



## St. Gertrude Church

A Parish of the Diocese of Greensburg

303 Franklin Ave., Vandergrift, PA 15690

724-568-2331 Jim Peterman Coordinator

Dear Parents:

Congratulations on the upcoming Baptism of your child. The St. Gertrude Community of Faith welcomes you and your family to this special time of preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism, the sacrament of belonging and initiation into the Catholic way of life.

We wish to join you in the responsibility of forming your child in the faith. We offer you the means to deepen your appreciation of the sacrament of Baptism through study, reflection, and sharing. Today's understanding of Baptism emphasizes an enlivened faith, a meaningful celebration of the ceremony, and a nourished sense of our ongoing mission as Catholic Christians. The challenges of such involvement on your part highlight the beauty of this time in your personal family as well as in our parish family.

I hope this packet assists you in the journey to fulfill your role as Christian parents. In order to begin the process of preparation for Baptism, I invite you to:

1. Read carefully the materials provided in this packet.
2. Complete and return the Pre-Baptismal Information Form
3. Attach the completed "The Role of the Godparents" form(s).
4. Attach Godparent Eligibility Form(s) from the Godparents' church

I hope and pray that you will take time to reflect, as individuals and as a couple, on what it means to have your child baptized into a Catholic faith community. We emphasize here at St. Gertrude the importance of the "domestic church" – the church of the home. The family home is the place where your child will first encounter a loving God who lives within each person. It is within the church of the home that your child will be exposed to the Catholic way of life and prepares to celebrate the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist, and Confirmation.

You may drop off or mail your completed forms at the parish office or place them in the collection basket at Mass. Once I receive your completed Pre-Baptismal Information Form, I will call you to confirm receipt of your paperwork, schedule you for a Baptismal Workshop, discuss Baptism dates, and answer any questions you may have regarding your child's baptism here at the St. Gertrude Faith Community.

Many Blessings,

James Peterman  
Coordinator of Faith Formation  
and Religious Education

## Considerations When Requesting the Sacrament of Baptism

### **When and where is Baptism celebrated?**

An infant should normally be baptized in the first few weeks or so following birth, with the following considerations:

1. In setting the time for Baptism, the first consideration is the welfare of the child and that it is not deprived of the benefit of the sacrament.
2. In danger of death, the child should be baptized immediately.
3. The second consideration is the health of the mother, so that if at all possible, she too may be present
4. When the health of the child is not a factor, another consideration is the readiness of the parents to accept the responsibility of bringing their child into the faith.
5. Sometimes the parents are not ready for the celebration of Baptism, or they ask for their child to be baptized, although the child will not afterward receive a Christian education and will even lose the faith.
6. Since the rite itself does not allow enough time to resolve these dilemmas or train the parents in the faith, Baptism may be delayed until proper commitment and catechesis on the part of the parents is ascertained.

**In the case of adoption**, a certificate issued by a United States' court must be presented to verify that the adoption is formal, final and irrevocable. Parents and godparents must ask themselves if they are ready to accept the responsibility of hand on the faith to their child since this task is charged primarily to them.

Thus the child should receive Baptism as soon as it is practical after birth, taking into consideration the health of mother and child and the readiness of the parents and godparents to accept the demands that baptism places on them.

**Baptism should normally be celebrated in the parish of the infant's parents by the parish priest.** Because Baptism binds a child to the universal church through a local community, at least one parent should be a registered, active member of St. Gertrude Parish for at least three months prior to setting the date of Baptism. This means, at minimum, regular participation in the Eucharist on Sundays and holy days of obligation, regular celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, support of the church according to one's abilities and active participation in the apostolic work of the church.

### **Parish Baptism Schedule**

At St. Gertrude Parish, Baptisms are generally celebrated after the 4:00 PM Vigil Mass on Saturday or after the 10:30 A.M. Mass on the first or the third Sunday of the month. Considerations for other times may be made by the pastor.

Baptisms are not celebrated outside the church and generally not celebrated during Lent, i.e., from Ash Wednesday until the Easter Vigil.

### **What preparations are necessary before a child may be baptized?**

Parents must complete the Pre-baptismal Information Form and attend a Baptismal Prep class before the Baptism can officially be scheduled.

Godparents must meet canonical and diocesan eligibility requirements and obtain a letter or form from their pastor stating that they are suitable to be godparents.



## *Parent Information Sheet*

1. **Begin Preparation Early.**

If possible, start the Baptism process as soon as you know you are pregnant. Most families find this easier.

2. **Register and Stay Active.**

Baptism is a sacrament of initiation into the Family of God, the Catholic Faith Community. It is a sacrament of belonging. Therefore, the first step is that the child's family be part of the community, which means that they should be registered and \*active members of the parish for *at least three months*.

