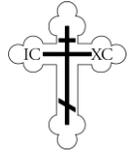




Choosing a Godparent / Sponsor for your Child's Baptism and Chrismation



In order to avoid unnecessary embarrassment or hard feelings, please carefully read the following canons and be fully cognizant of what they are stating **BEFORE** you approach someone to ask them to be a sponsor or godparent for your child's Baptism and Chrismation,. If **anything** is unclear concerning the qualifications that follow, contact the parish priest before all else!



The Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*, promulgated by His Holiness Pope John Paul II, in Rome at St. Peter's, on 18 October 1990, states:

Can. 684 - §1. 1. According to the most ancient tradition of the Churches the person who is to be baptized should have **at least one sponsor**.

§2. In fulfilling the function of a sponsor, the sponsor is to assist in the Christian initiation for a person who is no longer an infant; or to present the infant to be baptized and to **help the baptized person lead a Christian life in harmony with baptism and to fulfill faithfully the obligations connected with it.**

Can. 685 - §1. 1. For a person to fulfill validly the role of a sponsor it is necessary that he or she:

- (1) be initiated with the three sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation with holy Myron and the Eucharist;
- (2) belong to the Catholic Church, with due regard for §3;
- (3) have the intention of carrying out the responsibility of sponsor;
- (4) be designated by the person to be baptized or the parents or guardians or, if there are not any, by the minister;
- (5) **not be** a father, mother or spouse of the person to be baptized;
- (6) **not be** bound by excommunication, even a minor one, suspension, deposition or deprived of the right of acting in the function of a sponsor.

§2. To assume licitly the role of sponsor, in addition to what is required, the sponsor should be of the **age required by particular law** and **lead a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken.**

§3. For a just cause, it is permitted to admit the Christian faithful of another Eastern non-Catholic Church to the function of a sponsor, but always at the same time with a Catholic sponsor.

Criteria for being a member of the Catholic Church **in good standing**...

A sponsor...

- ...is registered in a parish.
- ...regularly attends Divine Liturgy and holy days; observes the fasts.
- ...is active in the non-liturgical life of the parish.
- ...supports the Church monetarily according to his or her means.
- ...if married, celebrated a **valid** Catholic marriage.

Nota Bene: The above also applies when wishing to be a witness for the Roman Catholic Sacrament of Matrimony.



According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church «*Baptism is the sacrament of faith.*» As such this should be the prime quality that one seeks in a sponsor. A godparent cannot be lukewarm or indifferent in faith and holiness since it is precisely Christian holiness and faith that the sponsor is being asked to exhibit in his or her life and so be able to transmit that to the child as he or she matures in the Catholic faith.

A sponsor is one who promises to join in the struggle with the parents, guided by the Church, to bring the infant carefully and prayerfully along the difficult path to heaven by focusing at all time on the progress of the child in the knowledge and practice of the catholic orthodox faith. A sponsor who promises to do so and is intentionally remiss in fulfilling said promise will be held accountable before God for the «perjury» committed.

Finally, keep in mind the position that is being imposed on me the priest in the above situation: I am being asked to lie by signing my name to an official, sealed church document, thus compromising the integrity of the sacrament which in conscience I cannot and will not do. As a priest of the Sacred Mysteries of Jesus Christ, I am accountable before Almighty God for protecting and preserving both the letter and the spirit of the Mysteries entrusted to me by the Church.



PLEASE NOTE that having been baptized and chrismated, and having received the Divine Eucharist at a church many years ago does not equate with current active membership. Catholic godparents are asked to provide from their parish priest a **SPONSOR CERTIFICATE**, bearing the church's seal, in order to attest to their suitability to serve as a sponsor. Again, this is done to ensure that the godparent can indeed serve as a role model and mentor for the child in his / her life of faith.

If you do not qualify as a sponsor, instead of getting angry with the priest, the parish staff, the Parish, or the Catholic Church, please redirect your energies in a more positive fashion by seeing this situation as a wake-up call from the Holy Spirit to reform your life, such that you do qualify in the future to be a laudable godparent.