



Baptism Handbook



ST. IRENE

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF FAITH

28W441 WARRENVILLE RD/WARRENVILLE, IL 60555

Congratulations on the (coming) birth of your new child!

Our parish staff and our baptismal preparation team are here to help you get ready for this great sacrament of our Catholic Christian faith!

The Parish of Baptism

The Church teaches that infants are to be baptized in the parish church of their parents within the first few weeks or as soon as possible after their birth. As parents, you have shared the gift of life with your child. In Baptism you bring them to a spiritual rebirth that makes them a Catholic Christian and grants them the gift of eternal life in Christ.

At least one of the child's parents needs to be a practicing Catholic and a registered member of our parish community. As you prepare for the Baptism of your child, this is also an opportunity for you to recommit your life to Christ as well. In the later section of this Baptism Handbook, there are some examples of how your parish can help you be the best Christian parents for your child.

Making Arrangements for Baptisms

In order to make arrangements for the Baptism of your child, you will first attend a baptismal preparation meeting held for (expectant) parents. These classes are held on Saturday mornings at 9:30am in the mobiles and are approximately two hours in length. Please call the parish office to register for one of these special classes.

Ideally, both parents will attend this meeting and babies are most welcome, too. Since the Catholic baptismal ceremony is explained in detail at these meetings, a non-Catholic parent would especially benefit from attendance. Parents may attend even before the birth of the child and Godparents are encouraged to attend, but are not required to do so.



Responsibilities of Christian Parents

In presenting their child for Baptism, parents make the commitment to raise their child in the Catholic Christian faith. The best way to fulfill this duty is for parents to already be practicing their faith conscientiously each and every day.

It is the calling of Christian parents to share their faith with their child by word and example, and to enroll their children in a Catholic school or a religious education program. They should have their children complete all of their sacraments: Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation.

Here are some further thoughts about Christian parenthood to prayerfully consider:



- Are you regularly attending Mass each Sunday? If not, we encourage you to begin attending Mass regularly again, even bringing your baby with you to church.
- How are you practicing your Catholic faith? If you need, we encourage you to go to Reconciliation, and to make a fresh start on living well as a Catholic Christian.
- Have you been married in the Catholic Church? If not, we encourage you to contact the parish office after the Baptism, to discuss how your marriage can be blessed in the Church.
- Have you as adults received all of your sacraments too? If not, we encourage you to complete them now by enrolling in our adult programs for these sacraments.
- If one of you is not a Catholic Christian, we encourage you to consider becoming one. Our adult OCIA programs are designed specifically for you!
- We also encourage you to explore the many benefits of Natural Family Planning as an effective and ethical way to be responsible parents. Please contact the Diocesan program coordinator at 815-221-6134 for the times and places where these classes are offered.

Please feel free to contact the parish office to discuss any of these important spiritual issues. You may also bring them up to one of the members of our baptismal preparation team. The more faithfully we follow the teachings of our Catholic Christian Faith, the more truly blessed we will be, both in this life and in the life to come.

Choosing a Christian Name

It is tradition in many families and cultures that the child be baptized with the name of a saint or a holy person from the Bible, a name derived therefrom, or a name based on a Christian mystery or virtue. While this is no longer a requirement, parents, sponsors, and St. Irene Parish are to take care that a name foreign to Christian sensibility is not given (*Cann. 855*).

While it goes without saying that it is meritorious for Catholic parents to choose a saint's name for their child, it is not actually necessary. Thus it's quite possible for a Catholic priest or deacon to baptize "Ashley" and "Jennifer," "Curtis" and "Todd." Even if there may be no canonized saints with these same names, there is certainly nothing unchristian about them!

Celebrants for Baptisms

Priests and deacons of our parish officiate Baptisms in our church, as scheduled by the parish office each month.

Baptismal Dates and Times

Baptisms may be celebrated at any Sunday or Saturday Vigil Mass. Outside of the Mass, Baptisms are celebrated on the third Sunday of most months, starting with the 10:00 am Mass. You are invited to attend, as your child will receive a blessing at that Mass. The rest of the baptismal ceremony begins at 11:30 am after the closing hymn of the Mass.



As your child grows, please continue to bring him or her with you to Mass each weekend as well. During the school year, we have a special Children's Liturgy of the Word during the 10:00 am Mass for children in pre-school through Grade Five.

In some rare cases, Baptisms may be scheduled at times other than at the regular Sunday time. However, all Baptisms are to be celebrated in the church building. To apply for any of these special exceptions, please consult the parish office staff in advance. These special situations are always contingent on the availability of the parish clergy.

Choosing Qualified Godparents

Each child may have one official godfather and one official godmother, or just one person as the official godparent, according to Catholic Church law.

Before the Baptism date can be confirmed by the parish office, we need to receive the Sponsor Eligibility Forms for the Godparents. By means of these forms, the godparents certify that they fulfill all the requirements for their role as a Sponsor for the Catholic Sacrament of Baptism.

