

The Sacrament of Baptism

at Saint Francis Xavier Church

Welcome to the St. Francis Xavier Parent Information Meeting for the preparation for Infant Baptism. We are happy that you have chosen to have your child baptized. We hope that you find this evening informative and that it will be the beginning of the life-long commitment you and your child are making to God and the Church through Jesus Christ. May you and your child be filled with the grace of Our Lord and the peace and presence of the Holy Spirit.

The Rite of Baptism Service Options



At Saint Francis Xavier Church there is the option of having your child baptized during Mass (*except during the season of Lent*). The rite is woven into the celebration of the Eucharist with the actual baptism taking place after the homily. Since sacraments are public celebrations of the whole Church this is a highly recommended option.

The second option is the Sacramental Rite of Infant Baptism that is celebrated Outside of Mass, usually on Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon. This celebration is just the Rite of Infant Baptism and does not include

Mass or the distribution of Holy Communion (Eucharist).

Scheduling and Fee Information

After attending the parent Information Meeting for Infant Baptism you may schedule or request a date for baptism. **Baptisms are celebrated on Sunday afternoon's at 1:00 (after Mass) and MUST be scheduled in advance through the Parish Office at 513-721-4045.**

There is no fee associated with the administration of the Church's sacraments, however, a stipend (a monetary offering) to the priest or deacon is customary. The amount is left to your individual decision.

Rite of Baptism Outside of Mass

Greeting

Opening Dialogue

The minister then questions the parents:

“What name have you given your child?”

“What do you ask of God’s Church for your child?”

The minister then addresses the parents in these or similar words and concludes with the question:

“Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?”

Then the minister turns to the godparents and asks:

“Are you ready to help the parents of this child in their duty as Christian parents?”

The minister signs the child on the forehead, in silence. Then he invites the parents (and the godparents) to do the same.

Liturgy of the Word - Gospel

Homily

Intercessions

Litany of Saints

Prayer of Exorcism and Anointing before Baptism

The minister anoints the child on the breast with the oil of catechumens.

Celebration of the Sacrament.

All proceed to the Baptistry. A hymn, psalm, or Litany of the Saints may be sung.

Blessing and Invocation of God over Baptismal Water

Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith.

After professing the Creed, the minister asks: “Is it your will that your child should be baptized in the faith of the Church which we have all professed with you?”

Baptism

The minister baptizes the child, saying:

**“(Child’s name) I baptise you in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.”**

Anointing with Chrism

Then the minister anoints the child on the crown of the head with the sacred chrism, in silence.

Clothing with the White Garment

Presentation of the Lighted Candle

The minister takes the Easter candle and says: “Receive the light of Christ.”

The Ephphetha

[Prayer over Ears and Mouth] may now follow

The Blessing and Dismissal

The minister first blesses the mother, who holds the child in her arms, then the father, and lastly the whole assembly.

Rite of Baptism During Mass

Introductory Rites

Mass begins with the Sign of the Cross and Greeting. The minister then questions the parents:

What name have you given your child?

What do you ask of God’s Church for your child?

The minister then addresses the parents in these or similar words and concludes with the question:

“Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?”

Then the minister turns to the godparents and asks:

“Are you ready to help the parents of this child in their duty as Christian parents?”

The minister signs the child on the forehead, in silence. Then he invites the parents (and the godparents) to do the same.

Mass continues with the Gloria and Opening Prayer or Collect. This is followed by the Liturgy of the Word but with the omission of the Creed as a profession of faith will be made during the baptismal rite. This concludes with the Bidding Prayers (Intercessions). Following these the rite of baptism continues.

Prayer of Exorcism and Anointing before Baptism

*The minister anoints the child on the breast with the oil of catechumens.
Celebration of the Sacrament.*

All proceed to the Baptistry. A hymn, psalm, or Litany of the Saints may be sung or recited.

Blessing and Invocation of God over Baptismal Water

Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith

After professing the Creed, the minister asks: “Is it your will that your child should be baptized in the faith of the Church which we have all professed with you?”

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Presentation of the Lighted Candle

The minister takes the Easter candle and says: “Receive the light of Christ.

