

Baptism is the first sacrament any of us receives and we receive it only once. Parents present their children to be baptized in their faith and aspire to nurture that faith in their children. Below are frequently asked questions regarding the process.

### **AT WHAT AGE ARE CHILDREN USUALLY BAPTIZED?**

There is no age limit, but infants are generally baptized within six months. Contact the parish office to schedule. 973-334-7131; [parishoffice@stcatherine-ml.org](mailto:parishoffice@stcatherine-ml.org)

### **MY CHILD IS OVER 7 YEARS OLD. IS IT TOO LATE TO BAPTIZE HIM?**

If your child is seven years or older, we offer baptismal preparation designed to meet the needs of older children and their parents. Please contact Lisa Gervasio, Director of Religious Education, 973-334-5257; [dre@stcatherine-ml.org](mailto:dre@stcatherine-ml.org).

### **DO I NEED TO BE REGISTERED IN THE PARISH TO HAVE MY CHILD BAPTIZED?**

As a family, St. Catherine's relies on the participation of all our families. We worship, serve, and socialize together; we encounter Christ together. Therefore, we ask you to be registered in the parish, or a member of a registered family. Registration forms can be found on our website [www.stcatherine-ml.org](http://www.stcatherine-ml.org)

### **WHEN ARE BAPTISMS HELD?**

Baptisms are generally held on the first and third Sundays of the month, immediately following the 11:30 am Mass. Contact the parish office to schedule.

### **WHAT ABOUT SINGLE PARENTS OR PARENTS WHO WEREN'T MARRIED IN THE CHURCH?**

St. Catherine welcomes every parent to bring your child forward for Baptism, no matter what your circumstances may be. Parents who were not married in the Catholic Church might consider the possibility of having their marriage convalidated in the Church; parish staff will gladly assist you in that process.

### **WHAT IS A GODPARENT?**

The role of a Godparent is to set a good Catholic example for your child and encourage your child in their faith journey. It is not an honorary title. Godparents serve a special role and must be selected carefully. It should be someone that lives their faith in accord with the teachings of the Catholic Church. Their role is an important one throughout your child's life.

### **WHAT DO WE ASK OF OUR GODPARENTS?**

1. A Godparent is fully initiated in the Roman Catholic Church. This means they have received the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation.
2. They are at least 16 years old.
3. They are not the parents of the child.
4. They are not married outside the Church (ie., married civilly or divorced and remarried outside the Church)
5. They participate in Sunday Mass and receive the sacraments of Holy Communion and Reconciliation regularly.

### **HOW MANY GODPARENTS CAN I HAVE OR DO I NEED?**

You need at least one Godparent. It doesn't matter if it is male or female. If two godparents are chosen, they are to be one male and one female that meet the requirements/qualifications for Godparents. You may not have more than that in the baptismal registry. The godparent(s)' name is entered into the parish registry. This is a historical record that cannot be changed.

### **CAN A NON-CATHOLIC SERVE IN ANY ROLE?**

A baptized, non-Catholic Christian may not be a godparent for the record, but they may stand as a "Christian witness" for your child. In this instance, you could then have one godparent and one Christian witness. A non-Christian cannot be a godparent or Christian witness. However, you may certainly invite non-Christian friends or relatives to attend the celebration and to have a special place in your child's life.

### **WHAT IS A PROXY?**

A proxy is someone that stands in for a Godparent that is unable to be present at the Baptism ceremony.

### **IS THERE A REQUIRED BAPTISMAL CLASS?**

We offer a baptismal preparation class for those who have not previously had a child baptized here at St. Catherine. We invite both parents to attend; godparents are also welcome. This single session is scheduled on an individual basis to accommodate busy families. We will discuss the theology of the Sacrament of Baptism, as well as practical aspects of the ceremony itself. Contact Sr. Bernadette Weller to schedule 973-586-6296.

### **IS THERE A FEE?**

No fee is required. Many parents like to make a free will "thanksgiving offering" at the time of the child's Baptism. These donations help support the ministries and works of the parish. The offering is made to St. Catherine of Siena Church, not to the celebrant of the sacrament.

### **WHEN WILL WE RECEIVE THE BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE?**

At the Baptism, you will receive one Baptism Certificate with the parents' names, including the mother's maiden name (as called for by church regulations). Please retain this document with your child's other important records.

### **CAN WE HAVE THE BAPTISM CELEBRATED IN ANOTHER CHURCH BUT DO THE PREPARATION HERE?**

That can certainly be done. Be sure to check with the other parish for their requirements. You will also need to obtain a letter from St. Catherine giving permission for the baptism to be celebrated outside your home parish. Contact the parish office.