



ROMAN CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

POLICIES  
FOR THE  
ADMINISTRATION  
OF THE  
SACRAMENTS





# Decree of Promulgation

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

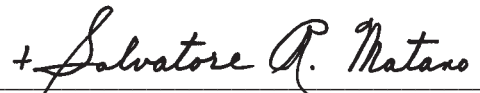
Noting the central role of the Sacraments in our Catholic Faith and that “the seven Sacraments touch all the stages and all the important moments of Christian life,” (Cf. CCC, no. 1210) it is essential that proper policies are in place to assure that our brothers and sisters in Christ are able truly to encounter Jesus Christ in the manner in which the Sacraments are celebrated and the faith is proclaimed. To this end, the attached policies contained in the *Policies for the Administration of the Sacraments in the Diocese of Rochester* are intended to assist all our Catholic parishes and institutions to fulfill their mandate to proclaim Jesus Christ in Word and to strengthen the faithful in Sacrament.

Therefore, having consulted with the Diocesan Presbyteral Council, the College of Consultors, the Pastors/Administrators of the Deaneries, the College of Deans and the staff of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, who have been in dialogue with parish catechetical leaders about these policies since spring 2012, I hereby promulgate these *Policies for the Administration of the Sacraments in the Diocese of Rochester*, today, September 30, 2014, which become effective on November 30, 2014, the First Sunday of Advent. There are two exceptions to this effective date:

- 1) The diocesan-wide age of Confirmation will become normative for all Confirmation programs after July 1, 2015. (Cf. 3.3.1).
- 2) The training and informational data for currently missioned extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are acknowledged and need not be repeated. However, parishes are strongly encouraged to update their records for extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion and to continue to provide ongoing formation and education to assist them in successfully fulfilling their ministry according to the norms indicated the *Policies*. (Cf. 2.4; Addendum 1).

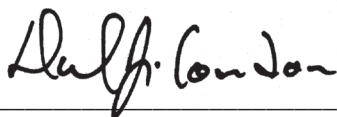
As a diocesan family, we raise our voices in prayer for our brothers and sisters who come to us with a simple request: “We would like to see Jesus.” (John 12:21). May these *Policies* assist us in this privileged vocation.

Given at the Chancery Office of the Diocese of Rochester on the thirtieth day of September, in the year of Our Lord two thousand and fourteen, on the *Memorial of Saint Jerome, Priest and Doctor of the Church*.



The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano  
Bishop of Rochester

Attested to by:



The Reverend Father Daniel J. Condon  
Chancellor



# A Letter from The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano

## Bishop of Rochester

---



September 14, 2014

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Since I began my apostolic ministry as the ninth Bishop of Rochester, I have had the joyful experience of visiting our parishes, schools, charitable agencies and outreach ministries. I have experienced the zeal and enthusiasm that characterizes your love for the poor and the forgotten members of our society, a love steeped in faith, a faith nurtured by the Church's rich sacramental life culminating in our participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

With profound gratitude, then, for our Diocese's beautiful manifestation of the Catholic faith, I am promulgating this first section of the *Policies for the Administration of the Sacraments in the Diocese of Rochester*, which concerns the Sacraments of **Baptism, Holy Eucharist, Confirmation and Penance**. It is my hope that these *Policies* will support and assist the local communities of faith in our mutual efforts to continue the proclamation of the Gospel and the celebration of Christ's Sacraments in the years ahead, always conscious that we do everything possible to hand over to our children the greatest gift we possess, the gift of faith.

In presenting these *Policies*, I express my deep gratitude to the Lord for the privilege of serving as your shepherd. I also am most grateful to the many who cooperated in the formulation of the *Policies*: our Diocesan Presbyteral Council, the regional/deanery representatives, the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis and so many others, pastors, parochial vicars, pastoral administrators, deacons, religious, pastoral associates, and laity, faith formation directors and catechists, the many who serve in ministries throughout our Diocese.

At the same time, the publication of these *Policies* affords me the possibility joyfully to fulfill my responsibility to teach and to instruct the faithful about the mysteries of our salvation in Christ. This is truly an awesome responsibility, but one greatly aided by God's Word in Holy Scripture, the Church's Magisterium, the Conciliar documents of the Church and with special note of the Pontiffs who have guided the Church during my years of priestly and episcopal ministry: Paul VI, John Paul I, John Paul II, Benedict XVI and now our Holy Father, Pope Francis. With this accumulated wisdom, supported by the deep faith of those I have been and am privileged to serve, I now "feed the sheep in the name of the Lord" by "performing for them the office of teaching, sanctifying and governing." (Cf. *Christus Dominus*, 11).

In particular, as a diocesan family, we are seeking to renew our love and appreciation for the Sacraments of the Church in order that we all may draw closer to Jesus Christ. These *Policies* are

intended for all the faithful, not only our children preparing for the reception of the Sacraments. The adult community is called upon to support our children and young adults by our own practice and witness to the faith. Each of us is called to be a disciple and to share with others the greatest treasure that God has given to us: the gift of His Son and the Holy Spirit, personally experienced in sacramental encounter.

### *The Gift of Presence*

Over the years many people have crossed our lives. At moments of joy and sorrow, rejoicing and disappointment, certain persons come to mind who supported us and encouraged us, not necessarily by words but simply by their presence. “He who has never struggled with his fellow creatures is a stranger to half the sentiments of mankind.” (Cf. Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*, 1767). Yes, true friends are always present to us in those times both convenient and inconvenient, when we are praised and when we are criticized, when we are welcomed and when we are scorned. Thus, in the Book of Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) we read:

“A faithful friend is a sure shelter, whoever finds one has found a rare treasure.  
A faithful friend is something beyond price, there is no measuring his worth.”  
(Ecclesiasticus 6:14-15).

In truth, as relational beings we need the support of others. As believers, we have the greatest support in the eternal presence of Jesus in the Sacraments, especially in the Most Holy Eucharist. Through the Sacraments, Jesus has remained faithful to His promise. “And know that I am with you always; yes to the end of time.” (Matthew 28:20).

At Baptism, we are received into the Body of Christ and become the sons and daughters of God. A lifelong relationship with the Triune God commences and should accompany us until the day we return to the Father for all eternity.

This journey through life is not without its crosses, successes and failures, hopes and disappointments. And in our humanity, we sin. But the Good Shepherd again and again raises His hand in benediction and in forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Jesus holds no grudges; He is not vindictive; He is forgiving! What an extraordinary encouragement and hope we find in this great Sacrament!

Life presents us with many challenges. In our world, now so very complex, we are faced with many decisions. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation, we receive those gifts that help us make the best possible decisions, life-giving decisions, decisions that reflect our dignity as the daughters and sons of God: the gifts of wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence, and the spirit of wonder and awe in the presence of God.

In our Catholic faith, the Most Holy Eucharist is our greatest treasure. The Holy Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life. The other Sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ Himself.” (Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1324).

Barely twelve hours after his election, Pope Benedict XVI delivered an address in Latin to the Cardinals in the Sistine Chapel. In that address, His Holiness asked “everyone to intensify in coming months love and devotion to the Eucharistic Jesus and to express in a courageous and

clear way the real presence of the Lord, above all through the solemnity and the correctness of the celebrations.” (Cf. J. J. Fischer, *Pope Benedict XVI, a Personal Portrait*, 2005). And so it must be because “Everything we have goes on the altar, to be made holy in Christ. The priest makes the connection explicit as he pours the water and wine into the chalices. ‘By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, Who humbled Himself to share in our humanity.’ This mingling is a rich symbol, suggesting the union of Christ’s divine and human nature, the blood and water that poured forth from His side on the cross, and the union of our gifts with the Savior’s perfect gift of Himself. That’s an offer the Father cannot refuse.” (Cf. Scott Hahn, *The Lamb’s Supper*, 1999).

Among our people there is a deep desire to recapture a sense of the transcendent and awesome nature of the Sacraments and the Most Holy Eucharist. One must always remember that the liturgical prayers and rituals of the Sacraments proclaim the doctrine, the creed which is the very foundation of the Catholic faith. The Sacraments are not created by the Church; the Sacraments are Jesus’ gift to us. Jesus is the One Who instituted the Sacraments and now in time has shared this gift of Himself with us. Thus, we approach the Sacraments with the utmost reverence to render worship, adoration, thanksgiving and prayers of supplication to the One Who alone is Lord! In view of this sublime reality, we come to understand that it is an extraordinary privilege for us to participate in the Church’s sacramental life, Christ’s sacramental life, and above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, the foundation and heart of our redemption in Christ. “The mode of Christ’s presence under the Eucharistic species is unique. It raises the Eucharist above the Sacraments as ‘the perfection of the spiritual life and the end to which all the Sacraments tend.’” (Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1374).

When we approach the celebration of Holy Mass or any of the Sacraments with this spirit of gratitude, it essentially changes our attitude toward the sacramental nature of the Church. Realizing that in the Sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, Jesus comes to us, we then approach Him not asking what is in it for me, but how can I possibly thank the omnipotent God Who has chosen to come to me! We realize we do not own the Sacraments. The Sacraments, the Most Holy Eucharist, belong to God who graciously invites us to participate in His life through these personal encounters with Him. We then imitate this generosity by our loving service to our brothers and sisters in God’s family. From our encounter with Christ in the Sacraments, particularly the Most Holy Eucharist, we see the poor with new eyes; we hear the cries of the oppressed with new ears; we empathize with the suffering with a new heart; we surrender our own will to the will of Jesus Christ.

### ***An Important Moment in the Life of the Church in Rochester***

We stand at an important moment in the life of the Church in our beloved Diocese. United with all who have gone before us in the living testimony of faith, we now have been given the opportunity to recommit our parishes, parish programs and parishioners to the sacramental life of the Church. With God’s blessings, we endeavor to rekindle our love for Christ through our participation in the Sacraments and to take very seriously the implementation of all that is needed and required for the proper celebration and reception of these *outward signs, instituted by Christ, to give grace*, a definition some of us learned many years ago, but which remains so true.

Central to this celebration and reception is a renewed emphasis on catechesis, called for as the heart of the New Evangelization. Together, parishes, united in faith, must serve our people who come to us to be strengthened through the Sacraments, with charity and compassion, and to

provide those whom we serve the necessary formation to be disciples of Jesus Christ in a rapidly changing and increasingly complex world.

