



BAPTISM INFORMATION
THE PARISH OF ST. STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR
845-986-4028

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

"From the earliest times, the Church, to which the mission of preaching the Gospel and of baptizing was entrusted, has baptized children as well as adults. Our Lord said, 'Unless a person is reborn in water and the Holy Spirit, they cannot enter the kingdom of God.' The Church has always understood these words to mean that children should not be deprived of baptism because they are baptized in the faith of the Church. This faith is proclaimed for them by their parents and godparents, who represent both the local Church and the whole society of saints and believers." (From The Rite of Baptism)

CONGRATULATIONS! This is a time of great joy for your family as you celebrate the birth of a child. It is also the time to prepare for your child's "second birth," his/her rebirth in Christ. The simple guidelines will help you to prepare for that moment.

The Celebration of Baptism for those who are parishioners of St. Stephen's - Roman Catholics who live in our parish are most encouraged to have the celebration of baptism for their child at St. Stephen's Church. If you are not already registered with the parish, we recommend that you do so and join our parish family. You can register on-line by visiting our website at www.ststephenchurchwarwick.org. Our secretary will contact you to set up a baptism date, sign you up for a baptism class if first time parents and answer any questions.

On occasion, parishioners request that the sacrament of Baptism be celebrated in another Catholic church for a variety of valid reasons. We will give permission to registered parishioners as long as a couple meet the requirements here and/or in the church intended for the baptism.

Meet with Priest/Deacon to Plan the Baptism first: Meetings are available on Monday, Thursday and Friday evenings. Please contact the Parish Office to set up an appointment 845-986-1028 ext 102.

Choosing the Date of the Baptism - Baptisms are scheduled at St. Stephen's on Sundays immediately after the 11:00am Mass which parents and godparents are encouraged to attend. Baptisms are not celebrated on Christmas Day, Palm Sunday, Easter Sunday or on Sundays when certain events are held in the parish or the village (e.g. Apple Fest).

The Minister of Baptism - A Priest or Deacon of St. Stephen's Parish usually celebrates the Baptism. In some instances, family may have a family member or Priest friend or Deacon whom they would like to celebrate the Baptism. They are most welcome. Please make sure that you have confirmed your date with that person. Baptisms conducted by visiting clergy are scheduled on Saturdays at noon or 1:00 p.m. on days when no weddings, Confirmations or First Communions are taking place.

Arranging for a Baptism at St. Stephen's –There is a Baptism Form on our parish website for parents to fill out to arrange for a baptism. After filling out the form, click on submit and it will be emailed to the parish secretary who will then be in contact to set a date to meet the Priest/Deacon to discuss the Baptism and answer/ask any questions pertaining to the child's baptism. **We will also need a copy of the birth certificate for your child.**

Baptism Class for Parents – Parents are required to come to one class. Baptism classes will be held on the 2nd Saturday of each month where you will attend the 5pm Mass and meet with the Priest/Deacon following the Mass. You will meet in the Church Atrium. You can call the office at 845-986-4028 if you have any questions or if you need to change a date.

The Role of Parents - It is hoped that parents show a level of commitment to Jesus Christ and his Church, as evidenced by their sincere efforts lead Christian lives. It is hoped that parent are registered members of this parish, participate regularly at Sunday Mass, are growing in love for God and neighbor, have found prayer and faith to be important elements in their daily lives and working to eliminate unjust attitudes and practices from their lives. Parents should be ready and eager to meet their responsibilities as Christian parents.

The Role of Godparents – Godparents (Godfather and Godmother) are expected to profess the Catholic faith in which the child is to be raised. Godparents show the newly baptized child how to live the Gospel in their personal and social life, and sustain them in difficult times. Therefore, godparents must be suitable for this role and intend to fulfill it. At least one godparent must be chosen. If the godparent cannot be present on the day of the baptism, a Catholic proxy may be chosen. As parents you are making sure your child has the best of everything possible - food, education, etc. So now, with godparents, you want to choose the best possible people to be part of your child's life. Godparents will be part of your child's life long after the baptismal ceremony is over. It is a serious decision you need to make. We will provide Godparent sponsorship forms which need to be completed by the church the GodParent is attending.

According to Canon (Church) Law, a godparent must:

- 1. Be at least 14 years of age**
- 2. Have received the Sacraments of Initiation - Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation,**
- 3. Not be the father and mother of the child**
- 4. If the child is adopted, finalization papers confirming the adoption need to be presented**

Christian Witness - When, for a just cause, parents wish to have another baptized and believing Christian (non-Catholic) to act as a Christian witness, the priest/deacon needs to be informed. A non-Christian may not be a godparent or Christian witness since they do not profess faith in Jesus Christ. **This is not a point for discussion or compromise.** One godparent **MUST** be Catholic. Given cause, one person may be a Christian witness.

School-age Children - In most cases infants are baptized but, on occasion, families delay baptism until their child is of school age. In those situations, if the child is 7 years of age or older, baptism will be delayed until the child is registered in the parish religious education program so that they understand and appreciate the importance and meaning of the sacrament.

The Day of the Baptism – Baptisms are held after the 11am Mass on Sundays which ends about 12pm. Parents and godparents are encouraged to attend Mass and family and friends are welcome as well. You will then be directed to sit in a specific area of the church. The Liturgy of Baptism will last between 30 to 45 minutes. Baptism certificates will be mailed within two weeks of the baptism.

Donation to the Church – Thank you for your donation which can be given to the church office **10** days prior to the Baptism along with the completed Godparent Sponsorship forms.