

## **Help! I'm looking for a Godparent!**

In times past, finding a Godparent was easy: You chose your brother, sister, or close relative because they were a practicing Catholic and you expected them to be in your child's life for at least 25 years. Parents also chose family members so that, if they died, that relative would physically care for the child and pass on the Catholic Faith.

But, today, there are greater distances between family members than in the past. Sadly, some relatives are no longer Catholic or practicing their faith. Many parents wonder if close Catholic friends qualify as Godparents, but feel that a family member is *supposed* to be chosen. ***So what's a parent to do?***

Well, let's focus on the responsibility of a Catholic Godparent:

***A godparent solemnly promises to help parents nurture the Catholic faith of their child.***

***A godparent shares their own faith with their godchild and helps teach the child how Catholics express their faith. And they vow to do so whether the parents do so or not!***

Being asked to be a Godparent is an honor and a great responsibility. Because of this, the law of the Church requires that a Catholic godparent is a person who is:

- *At least 16 years old*
- *Confirmed in the Roman Catholic Faith*
- *Living in good standing with the Church; and if the godparent is married, that means they are married in the Church. (canon law #874)*

***What does it mean to "live in good standing with the Church"?*** A Catholic in good standing lives out his/her faith beliefs. He or she attends Mass and receives Eucharist regularly, supports Church teachings, and actively participates in the parish community.

***"Why can't my sister, who was raised Catholic but is Lutheran now, be my baby's Godparent?"***

Because your sister has chosen to practice another Christian faith, she cannot make a profession of faith to the Catholic Church which is part of the Rite of Baptism. She cannot fulfill the promise the Godparent makes.

However, since we are one in Baptism with most Christian churches, Church law welcomes your non-Catholic sister to be a *Christian Witness* during the Baptism, *as long as another Catholic of good standing is the Godparent.*

***"If a Catholic or a witness is lapsed in their faith, should they be chosen as Godparents?"***

Good people are not always Churched people. Baptism, however, isn't just the recognition of the child's relationship with God. Baptism is also the celebration of the child's entrance into the Body of Christ. The sponsor is to help hand on to the child not only personal faith but Catholic faith, the faith of the Church. Someone who has stopped being a Church member by becoming inactive cannot hand on the faith of our Catholic Church.

*As your child enters the doors of the Church, godparents pledge to help the child's parents in their duty as Christian mothers and fathers...*

***"...accept the responsibility of training them in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring them up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor."***

*At the end of the Baptism Rite, parents AND godparents receive the Light of Christ from the Paschal Candle which...*

***"...is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly. This child of yours has been enlightened by Christ. He/she is to walk always as a child of the light with the flame of faith alive in his/her heart..."***

Choose someone who helps YOU keep the flame of your faith alive. May God bless and keep you...we look forward to officially welcoming your child into our parish family!