### *The Sacraments and the “New Evangelization”*

Over the last several years there has been much discussion about the “New Evangelization,” an initiative vigorously proclaimed by John Paul II and enthusiastically taken up by his successors, Pope Benedict XVI, our Holy Father Emeritus, and our present Pontiff, Pope Francis. Yet, for many, the “New Evangelization” is a popular theme but not very easily explained. The marvelous event of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ gives us the definition of the New Evangelization. The birth of Jesus Christ, the Incarnation of the Son of God, took place on our behalf. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity came to dwell among us to teach us about His Father, to share with us the love of the Triune God, to forgive our sins, and to open for us the doors of eternal life and to establish the community of faith, the Church, of which He is its cornerstone. Since the time of the Incarnation and the earthly mission of Jesus Christ, these realities have not changed. The *New Evangelization* is really a call to awaken in us a renewed appreciation for Jesus Christ present among us, continuing to live in our midst and alive in our hearts if we only open our hearts to receive Him.

The *New Evangelization* is not a program or another strategic plan; it is not another proposal; it is not something, but Someone, the very person of Jesus Christ: His life, His words, His presence, His union with us in the *Sacraments, especially the Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist*. The *New Evangelization* is the Incarnation coming alive in our own age. The *New Evangelization* means accepting Jesus Christ as the Savior, the Redeemer, and unreservedly following Him. The essence of the *New Evangelization* is powerfully captured in the words of Benedict XVI: “From the moment of His birth, He belongs outside the realm of what is important and powerful in worldly terms. Yet it is this unimportant and powerless child that proves to be the truly powerful one, the one on whom ultimately everything depends. So one aspect of becoming a Christian is having to leave behind what everyone else thinks and wants, the prevailing standards, in order to enter the light of the truth of our being, and aided by that light to find the right path.” (Cf. Pope Benedict XVI, *The Infancy Narratives, Jesus of Nazareth*, 2012, p. 67).

The *New Evangelization* is not recreating a product, rather it is recreating ourselves in the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. Once again, the means for renewing ourselves in Christ are present and call for a rediscovery of them on our part. It is almost impossible to speak of renewal without speaking of the *Sacrament of Reconciliation*, a Sacrament that sadly is forgotten by many in the community of the faithful. Yet it is so very powerful in its effects as so beautifully taught by John Paul II in *Reconciliatio et paenitentia*: “It must be recalled that... this reconciliation with God leads, as it were, to other reconciliations, which repair the other breaches caused by sin. The forgiven penitent is reconciled with himself in his inmost being, where he regains his innermost truth. He is reconciled with his brethren whom he has in some way offended and wounded. He is reconciled with the Church. He is reconciled with all creation.” (31, 5).

Once we have experienced the Lord’s mercy, we have placed ourselves in more intimate communion with the Lord culminating in the celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist. One cannot understand or appreciate the One who is the *New Evangelization* without entering into the Mystery of the Paschal Lamb, Who forgives our sins and nourishes us with His very *body and blood*. The primary concern, the first concern of the *New Evangelization* should be welcoming back, encouraging and reaching out to our brothers and sisters who no longer attend Holy Mass.



Without this emphasis upon the importance of participation at the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the *New Evangelization* is without a subject. In his first encyclical letter, *Lumen Fidei*, Pope Francis writes: “The Eucharist is a precious nourishment for faith: an encounter with Christ truly present in the supreme act of His love, the life-giving gift of Himself.” (44).

This, my brothers and sisters, is the message of the *New Evangelization*! Christ’s death is real, Christ’s resurrection is real and this is the reality of the Sacraments and the very foundation for the *New Evangelization*. The birth of Jesus Christ, the Incarnation, ushered in a new moment in humanity’s history, new in every age and in every circumstance because in its transcendence it breaks the limits and boundaries of all that is human and introduces humanity to eternity!

## ***Conclusion***

How difficult it would be to try to “go it alone” – to make sense of life “on our own.” But the Christ of the Sacraments has not left us orphans; He has called us by name. Our Lord has extended the invitation: “Come to me all you who find life burdensome, and I will refresh your souls!” Recalling the motto of both Saint Francis de Sales and Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman, “Cor ad cor loquitur,” “the heart speaks to the heart,” let us respond to Christ’s invitation and open our hearts to Him present in the Sacraments, Christ’s gifts eternal, the gifts of life, the supreme gift of the Most Holy Eucharist.

Throughout this renewal let us pray the prayer of Saint Thomas Aquinas:

“As one infirm, I approach  
the balm of life,  
as one begrimed  
the fountain of mercy,  
as one blind  
the light of eternal splendor,  
as one poor and needy  
the Lord of heaven and earth.”

(Robert Anderson and Johann Moser, *Devoutly I Adore Thee, The Prayers and Hymns of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1993).

With an assurance of my prayers, seeking the intercession of Saint John Fisher, patron of our Diocese, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Salvatore R. Matano". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

*The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano  
Bishop of Rochester*

## ABBREVIATIONS

AAS	Acta Apostolicae Sedis
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CIC	Code of Canon Law
GIRM	General Instruction on the Roman Missal
NCCB	National Conference of Catholic Bishops (now the USCCB)
NDC	National Directory for Catechesis
RBC	Rite of Baptism for Children
RC	Rite of Confirmation
RCIA	Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
RP	Rite of Penance
USCCB	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## SACRAMENTAL POLICIES

GENERAL PRINCIPLES .....	3
CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION/SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION/RECORD KEEPING....	5

## SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

### 1. BAPTISM

1.1 CANDIDATES FOR BAPTISM .....	9
1.2 PARENTS .....	10
1.3 PREPARATION.....	11
1.4 SPONSORS (GODPARENTS).....	11
1.5 CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT.....	12

### 2. THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST AND CELEBRATION OF HOLY MASS

2.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES.....	13
2.2 FIRST EUCHARIST .....	14
2.2.1 Candidates .....	14
2.2.2 Parents.....	14
2.2.3 Preparation.....	15
2.2.4 Celebration of the Sacrament .....	15
2.3 RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION.....	16
2.4 THE EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION.....	17
2.4.1 Requirements.....	19
2.4.2 Missioning.....	19
2.4.3 Responsibilities .....	20
2.5 PREACHING .....	20
2.6 GUIDELINES FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY FORM OF THE MASS .....	21

### 3. CONFIRMATION

3.1 CANDIDATES.....	23
3.2 PARENTS .....	23
3.3 PREPARATION.....	24
3.3.1 Proximate Preparation.....	24
3.3.2 Immediate Preparation.....	24
3.4 SPONSORS .....	25
3.5 CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT.....	26

## 4. RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

4.1 RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS.....	27
4.2 INITIATION OF UNBAPTIZED ADULTS .....	27
4.3 INITIATION OF BAPTIZED/UNCATECHIZED ADULTS <i>(both Catholic and Non-Catholic)</i> .....	28
4.4 RITE OF RECEPTION OF CHRISTIANS INTO FULL COMMUNION .....	29
4.5 RCIA ADAPTED FOR CHILDREN OF CATECHETICAL AGE .....	30

## SACRAMENTS OF HEALING

### 5. THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE/RECONCILIATION

5.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES.....	31
5.2 FIRST PENANCE OF CHILDREN.....	34
5.2.1 Candidates .....	34
5.2.2 Parents.....	34
5.2.3 Preparation .....	34
5.2.4 Celebration .....	34

## ADDENDA

### ADDENDUM 1

Selection, Preparation and Missioning of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

### ADDENDUM 2

Sign of Peace

### ADDENDUM 3

References regarding Preaching Norms

### ADDENDUM 4

Supporting documents for Extraordinary Form of the Mass

### ADDENDUM 5

Elements of a Confirmation Program

# SACRAMENTAL POLICIES

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

### KEY POLICY STATEMENTS:

---

- “As actions of Christ and the Church, they (the Sacraments) are signs and means which express and strengthen the faith, render worship to God, and effect the sanctification of humanity and thus contribute in the greatest way to establish, strengthen, and manifest ecclesiastical communion. Accordingly, in the celebration of the Sacraments the sacred ministers and the other members of the Christian faithful must use the greatest veneration and necessary diligence.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 840).
  - o Sacraments express the mystery-filled union of Christ and the Church.
  - o Sacraments also comprise the major portion of the liturgy.

While the Sacraments do effect individual sanctification, they always have a communal and ecclesial aspect. Baptism incorporates us into the People of God, imprints an indelible spiritual mark (character) with a sharing in the priestly, prophetic and kingly mission of Christ. (Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 31). Confirmation “strengthens the baptized and obliges them more firmly to be witnesses of Christ by word and deed and to spread and defend the faith.” (C.f. *CIC*, c. 879). The Eucharist completes and fulfills the initiation begun at Baptism. Penance reconciles the sinner to the Church community even as it restores one personally to the life of grace. The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick gives spiritual purification and strengthening of the soul to one in the face grave illness and prays that they might unite their sufferings to that of Christ for the good of the Church. “Two other Sacraments, Holy Orders and Matrimony, are directed towards the salvation of others; if they contribute as well to personal salvation, it is through service to others that they do so. They confer a particular mission in the Church and serve to build up the People of God. ... Those who receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders are consecrated in Christ’s name ‘to feed the Church by the word and grace of God.’ On their part, ‘Christian spouses are fortified and, as it were, consecrated for the duties and dignity of their state by a special Sacrament.’” (Cf. *CCC*, no. 1534-1535).

Parishes should embrace actions which will enhance this communal aspect of the Sacraments

such as: parental involvement, adult education courses, announcements in parish bulletins for baptisms, weddings and funerals, and occasions for the communal anointing for the sick.

- All policies and procedures in this document find their origin in Universal norms and legislation and are promulgated by the Bishop for the entire Diocese of Rochester and for all clergy, religious and laity engaged in pastoral ministry in this Diocese. They are to be followed in totality.
- Previously issued Diocesan policies for Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Eucharist, including preparation for First Penance and First Eucharist, are replaced by these instructions.
- Provisions of the *Code of Canon Law*, decrees and instructions of the Holy See, of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and of diocesan legislation in accordance with these policies retain their binding force.
- “In celebrating the Sacraments the liturgical books approved by competent authority are to be observed faithfully; accordingly, no one is to add, omit, or alter anything in them on one’s own authority.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 846).
- “The minister is to celebrate the Sacraments according to the minister’s own rite.” (*Ibid.*)
- Wherever permission or delegation of the Bishop is necessary, such permission or delegation must be sought and obtained in writing.
- All the faithful obtain their proper parish by means of their domicile or quasi domicile. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 102). All laity should be urged to attend their proper parish; however, with good reason they may transfer from their proper parish to another parish of their choice.
- Recorded proof of valid Baptism is required before admission to preparation for First Penance, First Communion, Confirmation and Marriage.
- Because the parish unit is so important, the ordinary place for the celebration of Baptism is in one’s proper parish church. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 857, §2).
- Ultimately, the universal Church is locally evident and personally experienced in and through the parish. For every Catholic, participation in parish life is both a right and a duty.
- Ideally, participation in parish life includes a variety of actions – registration as members, contribution of time, talent and financial support of parish activities, apostolic service to the needy in the parish and its larger communities, cooperation in the religious education of all family members, regular sharing in the sacramental life and worship of the proper parish community.
- Membership in a parish is often a key factor in problems attending to the administration of the Sacraments. Much concern is expressed about the quality of membership. With reference to “practicing Catholic,” we can state these ideal expectations but we cannot solely use these maximal criteria as a basis for celebrating or delaying Sacraments. Pastoral leadership will need to have a Christ-like understanding for people who do not always or even regularly meet these ideals, even as we often fail ourselves.
- In some instances, however, a Sacrament will not be able to be given at the present time, either because of some obstacle such as censure, “after the imposition or declaration of the penalty” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 915), or because an individual is “obstinately persevering in manifest grave sin” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 915), or because the pastoral judgment is reached that a person or a family is not yet

sufficiently prepared for the Sacrament or committed to the faith. This critical moment can be an occasion for healing and renewal; or it can become a cause for irreparable separation. Then, the parish priest/administrator should explain that the Sacrament requested is **only deferred** until the obstacle is removed or sufficient preparation is accomplished and evidence of faith is presented.