The Ephphetha

[Prayer over Ears and Mouth] may now follow

The Mass continues with the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Following the Prayer After Communion the minister concludes the Liturgy with the blessing prayers.

The Blessing and Dismissal

The minister first blesses the mother, who holds the child in her arms, then the father, and lastly the whole assembly.

Godparents

Parents who present their child for Baptism should give prayerful thought about whom they wish to be Godparents for their child. Godparents should be chosen on the basis of how they will help the parents in the Christian rearing of the child. They do not need to have a special relationship to the child because their role is to assist the parents. Their relationship will/may come about as a result of this function. Because they assist the parents in bringing up the child in the life of the Church, Godparents themselves need to be regular and active participants in the Church. It makes no sense to choose a Godparent who is not practicing, or worse, does not believe in the precepts of the Church.

Canonical Requirements for Godparents

The law of the Church stipulates that there must be at least one Godparent for each person received into the Church. It is customary for parents to have two Godparents. If this option is selected there must be one man and one woman. One of the Godparents must be a Catholic in good standing who has received the Sacrament of Confirmation and who regularly worships and participates in the life of the Church. The Godparent must also be at least 16 years of age. A baptized Christian of a tradition that follows the practice of baptizing with flowing water and in the Trinitarian form (Father, Son and Spirit) may be listed as a Christian Witness to the Baptism on the official Church sacramental records. Non-baptized witnesses will not be recorded as Godparents. The following are the actual canons (laws of the Roman Catholic Church which govern sponsors:

Can. 872 In so far as possible, a person being baptised is to be assigned a sponsor. In the case of an adult baptism, the sponsor's role is to assist the person in christian initiation. In the case of an infant baptism, the role is together with the parents to present the child for baptism, and to help it to live a christian life befitting the baptised and faithfully to fulfil the duties inherent in baptism.

Can. 873 One sponsor, male or female, is sufficient; but there may be two, one of each sex.

Can. 874 §1 To be admitted to undertake the office of sponsor, a person must:

1° be appointed by the candidate for baptism, or by the parents or whoever stands in their place, or failing these, by the parish priest or the minister; to be appointed the person must be suitable for this role and have the intention of fulfilling it;

2° be not less than sixteen years of age, unless a different age has been stipulated by the diocesan Bishop, or unless the parish priest or the minister considers that there is a just reason for an exception to be made;

3° be a catholic who has been confirmed and has received the blessed Eucharist, and who lives a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken;

4° not labour under a canonical penalty, whether imposed or declared;

5° not be either the father or the mother of the person to be baptised.

§2 A baptised person who belongs to a non-catholic ecclesial community may be admitted only in company with a catholic sponsor, and then simply as a witness to the baptism.

Special Date/Time Requests

We strongly urge parents to adhere to the schedule of services that are offered each month. Occasionally, as during the Lenten season when baptisms are not permitted during Mass, special arrangements can be made. If for unique circumstances or pastoral reasons the normal scheduled times can not be accommodated, you may request another time or date. Requests are to be made to the pastor and are considered individually. They are subject to church and minister availability, maintenance personnel schedules and other logistical concerns.

Special Request of Minister or Visiting Ministers

You may request a particular priest from Saint Xavier to baptize your child. Normally, the ministers are on a rotating schedule. Your request will be given consideration and the decision based upon availability of the minister and whether there may already have been a request for that day. Sometimes parents request visiting clergy to baptize their child. Again, your request will be given consideration by the pastor. Note that a visiting priest or deacon will still require personnel from Saint Xavier to be in attendance for set up, assistance and clean up. It would only be appropriate to offer some type of stipend to the Church for this extra-ordinary event. Canon Law requires that the visiting minister contact the pastor for permission to celebrate a sacrament at the church. All information about the visiting minister must be given to the parish office so that the Baptismal Record will be correct.

A Necessary Note

For parents who are expecting, we offer our prayers that your child will be born healthy and beautiful. If, however, in the event that some complications should arise during delivery and you want to have your child baptized immediately, remember that you can do it. This emergency baptism is legitimate in these rare and extreme situations. It is mentioned here so that you do not prolong treatment for your child while awaiting a minister of baptism. Ask for some water, even a few drops and pour them on your baby's head. While pouring the water say, "I Baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." When your child is healthy and can be brought to Church, (or stable and you can call the priest or deacon) he will administer the "Rite of Bringing a Baptized Child to the Church." If your child is baptized by a minister at a hospital, ask that the child be baptized in accordance with the Roman Catholic Rite. You should also receive a certificate of baptism from the hospital indicating that the baptism took place.

