

Dear Parents:

This letter is in response to your request for your child's Sacrament of Baptism at Queen of Angels Catholic Church. We would like you to take a minute to reflect upon this decision.

As **The Rite of Baptism** of The Church reminds us, in requesting to have your child baptized . . .

“. . . you are accepting the responsibility of training your child in the practice of the Faith. It will be your duty to bring your child up to keep God's Commandments as Christ has taught us... Do you clearly understand what it is you are undertaking?”

The Rite of Baptism reminds parents of the responsibilities and duties that they assume for their child. There are also, however, rights of the child which The Catechism of The Church speaks about – rights that should not be violated even by parents:

“Just as Baptism is the source of responsibilities and duties, the baptized person also enjoys rights within The Church: to receive the sacraments, to be nourished with the Word of God, and to be sustained by the other spiritual helps of the Church.”
#1269 Catechism Catholic Church

In reflecting upon the nature of baptism for their child parents should, in all honesty, ask themselves:

- Do we look upon baptism, and indeed the Christian Faith, as necessary for salvation as Christ clearly taught (Jn 3:5), or do we see them merely as occasions for human celebration?
- Do we practice our Catholic Faith as to reasonably try and keep God's Ten Commandments as Christ taught us (Jn 14:15)? (Keeping Holy The Lord's Day every Sunday).
- Do we support the Church financially? (Mt 17:24-27).
- Is our marriage “within the Church” so as to be sacramental (Mk 10:1-12), and thus permitting us to receive Holy Communion in the Church properly?

Moreover, one needs to consider that, according to the canonical law of The Church,

“ .. for the baptism of a child to be licit it is necessary that there be a well-founded hope that the infant will be brought up in the Catholic religion; if such a hope is altogether lacking, the baptism is to be put off ” canon #868.

Considering all of the aforementioned, we believe it would be irresponsible for any Catholic Priest to baptize an infant whose parents are altogether non-practicing in their Catholic Faith; such child would thereby be without hope of practicing the faith life to which they had been committed. Parents need to remember that they are the primary educators of their children in the faith.

For this reason, we have a process for infant baptisms at Queen of Angels as presented below. Please review it carefully.

A) NEED TO BE CONSCIOUS OF A CHRISTIAN NAME – the significance of naming the child within the tradition of the Saints of the Church – holy men and women of the Bible and Church History. At the very least, names foreign to the Christian mentality are not to be given, e.g. Diablo, Lucifer, Mohammed, mythical gods like Thor, Odin, Zeus, etc. (canon 855).

B) REGARDING GODPARENTS, AND WITNESSES (canon 874).

For one to be a Godparent, a person must:

- 1) Be designated by the parent(s).
- 2) Be at least 17 years old.
- 3) Be a confirmed Catholic, who leads a life in harmony with the Faith.
- 4) Not be the father or mother of the child.

N.B. Whenever possible, choose two sponsors (one of whom may later be the sponsor at the time of the child's Confirmation). *Catholic = Sponsor.*

For one to be a Witness:

- 1) A baptized person who is non-Catholic may be a witness to baptism, but only together with a Catholic Godparent. *Non-Catholic = Witness.*
- 2) C) Attend baptismal preparation class for first child (or for those not attending Church, canon 851).

C) FOR THOSE MARRIED BY A JUSTICE OF THE PEACE the marriage validation/annulment procedure is strongly encouraged. Remember your child's future first communion and your desire to be able to receive with your child according to the Church (canon 915).

If you are prepared to proceed, please fill out the form, print it, and bring it along with you to the meeting at the parish.

May God bless you, and may your lives show forth the love of Christ!

Most sincerely in Christ Jesus,

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Queen of Angels Catholic Church
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Requirements for Godparents:

- Be practicing Catholics.
- Attend the Baptism Preparation Program (may be waived).
- Live exemplary Christian lives as a model for the child to be baptized.
- The selection of two godparents is customary, but only one, either male or female, is required for baptism. If two godparents are chosen, one should be male and one female (canon 873).
- A Christian, baptized in another faith tradition, may not serve as godparent, but may serve as a witness along with the Catholic godparent and should be recorded accordingly (canon 874, §2).
- Please read below for more information on the Role of Godparents.

The Role of Godparents

It is an ancient custom of the Church that at the Baptism of infants, godparents be present to represent the whole faith community. To be chosen as a godparent is a special honor. You, above all others, have been entrusted with the responsibility to participate in this child's Christian life and education. This privilege offers you the opportunity to develop a mutually enriching spiritual relationship – one that will last throughout this life and beyond. There are many ways you can nurture this special relationship and become a special friend to your godchild. Among them are:

- Celebrate the anniversary of this holy day of Baptism each year with a visit, a call, or a card.
- As your godchild grows, listen to and share in the struggles and triumphs of living a Christian life, and keep yourself informed on Christian doctrine and values, to be able to answer questions as they arise.
- Encourage a consistent life of faith through special cards, letters, or gifts which celebrate holy events...Christmas, Easter... and personal growth events...graduation, first job, engagement. (Gift suggestions: A bible, spiritual book, rosary, religious jewelry, gift certificate for religious goods/books, retreat opportunity.)
- Participate in, or send assurance of prayer, as your child receives the other sacraments, particularly First Communion and Confirmation, which complete initiation into the Church community.
- Be supportive of your godchild's parents in their role as the primary religious educators of their child.
- *And, most importantly,* become a model of Christian living for your godchild, through daily prayer, virtue, and active participation in parish life and liturgy. By living a Christian life in partnership with your godchild, both of you will experience the great joy of sharing a life of faith.