- Persons who are developmentally disabled, who have severe learning disabilities, or who have other handicaps should be made to feel welcome in the parish programming and have their needs met. Whenever possible, they should participate in regular liturgies and activities, and they should be included in parish sacramental celebrations.
  - o No matter how disabled a person may be, he or she can and should be baptized and confirmed.
  - o Church law presumes that the disabled person who has sufficient use of reason can and should receive the Sacraments of Eucharist, Penance and Anointing.
- The model for sacramental catechesis is the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. (Cf. *NDC*, chapter 5, no. 35, D).

---

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION/ SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION/RECORD KEEPING

---

- “Pastors of souls and other members of the Christian faithful, according to their respective ecclesial function, have the duty to take care that those who seek the Sacraments are prepared to receive them by proper evangelization and catechetical instruction...” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 843, §2).
- As noted in the *Key Policy Statements*, in some cases, a Sacrament cannot be given at the present time, either because of some obstacle such as censure, “after the imposition or declaration of the penalty” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 915), or because an individual is “obstinately persevering in manifest grave sin” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 915), or because the pastoral judgment is reached that a person or a family is not yet sufficiently prepared for the sacrament or committed to the faith. This critical moment can be an occasion for healing and renewal; or it can become a cause for irreparable separation. Then, the parish priest/administrator should explain that the Sacrament requested is **only delayed** until the obstacle is removed or sufficient preparation is accomplished and evidence of faith is presented. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 843, c. 868, §1, 2, c. 915, c. 1007).
  - o Preparation needs to take into consideration the:
    - 1) individual needs and prior experience of the person and their family,
    - 2) degree of foundational catechesis, and
    - 3) current involvement in the faith community.
- Similar to all other religious education programs, sacramental preparation programs of Baptism, First Penance, First Communion, and Confirmation are parish-based and should make use of textbooks that are listed in the USCCB *Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series* as being in keeping with the teachings contained in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.
- The *National Directory of Catechesis* states, “Dioceses and parishes should present sacramental catechesis that:
  - is a comprehensive and systematic formation in the faith, one that integrates knowledge of the faith with living the faith.

- is fundamentally Trinitarian and centers on initiation into the life of the Triune God.
  - presents Christian life as a lifelong journey to the Father in the Son and through the Holy Spirit.
  - is appropriate to the age level, maturity, and circumstances of those being catechized.
  - is intended for all members of the Christian community, takes place within the community, and involves the whole community of faith.
  - involves parents in the preparation of their children for the Sacraments.
  - is integrated into a comprehensive catechetical program.
  - focuses primarily on the symbols, rituals, and prayers contained in the rite for each Sacrament.
  - enables the believer to reflect on the meaning of the Sacrament received by implementing a thorough experience of mystagogia following the celebration.” (Cf. *NDC*, 35-B).
- Parishes should take every opportunity to provide ongoing faith formation for adults by means of instructional series, bulletin inserts, Penance services with individual confession and absolution, retreat experiences, family programs for Advent and Lent, parent meetings, and all other means of helping the adults grow in faith as they lead their children into a deeper relationship with God and the Church.
  - Parishes are required to maintain registers of Baptism, Marriage, and Deaths. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 535, §1).
  - By these Policies, parishes in the Diocese of Rochester must also maintain Confirmation registers on a prospective basis.
    - o For the recording of Baptism, the *Code of Canon Law* requires:
      - name of baptized,
      - minister,
      - parent(s),
      - sponsor(s) (godparent(s)),
      - witness, if any,
      - place, and
      - date of conferral of Baptism, date and place of birth. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 877).
    - o For the recording of Confirmation, the *Code of Canon Law* requires:
      - name of those confirmed,
      - minister,
      - parent(s),
      - sponsor,
      - place, and
      - date of Confirmation. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 895).
    - o For the recording of Marriage, include:
      - names of the spouses,
      - name of the priest/deacon who officiated,
      - names of the two witnesses,
      - place and date of the celebration. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1121, §1).
      - notations about any dispensations/permission granted, fact of delegation, and any information regarding a decree of nullity or dissolution of the bond.



- 
- o The Death register should include at least:
    - name of the deceased,
    - date and place of death,
    - date and place of funeral services,
    - name of the presiding priest/deacon,
    - date and place of burial.
  - “In the baptismal register are also to be noted Confirmation and those things which pertain to the canonical status of the Christian faithful by reason of Marriage,...of the reception of sacred orders, of perpetual profession made in a religious institute, and of change of rite. These notations are always to be noted on a baptismal certificate.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 535, §2).
    - o After the conferral of Confirmation and the celebration of Marriage, the pastor/administrator must inform each parish of Baptism promptly so that the proper record may be made.
    - o Catechumens are to be recorded in the Baptism record book.
    - o For Christians received into Full Communion with the Catholic Church, the fact of reception should be recorded in the Baptismal register of the parish. The original information about the valid, non-Catholic baptism is listed (name, date of birth, parents, date, place, and minister, etc.) and the following annotation is added: “Received into full communion with the Catholic Church on (*date*) by (*name of minister*).” Since this Rite often includes Confirmation, this must be recorded as well.
  - Although not required by law, parishes and institutions sometimes maintain records for the Sacraments of First Communion and the Anointing of the Sick. Priests who administer the Anointing of the Sick in hospitals and health care facilities should verify if an Anointing of the Sick registry exists on location and, if appropriate, may record such sacramental administrations accordingly.
    - Particular care should be taken to register Baptisms, Confirmations, and Marriages which take place away from the parish church or in institutions. (E.g. in a hospital, in a college chapel, etc.). The notation is usually to be made in the register of the parish in whose territory the institution is located. Regional Confirmation ceremonies are recorded at the parish of membership.
    - Before preparation begins for First Penance, First Communion and Confirmation –**verify Baptism** – obtain a copy of a recent baptismal certificate if the candidate has not been baptized in your parish; if it is not possible to locate a certificate, procure an affidavit. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 876).
  - With regard to **adopted children**, parishes must follow the procedures related to canon 877 of the *Code of Canon Law* and the complementary norms issued by the USCCB.
    - o For children baptized after their adoption is finalized, the following information shall be entered in the register:
      - the Christian name(s) of the child as designated by the adoptive parent(s);
      - the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s);
      - the date and place of birth;
      - the names of the sponsors selected by the adoptive parent(s);
      - the place and date of the Baptism;
-

- the name of the minister performing the Baptism; and
  - the fact of adoption but not the names of the natural parents.
  - o Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for adopted children will be no different from other Baptismal certificates. No mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the Baptismal certificate.
  - o For children baptized before their adoption is finalized, the following notations shall be added to the Baptismal register, but only after the adoption has been finalized and with due regard for the civil law of the jurisdiction:
    - parentheses shall be placed around the names of the natural parents;
    - the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s) shall then be added;
    - the child's former surname shall also be parenthesized and the new surname added; and
    - a notation shall be made that the child was legally adopted.
  - o Baptismal certificates issued by the parish for these individuals shall give only the name(s) of the adoptive parent(s), the child's new legal surname, the date and place of Baptism, and the name of the minister who conferred the Sacrament. The name(s) of the sponsor(s) shall not be given, and no mention of the fact of adoption shall be made on the Baptismal certificate.
  - o For future ease in reference, and to afford what may often be the only possibility of reference after the adoption has been finalized, a Baptismal entry for the adopted child can be made in the Baptismal register of the adoptive parents' parish, citing the date and location of the original Baptismal record, and listing only the name of the adoptive parents, and the date and place of birth.
- Parish personnel having access to parish registers have an obligation not to disclose to any person any information which would identify or reveal, directly or indirectly, the fact that a person was adopted. (Approved by the NCCB Administrative Committee, September 12, 2000).

# SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

Initiation into the Church is celebrated by stages in the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation. Through them the recipient is incorporated into the Church and brought to a full sharing of the corporate life of the People of God.

## 1. BAPTISM

In obedience to the Savior's command to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19) and in fidelity to his teaching concerning the necessity of this Sacrament for salvation (Cf. Mark 16:16; *CIC*, c. 849), the Church ceaselessly promotes and guards the dignity of Christian Baptism and all the rites which surround its reverent administration.

At the moment of Baptism, the new Christian is washed of the stain of original sin, marked by an indelible character, imbued with the gift of sanctifying grace and the infused virtues, received into a relationship of Divine adoption, and incorporated into the Mystical Body of Christ which is the Church.

Consequently, Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit and the door which gives access to the whole Sacramental economy of the Church. (Cf. *CCC*, no. 1213; *CIC*, c. 849).

### 1.1 CANDIDATES FOR BAPTISM

In celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism, "The term children or infants refer to those who have not yet reached the age of discernment and therefore cannot profess personal faith." (Cf. *RBC*, no. 1). "What is prescribed in the canons on Baptism of an adult is applicable to all who are no longer infants but have attained the use of reason." (Cf. *CIC*, c. 852, §1).

They are baptized in the faith of the Church, a faith proclaimed for them by their parents and

godparents who represent both the local Church and the whole society of saints and believers. (Cf. *RBC*, no. 2).

- As for the time of Baptism, the first consideration is the spiritual welfare of the child.
- “Parents are obliged to take care that infants are baptized in the first few weeks.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 867, §1). “An infant in danger of death is to be baptized without delay.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 867, §2).
  - o Although Baptism can be celebrated on any day, it is nevertheless recommended that it be celebrated ordinarily on Sunday, or, if possible, at the Easter Vigil. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 856).
  - o As a rule, an infant is to be baptized in the parish church of the parents unless a just cause suggests otherwise. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 857, §2).
  - o The Rite may take place at a special celebration of the Eucharist or at a regularly scheduled parish Sunday Mass. It may also be celebrated within a Liturgy of the Word.
- An infant or small child whose parents intended Baptism but who dies before receiving the sacrament may be given ecclesiastical funeral rites, according to the Rite for “Funerals for Children who Died Before Baptism.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1183, §2).
- To fulfill the true meaning of the Sacrament, children must later be formed in the faith in which they have been baptized. Because of this, the faith of the parents is a critical pastoral concern since they are accepting the responsibility of forming their children in the practice of the faith. (Cf. *RBC*, no. 3).