Qualifications for Godparents: The qualifications for Catholic Sponsors are:

- They are a baptized member of the Roman Catholic Church.
- They are at least 16 years of age.
- They cannot be the parent/guardian of the child.
- They have made their First Holy Communion and received the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- They are a practicing Catholic in good standing.
- They understand and accept the responsibility which they undertake as a sponsor for the child to be baptized. They will help this child, by example, word, and action, to live as a faithful Christian in communion with, and according to, the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Sponsor Eligibility Form is also to be signed by the godparents' pastor and imprinted with the seal of their parish.

If a godparent cannot actually be present at the Baptism, they may be represented by a proxy. This circumstance should be noted when the Sponsor Eligibility Form is turned in to the parish office.

Parents should provide the Eligibility Forms to each proposed sponsor. The completed Sponsor Forms should be returned to the parish office, either by the sponsor or through the parents, in order for the requested baptismal date to be confirmed.

If a designated godparent does not fulfill all the requirements for being a qualified sponsor, this is an opportunity for them to come back to church, to reconnect with their Christian faith, and to join their local parish community. That situation, in itself, can be a great blessing.



Christian Witnesses: If there is already one qualified Catholic Godparent for the child, the second sponsor may be a non-Catholic Christian, with the following qualifications:

- They are a validly baptized Christian.
- They are at least 16 years of age.
- They cannot be the parent/guardian of the child.
- They understand and accept the responsibility which they undertake as a sponsor for the child to be baptized. They will help this child, by example, word, and action, to live as a faithful Christian.

If the Catholic sponsor is a godfather, then the Christian witness would be a godmother, and vice-versa.

A non-Catholic sponsor is called a Christian Witness. This is because they cannot really promise to help the parents raise their Godchild in the Catholic faith if they themselves are not actually members of the Catholic Church. However, they may still fulfill their responsibility as a faithful Christian witness.

Even though Christian witnesses are allowed, two Catholic godparents are preferred. Some families and cultures designate several additional honorary godparents. However, only one male and one female sponsor may have a role in the baptismal liturgy, have their names recorded in the parish register of Baptisms and appear on baptismal certificates issued by the parish.

Spiritual Duties of Godparents

The spiritual duties of the godparents are as follows:

- To make the baptismal vows along with the parents on behalf of their godchild and to pray regularly for their godchild.
- To be a good example for their godchild of how to live faithfully as a Catholic Christian and to assist the parents in their religious obligations toward their godchild.
- If necessary, to take the place of the parents in fulfilling their religious obligations toward their godchild, especially in regard to the reception of the three important sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation.
- All godparents are encouraged to remember the anniversary of their godchild's Baptism, and to celebrate it appropriately.

Special Situations

There are certain situations in which Baptisms may be celebrated separately from the regular Sunday ceremony:

- Children who were baptized in the hospital due to danger of death, or children who were baptized by a non-Catholic minister, are not to be re-baptized as such. Instead, they are to be formally received into the Catholic Church in ceremonies that are similar to the baptismal rite, but without the pouring of water.
- Older children, who understand what is going on, must be properly catechized for this sacrament, and usually prefer not to be baptized with the babies.
- The official rite of Baptism often refers to both parents, with special blessings for each. If both parents cannot be present at the Baptism, please talk to the parish office.
- In rare circumstances where the godparents or relatives are traveling from a great distance, some special considerations of scheduling may be considered. Please consult with the parish office staff regarding these special requests.

The Baptismal Liturgy

Here are just a few reminders for the day of the Baptism:

- For a third Sunday Baptism at 11:30 am, please come and invite your family and friends to join you at 10:00 am Mass.
- Sit near the Baptismal Font after the conclusion of Mass.
- The priest or the deacon will give instructions regarding the celebration of the sacrament of Baptism.
- As part of the baptismal ceremony your child receives a white baptismal bib, and a candle, all of which your child will keep.
- During the baptismal ceremony, one of the parents holds the child while the water is poured. Please hold the back of your baby's head, over the font, with your bare hand.
- The godparents may hold the child during the other parts of the baptismal ceremony.

Certificates of Baptism

A Baptismal Certificate will be provided to you after the Baptism. Please check it for accuracy, as this information will become part of the permanent church sacramental records for your child.

It will be necessary to present a Baptismal Certificate for First Communion and Confirmation. When getting married in the Catholic Church, the parish will ask for a newly issued Baptismal Certificate from the parish of Baptism.

**Congratulations once again on the birth of your child!
God bless you for baptizing your child in the Catholic
Church, and for raising your child in the Catholic
Christian Faith!**

General Parish Information

Saint Irene Catholic Church – 630-393-2400 – www.st-irene.org
28W441 Warrenville Rd., Warrenville, Illinois 60555

Weekend Mass Schedule:

Mass on Saturday evening is at 4:30 P.M.,
Masses on Sunday are at 8:00 am, and 10:00 am

Weekday Mass Schedule: Mass is celebrated on Monday and Tuesday at 8:00 am, Wednesday at 12:00 pm, and Thursday and Friday at 7:00 a.m. For the Mass schedule on holy days, please consult the parish bulletin.

Confessions: Offered Saturday at 3:30 pm before the 4:30 pm Vigil Mass

Parish Office Info: The main phone number is 630-393-2400. The office is open Monday through Thursday from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, Friday from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm. Summer office hours are Monday through Thursday from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, Friday from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm.