



Parish Policy for The Sacrament of Baptism

Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Cathedral Parish Biloxi, Mississippi

We who belong to Nativity Parish Faith Community see Baptism as the first Sacramental Stage of Church Membership. It is therefore, a concern of our parish ministry and a cause for parish celebration. We try to make every effort to prepare well for each celebration of this sacrament.

In our preparation, we try to provide an educational dimension, a communal aspect, and an outlook to the future. The educational dimension takes the form of two sessions prior to Baptism—one with the parent(s), and the second with the parent(s) and godparents. These sessions are conducted by a member of the staff or by another person(s) especially trained for this ministry.

The Baptism itself is celebrated in the midst of the community at a weekend liturgy except in extraordinary circumstances. The reason for this policy is because the Sacrament should be celebrated by the community to which the new member is joined. A third session follows the baptism in order to help the parents look beyond the baptismal ceremony and to provide assistance for them and for the godparents as they begin to journey with the newly baptized member. Because a good deal of the ceremony is done before the Mass, the baptismal party is asked to be in place at least 20 minutes before the scheduled time for Mass to begin.

We use a cross-section of materials: "Our Sunday Visitor, Liturgy Training Publications and Talk Trip, Inc." There is a suggested fee of \$10.00 to help cover the cost of the materials used in preparation for and at the Baptism itself. This may be paid at the beginning of the sessions or at the baptism itself. However, it is **never** a requirement for the baptism to be celebrated.

Canon Law requires only one male or one female sponsor or one of each sex is to be employed.

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

1. 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 this role;
2. Have completed the 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;
3. To 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 role to be undertaken.
4. Not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;
5. Not be the father or the 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 witness to baptism and together with a Catholic sponsor. {Canon 874}

Baptism calls parents, godparents, and the entire community to examine their own faith commitment. We are very happy to work with parents and godparents to help them carry out their responsibilities.

If you have any further questions please feel free to call the Parish Office at 228-374-1717.