

**CATHEDRAL PARISH OF SAINT PATRICK
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA**

REQUIREMENTS FOR GODPARENTS FOR BAPTISM

The role of godparents is vital to the life of the Christian. More than just a reliable relative or friend, the godparent is meant to be a teacher of the Catholic Christian faith. They teach with their words and example. They should possess a personal relationship with Jesus and love the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus, knowing them well enough to pass them on to their godchild.

The requirements for parents in choosing godparents:

- There is to be only one male godparent or one female godparent or one of each.
- Only Catholics can be designated as godparents.
- They must be at least 16 years old.
- They must be fully initiated Catholics – this means that they have received the three Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist.
- They must practice the Catholic faith and be good examples of Catholic Christians.
- They cannot be bound by any penalty imposed by Church law, such as being married outside of the Catholic Church without the proper sanctions.
- A non-Catholic Christian cannot serve as a godparent. However, a person baptized in another Christian community may participate with a Catholic godparent as a witness of the baptism.

Why would someone have a non-Catholic Christian serve as a witness to the Christian faith?

- A person who is not a Catholic but is an active member of a Christian community with a valid baptism and who has received that valid Baptism in their own church can act as a Christian witness.
- This is chosen for complementarity of having one male and one female, in imitation of parents.
- A Christian witness must also be at least 16 years old.
- A person baptized Catholic cannot serve as a non-Catholic Christian witness, they must fulfill the requirements for a godparent to be eligible.
- Someone who has left the Catholic Church for another Christian community cannot serve as a Christian witness.

Both Catholic godparents and Christian witnesses are required to present a letter of suitability from their parish/Christian community prior to the Baptism.

Please consult with a member of the clergy before asking the person you want as a godparent to be certain that you have the correct information in order to make an appropriate choice.