## 1.2 PARENTS

---

- All Parents are to be interviewed before a child may be baptized.
  - o The purpose of this initial interview is to help parents come to an awareness of the rights and responsibilities of Baptism, the significance of this event in the faith-life of their family, and to help them celebrate it in the best possible way. It is an opportunity for evangelization and catechesis.
  - o The interview should be in a setting conducive to discussion and exchange, and not over the phone.
  - o The interview should discern in the parents at least a minimal effort to live the Christian life including:
    - a well founded belief of the parents’ intention and capacity to raise the child in the Catholic faith,
    - acceptance of the doctrine of the Creed,
    - regular participation in the worship of the Church, especially faithful, weekly attendance at Holy Mass,
    - evidence of personal prayer life,
    - a concern to show charity to others and
    - a life-style influenced by belief in the Lord Jesus and a commitment to the way of life to which He invites us.
  - o Serious lack of the above elements would constitute legitimate reason for *delaying* the Baptism of the child. “There must be a founded hope that the infant will be brought up in the Catholic religion; if such hope is altogether lacking, the Baptism is to be delayed... after the parents have been advised about the reason.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 868, §2). ***Baptism is to be deferred, not refused.***
  - o The purpose of the delay is to allow time for the parish priest/administrator/parish

- staff to assist the parents to come to a fuller understanding of their own faith-life in the Church, their responsibilities relative to the faith-life of their child, and their relationship and responsibility to the parish community.
- o It is the obligation of the parish to offer these parents opportunities for adequate development of their faith.
  - o A priest/deacon will not baptize a child whose Baptism has been delayed for legitimate reasons in another parish.
  - o Some consultation with the pastor/administrator who has delayed the Baptism is in order to bring the situation to a resolution. Recourse may have to be made to the Chancellor.

### 1.3 PREPARATION

- The parents of infants to be baptized “... are to be instructed properly on the meaning of this Sacrament and the obligations attached to it. The pastor personally or through others is to take care that the parents are properly instructed through both pastoral advice and common prayer, bringing several families together and, where possible, visiting them.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 851, §2).
  - o It is the duty of the priest, assisted by others, to prepare families for the Baptism of their children and to help them in the task of Christian formation which they have undertaken. It is the duty of the Bishop to coordinate such pastoral efforts in the Diocese with the help of priests, deacons and well-formed laity.
- Reasonable flexibility and pastoral prudence are advised in the matter of preparation programs.
  - o Parents should be provided with suitable means such as books, letters addressed to them, and catechetical materials designed for families and based upon the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. (Cf. *RBC*, 5§1).
  - o The parish program of preparation should be directed toward enabling parents to show a genuine commitment to the faith and to the Church on their own behalf and on behalf of the child.
  - o Parents must be informed of the options available to them in the celebration of Baptism, as indicated in the Rite. They are also to be involved in the planning of the celebration.
  - o It is better if the preparation begins before the child is born, but it may begin after.

### 1.4 SPONSORS (GODPARENTS)

- Those who are to undertake the function of sponsor (godparent) are to be instructed properly on the meaning of this Sacrament and the obligations attached to it (assuming all live within reasonable distances of the parish). (Cf. *CIC*, c. 851 §2).
- The sponsor (godparent), together with the parents, presents an infant for Baptism and helps the baptized person to lead a Christian life in keeping with Baptism, and to fulfill faithfully the obligations inherent in it. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 872).
- Prerequisites for Sponsors:
  - o “There is to be only one male sponsor or one female sponsor or one of each.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 873).
  - o To take on the function of sponsor, a person must have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function and “must have completed the sixteenth year of age, unless a

different age has been established by the diocesan bishop or it seems to the pastor or minister that an exception is to be made for a just cause.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 874, §1, 2°).

- o The sponsor/godparent be a fully initiated Catholic (having received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) who leads a life of faith, is not be bound by any canonical penalty, and is not the father or mother of the one to be baptized. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 874, §1, 3°-5°).
- o “A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community is not to participate except together with a Catholic sponsor and then only as a witness to the Baptism.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 874, §2).
- o These norms also apply to sponsors involved in the RCIA.

## **1.5 CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT**

---

- Whenever possible, families should be combined for the celebration of the Sacrament so that its communal, ecclesial nature is more evident.
- After Baptism it is the responsibility of the parents and sponsors (godparents) to assist the child to know God, whose adopted child he/she has become, to prepare the child to receive Confirmation and participate in the Holy Eucharist. In this duty they are to be helped by the pastor by suitable means. (Cf. *RBC*, 5.5)

## 2. THE MOST HOLY EUCHARIST AND THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY MASS

“The most august Sacrament is the Most Holy Eucharist in which Christ the Lord himself is contained, offered and received, and by which the Church continually lives and grows. The Eucharistic sacrifice, the memorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord, in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated through the ages, is the summit and source of all worship and Christian life, which signifies and effects the unity of the people of God and brings about the building up of the body of Christ. Indeed, the other sacraments and all the ecclesiastical works of the apostolate are closely connected with the Most Holy Eucharist and ordered to it.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 897).

### 2.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- “The Christian faithful are to hold the Most Holy Eucharist in highest honor, taking an active part in the celebration of the most august sacrifice, receiving this Sacrament most devoutly and frequently, and worshiping it with the highest adoration. In explaining the doctrine about this Sacrament, pastors of souls are to teach the faithful diligently about this obligation.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 898).
- “The Eucharistic celebration is the action of Christ himself and the Church. In it, Christ the Lord, through the ministry of the priest, offers himself, substantially present under the species of bread and wine, to God the Father and gives himself as spiritual food to the faithful united with his offering.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 899, §1).
- “In the Eucharistic gathering the people of God are called together with the Bishop or, under his authority, a presbyter presiding and acting in the person of Christ. All the faithful who are present, whether clerics or laity, unite together by participating in their own way according to the diversity of orders and liturgical functions.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 899, §2).
- “The Eucharistic celebration is to be organized in such a way that all those participating receive from it the many fruits for which Christ the Lord instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 899, §3).
- Hierarchical roles must be acknowledged so no confusion about proper function ensues. (Cf. *Sacramentum Caritatis*, no. 53).
- The conciliar Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* encourages the faithful to take part in the Eucharistic liturgy not “as strangers or silent spectators,” but as participants “in the sacred action, conscious of what they are doing, actively and devoutly.” (156). Active participation by the laity is to be encouraged.

- At the same time, it should be noted that: “Active participation in the Eucharistic liturgy can hardly be expected if one approaches it superficially, without an examination of his or her life. This inner disposition can be fostered, for example, by recollection and silence for at least a few moments before the beginning of the liturgy, by fasting, and when necessary, by Sacramental confession. A heart reconciled to God makes genuine participation possible.” (Cf. *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 55).
- The Church teaches that the faithful have a serious obligation to participate in the celebration of the Mass on all Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. (Cf. *CIC*, cc. 1246-1248; *CCC*, nos. 1389, 2180-2182).
- “The Eucharistic celebration is to be carried out in a sacred place, unless in a particular case necessity requires otherwise; in which case the celebration must be in a fitting place.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 932, §1).
  - To celebrate Mass in a private chapel, outdoors or in any public place, the permission of the Bishop is required. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1228).
  - With the approval of the proper pastor, in consultation with the Vicar General or Chancellor, Mass may be celebrated in a private home for a family or small group.
- Bishops, priests, deacons, religious, catechists, teachers and parents all share a sacred responsibility of leading the faithful and themselves to a deeper awareness of the importance of the Eucharist in the life of the People of God. This responsibility includes instruction in the prayers and rubrics of the Mass; training of those who serve as acolytes, lectors, gift-bearers, ushers, musicians, etc; encouragement of Eucharistic devotion, e.g. exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament, Eucharistic Benediction, Forty Hours Devotion, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, devotion to the Sacred Heart; and catechesis on the importance of God’s word in the liturgy. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 942-44; *Sacramentum Caritatis*).

---

## 2.2 FIRST EUCHARIST

### 2.2.1 Candidates

- Ordinarily, candidates for First Penance and First Eucharist have participated in regular religious education or attend Catholic School for the year preceding enrollment for preparation for First Eucharist. (In other words, these children were part of a formal first grade faith formation experience.)
- Candidates for First Eucharist will have made sacramental confession before receiving this Sacrament in accordance with canon 914 of the *Code of Canon Law* which states: “It is primarily the duty of parents, and those who take the place of parents, as well as the duty of the pastors, to take care that children who have reached the use of reason are prepared properly and, after they have made sacramental confession, are refreshed with this divine food as soon as possible.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 914; *CCC*, no. 1457).
- Candidates are to have the use of reason, which is canonically presumed at age seven. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 97, §2; cf c. 913).

### 2.2.2 Parents

- Parents are to be carefully instructed on the meaning and theology of the Most Holy Eucharist.



- Parents, having chosen to begin the process of Christian initiation in the lives of their children through Baptism, are the primary teachers in the preparation of the celebration of First Communion.

### **2.2.3 Preparation for the Sacrament**

- The catechesis and celebration of First Eucharist is to be separated from that of First Penance, and these Sacraments shall ordinarily take place when a child is in grade two.
- The administration of the Eucharist to children requires that they have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so that they understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity and are able to receive the Body of Christ with faith and devotion. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 913, §1).
- In danger of death, the minimal requirements for the reception of First Eucharist are present when a child expresses the desire for the Eucharist and is able to distinguish it from ordinary bread. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 913, §2).
- An interview to help determine readiness to prepare for First Eucharist is desirable. This interview establishes a desire for the Eucharist and an understanding of the reality of the Real Presence: Jesus Christ is present body, blood, soul and divinity in the Most Holy Eucharist.
- The immediate preparation for First Eucharist is distinct, in programming and content, from the catechesis for First Penance; and separate from both Catholic schools and religious education programs.
  - The careful preparation required is more than the intellectual preparation; it includes formative experiences in faith such as are promoted by attendance at weekly Mass even before the children receive the Most Holy Eucharist.
  - Every parish has the responsibility of assisting the parents in this role by providing parish programs that include both the theological understanding of the Eucharist and the practical preparation of children to participate in the celebration of it.
  - Texts for First Eucharist must be on the USCCB *Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series* to be used to assist in this preparation process.
- Immediate preparation (of four to six weeks) for full participation in the Eucharist should include:
  - Familiarity with, and opportunities to participate in, the whole Eucharistic rite as the central act of worship.
  - Instruction in the options permitted by the Church for the reverent reception of the consecrated hosts and precious blood.
  - A deepening awareness of the activity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit in our lives.
  - The gifts of Jesus in his life, death and resurrection.
  - An understanding of the Church's faith in Christ's continued presence in the Eucharist, as well as in the Christian assembly and his Word.
- Any fee charged for preparation for First Eucharist should not exceed the cost of consumable materials and/or the cost of retreats. No person can be denied the opportunity to prepare for the Sacrament because of an inability to pay.

