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**Nihil Obstat**

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# Dear Godparent

Congratulations! You have been invited to serve as a godparent for a child who will be welcomed through Baptism into the Catholic Christian community of faith. Thank you for accepting this important ministry. What a joyful journey of faith! This handbook has been written especially for you. We hope it will answer your questions and help prepare you to live out this special ministry in the Church.

Serving as a child's godparent is a great honor and comes with corresponding responsibility. In the following pages, we will share information about the Sacrament of Baptism, as well as the role and responsibilities you undertake when you accept the invitation to be a godparent. To help you better understand the ceremony, we will also explore the ritual used to baptize infants and young children.

Thank you again for saying yes. You are a gift and blessing to your godchild and to the larger Church you represent.

Special Ministry

WHAT IS

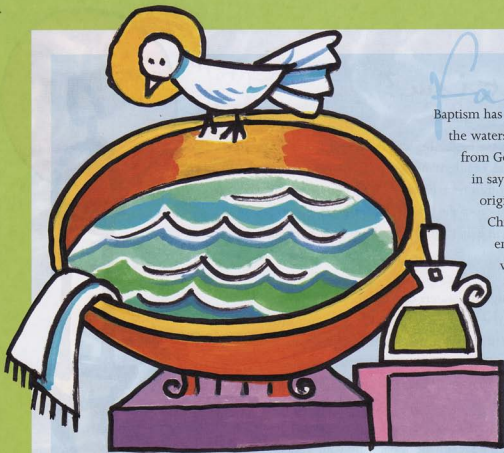
# Baptism?

The **Sacrament of Baptism** is the beginning and the foundation of the entire Christian life. We will never fully understand the great mystery of God's love until we see God face-to-face in heaven. However, after two thousand years, Sacred Scripture and the Tradition of the Church have a great deal to tell us about Baptism—truths that will help us understand just how rich and wonderful a reality it is.

The Gospel tells us that, through the waters of Baptism, we are given a share in **eternal life**—for all who have been joined with Christ in Baptism share also in his Resurrection. Baptism makes us members of Christ's Body, the Church. Being part of that Body calls us to fulfill a specific role in the Christian family for which God has made us.

Your godchild is initiated into the Catholic Christian **community of faith**. Through the saving waters of the Sacrament of Baptism, your godchild will come into a special relationship with God. We believe that the baptized are adopted children of God, sharing God's own life, marked as "beloved of God," and numbered among the saints forever. That is why Jesus taught his disciples to call upon God as "Abba," or "Father," to express the intimate bond of love that binds us to God forever.





## Faith

Baptism has been called a “**rebirth**” because in the waters of Baptism, we die to a life apart from God. That is what the Church means in saying that Baptism frees us from original sin. By dying and rising with Christ, our life becomes forever entwined with his. And in doing so, we are freed from all sin and gain the gift of salvation. This happens when the Holy Spirit is poured into our hearts. Our entire being—body, soul, spirit—is flooded with God’s love.

Saint Paul reminds us, however, that the **spiritual life** given to us in Baptism is a fragile thing

that develops gradually and needs constant nourishment if it is to survive the challenges of Christian discipleship. That is why the Church makes such a point of requiring both parents and godparents to make a firm commitment to support the faith of the newly baptized throughout his or her life.

## Commitment

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR

# Role and Responsibilities

## AS A GODPARENT

When you accept the invitation to serve as a godparent, you make a **lifelong** commitment to your godchild. The day of your godchild's Baptism marks just the beginning of your spiritual relationship with him or her. It is the hope and expectation of the Catholic Christian community that you will always be a spiritual companion in your godchild's life—someone who will nurture this child's faith and help him or her become a true disciple of Christ and an active member of the Church.

Parents have so many responsibilities to meet in caring for their child. This is one reason why your role as a godparent is so important. As a godparent, you are someone who will share in the parents' efforts to look out for the spiritual well-being of their child. You also represent the support, guidance, and love of the entire Christian community in your godchild's life.

