



## ***St. Joan of Arc Parish***

***61 Canal Road***

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Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you for expressing a desire to have your child baptized here at St. Joan of Arc Parish. We hope and pray that your child is a source of much love and joy in your life. The following guidelines will help clarify the practical steps involved in scheduling and celebrating a Baptism here.

**Where should I celebrate my child's Baptism?** Baptism is a Sacrament in which your child will receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit, and be welcomed with joy into the Catholic Christian Community. The norm in the Catholic Church is that the child is welcomed into the Catholic Christian Community where his / her parents are **REGISTERED, ACTIVE** members. **So, in order to have your child baptized at St. Joan of Arc Parish, the norm states that you must be a registered, active member of the parish.**

However, in certain circumstances, it is permissible for the child to be baptized in a parish other than his / her home parish. In that case, the pastor of the parents' home parish must write a letter to the pastor where the Baptism is to take place, granting permission for the child's baptism to be celebrated outside the home parish. **So, if St. Joan of Arc is NOT your home parish, and you would like to have your child baptized here, we must receive a letter from the pastor of your home parish giving us permission to celebrate your child's Baptism.**

**How do I schedule a Baptism at Saint Joan of Arc?** We will schedule a baptism only **AFTER** you have chosen two **QUALIFIED** Godparents. Please understand that the role of Godparent is not merely a symbolic role or a nice honor to bestow on a "good person". It is a real responsibility with distinct qualifications within the Catholic Church. The qualifications for Godparents are as follows:

- **Must have received the three Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.**
- **Must be registered in a Catholic Parish, attend Mass weekly, and receive the Sacraments.**
- **Must be 16 years old, and cannot be the mother or father of the one being baptized.**
- **If married, the marriage must be recognized as valid by the Catholic Church.**
- **For Baptism, two sponsors are suggested, one of each gender; however, only one sponsor is required. (A second sponsor of a different Christian denomination may be a Godparent as a Christian Witness).**
- **Those Catholics who have joined another religion may not act as a Godparent or Christian Witness.**

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**PLEASE NOTE:** Each Godparent must receive a **SPONSOR FORM** from the pastor of the parish where they are currently **REGISTERED** and **ACTIVE** parishioners. On the sponsor form, the pastor attests to the fact that the potential Godparent meets the Church's qualifications for Godparents. **Please do not ask a person to be a Godparent who does not meet these qualifications, as they would be ineligible to receive a sponsor form.** This inevitably only results in anger and hurt feelings.

Once we have received the sponsor forms from your child's Godparents, then we will schedule your child's Baptism. If St. Joan of Arc is not your home parish, then we will also need the letter from the pastor of your home parish, giving us permission to celebrate your child's Baptism here.

**Is there a fee for my child's Baptism?** There is no set fee for a Baptism at St. Joan of Arc Parish. If you would like to make an offering for the service we have provided, a donation to the parish would be accepted with gratitude.

Thank you for your attention to these guidelines surrounding your child's Baptism. May the Lord bless you and your child at this important time.

Peace,

Fr. John Kelleher