The Baptism Ceremony at Saint Xavier Church

- Please plan to arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start so you may receive instructions for the sacrament.
- When you arrive Saint Xavier Church, introduce yourself to the priest or. He will show you to your pew and assist with any other instructions.
- While pictures and video capture the moment, we must remember that Baptism is a sacrament celebrated in the context of a liturgical rite. It is an encounter with Christ Jesus in a most intimate manner. Thoughtless use of cameras can disrupt this sacred ritual for everyone and “cheapen” the sacrament into mere performance.
- During Mass we ask that no pictures be taken that use flash or require the photographer to stand or move out of their seat. Those gathered have gathered for the solemn celebration of the Eucharist as well as the special rite of Baptism for your child.
- During the service Outside of Mass, we ask that no one impede the solemnity and prayerfulness of the rite. This means standing in place or moving obtrusively around the church.
- We ask that you direct the your invited members to be courteous, discreet and respectful of the sacramental nature of the Baptism.

Godparents: Not just fiction or fairytale

Catholic godparents play a very real-life role in modeling and passing on the Faith to the children of family or friends

By Michelle Martin - OSV Newsweekly, 7/28/2013

Most stories that involve godparents start with “Once upon a time ...” and end with “happily ever after,” with a fair amount of magical fairy dust — not to mention ball gowns and love at first sight — sprinkled in. Or they involve warped tales of misplaced honor and entirely too much gunfire.

Maybe that’s why those who help parents prepare for the baptism of their children report that very often, it’s difficult to make them understand the very important role godparents should play in the lives of their godchildren. They don’t know whether they should ask the brother they love dearly, but who hasn’t seen the inside of a church since he stood up in their wedding. Or the college friend who is feeling left out as all of her friends have babies. Or even if they should keep searching until they find someone who would qualify for sainthood if he or she were not still walking the earth.

The good news, according to those who help families prepare for this first sacrament of initiation, is that it doesn’t have to be that hard if the parents keep the role of a godparent in mind.

Important role Put simply, a godparent is someone who agrees to support the parents on forming their child to the Catholic Faith. Under canon law, a godparent, or, more formally, a baptismal sponsor, must be a practicing Catholic who has received the sacraments of baptism, Communion and confirmation, and, in most cases, is over the age of 16, although the age requirement can be waived if there is a good reason (Canon 874).

The sponsor cannot be the parent of the child or the spouse of an adult seeking baptism, and he or she must not be excommunicated, a heretic, a member of a group in schism with the Church or publicly living in a state of sin. He or she must also intend to fulfill the duties of a godparent and be present to participate in the baptism.

And, while one godparent is all that is strictly required for baptism, if parents choose to have two, they must be a man and a woman. If there is one Catholic godparent, a believing member of another Christian tradition can also be recognized as a Christian witness to the sacrament.

Role models in faith

The issue of choosing good godparents has been around since at least the 1970s, said Tom Sheridan, author of “The Gift of Godparents: For Those Chosen With Love and Trust to Be Godparents” (Acta Publications, 1997). That’s when Sheridan, a deacon of the Diocese of Joliet, Ill., started doing baptismal preparation classes, and it was as much a topic then as it is now. “I would always tell people it’s not an honorific,” said Sheridan, who now lives in Florida. “It’s a matter of relationship. The people you are choosing are going to be models of life and faith.” That means choosing people who do more than practice their faith; it means choosing people who offer a good example of how to live.

“There’s an awful lot of people who consider themselves good Catholics or good Christians who are not nice,” he said, explaining that the best role models are those whose faith permeates their whole lives, rather than just sending them to church on Sunday.

“You hope for an ongoing relationship,” Sheridan said. “There’s a sense of the past, a sense of the present and a sense of the future. You choose godparents based on a past relationship with them; there’s a sense of the present with the godparent’s participation in the sacrament and in the future you hope for an ongoing relationship with the godchild.”

