The Cathedral of St. Patrick

BAPTISM GUIDELINES

For Catholics, the Sacrament of Baptism is the first step in a lifelong journey of commitment and discipleship. In order to be baptized at the Cathedral of St. Patrick, the parents of the child must be registered parishioners who have completed St. Patrick’s Baptism preparation class. Attendance at the Baptism preparation class is not required if the parents have attended a Baptism preparation class at the St. Patrick’s Cathedral within the past two years.

Baptisms are celebrated on the first, second and fourth Sunday after the 12:30 PM Mass. Saturday Baptisms are possible if there are no weddings. To schedule a Baptism please call St. Patrick’s Business Manager, Debra Lemmon, in the Parish office at (704) 334-2283. Baptism will not be scheduled until parents have completed the Cathedral’s Baptism preparation class and a baptismal registration form has been completed.

THE ROLE OF GODPARENTS

The principal responsibility of a godparent is to give witness to the Catholic faith by his/her words and actions. The role is, together with the parents, to present the child for baptism, and to help it to live a Christian life befitting the baptised and faithfully to fulfill the duties inherent in baptism. When called upon to profess the Catholic faith on behalf of the infant, the godparent must believe in what he/she is professing.

Is the godparent expected to be someone who attends church every Sunday? It makes sense if they do. After all, you are asking this person to assist you in bringing up your child in the Catholic faith. The church reasonably expects parents and godparents to help the child “lead a Christian life in harmony with baptism.” Baptism depends on the faith of the Church, expressed by parents and godparents. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary that they live what they say they believe.

After the baptism, the godparent’s role really begins, and not just in the sense of sending presents at birthdays and Christmas! Ideally, a godparent will continue to pray for their godchild; keep in touch with them and their family; give a present or a card at the baptism anniversary and each sacramental milestone in the life of the godchild; lead the child by their example towards a Christian way of life; be supportive of the godchild’s parents in their role as Christian parents and primary educators of their child.

THE HISTORY OF GODPARENTS

Godparents are a tradition in the Sacrament of Baptism that goes back as far as the early days of the Catholic Church. In those days, conversions came in two ways. In the first instance, whole families were received into the Church through the Sacrament of Baptism after they had been instructed and prepared by a friend or someone appointed by the Church. In the second instance, individuals were instructed and prepared by a friend or someone appointed by the Church. During the first four centuries, the Catholic Church was under intense persecution by the Roman Empire. To avoid persecution and the infiltration of pagans into the Church, every person who was received into the Church was required to have a sponsor. This sponsor performed two roles. First, he protected the Church by authenticating the sincerity of the convert. Secondly, as a catechist, he supported the person as a candidate into the Church.
GODPARENT QUALIFICATIONS

The role of the Godparent is to present the child for baptism and to help the child live a Christian life befitting the baptized. The following are the requirements.

1. One Catholic godparent, male or female, is sufficient but there may be two, one of each gender. No one can have more than two godparents for one child, nor can anyone have two godparents of the same gender.

2. Godparents must be appointed by the parents of child being Baptized and must be one who is willing to provide spiritual guidance to the child. They may not be the mother or father of the person to be baptized.

3. Godparents must be age 16 or older, unless the parish priest considers that there is a just reason for an exception to be made.

4. Godparents must be fully initiated Catholics (one who has celebrated Baptism, Eucharistic, Confirmation and practices their faith) and not labored under a canonical penalty, whether imposed or declared. If the person you are considering as a godparent is not married according to the laws and practices of the Catholic Church, or is cohabitating [living together without marriage], you will need to consider someone else. Catholics who are divorced and remarried, and whose previous marriage has not been annulled by a Decree of Invalidity are considered members of the Church living in an irregular (or invalid) marriage and as such, are not eligible to be a Godparent or Confirmation sponsor.

5. A Godparent must be an active, registered member of a Catholic Parish. If the Godparent is over 18, the person must be registered under their own name at a Catholic Parish. For those who are not parishioners of St. Patrick’s Cathedral, the Godparent must obtain a “sponsor certificate” from his/her parish indicating that he/she is a Catholic in good standing. The certificate should be mailed to the Parish Office two weeks prior to the Baptism.

6. While it is ideal that the parents select two Catholic Godparents, the Church only requires that there be one Godparent. A baptized non-Catholic may serve as a “witness” to the ceremony, as long as a Catholic Godparent is present. The non-Catholic should be an active and participating member of his/her Christian community. This restriction ensures that whoever is appointed as godparent, that person will be able to represent and attest to the beliefs of the Catholic Church, the community of faith in which the child is being baptized.

7. Godparents are not required to be present on the day of the Baptism. A Godparent may be represented by a proxy. If you plan to have a proxy, he/she must be either a baptized Christian and/or a practicing Roman Catholic in good standing.
FAMILY INFORMATION

Name of Child to be Baptized: ___________________________________________

Date of Birth: __________________________

Place of Birth: __________________________

Address: _______________________________________________

Home Telephone: _______________________ E-mail: __________________________

Father’s Name: _________________________________________________________

(First) (Middle) (Last)

Religion of Father: _______________________

Mother’s Name: ________________________________________________________

(First) (Middle) (Last) (Maiden)

Religion of Mother: _______________________

Parent’s Wedding Date: __________________________

Are you registered member(s) of St. Patrick Cathedral (Yes/No) ______

If Not, where are you registered? __________________________

Was your child baptized privately? __________ Was your child adopted? __________

GODPARENT INFORMATION

Are you attending this class as a Godparent not as the parent of child? ______

Godfather’s Name: ________________________________________________________

(First) (Middle) (Last)

Religion of Godfather: _______________________

Name of Parish/Church where registered or attend: __________________________

Godmother’s Name: _______________________________________________________

(First) (Middle) (Last)

Religion of Godmother: _______________________

Name of Parish/Church where registered or attend: __________________________

Proxy Name (if Godparent unable to attend Baptism): _______________________

Religion of Proxy: _______________________

Name of Parish/Church where registered or attend: __________________________

Reminder: Godparents who are not Parishioners of St. Patrick’s Cathedral must obtain a “sponsor certificate” from his/her parish indicating he/she is a Catholic in good standing and is a practicing, participating member of a Parish.

The certificate should be mailed to the Parish Office two weeks prior to the Baptism.

FOR PARISH OFFICE USE

Date attended Baptism Class: ____________________ Date/time of Baptism: ________________