

**A Brief Explanation Concerning Sponsors (Godparents)
For Baptism in the Catholic Church**

The role of a Sponsor (Godparent) is, “together with the parents, to present an infant at baptism,...to help the baptized to lead a Christian life in harmony with baptism, and to fulfill faithfully the obligations connected with it” (*Catholic Code of Canon Law*, can. 872).

At the very beginning of the *Rite of Baptism*, you will be asked: “Are you ready and willing to help these parents in their duties as Christian parents?” Your affirmative answer permits the ritual to proceed.

A Godparent who is a confirmed Catholic and who is currently practicing the Catholic faith is called a Sponsor. For the sacrament of baptism to be valid and recognized in the Catholic Church, there must be at least one Catholic Sponsor for each candidate.

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

- Have completed their sixteenth year;
- 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 the role to be undertaken;
- Not be the father or the mother of the one to be baptized.

According to the Catholic Church law (or Canon Law), only one male OR one female Sponsor OR one of each gender is to be employed;

A person who is baptized in another Christian faith, is called a Christian Witness. We welcome Christian Witnesses and thank them for their participation. Christian Witnesses may not be admitted except as a witness to the baptism and only together with a Catholic Sponsor. If you are a Christian Witness, you will be asked to renew your promises of baptism along with the parents and the Sponsor. When you make your profession of faith, saying that you believe in the “holy catholic Church,” this does not mean that you are professing the Roman Catholic faith, only that you believe in the universal Christian faith founded by Jesus Christ.

If a Sponsor is unable to be present for the ceremony, any confirmed adult may function as a **proxy** for that person.

There is room in the Baptismal Register for recording the name of only one male Sponsor and one female Sponsor. [If the parents wish to invite other persons to witness the baptism as “honorary Sponsors,” that is just fine, but since the “honorary” names cannot be recorded in the Register, their names will not appear either on any official certificate of baptism.]