sponsors (Godparents)

Prerequisites:

- There is to be only one male and one female sponsor for each candidate for baptism.
- To take on the function of sponsor, a person must have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function.
- The sponsor/godparent must be:
 - * a fully initiated Catholic (having received Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist)
 - * who leads a life of faith,
 - * has completed their 16th year of age, (*NB: unless it seems to the pastor or minister that an exception is to be made for a just cause.*)
 - * is not bound by any canonical penalty
 - * and is not the mother or father of the one to be baptized.

A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community is not to participate except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a witness to the Baptism.

Celebration of the Sacrament

Whenever possible, families should be combined for the celebration of the Sacrament so that the communal, ecclesial nature is more evident.

After Baptism it is the responsibility of the parents and sponsors (godparents) to assist the child to know God and prepare the child to receive Confirmation and participate in the Holy Eucharist. To this end, the parish should be of support.