One couple who came through the baptismal preparation class at his parish took the opposite tack from those who want to choose friends or relatives who practice their faith rarely, if at all. That couple said they didn’t know anyone worthy to sponsor their child, Sheridan said. “I told them, ‘You’re not perfect as parents, and you won’t find perfect godparents, but surely you have people in your lives who would be good role models of the Faith,’” Sheridan said.

They did eventually find someone, he said.

“It’s helpful to find a practicing Catholic who is close to the faith,” concurred Father Francis Hoffman, who writes for The Catholic Answer Life column and is one of the hosts on Relevant Radio’s “Go Ask Your Father.” Father Hoffman, perhaps better known as “Father Rocky,” is also Relevant Radio’s executive director. In his experience, he said, it’s even better when a child’s godparents are a married couple, although that is not required. In doing so, he said, they provide a model for sacramental marriage — hopefully, in addition to the model provided by the child’s parents.

“What you want to avoid is choosing the godparents to avoid family problems,” he said. “I think it’s more common among Catholics who don’t really practice the faith. They want to make sure

they don't leave out couple so-and-so. But you can make them feel included and pleased in other ways."

That's especially important as young people now are encouraged to choose their godparents — their baptismal sponsors — as their confirmation sponsors, to help them continue growing in the Faith. While the local pastor must approve the choice of godparents — and some require a letter from the godparents' pastor to make sure they are practicing Catholics — Father Hoffman said that a pastoral approach is required, lest parents choose not to have their children baptized at all. "You want to do all you can to encourage the baptism," he said.

Common misconceptions

Perhaps the most common misconception, according to both Sheridan and Father Hoffman, is that godparents are in some way required or expected to raise the child if the parents die. Parents should give thought to whom they would like their children's guardians to be if it becomes necessary, but they need not be the godparents, whose only job is to assist the parents in raising their godchild in the Faith.

Other misconceptions include the idea that a godparent incurs some kind of financial obligation to his or her godchild — whether it's throwing a party for a baptism, paying for a wedding or more general financial support. Some of those expectations are cultural, Father Hoffman told OSV. For example, in some Latino communities, the godparents, or padrinos, are expected to take on much more responsibility, up to and including paying for (or helping to pay for) their godchildren's weddings. "That should be part of the conversation," Father Hoffman said.

Sheridan noted that in generations past, in some communities, godparents took on the responsibility of the whole baptism ceremony and celebration — something that rarely happens now, as the baptismal rite puts the parents front and center, asking baptism for their child and promising to raise them as Catholics.

Perhaps, he said, it made more sense when babies were baptized as soon as possible after birth, and their mothers were still confined to home.

Prayerful decision

Lisa Hendey, writer and founder of CatholicMom.com, said she has seen and heard from and about many families who don't think clearly about what they are asking from godparents. She and her husband, Greg, have two sons.

"Many new parents choose godparents for the wrong reasons: because they are family or long-term friends or even to 'reciprocate' after being chosen as godparents themselves by a couple," she said. "Baptism and the godparent relationship isn't about a 'photo opportunity' on the day the sacrament is celebrated. You are making a life-long decision, so pray carefully, discuss as a couple and perhaps even with your pastor prior to asking someone to godparent your child. Make sure when you discern the right godparents that you carefully explain to them what you hope for in this relationship so that they will understand the true nature of the commitment." Such communication is vital, because godparents will not know what is expected if no one explains it,

and godchildren will not understand the blessings their godparents provide.

“For them to be effective in their role as ‘prayer warrior’ for my child, it’s important that my husband and I fully trust and communicate regularly with our sons’ godparents,” Hendeley said. “We also need to regularly remind our sons that they have godparents who love and are praying for them, inviting the boys to turn to their godparents when they have concerns, questions of faith or a blessing to celebrate.”

Hendeley said that when she and her husband were selecting godparents for their sons, they looked for “trusted, committed family members who we knew would pray frequently with and for our sons. The godparents we chose had solid faith lives, a commitment to service and a great love for our boys and for the Catholic Church. We knew that we could trust them (and also learn from them) in the faith-rearing of our children.