### **2.2.4 Celebration of the Sacrament**

- It is recommended that reception of First Eucharist take place within a family context within one of the Lord's Day celebrations of the Mass.

- The First Communion of children must always be preceded by sacramental Confession and absolution. Moreover First Communion should always be administered by a Priest and never outside the celebration of Mass.
- Apart from exceptional cases, it is not particularly appropriate for First Communion to be administered on Holy Thursday of the Lord's Supper. Another day should be chosen instead, such as a Sunday between the Second and the Sixth Sunday of Easter, or the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, or the Sundays of Ordinary Time, since Sunday is rightly regarded as the day of the Eucharist.
- "Children who have not attained the age of reason, or those whom the parish priest has determined to be insufficiently prepared should not come forward to receive the Holy Eucharist." (Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 87).
- The parish should provide continued formation in the Eucharistic mystery, and opportunities for children and families to celebrate the Eucharist often together.

### 2.3 RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

---

- "A person who has already received the Most Holy Eucharist can receive it a second time on the same day only within the Eucharistic celebration in which the person participates, without prejudice to the prescript of can. 921, §2 concerning Viaticum." (Cf. *CIC*, c. 917).
- "A person who is to receive the Most Holy Eucharist is to abstain for at least one hour before Holy Communion from any food and drink, except for only water and medicine." (Cf. *CIC*, c. 919, §1).
  - o "The elderly, the infirm and those who care for them can receive the Most Holy Eucharist even if they have eaten something within the preceding hour." (Cf. *CIC*, c. 919, §3).
- Catholics conscious of mortal sin must celebrate the Sacrament of Penance before receiving Holy Communion. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 916; *CCC*, no. 1385).
- Particular attention is to be given to **canon 844** which establishes the norms for the *communicatio in sacris*, participation in liturgical worship or in the administration of the Sacraments by persons belonging to different Christian denominations that are not in full communion with the Catholic Church. A general principal is established (§1) that considers three situations of fact (§§ 2-4) and regulates the lawful exercise of the normative activity in a particular area (§5). The canon reads as follows:
  - o "§1. Catholic ministers administer the Sacraments licitly to Catholic members of the Christian faithful alone, who likewise receive them licitly from Catholic ministers alone, without prejudice to the prescripts of §§2, 3, and 4 of this canon (844), and can. 861, §2."
  - o "§2. Whenever necessity requires it or true spiritual advantage suggests it, and provided that danger of error or of indifferentism is avoided, the Christian faithful for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a Catholic minister are permitted to receive the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and anointing of the sick from non-Catholic ministers in whose Churches these Sacraments are valid." (Cf. *CIC*, c. 844).
  - o "§3. Catholic ministers administer the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Anointing of the Sick licitly to members of Eastern Churches which do not have full communion with the Catholic Church if they seek such on their own accord and are properly disposed. This is also valid for members of other Churches which in the judgment of the

Apostolic See are in the same condition in regard to the Sacraments as these Eastern Churches.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 844).

- o “§4. If the danger of death is present or if, in the judgment of the diocesan bishop or conference of bishops, some other grave necessity urges it, Catholic ministers administer these same Sacraments licitly also to other Christians not having full communion with the Catholic Church, who cannot approach a minister of their own community and who seek such on their own accord, provided that they manifest Catholic faith in respect to these Sacraments and are properly disposed.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 844).
- o “§5. For the cases mentioned in §§2, 3, and 4, the diocesan bishop or conference of bishops is not to issue general norms except after consultation at least with the local competent authority of the interested non-Catholic Church or community.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 844).
- Communion under both species may be permitted when there is no danger of the sacred species being profaned. However, “the chalice should not be ministered to lay members of Christ’s faithful where there is such a large number of communicants that it is difficult to gauge the amount of wine for the Eucharist.... The same is true wherever access to the chalice would be difficult to arrange..., or wherever there is not an adequate number of sacred ministers or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion with proper formation, or where a notable part of the people continues to prefer not to approach the chalice for various reasons, so that the sign of unity would in some sense be negated.” (Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 102).
  - o Christ’s faithful may wish to receive the Eucharist kneeling or standing. (Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 91).
  - o The option of receiving the Eucharist on the tongue or in the hand is the choice of the communicant, except when pastoral necessity requires that Holy Communion be given on the tongue. Also, one must be conscious of preserving the Blessed Sacrament from profanation. (Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 92).
  - o Consuming the Precious Blood from the chalice is also an option and must never be forced upon the people.
  - o If Holy Communion is to be administered by intinction, “...The Priest takes a host, dips it partly into the chalice, and showing it, says, *Corpus et Sanguis Christi (the Body and Blood of Christ)*. The communicant responds *Amen* and receives the Sacrament in the mouth from the priest and then withdraws.” Holy Communion by intinction requires the use of a communion plate (paten). (Cf. *GIRM*, 287).
  - o “The communicant, including the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, is never allowed to self-communicate, even by means of intinction.” (*USCCB Norms for Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the USA*, no. 50).

## 2.4 THE EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION

An extraordinary minister of Holy Communion may be used only when pastoral necessity and insufficiency of ordained ministers require that help be obtained for distribution of Holy Communion. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 910, §2; c. 230, §3). (Cf. Addendum 1).

- “‘The only minister who can confect the Sacrament of the Eucharist *in persona Christi* is a validly ordained Priest.’ Hence, the name ‘minister of the Eucharist’ belongs properly to the Priest alone. Moreover, also by reason of their sacred Ordination, the ordinary ministers of Holy Communion are the Bishop, the Priest and the Deacon, to whom it belongs therefore to administer Holy Communion to the lay members of Christ’s faithful during the celebration of Mass. In this way their ministerial office in the Church is fully and accurately brought to light,

and the sign value of the Sacrament is made complete.” (Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 154).

- “In addition to the ordinary ministers there is the formally instituted acolyte, who by virtue of his institution is an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion even outside the celebration of Mass. If, moreover, reasons of real necessity prompt it, another lay member of Christ’s faithful may also be delegated by the diocesan bishop, in accordance with the norm of law, for one occasion or for a specified time, and an appropriate formula of blessing may be used for the occasion. This act of appointment, however, does not necessarily take a liturgical form, nor, if it does take a liturgical form, should it resemble sacred Ordination in any way. Finally, in special cases of an unforeseen nature, permission can be given for a single occasion by the Priest who presides at the celebration of the Eucharist.” (Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 155).
- “This function is to be understood strictly according to the name by which it is known, that is to say, that of extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, and not ‘special minister of Holy Communion’ nor ‘extraordinary minister of the Eucharist,’ nor ‘special minister of the Eucharist,’ by which names the meaning of this function is unnecessarily and improperly broadened.” (Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 156).
- “If there is usually present a sufficient number of sacred ministers for the distribution of Holy Communion, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may not be appointed. Indeed, in such circumstances, those who may have already been appointed to this ministry should not exercise it. The practice of those priests is reprobated who, even though present at the celebration, abstain from distributing Communion and hand this function over to laypersons.” (Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 157).
- “Indeed, the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion may administer Communion only when the priest and deacon are lacking, when the priest is prevented by weakness or advanced age or some other genuine reason, or when the number of faithful coming to Communion is so great that the very celebration of Mass would be unduly prolonged. This, however, is to be understood in such a way that a brief prolongation, considering the circumstances and culture of the place, is not at all a sufficient reason.” (Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 158).
- “It is never allowed for the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion to assign anyone else to administer the Eucharist, as for example a parent or spouse or child of the sick person who is the communicant.” (Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 159).
- “Let the diocesan bishop give renewed consideration to the practice in recent years regarding this matter, and if circumstances call for it, let him correct it or define it more precisely. Where such extraordinary ministers are appointed in a widespread manner out of true necessity, the diocesan bishop should issue special norms by which he determines the manner in which this function is to be carried out in accordance with the law, bearing in mind the tradition of the Church.” (Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 160).
- The need for such extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should be presented to the Bishop through the Chancellor by the local pastor/administrator or by the chaplain of an institution.
  - o The Bishop’s permission is to be sought to select and prepare a definite number of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. (Cf. Addendum 3).
  - o An excessive number of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should not be requested.

- The invitation to serve as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion must not be offered until a pastor/administrator/chaplain has received permission to invite a definite number of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.
- Training for the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion will consist of at least two sessions, consisting of spiritual, theological and practical preparation. (Cf. Addendum 1).
- At the completion of training, candidates complete the biographical data and sign the Profession of Faith in the presence of his or her pastor/administrator. These are submitted by the pastor with a request that the candidates be officially missioned by the Bishop. (Cf. Addendum 1).
- A letter is sent by the Bishop to the pastor/administrator/chaplain and accompanied by individual cards of authorization for each extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.
  - o Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, designated for either the parish or institution are appointed for renewable terms of three years.

### **2.4.1 Requirements for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion**

- These men and women must:
  - o have completed their sixteenth year, be fully initiated, lead a life of faith in keeping with the function to be undertaken, and if married, be validly married within the Church and not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;
  - o sign the *Profession of Faith for an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion*, renewing his/her belief in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Eucharist. A copy of this *Profession of Faith for an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion* is to be filed at the Chancery Office; (Cf. Addendum 1)
  - o participate in training which includes a theological discussion of the Sacrament of Holy Communion as well as training on the appropriate posture and deportment of the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion during the Mass;
  - o have a letter of authorization from the Bishop.

### **2.4.2 Missioning**

- A formal recognition of this ministry may be celebrated according to the rite found in the *Book of Blessings*. This ceremony may be held in each parish after candidates complete the training.
  - o Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are assigned for their own parish and are normally not to exercise this ministry outside their parish.
  - o In particular and singular instances (such as on the occasion of a family wedding or funeral), when a true need exists, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may exercise their ministry at other parishes within the Diocese with the approval of the pastor/administrator. The extraordinary minister of Holy Communion should identify himself or herself to the pastor/administrator before Mass by showing the Diocesan issued card.
  - o When an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion discontinues this ministry for whatever reason, the Diocesan Chancery Office is to be notified.

### **2.4.3 Responsibilities**

- The responsibilities of the extraordinary minister of Holy Communion at Mass:
  - o Approaches the altar *only after* the priest receives Communion. (Cf. *GIRM*, 162).

