

Saint Catherine Parish

5101 West Center Street, Milwaukee, WI 53210
(414) 445-5115 / www.saintcatherine51.org



Baptism Policy for Children

The birth or adoption of a child is a great source of joy and a major event in the life of a family and of our parish community. The entire community of Saint Catherine extends congratulations and our warmest welcome. As you welcome a child into your home, we invite you to welcome your child into the community of faith through the Sacrament of Baptism.

The decision to baptize a child is serious. It is a commitment to accept the responsibility to form and raise your child as a follower of Christ Jesus. Our community is here to assist you in fulfilling that commitment. Pope John Paul II wrote *"in the case of Baptism of children, efforts to catechize the parents and godparents should not be spared"* (*Ecclesia in America*, 34).

Because Baptism is a time of entry into a faith community, our parish, in conformity with the Catholic Church, has basic requirements:

1. At least one of the parents must be a registered and practicing member of Saint Catherine Parish. In cases where parents who are not members of the parish request Baptism, at least one parent must be a practicing member of another Catholic parish, offer proof of membership, and request permission of their pastor.
2. Both parents must attend a preparation class. Baptism classes, which focus on the responsibilities of a Catholic parent, and the rites associated with the Sacrament of Baptism, are offered monthly. We highly recommend that parents participate in the Baptism Preparation prior to the birth or adoption. In the case of preceding children, once the class has been taken, parents need not take it again for five years.

*The celebration of baptism must be prepared properly; consequently: **the parents of an infant to be baptized and those who are to undertake the function of sponsor are to be instructed properly on the meaning of this sacrament and the obligations attached to it.***
(Canon Law of the Catholic Church 851)

3. Since the earliest days of the Church, those baptized have had the assistance of a Godparent or Sponsor to serve as a guide and mentor. The Church requires one Godparent for each person baptized. A Godparent must:
 - a) Be a baptized and confirmed practicing Catholic;
 - b) Be at least 16 years of age and not be one of the child's parents;
 - c) Participate in a Baptism Preparation class either at Saint Catherine, Saint Sebastian or in their home parish;
 - d) If the Godparent is not a member of Saint Sebastian Parish, the Godparent must complete the Godparent Form from Saint Sebastian Parish and have it signed by the pastor of their home parish.
 - e) Only one confirmed and practicing Catholic Godparent is required for Baptism. If a second Sponsor is chosen, that person, known as a Christian Witness, must be a baptized and participating member of their Christian Church.

The Church teaches that, unless there is strong pastoral need, the appropriate time to celebrate Baptism is in the midst of the Eucharistic community. To that end, Saint Sebastian celebrates baptisms during regularly scheduled Sunday Mass. Parents are encouraged to arrange for Baptism early since the number of baptisms celebrated at each Mass is limited to four.

Parents should contact Deacon Ralph at Saint Catherine Parish {414-445-5115 or railrdralf@wi.rr.com} to schedule the Baptism preparation class and the Baptism celebration

Baptism Policy for Children of School Age

When parents request Baptism for children who have begun grade school, they will follow the same policies that are required of infant baptism. However, the children as well as parents and Godparents will participate in the preparation.

Children who have reached the age of 7 years must participate with their parents in a different preparation process modeled after the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), *and not the normal single Baptism class*.

The prescripts of the canons on adult baptism are to be applied to all those who, no longer infants, have attained the use of reason. (Canon Law of the Catholic Church 852)

This revised policy will go into effect on Easter Sunday, April 12, 2020