

A. INTRODUCTION:

The godparent is a most important person in the life of an infant, child or adult who is to be baptized. The godparent is 1) a spiritual role model, 2) an example of the Christian life and 3) the official representative of the Body of Christ, the Church, into which an infant/child/adult is being baptized. Because of these three responsibilities, the Catholic Church has some minimum requirements it asks all godparents to fulfill in order to serve in this role. Each godparent is asked to complete the other side of this form using this side of the form to answer the questions.

NOTE ABOUT PROXIES: A godparent is not required to be present for a baptism. When a godparent cannot be present, a Catholic parent or the candidate him/herself may ask someone to stand in as a proxy for the godparent as long as the proxy is not one of the parents. Proxy must also complete a godparent form.

B. THE QUESTIONS:

1. **RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION:** A godparent must be a Roman Catholic because the godparent is an official representative of the Catholic Church. Christians of other denominations whose baptism is recognized as valid in the Catholic Church may serve as a Christian Witness for the baptism of a Catholic. If you are serving as a Christian Witness, please fill out the *Christian Witness Testimony Form* and return it to the parish. Christians whose baptism is not recognized as valid in the Catholic Church and Non-Christians may not serve as a godparent or Christian Witness.

2. **MINIMUM AGE:** A godparent must generally be 16 by the date of the baptism. For exceptions, see a Catholic priest or the minister who will officiate for the baptism.

3. **SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION:** A godparent is a baptized Catholic who has received Confirmation and Holy Eucharist in the Catholic Church.

4. **FREEDOM TO RECEIVE THE SACRAMENTS:** The godparent is a practicing Catholic who is free to receive Holy Communion when he or she comes to Mass.

5. **MARITAL STATUS:** A Catholic godparent who is married must be in a marriage that is recognized by the Catholic Church. Those in their first marriage must have been married either a) in a Catholic Church ceremony or b) in a church/synagogue ceremony with the permission of the Catholic Church. Catholics in second marriages must have had their first marriage annulled and their second marriage recognized or convalidated by the Catholic Church.

Catholics presently in civil or common law marriages are not eligible to serve as a godparent.

6. **UNMARRIED STATUS:** If unmarried, a godparent must be living a life consistent with a single person as defined by the Catholic Church. Anyone cohabitating with another person, e.g., living in a romantic relationship or as a couple, is ineligible to serve.

C. SIGNING AND RETURNING THE FORM:

Bring the completed form to a Catholic Church and ask the pastor to certify that you are in good standing from your parish. The pastor must then sign the document and place the parish seal/stamp on it. Please return the signed and sealed/stamped document to the parish office no less than 2 weeks before the date of the baptism. Forms may be faxed but the original must be brought to the church before or on the day of the baptism in order for the godparent to serve.