

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **WHAT HAPPENS IF THE GODPARENT CANNOT BE PRESENT AT THE BAPTISM?**

If the Godparent cannot be present the parents are to appoint someone else to serve as a proxy. In the record of Baptism the name(s) of both the Godparent(s) will be entered.

## **CAN A MARRIED FAMILY MEMBER WHO IS CATHOLIC BUT DID NOT MARRY IN THE CHURCH BE A GODPARENT?**

Unless the marriage is recognized as valid by the Church, this person cannot serve as a godparent. This person may very well be a good person in many ways, but the marital situation needs to be reconciled before they fulfill the role of godparent.

## **CAN A FAMILY MEMBER WHO WAS MARRIED IN THE CHURCH BUT NOW IS SEPARATED OR DIVORCED BE A GODPARENT OR SPONSOR?**

Possibly. Separation or divorce does not necessarily inhibit a person from being a godparent, but please contact the church office to speak with a Priest or the Director of Faith Formation to help clarify your situation.

## **CAN A MEMBER OF MY FAMILY WHO IS NOT CATHOLIC BUT A CHRISTIAN BE A GODPARENT?**

A nonCatholic cannot serve as a godparent in a Catholic baptism. A validly baptized Christian may serve as a Christian witness. A godparent is asked to promise to help the parents of the child to raise the child in the Catholic faith. A godparent or sponsor is required by Canon Law to be a fully initiated Catholic in good standing (This means they have received Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation. If they are married, they must have a marriage recognized by the Catholic Church.)

## **CAN A FAMILY MEMBER WHO IS NOT CHRISTIAN BE A WITNESS?**

No, the Church requires that a witness be a validly baptized Christian. Non-Christians are welcome to attend a celebration of the Sacrament; however, the Church makes no demands on their conscience to participate in a Rite which may be contrary to their beliefs.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS CONTINUED

## CAN I HAVE MORE THAN TWO GODPARENTS OR SPONSORS?

Although people of some cultures sometimes choose multiple godparents, only two names can actually be entered in the Baptismal Register. (CIC, can. 873) We would invite your entire family to be involved in the upbringing of your child in the Catholic faith.

## CAN I HAVE MY CHILD BAPTIZED IF MY SPOUSE OR PARENT IS NOT CATHOLIC?

Yes, only one parent needs to have received the Sacrament of Baptism. The other parent must agree to have the child baptized. Please note, however, that if one or both of the parents have expressed an intent to become Catholic, the child may be baptized. As long as there is an earnest desire for the child to be reared in the Catholic faith, the Church will work with the parents on baptizing the child and addressing any specific concerns.

## DO I HAVE TO BE MARRIED IN THE CHURCH TO HAVE MY CHILD BAPTIZED?

No, however; we would invite those who have not received the Sacrament of Matrimony to talk to our priest or Director of Faith Formation for more information on how to celebrate this sacrament.

## DO I HAVE TO BE CONFIRMED TO HAVE MY CHILD BAPTIZED?

No, however, we would invite anyone who is an adult and has not been confirmed to enroll in our Adult Confirmation course.

## DO I NEED TO CHOOSE A BAPTISMAL NAME FOR MY CHILD?

This is optional. In the past, Canon Law required that parents have a Christian name for the child at Baptism. However, this is no longer a hard-and-fast requirement. In the current code of Canon Law, number 855 simply states:

“Parents, sponsors, and the pastor are to take care that a name foreign to Christian sensibility is not given.”

In short, the canon suggests names like "Lucifer" or "Zeus" are off-limits, but "Todd" or "Jane" are permissible. That being said, there is a long and beautiful tradition as to why Catholics do present a saintly or biblical name for their child at Baptism, and why those who convert to Catholicism may choose to take an additional name when they are baptized.

**CCC 2158**, "God calls each one by name. Everyone's name is sacred. The name is the icon of the person. It demands respect as a sign of the dignity of the one who bears it."