

SPONSORS AT BAPTISM

Church law requires that a baptismal sponsor be a practicing Catholic, i.e., one who attends Mass and receives the Sacraments regularly.

When someone who does not meet that requirement is designated as a sponsor, it is always an unpleasant (frequently painful) experience for the priest, the parents of the child, and most especially for the person designated.

The priest has a serious responsibility not to admit that person to serve as a sponsor here at Our Lady of Sorrows. Nor may the priest give the person a certificate of eligibility to serve as a sponsor at a baptism, which is to take place at some other Catholic parish.

The reason a sponsor must be a practicing Catholic is that a sponsor is expected to pay special attention to the efforts of the person who is being baptized to live a Christian life in keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Sponsors are also expected to assist the parents of the child in their Christian duty as parents, by offering them support through good example, encouragement and prayer.

Some advice that we hope will avoid difficulties:

Choose baptismal sponsors whom you know to be practicing Catholics.

If you decide to choose a sponsor who is not a practicing Catholic, inform the person very early in the pregnancy. If that person is willing, at least six months before the baptism, to begin attending Mass and the Sacraments regularly, and, at the same time, to discuss the matter with the priest who must make the decision to write the certificate of eligibility, there is at least a possibility the person may be able to serve as a sponsor.

SPONSOR CERTIFICATE - YES OR NO?

Your Priest has been deluged over the last months to verify the good Catholic practices of parishioners who want to be sponsors for those receiving Baptism and/or Confirmation.

Sometimes this is easy, for most of our active parishioners, but sometimes this request turns out to be an unpleasant experience when one requests verification and a Priest, in good conscience, cannot give it. Why?

Let us clear up all of the vagueness that exists, and if you can answer yes to the following questions, you should have no trouble obtaining a certificate.

- * Am I a registered and active parishioner of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish for at least 12 months?
- * Am I at least 16 years of age?
- * If married, was I married in the Catholic Church?
- * Do I attend Mass regularly on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation?
- * Do I receive the sacraments of the Church Regularly?
- * Do I understand and accept the responsibility, which I undertake as a sponsor, and do I promise to pay special attention to the person I am sponsoring in his/her efforts to live a Christian life that reflects the spirit and teachings of the Catholic Church?
- * Am I prepared to assist the parents in their Christian duty by my example, support, encouragement and prayer?

Here are some questions parents might ask themselves when choosing Baptism Sponsors for their child:

Is this a person whose personal life shows the religious and moral values I want my child to learn and practice?

Is this a person who will be able and willing to explain their faith experience, convictions and growth to my child?

Is this a person who will be in frequent contact with my child, especially during the early years of personal and spiritual growth?

Is this a person who will be comfortable, when necessary, challenging me or my child about our faith?