

QUALIFICATIONS FOR GODPARENTS

Please read this information carefully. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call the Rectory Office at 703-836-1640, ext. 10.

CANONS 873 AND 874 OF THE 1983 CODE DEAL WITH THE ISSUE OF BAPTISMAL SPONSORS. (Usually called godparents)

CANON 874: To be admitted to the role of sponsor, a person must:

be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or the one who takes their place, or, in their absence, by the pastor or minister and is to have the qualifications and intention of performing the role;

have completed their sixteenth year, unless a different age has been established by the diocesan bishop or it seems to the pastor or minister that an exception is to be made for a just cause;

be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken;

not to be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;

not to be the father or mother of the one to be baptized.

A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community may not be admitted except as a "Christian Witness" to baptism and together with a Catholic sponsor.

Normally only one sponsor for baptism, male or female, is sufficient, but there may be two, one of each sex. This is to eliminate a practice that has entrenched itself in some cultures, namely, the multiplication of sponsors. A second sponsor may be used for baptism.

A sponsor who is a member of a non-Catholic Eastern Church (e.g., Greek Orthodox) may be a baptism sponsor as opposed to a Christian Witness, but the other sponsor who is, of course, Roman Catholic, has the obligation of seeing to the Christian upbringing of the baptized.

A SPONSOR CERTIFICATE IS REQUIRED FROM CATHOLIC SPONSORS (GODPARENTS)

A **Sponsor Certificate** is a pre-printed form or letter signed by the pastor of their church. His signature assures us that your sponsor(s) qualifies to act as such for your child. A Sponsor certificate is also required from your proxy (if you use one for your Catholic sponsor). - No paperwork is required, however, if your sponsor is a registered member of St. Rita Church. **A letter of recommendation is required from the witness's pastor**; this letter should attest to the witness's suitability to serve in this capacity.

SPONSOR CERTIFICATES & LETTERS MUST BE ON FILE WITH US ONE WEEK PRIOR TO THE DATE OF BAPTISM. NO EXCEPTIONS! INFORM YOUR SPONSORS OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITY IMMEDIATELY.