

On Being a Sponsor in the Catholic Faith

Congratulations! Because your faith was appreciated so much, you have been asked to share that faith with someone, or with that person's child. Certainly, you feel honored. The Catholic Church values godparents and sponsors so much that ***you should be very clear about what your role of sponsoring someone for Baptism or Confirmation involves.***

This is what Canon Law, the official law of the Church, states in Canons 872-874:

The one to be baptized is to be given a sponsor who will... help the baptized to lead a Christian life in harmony with baptism, and to fulfill faithfully the obligations connected with it. To be admitted to the role of sponsor, a person must... have completed the sixteenth year, and must be a Catholic who has been baptized, confirmed, and has already received the sacrament of the most Holy Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken.

As you can see, being a godparent or a sponsor is far more than an honorary role. You will be a living pattern of what a Christian is and how we call upon God in prayer. ***From you, this person will discover a sense of Church and will learn of repentance, justice to the poor, the victory of the cross, hunger for the Eucharist, a love for the Sacraments, and the many other ways that God's love gives us life.*** In other words, you will represent to this person the rest of the Church, the communion of Saints to which the newly-baptized will belong, and among whom the newly-confirmed will be strengthened by the Holy Spirit. The individual you are sponsoring (and the parents) will know that he or she is not alone in the quest to know God and to do God's will.

What are your hopes and dreams for your godchild? What do you most want to give this child? What graces have you been given that you can share? What are God's answers to these questions? What role did your own godparents play in your discovery of God and in your religious formation? Do you want to be the same way to your godchild? What does it mean to "lead a life in harmony with the role of godparent"?

Even if distance or circumstances separate you from your godchild, you can do a simple thing such as sending a card of remembrance and encouragement on the yearly anniversary of the Baptism or Confirmation. *How many other ways can you "be there" for your godchild? How might you be needed throughout your godchild's life to be a mentor? A guide? A companion? A listener? An example? A teacher? A friend? How might you need to be comforting? Challenging? Encouraging? Forgiving?* Please know that you can call upon your priests if they can be of any help in discerning how to best fulfill this very important role in the Church.

One thing we know for sure: you can not fulfill this role without prayer and the regular reception of the Eucharist and the other sacraments. ***Your best resource in helping this person to live the faith well is for you to live your faith well.*** If you remain active in the Church and keep growing in your faith and in your love for God, you can't go wrong.

Once again, **congratulations!** And **God bless you!**