

Faith Tidbits..

*a little food for thought
and some knowledge
about your
Catholic faith*

October 2008

This monthly series will answer questions you always wondered about or questions you never even thought to ask... all about our Catholic Faith.

If you have a question you want answered, call Diane Hardick at 633-3672.

More on Canon Law

1. Does Canon Law say I have to belong to a certain parish?

Canon 518 states that a parish is "to be territorial, that is, to embrace all Christ's faithful of a given territory." Canon Law is basically saying that every Catholic belongs to a parish by virtue of where they live. Since "church shopping" today seems to be the way some people decide on which parish they want to attend because they like the music or the priest, problems have arisen. Some parishes have lost the financial support they need while other parishes are bursting at the seams. This appears to be a new situation which Canon Law has not caught up with as yet. When someone comes to register from outside their territorial boundaries, some pastors will request that person get a letter of permission from their territorial parish. This is in keeping with Canon Law, but is also is a courtesy to that parish and pastor.

2. Why can't a priest baptize a baby at home?

Canon 857 states: "Apart from a case of necessity, the proper place for a baptism is a church or an oratory (part of a church or chapel)." Baptism is a public act of worship by the Church. The baby or individual receiving baptism is publicly welcomed into communion with Christ and the Church. A Baptism of a baby or child or adult is a time of celebration for the entire community.

3. What if I can only find one godparent for my child. Can my child still be baptized?

Canon 873 states that "one sponsor (godparent), male or female is sufficient." If there is only one godparent, the person must be Catholic, at least 16 years of age and fully initiation into the Church, i.e. have been baptized, received Holy Eucharist and be Confirmed, and in good standing with the Church. The Sponsor cannot, obviously, be a parent of the child, since the parents have their own special role. The role of the godparent/s is important. They are to be a support to the parents as they raise their child in the Catholic faith. As the child grows, their godparent can be a strong witness to the child as to what it means to live out your Catholic faith. And when it is time for the young person to be confirmed, their Baptismal Godparent is their ideal Sponsor for Confirmation.

4. What does Canon Law say about who can or can't receive Holy Communion in our Church? Canon 912 summarizes the Church's basic thinking when it comes to reception of Holy Communion: "Any baptized person who is not forbidden by law may and must be admitted to holy communion." The reception of Holy Communion is an essential right of all Catholics, and thus it may only be restricted or limited for a just reason. Generally, such restrictions must be noted in Canon Law. Such restrictions may include marriage outside the Church without the Church's permission. These restrictions are not to punish individuals, but to encourage the individual to repent of whatever situation caused the restriction. The reception of the sacraments within the Catholic Church is also generally limited to Catholics who are in "full communion" with the Church, which is marked by a common "profession of faith, the sacraments and ecclesiastical governance" (Canon 205). As Catholics we do not share full communion with other churches and Christian denominations, and as a rule, non-Catholics are not permitted to receive Holy Communion at a Catholic Mass, nor are we as Catholics to receive Communion in other churches. Holy Eucharist is the "summit and source" of who we are as Catholics, and we hold dear our belief in the *real presence of Christ in the Eucharist*.