



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CATHOLIC PARISH

BAPTISM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I am not married. Can my child be baptized?

Yes. A child may be baptized so long as there is a well-founded hope that he or she will be brought up in the practice of the Faith. This is present so long as one parent is willing to practice the Catholic Faith and share it with the child. A child is not penalized for having been born out of wedlock. If the parents of a child are living together without benefit of marriage or in a civil marriage not recognized by the Church, they would be encouraged to regularize their situation so that they can fully practice the Faith they are called to share with their child.

What are the requirements for being a godparent (sponsor) at Baptism?

Code of Canon Law 874.1

One sponsor must be Catholic.

The Catholic must be at least 16 years old, fully initiated, Catholic in good standing

Cannot be either parent

What if we have trouble finding one man and one woman who satisfy the requirements and can be sponsors at the Baptism?

First, only one sponsor is required, and that sponsor may be of either gender. Secondly, although it is preferable that sponsors be present for the Baptism, this is not required. One or both sponsors may be represented by proxy (someone present at the Baptism who speaks for the absent sponsor). There are no special requirements for proxies (they need not be Catholic, for example). Finally, it is not required that godparents be relatives of the parents.

Can we have more than two sponsors for our child?

No. The Church does not want the responsibility of sponsors to be diluted. The maximum number of sponsors is two; and if there are two, one must be male and one female.

Can't non-Catholics sometimes be sponsors?

No. In order to sponsor someone to become a member of the Catholic Church, one must be a Catholic oneself. (Could you imagine sponsoring someone to become a member of the Elks



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Club if you yourself were not an Elk?) However, if a child being baptized has only one sponsor, a non-catholic Christian may serve as an additional witness of the Baptism and be recorded as such. The rules about gender do not apply to a witness; so, for example, a child may have a female sponsor and a female witness. Nor is there any requirement that a witness be an active member of his or her denomination.

May we take photographs or video during the Baptism?

Yes – but anyone with an official role in the Baptism (parent, sponsor or witness) should give their attention to that responsibility and not serve as a photographer during the ceremony itself.

Is there a fee for Baptism?

No. Since it is presumed that the parents belong to the parish and are regularly supporting the Church according to their ability, there is no fee for Baptism. If the parents do live elsewhere and are celebrating the Baptism here for the convenience of the family, a donation to the parish would be very appropriate. The priest or deacon performing the Baptism is sometimes given a monetary gift as a token of appreciation, but this is at the discretion of the family.

What should the baby wear for the baptism?

A white garment is an ancient sign of the newly baptized Christian's new life in Christ. Your child's baptismal garment need not be a traditional baptismal or christening gown; it can be any clothing that is mainly white.

Do we need to provide the candle?

No. St. Thomas Aquinas parish provides the candle, as well as the small white garment which will be placed on your child during the baptism.