

# New Policy for Scheduling Baptisms

## New Procedure for procuring a date for a Baptism:

Before a date will be given for a Baptism the following requirements must be met:

- ◆ The names of the sponsors and their sponsor certificates from their home parish must be presented.
- ◆ The parents must register in the parish if they have not already done so.
- ◆ The parents must have completed the Baptism preparation class offered in the parish.
- ◆ The Baptism stipend must be submitted.

## Why a new policy?

More and more frequently we have encountered difficulties about sponsors as parishioners approach the parish to arrange for a Baptism without having made a final selection of those who will be the sponsors. Even though a date for the Baptism is arranged, the parents may not inform the parish about the sponsors until the Baptism is near only to find out the people they have chosen are not eligible to be sponsors. This leads to frustration and even alienation. It is our hope that this new policy will educate our parishioners to the important role played by the sponsor in the Baptism ceremony and in the life of the person being baptized and at the same time eliminate potential problems.

## Please Note:

- ◆ This policy will now be the standard policy for Baptism in this parish. Past practices in this parish or in any other parish will not replace this policy.
- ◆ No office staff person is authorized to alter this policy.

## Who qualifies as a Baptism Sponsor (Godparent)?

### The role of the sponsor:

In Baptism a person is being initiated into the Church. The sponsor's role is twofold. In the Baptism ceremony the sponsor stands as a representative of the faith community to receive and welcome the new Church member into the community. In the ongoing life of the baptized person the role of the sponsor is to be a model of Catholic Christian living who will encourage and support the faith development of the baptized person. In order to fulfill this twofold spiritual role, it is essential the sponsor have the following qualifications:

- ◆ The person must have received all three Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Communion).
- ◆ The person must be a Catholic in good standing who regularly attends Sunday Mass, participates in the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) and, if married, is living in a valid marriage approved by the Church.
- ◆ The person must be living a Christian lifestyle which can serve as a model and an inspiration to the person he or she will sponsor.
- ◆ The person must be at least sixteen years old.

It is permissible to have only one sponsor. If there are two sponsors one must be female and one male. A parent may not serve as a sponsor; however, grandparents may be sponsors.

### The "Christian Witness" option clarified

It is possible to have a devout member of a Christian tradition who is not Catholic present as a witness to the Baptism provided there is also a regular Catholic sponsor present.

In addition to being a devout Christian it is important to note that the person can never be a former Catholic. Allowing a former Catholic to participate in a Catholic Baptism would indicate to the person being baptized that persevering in your Catholic Faith is not important or expected.

### A Proxy:

A Catholic in good standing can stand in for the sponsor if the sponsor cannot be present at the actual ceremony. A parent can be a proxy. Only the designated sponsor will be listed in the parish baptismal registry or on the baptismal certificate as the godparent.

Hopefully, this information will be helpful when scheduling Baptisms at St. Mary Parish.  
Please contact the parish office for further assistance.