

# The Role of a Confirmation Sponsor

*“Candidates for Confirmation, as for Baptism, fittingly seek the spiritual help of a sponsor. To emphasize the unity of the two sacraments, it is appropriate that this be one of the baptismal godparents.” (#1311 Catechism of the Catholic Church)*

In the Diocese of San Bernardino, there is to be only one sponsor for each candidate for Confirmation who is to be at least 18 years of age and is a fully initiated Roman Catholic; a person who has received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. **If Sponsor is married, Sponsor must be married in a Catholic Church.** *(Please provide your certificates of Confirmation & Marriage)*

The most important role of Confirmation sponsors is to journey with the candidates and guide them as they prepare to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit in this Sacrament of Initiation, and to continue to help them live out their mission as fully initiated Catholics especially after the celebration. They are to listen attentively to candidates and affirm their strengths. They are to share in the catechetical sessions, rites, retreats and service projects whenever possible. Sponsors act in the name of the Church; they have the responsibility to witness to the faith through their actions.

***“The sponsor brings the candidate to receive the sacrament, presents him to the minister for anointing, will later help him fulfill his baptismal promises faithfully under the influence of the Holy Spirit.” Rite of Confirmation***

Every effort is to be made to ensure that the sponsor for Confirmation will be present and accompany the candidate at the liturgical celebration of the Rite of Confirmation. The sponsor serves as a mentor/guide in the faith and should have regular contact with the candidate. Living at a remote distance from the Confirmation candidate is not an excuse for the sponsor’s absence during the celebration of the rite itself.

Having explained that, there may be emergency situations where the sponsor may not be able to be physically present for the celebration of the rite. Such reasons may include illness, inclement weather, national emergencies. In this extreme emergency absence of the sponsor, a witness is required who can attest to the administering of the sacrament. The only requirements for the witness are that he or she be practicing Catholic & have received all and at least 18 years of age. This may include the person who prepared the candidate for the sacrament.

## **Sponsor Qualifications**

**Can. 892** Insofar as possible, there is to be a sponsor for the person to be confirmed; the sponsor is to take care that the confirmed person behaves as a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations inherent in this sacrament.

**Can. 893 §1** To perform the function of sponsor, a person must fulfill the conditions mentioned in ⇒ **can. 874.**

**§2.** It is desirable to choose as sponsor the one who undertook the same function in baptism.

**Can. 874 §1** To be permitted to take on the function of sponsor a person must:

1. be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or the person who takes their place, or in their absence by the pastor or minister and have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function;
2. have completed the sixteenth year of age, unless the diocesan bishop has established another age, or the pastor or minister has granted an exception for a just cause; ***(In the Diocese of San Bernardino, our Bishop has established the age of 18 years as the minimum)***
3. be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on;
4. not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;
5. not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized.

**§2.** A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community is not to participate except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a witness of the baptism.