

## Baptism Policy for Saint Mark / Saint Matthew Parish

Baptism is the foundation of the Christian life and the gateway to the sacraments. Through Baptism, we are freed from sin, become children of God, members of the Church, and are called to share in her mission. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, it is “the sacrament of regeneration through water and in the word.”

Our parish is committed to helping parents fulfill their sacred responsibility to have their children baptized promptly—ideally within the first few weeks after birth—and to prepare well for the sacrament.

The requirements and guidelines below are based on the **Code of Canon Law** and the **Archdiocese of Seattle's Baptismal Policies**, which we follow closely. Our parish preparation process also covers these norms in more detail.

**Note:** This document outlines local practices and answers frequently asked questions. It does not address every possible situation. Updates may be made as needed.

### Parish Requirements for Infant Baptism

#### 1. For Parents / Guardians

- Only the child's parents or legal guardians may request baptism.
- At least one parent must be a practicing Catholic and committed to raising the child in the faith.
  - If there is not a well-founded hope the child will be raised Catholic, baptism may be delayed.
- Parents not married in the Church will be encouraged to pursue convalidation.
  - An invalid marriage does **not** usually prevent a child's baptism.

#### 2. For Godparents

- **At least one godparent is required.** Two are permitted (one man and one woman), though they do not need to be married to each other.
- If a godparent cannot be present, a proxy may stand in their place. Please notify the parish in advance.
- Godparents must be:
  - Practicing Catholics
  - At least 16 years old
  - Baptized, confirmed, and have received First Holy Communion
  - Free of canonical penalties
  - If married, married in the Catholic Church
- A child's parents **cannot** serve as their godparent.

### Required Paperwork

All documents must be submitted to the parish office **no later than two weeks before the scheduled baptism**.

Required documents:

- Child's state-issued birth certificate
- Baptism information form
- Godparent interview form
- Parent commitment form

*(Forms are included on pages 3-7 of this packet)*

## Location of Baptism

- Baptism is ordinarily celebrated at the parish where the child's family is registered or regularly attends.
- If the family belongs to another parish, baptism should be celebrated at that parish.
- **Exceptions** must be approved in advance by:
  - The pastor of Saint Mark/Saint Matthew parish, **and**
  - The pastor of the family's home parish
- Outside of necessity (such as danger of death), baptisms are to be celebrated in a **church**, which is the proper and sacred place for this sacrament.

## Time and Date of Baptism

- Baptisms are normally celebrated **on Saturdays after the 9am Mass, or on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of the month, immediately following the 10:30 AM Mass.**
- To be fair to all families, **special time/date requests** will only be considered in **extraordinary circumstances** and must be approved by the pastor.

## Preparation for Baptism

- Parents are required to attend **a one-day baptism preparation session** (approximately 4 hours), led by the pastor or the Pastoral Assistant for Faith Formation. This session includes catechesis and prayer.
- Parents need only attend this session **once every three years**, but are welcome to attend more often for their own enrichment and to support other families.
- **Godparents are not required** to attend, but their participation is warmly encouraged whenever possible.

## Minister of Baptism

- Baptisms are ordinarily celebrated by the **pastor or a parish deacon**.
- **Visiting clergy** may only preside at a baptism with **explicit permission** from the pastor.

## Stipends

- There is **no fee** for baptism. Donations are always appreciated but **not required**. If a **visiting priest or deacon** performs the baptism, a stipend is appropriate and appreciated—especially for retired clergy who may rely on stipends as part of their income. If you're unsure what is customary, feel free to speak with the pastor or parish staff for guidance.

## Baptism information form

## Child's information

First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Middle name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth date: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthplace: \_\_\_\_\_  
(city, state, and country)

When was your most recent child baptized in the Church? \_\_\_\_\_

## Parents' information

Father's full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

### Sacraments received:

Birth date: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth place: \_\_\_\_\_  
(city, state, and country)

Mother's full name:

Mother's maiden name:

Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

### Sacraments received:

confirmation  
 marriage –  Catholic  civil  other \_\_\_\_\_  
(check only one box) (church and denomination)

Birth date: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth place: \_\_\_\_\_

Baptism policy. Parish Family #12 – page 3 of 7

## Contact information

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone numbers: \_\_\_\_\_  home  cell  work

(check only one box)

\_\_\_\_\_  home  cell  work

(check only one box)

E-mail addresses: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please specify to whom this e-mail address belongs)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(please specify to whom this e-mail address belongs)

