



## Policies and Procedures Manual

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Title: Baptisms on Campus  
Policy Administrator: Director of Liturgy  
Effective Date: Oct-01-2011  
Approved by: President of the College

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### **Purpose:**

If you have recently celebrated the birth of a child, congratulations from the College Chaplains at Holy Cross! The decision to request baptism for a child is one of the most important steps that Christians take in their role as parents. As the words of the baptism liturgy indicate, by requesting baptism “you are accepting the responsibility of training (your child) in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him/her up to keep God’s commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor” (#77).

This policy governs the celebration of infant baptism on the Holy Cross campus.

### **Policy:**

In the Roman Catholic Church, baptism is understood as a celebration of the Church’s faith and of admittance into the People of God. The local Christian community has a role in the celebration of baptism as well as in assisting parents in the child’s Christian formation. For that reason, it is the practice of the Church that infants and young children are baptized in their parents’ parish church. Since Holy Cross is not a parish, infant baptisms are not celebrated in the College Chapel as a matter of course. The College Chaplains are available to assist parents without a parish affiliation to locate a parish that will meet their spiritual needs.

With the permission of the local pastor, a Jesuit priest at Holy Cross may be invited to lead the celebration of infant baptism in a parish. The Diocese of Worcester permits the celebration of infant baptism in the College Chapel for family and friends of Jesuit priests at Holy Cross. However, the College does not offer postbaptismal religious education for children or baptismal preparation sessions for parents. Universal Church law and the guidelines of the Diocese of Worcester require these forms of catechesis to fulfill the true meaning of the sacrament of baptism and to support the parents’ primary role in the religious formation of their child.

The following points apply, then, to all requests to have a child baptized at the College of the Holy Cross:

Only priests or deacons from the Jesuit Community or the Office of the College Chaplains at Holy Cross may preside at the celebration of baptism in the College Chapel.

One of the parents must be a relative or friend of the priest or deacon who will preside at the celebration of baptism. The parents are responsible for contacting the priest or deacon and asking him to preside at the celebration of baptism.

The celebration of baptism may take place during a regularly scheduled weekend Mass at the College or another time that does not conflict with College events in the Chapel. The baptismal font at Holy Cross is located on the lower level of Saint Joseph Memorial Chapel, in the Gathering/Baptismal Space between the Mary and McCooey Chapels. This is where baptisms at Holy Cross are celebrated. The font is a beautiful large cast bronze vessel with continuously running water in which an infant or young child may be baptized by the richly symbolic and ancient practice of immersion or by the pouring of water over the child's head. Parents are responsible for providing a white baptismal garment (or gown) in which the child will be clothed following the anointing after baptism.

The parents will obtain the written permission of their pastor for the baptism to be celebrated at Holy Cross. The letter from the pastor needs to acknowledge that the postbaptismal religious education of the child and baptismal preparation sessions for the parents will take place in the parish, not at Holy Cross.

Parents are asked to keep the following in mind when choosing sponsors (godparents):

- (a) Sponsors (godparents) assist the parents in presenting the child at baptism and in leading the child to profess the Christian faith and to show this by living it.
- (b) The child may have either one godparent (male or female) or two godparents (one male and one female).
- (c) Godparents must be Catholics who have been confirmed, received first Eucharist, and lead "a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken" (Code of Canon Law #874-3). A baptized non-Catholic person may serve as a witness to baptism together with a Catholic sponsor (godparent).

Parents must provide the following information for the baptismal certificate:

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|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| (1) child's name   | (4) father's name    | (7) godmother's name |
| (2) date of birth  | (5) mother's name    | (8) godfather's name |
| (3) place of birth | (6) parents' address |                      |

The baptism will be registered at the Office of the Tribunal, Diocese of Worcester, 49 Elm Street, Worcester, Massachusetts 01609. Please write to this office when requesting a copy of the baptismal certificate for first Eucharist, confirmation, marriage, etc.

**Procedures:**

Parents who have secured the agreement of a priest or deacon at Holy Cross to preside at the baptism of their child are asked to contact the Director of Liturgy in the Office of the College Chaplains to schedule the baptism and to obtain additional information:

Normand Gouin, Assistant Chaplain and Director of Liturgy and Music

Office of the College Chaplains

College of the Holy Cross

1 College Street, Box 16A

Worcester MA 01610

Campion House, 508-793-2428, [ngouin@holycross.edu](mailto:ngouin@holycross.edu)

Forms: Information for Parents (see next for pages)

**Forms:**

Title
Title: <a href="#">Infant Baptismal Request Form.pdf</a>

**Related Information:**

Title: <a href="#">Diocese of Worcester Office of the Tribunal</a>
Title

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