



*"Behold, children are a gift of the Lord..." Psalm 127:3*

## St. John Neumann Guidelines for Baptism

Dear Parents,

Congratulations on the reception of God's most precious gift – your new baby! We look forward to sharing in your joy as you begin preparations for your child's Baptism. To assist you in planning this sacred occasion, we have listed information that may be helpful:

### **The Sanctifying Mission of the Church**

- Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to the life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons and daughters of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission... (CCC, #1213)
- Baptism imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual sign, the character which consecrates the baptized person for Christian worship. Because of this character, Baptism cannot be repeated. (CCC, # 1280)
- Baptism perfectly linked to Confirmation and Eucharist form the three Sacraments of Initiation into the fullness of the Christian life.
- Through Baptism we commit ourselves to grow in new life and spiritual maturity
- An infant is baptized into the faith of his/her parents and godparents. Consequently, there needs to be an authentic hope that the child will be brought up in the Catholic faith.

### **Starting the Process**

- Parents should first prayerfully reflect on the baptism of their child and their responsibilities by asking themselves:
  - What do you ask of the Church in regards to the baptism of your child?
  - How will you prepare yourselves to fulfill your promise to raise your child in the Faith?
- Parents of the child to be baptized must be registered members of St. John Neumann for at least 6 months prior to the baptism. If you have recently moved to our area, the waiting period can be waived if your pastor from your previous parish provides a letter attesting to active participation in your previous parish.
- Faithful, regular attendance at Sunday Mass should be a given before parents request to have their child baptized as this is very important for passing on the faith to their child(ren).
- You will be asked to complete a baptismal information form prior to attending a preparation class. Please come to the parish office/website to complete it or request a copy be sent to you which you can complete and return at your convenience.
- To help ensure accuracy in our records, we ask you to provide us a copy of your child's birth certificate or other official record of the birth of your child.
- The Pastor may wish to meet with you prior to attending a baptism preparation class.
- Children older than 7 years old are ordinarily baptized via the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (adapted for Children). In such a case, please see the Director of Religious Education.

### **Baptismal Preparation at St. John Neumann**

- All parents and godparents are required to attend a Baptism class, normally held once a month. Contact the Parish Office at 788-0811 to register for the Baptism class after we receive all documentation. Godparents are also asked to attend a class locally or provide a copy from their home parish of their certificate.
- If it has been more than three years since you completed a Baptism class, you are asked to attend a refresher class.

## **Celebrating Baptism**

- Baptisms are held in the church two times each month; once at a weekend Mass and once on a Saturday afternoon at 3 pm. Baptisms scheduled to take place during Mass are limited to three and scheduled on a first come/first serve basis.
- The church is the customary place for Baptisms to take place.
- In the case of divorce or other special circumstances, both parents (or legal guardians) must consent to the Baptism.
- Baptisms are not celebrated during Lent.
- After receiving all of the documents and attendance of Baptism class, contact the parish office to schedule the Baptism.

## **Godparents**

Being a godparent is an honor and privilege, but comes with responsibilities. A godparent serves as a role model for the child, promises to support the family in raising the child in the faith and acts as a representative of the Church and witness to the faith. Therefore, godparents should be carefully and prayerfully chosen.

Church requirements for godparents (also called sponsors) are:

- at least 16 years old and mature enough to understand, accept and fulfill the duties of a godparent.
- Fully initiated, that is, having received all the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.
- actively practicing the faith, faithful in Sunday Mass attendance, and in good standing with the Church
- if married, the marriage is recognized by the Catholic Church.
- able to provide a good model of Christian faith and morals.
- parents cannot be their own child's Godparents.

## **Christian Witnesses**

- A baptized Christian from a church that is not Catholic may be chosen by the family as a Christian witness, as long as one godparent is Catholic and fulfills the above criteria.
- A non-baptized person cannot be a godparent or Christian witness.
- There must be at least one Catholic godparent for baptism, but if you choose two they cannot be of the same gender.

## **Sponsor Certificates**

If your chosen godparents are not registered members of St. John Neumann, they must obtain a sponsor certificate/letter from their home parish stating that they are members in good standing and are eligible to act as a godparent. They are also asked to attend the baptismal preparation in the parish to which they belong.

## **Baptismal Certificates**

Will be given to you at the celebration of the baptism or mailed to you after the ceremony.

## **Donations**

The church does not charge a fee; however, many families wish to offer the priest and/or the parish a gift as an expression of thanks. If you wish to give a gift by check, be sure to specify recipient (parish or priest).

## **Checklist:**

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| ___ Baptismal Form  | ___ Copy of child's birth certificate     |
| ___ Godfather's sponsor letter or affidavit   | ___ Godfather's Baptism class certificate |
| ___ Godmother's sponsor letter or affidavit   | ___ Godmother's Baptism class certificate |
| ___ Parents' attendance of Baptism class (within 3 years). Call parish office to pre-register after all documents submitted |   |
| ___ Contact the parish office to select the Baptism date  |   |