- o First receives Communion from the celebrant, or concelebrant, or deacon and then receives the sacred vessel from the celebrant, or concelebrant, or deacon for distribution to the people.
  - o Holds the host or chalice before the communicant at a level that makes eye contact between the communicant and extraordinary minister of Holy Communion, if possible.
  - o Offers the Body of Christ to the communicant in the hand or on the tongue, as the communicant indicates.
  - o Says only, “*The Body of Christ*” if offering the host, or only “*The Blood of Christ*” if offering the chalice.
  - o Wipes the rim of the chalice with a purificator after each communicant and turns the chalice slightly for the next communicant.
  - o Properly consumes any remaining Precious Blood at the altar.
  - o Reverently handles and consumes any dropped hosts – spilled Precious Blood must be attended to with water which is then poured in the sacrarium.
  - o Is attentive to the presence of persons in the congregation who have special needs and adapts accordingly to give them access to Holy Communion.
  - o Returns the ciborium/chalice to the altar for purification by the priest/deacon either at the altar or credence table. The priest or deacon brings the Blessed Sacrament to the tabernacle.
  - o Participates in ongoing training throughout their service as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.
- Some extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may serve the homebound, ill or those in the hospital. (Cf. Addendum 1). These extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion:
    - o Receive a pyx containing the Body of Christ for distribution to the home or hospital bound, maintaining reverence for the Blessed Sacrament which is brought to the sick without interruption or unnecessary conversation en route to the person’s residence.
    - o Makes himself or herself aware of the situation of each of the sick persons to be visited and is prepared for any special needs or circumstances.
    - o Receive a copy of *The Pastoral Care of the Sick*, an orientation for its usage, and follows the appropriate ritual depending on the circumstances of the sick person(s).
    - o Receive a theological context for the significance of this ministry.
    - o Have a period of mentoring with a minister experienced in this care.

## 2.5 PREACHING

---

- Ordinarily, the celebrant should preach the homily which immediately follows after the Gospel. (Cf. *GIRM*, 66).
  - o Particular attention and proper preparation must be given to the homily.
  - o Among the forms of preaching, the homily, which is part of the liturgy itself and is reserved to a priest or deacon, is preeminent. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 767, §1).
  - o “...the homily on account of its importance and its nature is reserved to the Priest or Deacon during Mass. As regards other forms of preaching, if necessity demands it in particular circumstances, or if usefulness suggests it in special cases, lay members of Christ’s faithful may be allowed to preach in a church or in an oratory outside Mass in accordance with the norm of law. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 766, 767, §1). This may be done only on account of a scarcity of sacred ministers in certain places, in order to meet the need, and it may not be transformed from an exceptional measure into an ordinary practice,

nor may it be understood as an authentic form of the advancement of the laity.” (Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 161). (Cf. Addendum 3).

- o “All must remember besides that the faculty for giving such permission belongs to the local Ordinary, and this as regards individual instances; this permission is not the competence of anyone else...” (Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 161).
- o In Masses during which the children are dismissed for the Liturgy of the Word, a competent adult may address the children after the reading of the Gospel in a separate, but not distant room. (Cf. *Directory of Masses with Children*, CDW, no. 17).

## 2.6 GUIDELINES FOR THE EXTRAORDINARY FORM OF THE MASS

- The Diocese of Rochester will continue to monitor and to evaluate requests for the celebration of Holy Mass according to the *extraordinary form*, which is the rite contained in the **1962 Roman Missal**. This evaluation will be done in full accordance with the *Apostolic Letter, Summorum Pontificum*, promulgated by His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, on July 7, 2007. In this regard, please refer to **Addendum 4**, which contains the text of *Summorum Pontificum*; and the *Accompanying Letter* of Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops of the World on this subject.
- In the implementation of the *extraordinary form*, it should be noted that due to a serious shortage of priests, the first duty of the Bishop and the pastors is to make the Eucharistic Sacrifice available to as many people as possible, using the rite that is understood by the majority of the faithful in attendance. In this regard, Pope Benedict XVI notes: “It is clearly seen that the new Missal will certainly remain the ordinary form of the Roman Rite, not only on account of the juridical norms, but also because of the actual situation of the communities of the faithful.” (Cf. *Accompanying Letter* of Pope Benedict XVI, cf. above). When this fundamental need is met, attention can be given to significant numbers of the faithful who seek the celebration of the *extraordinary form* of the Eucharistic Liturgy.
- However, it is always permissible for parts of the Mass to be sung in Latin, such as the Gloria, Creed, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, as well as appropriate Latin hymns from the Church’s vast treasury of liturgical music and Gregorian Chant. This use of the Latin language in the Sacred Liturgy can provide an appropriate bridge between the *ordinary* and *extraordinary* forms of celebrating the Divine Mysteries of our Redemption in Christ.
- The Diocese will make known the locations of places where the *extraordinary form* of Divine Worship will be celebrated as individual parishes indicate their willingness and ability to celebrate this rite. To celebrate the *extraordinary form* of the Sacred Liturgy with the proper reverence and honor it merits, careful preparation is needed. Thus, priests able to celebrate the *extraordinary form* must be familiar with its rubrics. Also, servers must be properly trained, as well as choirs and cantors.
- Prior to scheduling any public celebrations of the Latin Mass in either the *ordinary form* or the *extraordinary form*, the Chancery Office is to be consulted. Particular attention must be given when the Latin Mass will be celebrated at a normally scheduled Lord’s Day Mass.

---



## 3. CONFIRMATION

In Baptism, people are incorporated into Christ and become part of God's people. This first Sacrament makes us a "new creation through water and the Holy Spirit" (Cf. *Christian Initiation*, Introduction, no. 2). By the signing at Confirmation they are strengthened in the image of the Lord and are sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

This renewed gift of the Holy Spirit at Confirmation endows the candidates "with special strength" (Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 11) to speak the Gospel and bear witness for Christ in the world. This coming of the Holy Spirit "conforms believers more fully to Christ and strengthens them so that they may bear witness to Christ for the building up of His Body in faith and love." (Cf. *RC*, no. 2)

Confirmation brings to fullness that life in the Holy Spirit into which God's sons and daughters were first initiated at Baptism.

### 3.1 CANDIDATES

- To celebrate Confirmation, baptized candidates, if they have the use of reason, must be in a state of grace, properly instructed and able to renew their baptismal promises. (Cf. *RC*, 12, 13).
- Candidates who are in some way developmentally disabled should have catechesis appropriate to their capacity and then celebrate Confirmation with the support of their family and faith community.
- Adults who wish to be confirmed must receive adequate preparation for the reception of the Sacrament. This preparation is the responsibility of the pastor/administrator or those who cooperate with them in providing sacramental preparation.
- "If they can do so without serious inconvenience, Catholics who have not yet received the Sacrament of Confirmation are to receive it before being admitted to marriage." (Cf. *CIC*, c. 1065, §1).
- Catholic school students should be referred to their proper parish.
- No one should be forced to celebrate the Sacrament. However, parents by word, example and participation in the life of the Church are a true support and encouragement to their children.

### 3.2 PARENTS

- The faithful are obliged to receive this Sacrament at the proper time. Parents and shepherds of souls, especially pastors, are to take care that the faithful are properly instructed to receive the Sacrament and approach the Sacrament at the appropriate time. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 890).
- Parents are to be carefully instructed throughout the year(s) on the meaning and theology of the Sacrament.

## 3.3 PREPARATION

---

### 3.3.1 Proximate Preparation

- Preparation for reception of the Sacrament is the shared responsibility of the faith community. Therefore, the community is intimately involved in the preparation for Confirmation through serving as sponsors, catechists, prayer partners, and assuring that adequate opportunities for on-going formation in faith development and the exercise of apostolic life exist in the faith community. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 9).
- Proximate preparation for Confirmation is a two-year process beginning in the fall of the eighth grade. Each year should include 25 hours of classroom instructions, as well as opportunities for retreat and service.
  - Proximate preparation should parallel the period of the catechumenate of the RCIA including opportunities for candidates to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the Gospel message, an integral and systematic catechesis; for deepening their relationship with the Christian community; for exercising the Christian apostolate; and for participating in the prayer life of the community. (Based on *NDC*, 35.D; *RCIA* no. 75).
- Content and Process for Proximate Preparation for Confirmation should include the following:
  - The Catechetical Topics. (Cf. Addendum 5).
  - Liturgy, Scripture, and one day retreats are also to be included.
  - Attendance at Holy Mass should be considered as the heart of all programs and the source and summit to and from which programs acquire their relevance and importance.
  - Components of Christian Service experiences of reasonable hours directed and evaluated by a parish staff member. (Cf. Addendum 5).
  - Regular meetings of all candidates throughout the year.
  - Information on the requirements for and role of sponsors in the process.
  - Formation of the parents throughout the year(s) on the meaning and theology of the Sacrament of Confirmation, and offered opportunities to grow in their own faith.
  - The celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation should be an integral part of the program.
- Texts for Confirmation must be on the USCCB *Conformity Listing of Catechetical Texts and Series*. Other approved supplemental texts bearing an imprimatur may be used with permission.
- If any fee needs to be charged for Confirmation preparation, it should not exceed the cost of consumable materials and/or the cost of retreats. No person can be denied the opportunity to prepare for the Sacrament because of an inability to provide the fee.

### 3.3.2 Immediate Preparation

- At the end of the process of proximate preparation, evaluations for readiness to celebrate Confirmation should attend to all proximate preparation components and the candidate's own personal development. Readiness for Confirmation shall not be judged solely on the basis of only one program component. (e.g. the service project, the retreat). However, regular attendance at Holy Mass must be an essential component of the program.
- Near the completion of the second year, as part of the 25 hours of classroom instruction

referenced above, candidates begin immediate preparation for Confirmation only after a careful, personal screening of their faith understanding, life values, and parish-life participation.

- Candidates cooperate in interviews with parish clergy and faith formation staff. These help all parties to know each other personally and reflect upon the candidates' self-understanding of their faith and their desire to seek Confirmation.
  - o Regular participation in the faith community, willingness to participate in the mission of the community in an age appropriate way, and the intention to continue to be formed in the faith are all part of determining readiness.
  - o Candidates are asked why they wish to be confirmed in the Roman Catholic Church, and how they have responded to the call to discipleship, and the challenge of the Gospel.
- No unnecessary obstacles should interfere with the candidate's reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. All programs should strive to support the candidates in nurturing their faith centered in the Most Holy Eucharist.
- Immediate Preparation for Confirmation should include:
  - o The primary context for the period of immediate preparation (4-6 weeks before Confirmation) is prayer and reflection, and parallels the period of Purification and Enlightenment. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 138).
  - o Immediate preparation is concerned with providing candidates with the opportunity to reflect on the presence and power of God in their lives and the difference that has made for them, prayerful reflection on the challenges of life and the gift of the Holy Spirit that strengthens candidates throughout their lives in Christ.
  - o Immediate preparation for the celebration of the Sacrament, preceded by adequate foundational catechesis, is distinct from regular ongoing catechetical formation (i.e. Catholic school or religious education).
- Content & Process for Immediate Preparation should include:
  - o Understanding of Confirmation;
  - o Understanding the Role of the Holy Spirit and Gifts of the Holy Spirit;
  - o Understanding of Prayer;
  - o Understanding of Christian Lifestyles, and the life of a Disciple on Mission;
  - o A day of reflection/retreat (5 hours).

