

Saint Mary Catholic Parish Infant Baptism Policy

Canon Law requires that there be a “well-founded hope” that the child to be baptized will be brought up in the Catholic faith. The only way that we as a parish can confirm this is through active participation in the life of the church. Therefore, parents of the baby to be baptized must be registered, active members of St. Mary Parish for at least six months before scheduling a baptism. Families who have recently moved to our parish can, in lieu of the six month registration, provide a letter from a priest at their previous parish or another priest confirming their practice of the faith. Grandparents who are active religious educators of their grandchildren can request baptism for them, provided the parents affirm that they will not interfere with the Catholic formation of the child.

Parents and godparents (and grandparents, if they are requesting baptism) must also attend a baptism preparation class prior to the baptism. Also, to remind parents of their solemn duty, they will be asked to sign a statement affirming their commitment to raise the child in the Catholic Faith.

In addition, in accordance with Canon Law:

- Parents must select at least one and not more than two godparents.
- If two godparents are selected, one must be male and one female.
- Godparents must be at least 16 years old and mature enough to undertake this responsibility.
- Godparents must be fully initiated, practicing Catholics who attend Mass on Sunday, receive the sacraments regularly and see to the religious instruction of their families.
- Godparents must be canonically free to carry out this office. Those living in an invalid marriage or cohabitating are ineligible to act as godparents.
- The parents of the child to be baptized cannot act as godparents.

Expectant parents are encouraged to register in the parish (if they have not already done so), and to attend the baptism class, *prior* to the arrival of the baby.