



### **I am a sponsor ~ Now what do I do?**

The role of a sponsor is often approached with concern for what the proper function should be, however, the proper function depends entirely on who the candidate and sponsor are, and how, where, and when the spiritual journey takes place. Sponsors are chosen by the candidates, not particularly because of a tremendous theological knowledge or spiritual consciousness, but because they are someone the individual trusts, feels safe with, and can confide in. The role of the sponsor is to be a faithful companion. The sponsor is not completing the spiritual journey with the candidate, but agreeing to embark on one, together. The task of the sponsor is to walk with them, listen to their questions and struggles, affirm them and stay beside them as they work their own way towards greater spirituality. Although Confirmation completes the process of initiation into the Church, it is the beginning of each candidate's mature understanding of God in his or her unique lives. The Church understands that it takes time for people to grow in faith and to understand the implications of faith in their daily lives. Practically, a sponsor should encourage their candidates to find an area of service for the Church such as Lectors, Eucharistic Ministry, Music Ministry, Aid in Faith Formation Classes for the young, service projects, etc., that is meaningful and supportive of their unique gifts. Frequent, quick check-ins, conversations on what is going well and what is not in their lives, are also valuable. The sponsor does not direct or control the process - that is up to God - the sponsor simply supports God's stirring and activity within the candidate.

A sponsor serves to listen and explore with the candidates, to try come to understand the desire to be faithful in their own unique way. Being a sponsor is a conduit or bridge into the life of the parish and greater church for each candidate. The greatest gift a sponsor has to offer is to listen with reverence and respect. The sponsor's ability to listen firmly acknowledges and affirms God's presence in the candidate's life. True listening conveys that they believe the life of the candidate is important and valuable; it subtly, but clearly, proclaims that the sponsor believes in the power of God's love to transform and enhance lives. Sponsors are part of the living tradition of our Church. It is our own experience that God uses to pass our faith along to our companions on the journey.

The first official act of a sponsor is to introduce, and witness on behalf of the candidate at the Rite of Acceptance Mass, which will be held on April 17, 2011, at 5:00 PM. We look forward to meeting all of the sponsors and welcome those from other parishes to our church.