



DIocese OF AUSTIN

INFANT BAPTISM



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Policy on Infant Baptism *Effective 2005*

I. Norms

In order to serve the needs of the people of God in the Diocese of Austin and to be responsible stewards of the gifts given to the diocese, the Diocese of Austin issues the following policy:

- A. Infant Baptism is the normative way to begin the initiation of children into the Church.
1. Pastors provide proper catechesis for the parents and godparents of the child.
 2. Ordinarily, a minimum of approximately three (3) hours or four (4) sessions of reasonable length is required for this preparation.
 - a. If godparents are not from the same parish or the geographic area, they may attend the classes in another parish. If this is the case, they are to provide evidence that they attended the class. They should also supply evidence that they are eligible to be a sponsor. This can be a written statement from their pastor.

B. Preparation class(es)

The following topics should be included in the program of preparation and instruction:

1. Theology of Baptism/Initiation
2. Role of the parents and godparents in the faith formation of the child
3. The responsibilities of Baptism

4. Preparation for the celebration of Baptism, including familiarization with the rite

C. Baptismal Sponsors/Godparents

1. Sponsors or godparents are to be selected by the parents according to the requirements found in Canon 872, which states that at least one sponsor is required.
2. To perform the role of sponsor, it is necessary that a person (c. 874):
 - a. Be designated 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 the role
 - b. Have completed the sixteenth (16) 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
 - c. Be a practicing Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the sacrament of the Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with faith and the role to be undertaken
 - d. Not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared
 - e. Not be the father or the mother of the one to be baptized

D. Baptismal Register

1. The church of Baptism is the church of record for the child who is baptized.
 - a. The baptism is to be recorded according to the diocesan norms.

E. Marriage Status of Parents

1. Ideally, if either of the parents of the child is Catholic, they should be married according to the laws of the Catholic Church. If this is not the case, the child may still be baptized provided that the parents accept their responsibility to assure the faith formation of the child. Where possible, parents should be interviewed and invited to take steps toward getting their marriage convalidated in the Catholic Church.

a. DOASN 3:

Given the fundamental importance of Baptism for salvation, the Church obliges parents to seek the Baptism of their child within the first few weeks after the birth of the child (c. 867, § 1).

For their part, pastors of souls are to welcome parents with open arms. In cases where the parents are not practicing their faith regularly, the preparation for the Baptism of their child is to be seen as an opportunity to invite them into greater communion with the Church and to foster their spiritual growth.

The mere fact that parents do not regularly practice their faith is not in itself a certain indication that the child will not be brought up in the Catholic faith. Rather, in such cases the necessary period of preparation for Baptism should include pastoral advice, instruction, and communal prayer (c. 851, § 2) that encourage the parents in a special way to a stronger witness of their faith to the newly baptized child.

BAPTISM SPONSOR COVENANT

As a Baptism sponsor, your role is to encourage the faith of your candidate and be an “example” to your godchild and to reflect with your godchild as they grow on the meaning of a life of Catholic discipleship.

The Code of Canon Law (Church Law) specifies the requirements for serving as godparents at Baptism (Canon 874): You may not be the parent of the person being baptized; you must be at least 16 years old; you must be fully initiated (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist); if married, be in valid Catholic marriage; and live a life of active faith in the Catholic Church.

I understand the requirements of being a Baptism sponsor and I state that I received the **Sacrament of Baptism**

at _____ Church in
 _____ (City and State)

I received the **Sacrament of Confirmation**

at _____ Catholic Church in
 _____ (City and State)

(And if married) celebrated the **Sacrament of Marriage**

at _____ in
 _____ (City and State)

My godchild's name is: _____

Name of parish and city where the **Sacrament of Baptism** is to take place:

Parish _____ City _____

I am active in the Catholic Church, fully initiated into the Catholic Church, regularly attend Mass on Sunday and strive to live my faith.

Please print your

Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

CONVENIO PADRINO DE BAUTISMO

Como Padrino, su responsabilidad es fomentar la fe de su ahijado y reflexionar con él sobre el significado de la vida como discípulo católico.

El Código de la Ley Canónica (Ley de la Iglesia) especifica los requerimientos para servir como Padrino (Ley 874): Usted no puede ser el padre de la persona que será bautizada; debe tener al menos 16 años de edad y estar completamente iniciado en la Iglesia (Bautizo, Confirmación y Primera Comunión). Si está casado, debe haber contraído matrimonio católico válido y haber vivido activamente su fe en la Iglesia Católica.

Entiendo los requerimientos para ser padrino de Bautismo y declaro haber recibido el **Sacramento del Bautismo**

En la Iglesia _____ de
 _____ (Ciudad y Estado)

Haber recibido el **Sacramento de la Confirmación**

En la Iglesia Católica _____ de
 _____ (Ciudad y Estado)

(En el caso de estar casado) haber celebrado el **Sacramento del Matrimonio**

En la Iglesia _____
 _____ (Ciudad y Estado)

El nombre de mi ahijado es: _____

Nombre de la parroquia y ciudad donde se celebrará el **Sacramento del Bautismo:**

Parroquia _____ Ciudad _____

Estoy activo en la Iglesia Católica, regularmente acudo a Misa los domingos y me esfuerzo por vivir mi fe.

Por favor escriba su

Nombre _____

Firma _____ Fecha _____