



## **Infant Baptism Preparation Program**

### **Guidelines for Parents and Godparents**

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church

Dear Parents and Godparents,

Welcome to the Infant Baptism Preparation Program!

Since our parish community was established in 1982, the Infant Baptism Preparation Program has offered an excellent opportunity for all its participants- parents, godparents, as well as the entire Instruction Team- to renew and deepen their faith, strengthen their commitment to the Church, reflect seriously on the responsibilities of Christian parenting, and understand better the Sacrament of Baptism.

This booklet serves to enhance such opportunities both now and in the future. The following pages provide the papers necessary to participate in the program sessions in which you will learn about the theology and symbols of the Sacrament of Baptism, discuss among yourselves and in small groups the role of parents and godparents, reflect on your responsibilities as parents and godparents, as well as brainstorm concrete ways that you can witness the faith to your baptized child.

You are accepting the responsibility of training your child in the practice of faith in asking to have your child baptized. It will be your duty to bring your child up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbors.

Along with the clergy, staff, and the entire Instruction Team, I look forward to welcoming your new child into the Holy Catholic Church through the Sacrament of Baptism.

Yours in God's service,

Fr. Albert Laforet  
Pastor  
St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Parish



## *Introduction*

The purpose of the following pages is to provide parents and godparents with the necessary information and guidelines for infant baptism. The information is organized chronologically, beginning with the choosing of the child's godparents and ending with the Baptism itself. Our hope is that the following of this program will make the celebration of your child's baptism a meaningful experience.

In asking to have your child baptized you are accepting the responsibility of training him or her in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him or her up to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbors. The Baptism preparation program offers an excellent opportunity for you, the parents to renew and/or deepen your faith, strengthen your commitment to the Church, seriously reflect on the responsibilities of Christian parenting, and come to a better understanding of the Sacrament of Baptism.

It is with great joy that our Catholic community of St. Thomas Aquinas and the Baptism team welcomes you to this program and we look forward to welcoming your new child into the family of God through the faith filled celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism.

## *Steps in the Preparation*

### **1. Choose a couple to act as godparents for your Child**

- It is convenient to have discerned with friends or family members the possibility of them acting as godparents before beginning the preparation program. Here are some criterions to keep in mind:
  - Only one godparent is required and only two are permitted. If there are two they need to be a male and a female.
  - The godparents must have received Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.
  - The godparents must not be bound by canonical penalty. They cannot be in an irregular marriage or cohabitating. (seek consultation with a priest or deacon if there are doubts concerning this)
  - They should be practicing Catholics, giving an example of prayer and regular worship with their parish community.
  - They should be able to share with the parents the task of handing on the faith to the child; actively giving Christian witness in their lives.
  - The godparents cannot be the parents of the child.
  - They must be at least 16 years of age.
  - If one godparent is chosen there is the possibility that a baptized Christian of another denomination may take the role of a "Christian Witness."
  - If the godparent cannot be at the baptism another Catholic may stand as a proxy.



## 2. Arrange an initial meeting with the Parish office.

- This meeting is with the Pastor or someone he assigns.
- It is helpful to bring a copy of the birth certificate, adoption papers (If applicable), and the completed Baptism application form.

## 3. Baptism preparation sessions

- Parents and godparents are asked to attend a 2-3 hour program as a spiritual and formative preparation for their child's reception of Baptism.
- Each session is normally held on the first Sunday of every other month at 1:00 PM. Please consult the bulletin, the Church office, or the St. Thomas website for dates, times, and location.
- The attendance of the sessions is required unless the parents and godparents have shown that they have participated in a Baptismal preparation program within the last 2 years (even from another Parish) or, after consultation with the pastor, have received an exemption.
- Attendance by both parents is strongly encouraged, even if one of the parents is not Catholic.
- Childcare is provided at the session for children over nine months. Younger children may accompany the parents during the sessions.

## 4. Necessary Documents

- **St Thomas Aquinas' Application form for Baptism** : available [on-line](#) or at the front desk
- **Copy of Birth Certificate**: or suitable document
- **Adoption records** (if applicable)
- **Letter of permission from your home parish**: if you are not a parishioner at St. Thomas Aquinas
- **Godparent's letter of suitability**: From their parish, if that parish is other than St. Thomas Aquinas, witnessing to their good standing with the Church
- **Godparent Covenant form**: Found on the St Thomas Aquinas website under "[Baptism](#)", or at the front desk.
- **Certificate of attendance of Baptismal preparation**: either participation in the program at St. Thomas, even from a previous year, or suitable documentation from another parish.
- All required documents should be submitted at least one week before the date of Baptism.



### *Other concerns*

- Couples who are in an irregular marriage should consult the pastor concerning reconciling themselves with the Church. Please consult a priest or deacon if you are unsure about the status of your marriage.
- To reflect the communal and ecclesial nature of Baptism, and its relationship with the other Sacraments; Baptism is ideally celebrated in the Parish Church of the family on a Sunday. Baptism at St Thomas Aquinas is normally offered on the first Sunday of every month after the 11 am mass. Contact the parish office to sign up for the one of the available times. If special arrangements are required, please feel free to present your request to the Pastor.