

ST. GERTRUDE'S PARISH

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Celebration of First Confession and First Holy Communion

Year 2022-2023

Dear Parent(s):

You are receiving this letter because you have a child or children who, in the fall of 2022, will be entering Grade 2, or as might be the case, a child entering Grade 3 or higher who has not yet gone through the preparatory program and would like to register for this year's program. As such, I want to take this opportunity to provide you with some information about the process for receiving the sacraments of First Confession and First Communion at St. Gertrude's Parish. This year planning can only be done tentatively due to the COVID-19 situation which is still fluid. There are still unknown variables regarding what things will be like in the fall and winter.

Please note that the Sacraments of Initiation are to be celebrated and received in **the family's home parish** (i.e. the parish where the family attends each Sunday Mass).

Children learn their faith first and foremost from their parents. It is in the home that children first learn about God and are introduced to a Christian way of life. This is considered the ***Initial Preparation*** for the sacraments of First Confession and First Communion. Those children who attend Catholic schools participate in religious education which is also part of this initial preparation, **as is coming to Church each Sunday to worship God and thank Him for all His blessings**, especially the gift of His only Son, Jesus and his saving sacrifice.

As the time for receiving these sacraments nears, the families come to the church to begin the process of ***Immediate Preparation*** for these sacraments.

Immediate Preparation for First Confession and First Communion will be accomplished through a combined effort of parents, school and the Parish:

Role of Parents: This year parents will be asked to join their children for the 4 or 5 Zoom classes on Saturday mornings, in order to assist their children with the material for both sacraments **at home** over the course of the program. It is our hope that this will be a blessed opportunity for you to spend time with your children in their faith journey, by sharing your own experiences with them to help them understand their faith better and bring them closer to God. It gives your child a chance to ask questions, understand your upbringing and why their receiving of these sacraments is so important to you. It also allows you to revisit parts of your Catholic faith that you may have forgotten, and to grow along with your child. **It is expected, of course, that you will commit to attending mass each weekend.** It is the best opportunity for children to understand the parts of the mass, and to see you leading by example is the most important lesson and gift you can give them. **We will also be asking the parents to make a concerted effort to make sure the children know basic prayers such as the Our Father, Hail Mary, Guardian Angel prayer, Act of Contrition, as well as how to bless themselves and genuflect.**

Role of Schools: The Catholic schools will continue to teach the curriculum as it relates to religious instruction for grade 2 students.

Role of St. Gertrude's Parish: The Parish will host and provide the basic program over Zoom in the Fall and next winter. The four or five zoom classes for each sacrament will be on a Saturday morning.

***Parent Meeting & Registration Night on
Thursday, September 29th at 7:00pm in the Church***

Please note the registration package will be handed out at this meeting with instructions and must be returned to the parish with all required paperwork by **October 16th**.

COURSE MATERIALS:

Parents will be given one workbook for First Confession at the Parent Meeting night.

The First Communion workbook will be handed out at the January 25th 2023 parent meeting.

Dates of Zoom classes for the fall program are as follows, all on Saturday mornings:

October 22nd, October 29th, November 5th and November 12th.

The sacrament of First Reconciliation will be received on either

Wednesday Nov. 16th or 23rd at 7pm in the Church. You will be notified as to which date your child will attend.

The full program is mandatory so you can plan other activities with these commitments in mind. The dates for the winter program will be given at the parents registration meeting. Actual First Communion celebrations will take place at our regular Sunday masses after Easter with an approximate limit of 12 children per mass. Dates will be known once all registrations have been received. You will be notified of your child's date. If you foresee a conflict with these dates due to other commitments such as recreational activities, vacation trips, family functions, etc., we ask that you please defer registering your child for reception of the sacraments this year and wait until Grade 3 or other suitable year.

PROGRAM COSTS: The cost for each sacramental program is \$50.00

Please submit the fee in the envelope provided with the registration package. You may submit \$50.00 now and the other \$50.00 in January or choose to submit the entire \$100.00 at this time. Cash or Cheque is accepted. If this is a real problem please speak call the office and we will certainly help and accommodate your child and family to ensure money is not an obstacle.

Program Requirements

All of the requirements set out in this letter, **are mandatory and must be met** in order for your child to receive the sacraments of First Confession and First Holy Communion. Absence from a catechetical zoom session at the scheduled time, may result in your child not being able to receive the sacrament on the selected date. Please make note of all dates and requirements to ensure that both you and your child can complete all elements of the preparatory program.

I look forward to sharing with you in this God-given mission of leading our children to the Father through His Son in the Holy Spirit.

Yours Sincerely,



Rev. Michael Hughes, Pastor