## Godparent information

Godfather's full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

Sacraments received:

baptism      Parish: \_\_\_\_\_  
(parish name, city, and state)

confirmation

marriage –  Catholic  civil  other \_\_\_\_\_  
(check only one box)      (church and denomination)

Godmother's full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

Sacraments received:

baptism      Parish: \_\_\_\_\_  
(parish name, city, and state)

confirmation

marriage –  Catholic  civil  other \_\_\_\_\_  
(check only one box)      (church and denomination)

**SAINT MARK CATHOLIC CHURCH  
SHORELINE, WA**

**INTERVIEWS SHOULD BE SEPARATELY & PRIVATELY**  
(FORM MUST BE COMPLETED BY INTERVIEWER)

1. Do you solemnly swear to answer the following questions truthfully? \_\_\_\_\_

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

2. Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ **Mobile/Home/Other** (circle one)

3. Are you at least 16 years old? **Yes/No** (circle one)

4. Have you been baptized? **Yes/No** (circle one) If so, what denomination? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Have you been confirmed? **Yes/No** (circle one) If so, was it in the Catholic Church? **Yes/No** (circle one)

6. Are you practicing your faith through attendance of weekly Sunday Masses, holy days of obligation, and regular confession, and reception of the Eucharist? **Yes/No** (circle one)

If so, what is your parish? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, are you resolved to do so? **Yes/No** (circle one)

Are you married? **Yes/No** (circle one) If so, is your marriage in the Catholic Church? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you affirm that you will faithfully carry out the duties of a godparent or sponsor in accord with the precepts of the Catholic Church? **Yes/No** (circle one)

**SIGNATURES & PARISH SEAL**

Signature of godparent/sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_

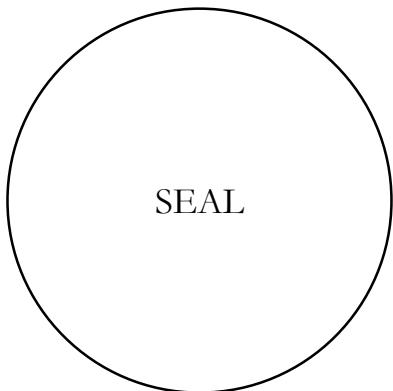
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This godparent/sponsor is known to me personally: **Yes/No** (circle one)

**I affirm that the person named above is suitable to serve as a  
godparent or sponsor.**

Signature of interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Name & position/title of interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_



GODPARENT/SPONSOR NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

CHILD(REN) BEING SPONSORED: \_\_\_\_\_

SACRAMENT DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

PARISH OF CELEBRATION: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

## Parent commitment form

Passing on the faith to one's child is both an extraordinary gift and a serious responsibility. In doing so parents assume the responsibility of forming their child in the faith. To do so, it is necessary that the parents themselves be well-formed Catholics who actively participate in the life the Church both personally and within their parish. This is most evident in the celebration of Sunday Mass, regular confession, and daily prayer.

In preparation for your child's baptism, parents are asked to review and affirm their own faith. This is the faith of the Church – the faith in which your child is about to be baptized.

**Do you currently attend Mass each Sunday?**  yes  no

Consider the value of your daily meals, a full night's sleep, time with your family, or regular vacations. Taking away from just one of these can handicap your ability to live well! Sunday Mass is the spiritual nourishment of our faith, helping us live well as Christians.

**Do you go to confession at least once a year?**  yes  no

As sinners, it is easy to focus on what we have done wrong and how we might be admonished for our failings. The sacrament of confession reminds us that God seeks above all to offer us His mercy and love. What better time to receive His forgiveness than in preparation for your child's baptism?

**Are you actively involved – to the best of your ability – in the life of the parish by offering your financial support, volunteering, and participating in extra-liturgical gatherings?**  yes  no

Consider how you might engage in the life of the parish. What would you like to see done at your parish? Who could you get to know a little better? What opportunities are there for fellowship?

**Will you pass on the Catholic faith to your child as he or she grows by bringing them to Mass each Sunday, preparing them for the sacraments, and sharing your faith with them?  yes  no**

There is no universal template for faithful parenting as a Catholic, though a good starting ground is found in the five precepts of the Church. Take time to discuss with your spouse and the godparent(s) you have chosen how you will pass on the faith your child will receive in baptism.

### **The Precepts**

1. You shall attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor.
2. You shall confess your sins at least once a year.
3. You shall receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season.
4. You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church.
5. You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church.

Father's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print the full name)

Mother's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print the full name)

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print the full name)

Date & time of baptism: \_\_\_\_\_