“Godparents are another set of faith formation teachers and prayer warriors for your child. You want them to love and care about your child as much as you do, and especially want them to be concerned with the spiritual life of your child.”

Making the choice

Christopher and Anne Marie Duquin of Williamsville, N.Y., could not agree more. The couple are the parents of Colin, 6; Ellie, 5; and Patrick, almost 4, and they do baptism preparation for their parish, St. Gregory the Great.

“One of the things we talk about quite a bit is the selection of godparents,” said Christopher Duquin. “The person they choose should be the person who exemplifies what it means to live a Catholic life, who lives a life of faith. It’s become a lot harder to find people like that these days.” All three of the Duquin children have the same godfather, Christopher’s brother Thomas. The children have different godmothers, selected from among their aunts.

People don’t generally ask whether the person they are considering is the best one for the job. “They come in for the concern of whether this person is going to qualify,” Christopher Duquin said.

But, the Duquins said, it’s not always necessary to choose two ideal godparents; the Church requires only one actual godparent, anyway. The other can be chosen for family reasons, or even in the hope that being a godparent might help him or her return to the faith, Christopher Duquin suggested. “You run into some people where it’s a moment of conversion,” he said. “God’s grace is going to lead them back to the Church.”

People often choose family members — aunts and uncles or cousins — for their first children, if only because it is expected of them, the Duquins said. There is an argument for that: Those are people who most likely will have a lifelong connection to their godchildren. Those are also the people who will be most likely to be involved in making decisions for the children should their parents not be able to care for them. “When something happens, you gravitate to the family,” Anne Marie Duquin said.

But the argument can work the other way as well; if the child's relatives will maintain lifelong connections anyway, and serve as an example of how to live as a faithful Catholic, why not choose someone from outside the family, who can provide another example, strengthening the circle of faith around the child? Christopher Duquin said it works well when parents choose someone in the parish, someone the family sees every week at Mass, especially if they live far away from the rest of their family members.

And if people do grow apart over the years, the parents — who are, after all, their children's first teachers — can work to surround their families with examples of good Catholic faith lives. In the Duquin's case, the children's Uncle Thomas has been an ideal godparent, not only attending Mass, but making a point to do so with his godchildren and their parents. He moved closer to the family and spends time not only with the parents, but with the children. "He comes over to spend time with them so they get to know him," Christopher Duquin said. "He prays with us, and he does prayers before bed with the children." "He's the perfect godfather," Anne Marie Duquin said of her brother-in-law, a doctor who isn't married and doesn't have children of his own.

No guarantees

There are no guarantees that the people who seem like the best choices at the moment will be around for the godchild's entire faith journey. "Sometimes life is rich, and difficulties come up," he said. Sheridan, the father of five grown children, has seen that happen in his own family. "We've had the gamut with the godparents' relationships with our kids," he said. The family lost track of their oldest daughter's godparents, who divorced and drifted away. Other sets of godparents maintained contact, he said. "They have, through the years, provided a presence for our children."

That's what Hendey wants for her boys, and she's doing everything she can to foster that. "I want my sons to be able to fully rely upon their godparents for spiritual support," she said. "This means that I need to nurture that relationship from a very early age, keeping the godparents up to date on the life of my child. Frequent time together or letters and photos if they live far away help the godparents to be a part of the milestones in my child's life but also — and perhaps more importantly — the joys and challenges he faces on a daily basis."

REQUEST FOR SPECIAL BAPTISMAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Date _____

Dear Fr. Fairbanks,

I/we _____ are requesting a special date and/or time for the baptisms of our child(ren). We would like to have our child(ren) baptized on (day) _____ (date) _____ (time) _____. We understand that many factors need to be considered for our request to be granted. The reason we are making this request is: _____

We appreciate your consideration of our request.

REQUEST FOR VISITING CLERGY

We would like to have (Father/Deacon) _____ of _____ Church in _____ be the Minister of Baptism for our child(ren) on (day) _____ (date) _____ (time) _____.

With your permission we will contact him and have him get in touch with to to make any necessary arrangements.

Thank you.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home phone _____ Work phone _____
Cell phone _____ e-mail _____