

ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST CATHOLIC CHURCH

Faith Formation Office

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Godparent / Christian Witness Requirements

The Catholic Church's Code of Canon Law lists these requirements for a person to be a valid and lawful godparent in Baptism:

- Canon 872 - The godparent's role with the parents is to present the infant for the sacrament of Baptism and help the child live a life befitting a baptized Catholic Christian.
- Canon 873 – There may be only one male godparent or one female godparent or one of each.
- Canon 874

§1 To be permitted to take on the function of godparent a person must:

1. Be designated by the parent and must be mature enough to undertake this responsibility;
2. Be at least 16 years of age;
3. *Be a Catholic who has received the three sacraments of initiation, namely Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation, and live a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on (i.e., must believe all that the Catholic Church believes and teaches, and truly make a serious effort to live a good moral life worthy of imitation, and sees to the religious instruction of his/her family). Must be an actively practicing Catholic who attends weekly Mass;
4. *Not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared by the Church (This means that Catholics living in an invalid marriage and those that are cohabitating [living together without marriage] cannot serve as a sponsor.);
5. Must not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized;

§2 A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic Christian community may not be admitted as a godparent but as a witness to the Baptism together with a Catholic godparent.

The intent of Canon 874.2 is to allow someone who is baptized in another Trinitarian Protestant Faith (i.e., Baptist, Episcopal, etc.) to participate in the baptismal ceremony in conjunction with a qualified Catholic sponsor. It is not intended to allow for the following situations: a baptized Catholic who is not living out his or her Catholic faith; a baptized Catholic under the age of 16 years; or a baptized Catholic who has not yet received the sacrament of Confirmation. An ex-Catholic is still a Catholic, one who is under canonical penalty, having been excommunicated, therefore not in good standing with the Catholic Church.

*A copy of your Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation (and Marriage, if applicable) Sacramental certificates will also be required.