SELECTION OF A SPONSOR (GODPARENT)

The view of Baptism as a second birth has developed since the 4th century. In biological birth there is a birthmother and birthfather. Likewise in Baptism, a spiritual birth, there is a spiritual mother or spiritual father, hereafter referred to as sponsor.

Selection of A Sponsor — Policy No. 605

Policy Statement:

Only a baptized Catholic, Latin or Eastern *sui iuris,* can be a Sponsor.

The Sponsor is chosen by the parents requesting the Sacrament of Baptism for their infant or child.

The Sponsor is willing to accept the responsibility of presenting the infant or child for Baptism, assisting the parents, and witnessing the public event of the Sacrament of Baptism.

The Sponsor is also responsible for assisting the baptized in fulfilling the obligations acquired by the sacrament (cf. c. 872).

Definition:

The Sponsor is to be:

- sixteen years of age
- a practicing Catholic who has received the Sacraments of Initiation – the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation of the sponsor is to be verified (c. 874 § 1, 2°- 4°)
- not bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared

The Sponsor cannot be:

- the parent(s) (c. 874, 5°). This restriction also applies to step-parents, permanent legal guardians, or permanent foster parents.
- the priest or deacon conferring the Sacrament of Baptism.

Although one sponsor is sufficient, when there are two sponsors, one must be male and one female (c. 873).

A Proxy is a Catholic faithful who stands in at the celebration of the Baptism for another Catholic, selected as Sponsor, who is unable to be present at the celebration.

Procedure:

a) The parent(s) will testify to the suitability of the Sponsor(s). (see Appendix 603A Baptism of a Child Form)

b) The Sponsor will be ready to commit time and personal care to nurture and support the baptized in the Faith.

c) The Sponsor at the Baptism cannot be changed after the celebration and/or after it has been recorded in the Baptism Register as this is a recorded factual event.

d) The Sponsor is encouraged, whenever possible, to be the Sponsor at the sacrament of Confirmation.

e) A Proxy may stand in for a Sponsor (or two) who cannot be present at the Baptism ceremony.

f) A Proxy may not stand as a Witness. The Proxy is not listed on the Baptism Certificate.

Exception: Because of the close relationship between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches, an Orthodox faithful may be chosen as the second Sponsor along with a Catholic Sponsor. An Orthodox faithful cannot stand as Sponsor for Confirmation.

Refer to Policy:

No. 601 Baptism Preparation
No. 811 Baptism and Profession of Faith Entries

Refer to Appendix:

603A Baptism of a Child Form