

# Baptism FAQ

## To be admitted to the role of a Godparent what requirements do I need?

To be permitted to take on the function of sponsor(godparent) a person must:

- be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or the person who takes their place, or in their absence by the pastor or minister and have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function;
- have completed the sixteenth year of age, unless the diocesan bishop has established another age, or the pastor or minister has granted an exception for a just cause;
- be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on;
- not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;
- not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized. §2. 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 of the baptism (Canon 874).

## How do parents choose a name for Baptism?

Parents, sponsors, and the pastor are to take care that a name foreign to Christian sensibility is not given (Canon 855). The law does not require that the child be given a saint's name but forbids a name that would be offensive to Christians (Pastoral Companion for Canon Law 51).

## How soon after birth should Infants be Baptized?

For infants, parents are bound by obligation to ensure that infants are baptized within the first weeks after birth (Canon 867). For adults, baptisms may be celebrated at any time however it is commendable to celebrate them at the Easter Vigil.

## What happens if the Godparent cannot be present at the Baptism?

If the Godparent cannot be present he/she is to appoint someone else to serve as a proxy. According to the Pastoral Companion; "If the godparent cannot be present in person, he/she may appoint another person to serve as a proxy, but the appointment must be made so that there is certainty as to the person who takes the responsibility as Godparent. Ordinary, the Godparent should make the appointment of the proxy in writing or before two witnesses so that there is certainty about who is the responsible person. The custom of leaving the appointment of the proxy to the parent of the infant or two the baptizing priest tends to make sponsorship doubtful and is to be reprobated. The real Godparent must give a mandate directly or indirectly (through the agency of others but with his or her consent) to the proxy. In the record of Baptism, the names of both the Godparent and the proxy should be entered" (56).

## Are other Christian baptisms valid?

Yes, other Christian baptisms are valid and recognized by the Church. If there is any question if a Baptism is valid an investigation should take place. Please consult your parish priest.

## How do I have my child Baptized in another parish?

One must coordinate with the pastors of both one's own parish and the parish the parent's wish to have their child baptized and permission from both must be given.

## Who can Baptize?

Any validly ordained Deacon, Priest, or Bishop can baptize. In extreme cases, when death is eminent, any person can baptize (Canon 861).

### Can a Baptism take place in the context of Mass?

A Baptism can take place in the context of Mass but it is customary for it take place outside of Mass. The only time it is customary to take place during Mass is during the Easter Vigil. If there is a desire for it to take place during Mass please refer to the parish where the Baptism is taking place.

### Can a Non-Catholic be a witness?

Yes, non-Catholic witnesses can serve as a Christian witness but it is not preferred. The non-Catholic must be baptized and must be present with a Catholic godparent at the time of baptism (Pastoral companion for Canon Law 57).