

# **GUIDELINES FOR BAPTISM IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

As you are seeking the baptism of your child in the Roman Catholic Church, the following guidelines are presented to help you embark upon this journey of faith with Christ and his Church.

## **A. The Sanctifying of the Church**

Through Baptism, God enables us to participate in his life in Jesus Christ and makes us his children. It is through this sacrament that we receive the Holy Spirit and become members of the People of God, of the Body of Christ, which is the Church. Baptism becomes our commitment to grow in this new life and to strive to acquire spiritual maturity. By baptism, God purifies us from original sin.

Baptism, is the sacrament of faith which has the Risen Christ as its source, and it is the offer of salvation for all people. Intimately linked to Confirmation and to Eucharist, Baptism comprises with these two sacraments, Christian Initiation. The child is baptized in the continuing faith of his/her parents, and the continuing faith of his/her godparents and of the Church.

## **B. Basic Guidelines and Information for Infant**

Parents are responsible for bringing their child to the Sacrament of Baptism as soon after birth as possible. The church is the usual place of baptism.

In order that a child be baptized, it is necessary that

- The parents' consent, or at least one of them, or someone legally standing in their place,
- There is reasonable hope that the child will be brought up in the Catholic Faith.

**GODPARENTS:** A person may only have one or two godparents (also called sponsors); if two are chosen, they must be male and female.

In order for someone to be eligible as a godparent, these are the requirements...

- They must be chosen by the parents,
- Have the ability and the intention to fulfill the role,
- Be at least 16 years of age,
- Be a confirmed Roman Catholic, who has already received the Most Holy Eucharist, is leading a life in harmony with the Catholic Faith and will be a good role model for the one being baptized,
- Be neither the father nor the mother of the child,
- A baptized person who belongs to another Christian community may be admitted to this role provided that there is at least one Roman Catholic godparent who fulfills the above criteria. A non-baptized person cannot be godparent.

### **C. Baptismal Preparation in your Parish**

In order to fulfill your request for the baptism of your child, you are asked to follow the stages of preparation offered below:

- Contact our parish office to express your desire to have your child baptized and ask about our baptismal preparation program. Complete the registration form, which can be found on the parish webpage. Return the completed form to the parish office.
- Introduce yourself to our parish priests and deacons if you do not already know them personally.
- Be open to the invitation to actively join the faith community of our parish. If you are not registered parishioners, please contact the parish office and consider becoming involved in the prayer and celebration of the Sunday Eucharistic community.

It is extremely important to take your faith-life seriously because, before God, you have taken on an awesome responsibility of assisting in the salvation of another—your own child! Your commitment and openness to baptismal preparation will help develop the faith-life of your child as they mature.

### **D. Other Information**

Are you living away from Kingsport and would like to have your child baptized at St. Dominic Church?

You are required to take your Baptismal Preparation in the parish in which you reside and then receive a testimonial letter from your Parish Priest giving permission to have your child baptized at St. Dominic's. This requirement respects the reality that pastors normally have sacramental jurisdiction only over their own parishioners. Therefore, when one seeks a sacrament outside of one's parish, the proper pastor's permission is necessary. Furthermore, the invitation to connect with one's own proper parish first is founded on the hope that the faith-life of the family and of the one(s) to be baptized will be lived in community and not in isolation.

Baptism of a child is not denied if the parents are unmarried or not married in the Roman Catholic Church. If your status is not in harmony with the Roman Catholic understanding of sacramental marriage, you might want to inquire as to how we may help you enter into proper sacramental marriage or, if need be, seek a declaration of nullity by the Church.

All of the above information applies to Baptism of an infant or young child only. If you have a child to be baptized who has reached catechetical age/the age of reason (Grade 2 or 7 years), you and they will receive different preparation. Having sufficient understanding, the preparation will now be for the full complement of the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

Those children already baptized in other Christian communities will be prepared to make a profession of faith into the Catholic Church and will receive the sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation in the Rite of Reception into Full Communion with the Catholic Church.

If you have questions regarding baptism or what the process might be for your particular situation, please call the parish office at (423) 288-8101. May God bless you and your family!