



## **WHAT DOES THE CHURCH TEACH REGARDING GODPARENTS BY PROXY?**

### **What is a Godparent by proxy?**

Decades ago, a Godparent by proxy meant that when an appointed baptism Godparent could not be present in person, he or she could appoint another person to serve as a proxy (appointed replacement) in place of them.

### **Why would a Godparent need a proxy?**

In a situation where an appointed Godparent suddenly had an urgent medical condition, such as a heart attack and was unable to attend the ceremony, then an appointed proxy was (notice the past tense) asked to stand in at the ceremony.

Sadly, appointment by proxy has led to extreme abuses, such as a case where a mother living in the U.S. wants her grandmother to stand as Godmother of her child. But the grandmother lives in Australia and is unable to attend the ceremony. So a proxy might have been appointed to stand-in for the grandmother as Godmother. This was and remains an abuse of the process. First of all, by refusing to attend the ceremony, the grandmother has declined the role [or to fulfill the sacramental ministry role] as Godmother. Therefore, someone else must to be appointed as Godmother. There is no need for a proxy.

### **Where can I find information about Godparents by proxy in the Canon Law [of the Roman Catholic Church] or the Catechism of the Catholic Church?**

Prior to 1983, Church law made reference to the use of a Godparent by proxy. Since 1983 however, neither the Catholic Church's Canon Law nor the Catechism of the Catholic Church make any reference to Godparents by proxy. The Catholic Church no longer recognizes official "proxies" at the Sacrament of Baptism.

(SR: <https://catholicdoors.com/faq/qu294.htm>)

Special Note: On September 15, 2018, Bishop Sheridan reaffirmed this prohibition and notified all Diocese of Colorado Springs' priests and deacons that the use of a proxy as a Godparent within a Mass or other ceremony conferring the Sacrament of Baptism is not permitted.