3. **Complete the Pre-Baptismal Information Form and attach Your Godparent Forms.**

Return the forms to the Parish Office or drop in the collection basket at Mass. If possible, this is to be done as soon as you know you are pregnant. All godparents, whether from St. Gertrude Parish or from other parishes need to sign *The Role of the Godparent Form* and get a letter (certification of eligibility form) from their Pastor, saying that they are practicing Catholics who are prepared to be godparents. Godparents represent the Catholic Community at the Baptism. Their role is to support the growth of the Catholic faith in your child.

4. **Attend a Baptism Preparation Workshop.**

(Usually held on the third Thursday of the month @ 7:00 PM. Check with the Coordinator for workshop place and dates)

Both parents are required by the Diocese to attend a Baptism Preparation Workshop. If the godparents are from another parish, they may attend a workshop at the parish where they are registered and active. Or they are welcome to join the parents at a St. Gertrude workshop. You are welcome to bring your infant to the workshop

5. **Schedule the Date for the Baptism.**

Do not schedule family arrangements until the Baptism date is confirmed with the Coordinator and all Sacramental preparations are complete.

*\*Active membership in the parish is communicated in a number of ways, including the following:*

- Active participation in a ministry. St. Gertrude Parish offers many ministries which provide an opportunity for active membership. We want you to feel part of the St. Gertrude community!  
One of the ministries is bound to fit you. St. Gertrude is an energetic and dynamic community because our members are actively involved with our community.
- Regular participation in Mass on a weekly basis. It takes us all actively participating to create a vibrant celebration. The greater the vibrancy of the Mass, the more it touches hearts.
- Using the weekly offering envelopes. (If you are unable to contribute, please hand in an empty envelope to communicate participation.)



Are you requesting Baptism for your child of your own free will?       Yes       No

Was the child adopted?       Yes       No

Was the child previously baptized?       Yes       No

Circumstances \_\_\_\_\_

**Child's Information**

Complete Name of the Child \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Child's Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Child's Birth \_\_\_\_\_

**Godparent Information**

Godfather's / Witness's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Religion & Church Attending \_\_\_\_\_

Forms Attached (Office Use)       Role of the Godparent       Certificate of Eligibility

Godmother's / Witness's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Religion & Church Attending \_\_\_\_\_

Forms Attached (Office Use)       Role of the Godparent       Certificate of Eligibility

**Instruction** (Office Use)

Date & Place of Instruction \_\_\_\_\_

Attendance \_\_\_\_\_

Baptismal Date Requested \_\_\_\_\_

Baptizing Priest \_\_\_\_\_

**Remarks**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## THE ROLE OF THE GODPARENTS

To be chosen as a godparent is a special honor. You represent the Catholic Faith Community. You, above all others, have been entrusted with the responsibility to participate in this child's Catholic Christian life and education.

This privilege offers you the opportunity to develop a mutually enriching spiritual relationship – one that will last throughout this life and beyond.

There are many ways you can nurture this spiritual relationship and become a special friend to your godchild. Among them are:

- Celebrate the anniversary of this holy day of Baptism each year with a visit or a card.
- As your godchild grows, listen to and share in the struggles and triumphs of living a Christian life and keep yourself informed on Catholic doctrine and values to be able to answer questions as they arise.
- Encourage a consistent life of faith through special cards, letters, or gifts, which celebrate holy events – Christmas, Easter, personal growth events, graduation, first job, and engagement.
- Participate in, or and assurance of prayer, as your godchild receives the other sacraments, particularly, First Communion and Confirmation, which complete initiation into the Church community, and Reconciliation.
- Be supportive of your godchild's parents in their role as the primary religious educators of their child.
- **And most importantly,** become a model of Catholic living for your godchild, through daily prayer, virtuous living and active participation in parish life and liturgy, particularly weekly Sunday Mass.

By living a Christian life in partnership with your godchild, both of you will experience the great joy of sharing a life of faith. Godparents must meet Canon Law requirements and Diocesan Guidelines, which include that, the godparents:

1. be not less than sixteen years of age;
2. be a fully initiated Catholic (having received Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist) and who lives a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken;
3. be in good standing with the church and not under canonical penalty (i.e. A marriage that is not validated in the Catholic Church);
4. be an active regularly participating member of Catholic parish;
5. not be either the father or the mother of the person to be baptized. **Canon 874**

## GODPARENT'S COMMITMENT

I understand my commitment to the above and accept the responsibility of being a godparent for:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Child

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Godparent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Commitment

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name of Godparent