### **3.4 SPONSORS**

- Prior to the actual selection of a sponsor, both candidates and parents should be instructed on the role and responsibility of a sponsor. This catechesis should occur early in the two-year parish program for sacramental preparation.
  - o It is desirable that the sponsor (godparent) at Baptism be chosen as sponsor for Confirmation, if they still meet the qualifications. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 893, §2; *RC*, no. 5).
  - o Sponsors who are not members of the parish should provide a letter from their pastor attesting to their suitability to serve as sponsor.

- Prerequisites for Sponsors:
  - To take on the function of sponsor, a person must have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function and must have completed the sixteenth year of age, unless the pastor or minister has granted an exception for a just cause. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 874, §1, 2°).
  - The sponsor/godparent should be a fully initiated Catholic (having received Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) who leads a life of faith, is not bound by any canonical penalty, and is not the father or mother of the one to be confirmed. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 874, §1, 3°-5°).

### **3.5 CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT**

---

- Confirmation ceremonies are celebrated in the fall and the spring each year throughout the Diocese of Rochester.
- The Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, in collaboration with the Office of the Bishop, will schedule the dates for the Confirmation ceremonies. Additionally, each year the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis will provide *Directives for the Confirmation Masses in the Diocese of Rochester*, detailing the necessary preparation for the ceremony and a form which must be completed and returned to the Office prior to the ceremony.
- Following the administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation, ongoing catechesis (mystagogia) should be offered to the newly confirmed in an effort to assist their continued practice of the faith and to encourage their ongoing participation in the parish.

## 4. RCIA

“The Rite of Christian Initiation presented here is designed for adults who, after hearing the mystery of Christ proclaimed, consciously and freely seek the living God and enter the way of faith and conversion as the Holy Spirit opens their hearts. By God’s help they will be strengthened spiritually during their preparation and at the proper time will receive the Sacrament fruitfully.”  
(Cf. *RCIA*, no. 1).

“This Rite includes not simply the celebration of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, but also the rites belonging to the catechumenate...”  
(Cf. *RCIA*, no. 2).

“The celebration of Baptism must be prepared properly; consequently: an adult who intends to receive Baptism is to be admitted to the catechumenate and is to be led insofar as possible, through the various stages to Sacramental initiation, according to the order of initiation...”  
(Cf. *CIC*, c. 851, 1°).

### 4.1 RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

- Adults who seek the Sacraments of Initiation are to be nurtured in their faith journey through the process described in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. The Rite should be implemented in every parish through an adaptation that takes into account:
  - o the flexibility of the document,
  - o the unique needs of each candidate,
  - o the need of recognizing each step in the process and celebrating the rite of each stage with the parish community,
  - o the essential role of the sponsor and the whole faith community,
  - o the responsibility of the community to support the newly-baptized (neophytes) and aid them in the process of continued integration into the community.

### 4.2 INITIATION OF UNBAPTIZED ADULTS

- In accordance with the *RCIA*, each period in the process is to be recognized and each candidate must be given ample time to freely determine his/her readiness to celebrate the rite of each stage. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 4-7, 20).
- Before and during the implementation of the *RCIA*, the community must be made aware of their call to be evangelizers and of the implications of the restored Rite to their own faith and place in the community. Likewise they should pray for, and offer personal support to, the catechumens in their journey of faith. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 41, 80).
- A sponsor is chosen to accompany the candidate on the journey. Sponsors should be fully initiated members of the Catholic Church who desire to share their faith. They should

participate in the formation sessions and all liturgical celebrations, and be available to the candidate for personal prayer, support and faith sharing. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 42-43).

- o Sponsors must meet the criteria for Sponsors of Baptism. (Cf. p.12, *CIC*, cc. 873-874).
- The Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens, whereby the candidates are presented to and welcomed by the community, initiates a period of pastoral formation. From this time on, catechumens are joined to the Church. They may marry in the Church, using the appropriate rite; and one who dies during the catechumenate receives a Christian burial. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 47).
- The catechumenate is an extended period of time during which the candidates are given suitable pastoral formation and guidance... (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 75).
- The Rite of Election will be celebrated by the Diocesan Bishop at designated places at the beginning of Lent each year. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 126).
- The Sacraments of Initiation conclude and climax this period. They are ordinarily celebrated at the Easter Vigil. Only for extraordinary reasons are they to be celebrated at another time. (The priest who baptizes continues the Sacraments by confirming as well.)
- The period after Easter, Mystagogia, formally concludes at the Pentecost celebration. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 244-251).

### **4.3 INITIATION OF BAPTIZED/UNCATECHIZED ADULTS BOTH CATHOLIC AND NON-CATHOLIC**

---

(Cf. *RCIA*, nos. 400-501)

- Adults baptized as infants either as Roman Catholics or as members of another Christian community who did not receive further catechetical formation, or consequently, the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist, are nourished through this process of initiation. Having already become members of the Church through Baptism, their circumstances differ from the catechumens since their conversion is based on the Baptism already received. However, they may be supported through the process with the catechumens. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 400).
- The period of preparation is made holy by means of liturgical celebrations. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 405).
  - o The framework of this process of initiation includes the same elements as that of the catechumens:
    - a sponsor to accompany the candidate,
    - presentation before and support by the whole community,
    - a period of pastoral formation which recognizes the unique needs of the candidate,
    - a prayerful, reflective Lenten period of immediate preparation,
    - communal celebration at Easter or during the Easter season, and
    - the continued support and nourishment of those fully initiated by helping them enter more fully into the life of the community.
- In the final phase of preparation during Lent, the adults should be prepared for the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 408).
- Baptized Catholics who have not received Confirmation and Eucharist are to be fully initiated at the Easter Vigil. The priest presider must request delegation from the Diocesan Bishop in

writing. Delegation cannot be transferred to another priest unless required due to incapacity, in which case it may be sub-delegated.

- Both Baptized Catholic and Christian candidates must provide proof of valid Baptism. The celebration of Baptism may not be repeated and Conditional Baptism ordinarily is not celebrated. If however there is doubt about the fact or validity of the candidate's Baptism, Conditional Baptism must be celebrated, even privately if pastorally suitable.

#### **4.4 RITE OF RECEPTION OF BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS INTO FULL COMMUNION WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

(Cf. *RCIA*, nos. 473-486 and Appendix I of the Rite)

“Those who believe in Christ and have been properly baptized are brought into certain, though imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church ... all who have been justified by faith in Baptism are incorporated into Christ; they therefore have the right to be called Christians, and with good reason are accepted as sisters and brothers in the Lord by the children of the Catholic church.”

(Cf. *Conciliar Decree on Ecumenism*, no. 3).

- No greater burden than necessary should be demanded for reception into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church.
- With respect to the validity of Baptisms in other denominations, questions should be referred to the Chancery.
- Eastern Christians need only make a simple Profession of Faith in the Roman Catholic Church.
- “The baptized Christian is to receive both doctrinal and spiritual preparation, according to individual pastoral requirements, for his/her reception into full communion with the Catholic Church...” (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 477).
- During the period of preparation, the candidate shares in the worship according to the norms of the Directory on Ecumenism.
- Any confusion between catechumens and candidates for reception into communion should be absolutely avoided.
- Although it belongs to “the office of the bishop to receive baptized Christians into the full communion of the Catholic Church,” priests may conduct this Rite after having received the permission of the Bishop. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 481).
- “If the profession of faith and reception take place within Mass, the candidate ... should make a confession of sins beforehand, first informing the confessor that he or she is about to be received into full communion. Any confessor who is lawfully approved may hear the candidate's confession.” (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 482).
- The “Rite of Reception of baptized Christians into Full Communion with the Catholic Church” should normally be celebrated within the Sunday celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist. On Sundays and solemnities, the Mass of the Day is used. If celebrated on a weekday, the Mass of Christian Unity may be used. During the Lenten season, the Lenten texts must be used.
- Candidates who are received into the Roman Catholic Church also celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation and receive First Eucharist, accompanied by a sponsor. The priest who receives the baptized Christian into full communion should confirm the candidate during the rite

unless the candidate has already been validly confirmed. The priest receiving the candidate into the Roman Catholic Church enjoys the faculty to confirm in accordance with canon 883, °2.

- If it is not possible to receive the candidates during the celebration of the Most Holy Eucharist, the “Rite of Reception of Baptized Christians into Full Communion with the Catholic Church” should be celebrated during the Liturgy of the Word. A candidate in this situation, however, should be encouraged to attend Mass as soon as possible in order to fully participate in the Church’s Sacramental life.
- The actual reception takes place after the homily, which should speak of the significance of reception into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church.
- The candidate should celebrate the Sacrament of Penance prior to reception. The candidate may approach any confessor who is lawfully approved, first informing the confessor that he or she is about to be received into full communion. (Cf. *RCIA*, no. 482).
- The names of those received into full communion should be reported in the baptismal record of the parish of reception, including the original information about the valid, non-Catholic baptism (date of birth, parents, date of baptism, place, and minister, etc.) with the following annotation added: Received into full Communion with the Roman Catholic Church on (*date*) by (*name of minister*). Confirmation and First Eucharist should also be recorded as usual.

#### **4.5 RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS ADAPTED FOR CHILDREN OF CATECHETICAL AGE**

---

(Cf. *RCIA* nos. 252-330)

- The adult process is adapted to meet the unique needs of unbaptized children of catechetical age (7+) who present themselves for initiation into the community. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 852, §1; *RCIA*, no. 252).
- Parents or guardians, sponsors and parishioners play an indispensable role in the faith journey of these children. Parents or guardians must give their permission and be willing to support their children in the process.
- The period of instruction must be adapted to include the pedagogical and spiritual needs of the candidates.
- The rites celebrated are integral to the process, but should be adapted to provide a celebration meaningful to the candidates.
- The Sacraments of Initiation should be celebrated within the community at the Easter Vigil. Confirmation is celebrated by the priest who also does the Baptism.
- The post-Baptismal period includes opportunities for continued catechesis and participation in the life of the community. Godparents, in particular, should support the newly baptized at this time.



