

A Word About Godparents

The following are guidelines to help in choosing godparents.

The role of the godparent(s) is often confused and misunderstood. It has been an erroneous belief that the role of the godparent is such that, should the parents be deceased, the godparents would assume custody of the child. This is not true and has nothing to do with the true role of the godparent.

A godparent is one who assists the parents in the “spiritual” upbringing of their child. They should have some life-contact with the child and be actively interested in praying for, and being a personal support to the child. Unfortunately, in the choosing of a godparent, sometimes people are chosen for purely honorary reasons. It is seen as honouring a person by asking them to assume the role of godparent. However, when taken seriously, this role is one that should and must reach far beyond the actual day of baptism.

It is a serious and important task that is placed before you as parents to carefully choose suitable candidates who will take their role, as described above, seriously. The Church teaches that “godparents are to be present (at the actual Baptism) in order to represent both the expanded spiritual family of the one to be baptized and the role of the Church as Mother. As occasion offers, godparents help the parents so that the children will come to profess the faith and live up to it. In the actual celebration of Baptism, the part of godparents is to testify to the faith, and together with the parents, to profess the Church’s faith in which children are baptized.”

In choosing godparents, please consider the following requirements:

1. The godparent you choose must be a Catholic 16 years of age or older who has received the Sacrament of Confirmation and the Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist, and leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken.
2. The person must be willing to profess his/her faith positively or perfectly?? with the parents immediately prior to the pouring of water and should have no reservations about doing so.
3. The person must be willing to cooperate with the parents in helping to foster and nurture in the child a Catholic way of life.
4. Canon Law states that the child must have at least one Catholic godparent **and no more than 2. If there are two, then one man and one woman are to be chosen.**

5. If you have only one Catholic godparent you are permitted to have one Christian Witness of the opposite sex of the godparent to stand in as a witness to the baptism. If you have two Catholic godparents, you do not need a Christian Witness.
6. The requirement for a **Christian Witness** is that the person be a **baptized Christian** belonging to one of the non-Catholic ecclesial communities (eg. United, Anglican, etc.)

Finally, what is asked of the godparent is really the mission accepted by all Christians at their Baptism; to nurture the faith by living it in their daily lives and being a witness to others to do likewise.