# SACRAMENTS OF HEALING

“The Lord Jesus Christ, physician of our souls and bodies, who forgave the sins of the paralytic and restored him to bodily health, has willed that the Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit, his work of healing and salvation, even among her own members. This is the purpose of the two Sacraments of healing: the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation and the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.” (Cf. CCC, no. 1421).

## 5. THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE/ RECONCILIATION

Before his Ascension, Our Lord entrusted to the Church the power to forgive sins in his name: “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained” (John. 20:21), and so from apostolic times the Church has always exercised this essential aspect of her Divine constitution as the instrument of salvation in the world.

The Sacrament of Penance is the ordinary means by which the faithful are restored to sanctifying grace after having fallen into post-baptismal grave sin. (Cf. CIC, c. 960). It is also a channel of particular graces which assists the faithful in avoiding sin in the future, overcoming habits of sin, and growing in the life of supernatural grace and virtue.

“ Those who approach the Sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from the mercy of God for the offence committed against him and are at the same time reconciled with the Church, which they have wounded by their sins...” (Cf. *Lumen gentium* no. 11).

### 5.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- With the assistance of the confessor, the penitent makes an integral and contrite confession

of at least all unconfessed, post-baptismal grave sins of which he or she is conscious. He then accepts a salutary penance and receives absolution. “Only physical or moral impossibility excuses from confession of this type; in such a case, reconciliation can be obtained by other means.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 960).

- o What is crucial for the implementation of the Rite of Penance is solid catechesis on the mystery of Reconciliation, the meaning of sin, and the rites themselves, as well as a deep formation in prayer, the study of Scriptures, and a concern for right moral development. These are not simple tasks accomplished in a short period of time. Ongoing care for catechists and faith formation is essential for all age levels of the Christian people.
  - o In particular, such formation should enable each person to approach the Sacrament with proper dispositions: sincerity of heart, sorrow for sins, desire for Reconciliation, firm purpose of amendment and sensitivity for the integrity of the Sacrament. This will enable a renewed appreciation of Penance in the penitent’s life.
  - o Also, because of his office and ministry within the reconciling community, the priest is called to a fuller appreciation of the scriptural and theological dimensions of this powerful expression of God’s reconciling love. Hence, a constant updating in the theology of sin, reconciliation, Sacraments in general, the dynamics of the spiritual life, and the power of the Word of God is the moral responsibility of the confessor. This will correct any tendency towards routine, hurried or mechanical confessions; it can open the way for a fuller, more beneficial reconciling ministry in the Church.
- “After having reached the age of discretion, each member of the faithful is obliged to confess faithfully his or her grave sins at least once a year.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 989).
  - Every parish shall provide suitable, visible places in the Church or oratory for the celebration of the Sacrament, containing at least a fixed grate for the anonymity of the penitent, should he or she desire. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 964, §2). The confessional may also provide the option of face-to-face confession, although outside of a case of necessity, priests retain the right to hear confessions always from behind the fixed grate. (Cf. *AAS* 90 [1998] 711).
  - “Confessions are not to be heard outside the confessional without a just cause.” (Cf. *CIC*, c. 964, §3).
  - The Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation should not be united to the Mass in such a way that it becomes a single liturgical celebration. “This does not exclude, however, that priests other than those concelebrating the Mass might hear confessions of the faithful, for genuine pastoral necessity.” (Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 76).
  - A specified and regular time for weekly confessions of individual penitents is required. The time for confessions should be chosen with generous sensitivity to the needs of the people.
  - Great care should be taken on the part of the confessor so that a peaceful atmosphere is provided for the penitent. This care should include a sensitivity of privacy needed for the proper celebration of the Sacrament.
  - Sufficient time should be allowed for each penitent. Describing sinful actions or personal growth cannot be done quickly or glibly. The penitent needs to be offered guidance and reassurance, and concerns of conscience should be treated seriously and compassionately.
  - The reading of God’s Word should place both penitent and priest in an unhurried, reflective and prayerful environment. When Scripture is used, its place and value in the Sacrament ought to be briefly explained by the priest. Either the penitent or the priest may select the scripture passage.

- In accord with the spirit of the Rite of Penance, each parish should plan regular communal Penance services each year where a number of priests are brought in to assist in the celebration of the Sacrament and to provide for individual, private confessions and absolution.
- Parishes must ensure that catechesis on the Sacrament of Penance is a regular part of family and adult education.
- Priests should make themselves available to the faithful whenever they reasonably request the Sacrament.
- During particular liturgical seasons, i.e. Advent and Lent, parishes are encouraged to plan regular celebrations of the Rite for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution.
  - o The celebration of the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation in communal forms emphasizes reconciliation with both a forgiving Father and a forgiving community. When penitents gather specifically as a sinful but faith-filled community, confident of the Father's mercy, participants sense that the Sacrament is a public act of worship and celebration in the community. It is fitting that the penitents be prepared for the Sacrament by a celebration of the Word of God. (Cf. *RP*, 22).
  - o All parts of the celebration are to be well-planned. This would include providing an adequate number of confessors and making provision for active participation in song and prayer, readings and examination of conscience.
  - o The length of such celebrations must be reasonable. A sense of reverence and prayer can be lost because of boredom or tiredness.
  - o It may be better to plan several smaller celebrations than one large one.
  - o Careful explanation to penitents that confession in this form should be clear, concise and brief will reassure them. Respect for individual conscience and an atmosphere of reverence in the group celebration should be kept in balance. This is not a suitable time for spiritual direction or counseling.
  - o "Absolution cannot be imparted in a general manner to many penitents at once without previous individual confession unless:
    - 1) the danger of death is imminent and there is insufficient time for the priest or priests to hear the confessions of individual penitents;
    - 2) there is a grave necessity that is, when in view of the number of penitents, there are not enough confessors available to hear the confessions of individuals properly within a suitable period of time in such a way that the penitents are forced to be deprived for a long while of sacramental grace or Holy Communion through no fault of their own. Sufficient necessity is not considered to exist when confessors cannot be present due only to the large number of penitents such as can occur on some great feast or pilgrimage." (Cf. *CIC*, c. 961, §1).
- It belongs to the Diocesan Bishop to judge whether the conditions required according to the norm of §1, 2° are present. He can determine the cases of such necessity, attentive to the criteria agreed upon with the other members of the conference of Bishops. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 961, §3).
  - o At the present time it is judged that there is no cause within the Diocese of Rochester for the use of the Rite of General Absolution.
  - o Priests are not to make use of General Absolution as part of parish celebrations.

## 5.2 FIRST PENANCE OF CHILDREN

---

### 5.2.1 Candidates

- Children should be encouraged to prepare for the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation as they near the age of seven.
- Celebration of First Penance is to precede the celebration of First Eucharist. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 914, *CCC*, no. 1457).

### 5.2.2 Parents

- Parents are to be intimately involved in preparations for a child's first reception of the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation.
- Parents are to be clearly instructed on the meaning and theology of Reconciliation.
- The pastor will make the final decision concerning a child's readiness to receive the Sacrament. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 914).

### 5.2.3 Preparation

- Catechesis for Penance/Reconciliation is to precede the catechesis for First Eucharist and must be kept distinct by a clear and unhurried preparation. (Cf. *NDC*, p. 127).
  - Catechesis for children prior to their first reception of the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation must always respect their natural disposition, ability, age and circumstances. (Cf. *NDC*, Chapter 5, no. 36).
  - Catechesis of the Sacrament must include: helping children recognize the need for forgiveness, exploring the meaning of the symbols, gestures, prayers and scriptures of the Rite, instruction in how to celebrate the Rite, and understanding the need for confession in the case of serious sin. (Cf. *NDC*, Chapter 5, no. 36).
  - Children at an early age should learn about and receive this precious gift. Children at the age of seven are certainly capable of understanding what is right, what is kind and charitable and what is evil, incorrect, uncharitable and selfish. The Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation is a positive instrument in developing a genuinely Christian moral sense in a child; it helps the child to want to do good, to be kind, but also to understand that when one fails, it is not the end; we can turn to God for forgiveness, for help, for the strength to try again.

### 5.2.4 Celebration

- For the celebration of First Penance/Reconciliation with individual confession and absolution for several children celebrating together:
  - The Sacrament should be celebrated as part of a Liturgy of the Word and may include signs, symbols, music, readings and prayers suitable to the age of those participating.
  - The celebration should be planned by parish and catechetical leadership.
  - Each child should have the option of anonymous or face to face confession.
  - Each child should be fully able to participate in the liturgical celebration as completely as possible.
- After the initial celebration, regular opportunities for celebration of the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation should be made available to children who have celebrated first Penance.
- Parishes must provide ongoing catechesis on the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation as well as ongoing opportunities for celebration of the Sacrament for these children and for their families.

# ADDENDUM 1

## THE SELECTION, PREPARATION AND MISSIONING OF EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

- Step 1:** The Bishop’s permission is to be sought by the pastor/administrator to select and prepare a definite number of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. *Selection should not precede this step.* An excessive number of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should not be requested. The number should be in proportion to the number of communicants. When ordinary ministers of Holy Communion (priests, deacons) and/or instituted acolytes (seminarians) are available, they should distribute Holy Communion. (Cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 160).
- Step 2:** Parishes are strongly encouraged to actively select individuals who are particularly well qualified to serve in this capacity, not simply asking for volunteers. The faithful who become extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion “must be persons whose good qualities of Christian life, faith, and morals recommend them. Let them strive to be worthy of this great office, foster their own devotion to the Eucharist, and show an example to the rest of the faithful by their own devotion and reverence toward the most august sacrament of the altar. No one is to be chosen whose appointment the faithful might find disquieting.” (Cf. *Immensae Caritatis*, 1, IV, 1973) They must be sixteen years of age and, if married, must be validly married within the Church. Daily communicants usually are excellent candidates.
- Step 3:** The preparation of extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion is to consist of at least two sessions dealing with the Church’s teaching on the Eucharist and dealing also with the practical applications in the parish, institution, or residence for the homebound. (Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church; The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, Third Edition; Sacramentum Caritatis; Redemptionis Sacramentum; USCCB Liturgy Guide: Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at Mass; USCCB Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States of America.*)
- Step 4:** At the completion of the training sessions, the candidates are to complete the *biographical data* requested by the Diocese and all candidates for extraordinary minister of Holy Communion are required to sign the *Profession of Faith for an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion*. These are submitted by the pastor/administrator/chaplain with a request that the candidates be officially approved by the Bishop.
- Step 5:** A letter of appointment is sent by the Bishop to the pastor/administrator and is accompanied by individual identification cards for each extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.
- Step 6:** A formal missioning ceremony may be held in the parish, according to the Rite found in the *Book of Blessings*.

**Final Notations:**

- Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are missioned for a three-year term which may be renewed at the discretion of the pastor/administrator/chaplain.
- Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are missioned for their parish only and are not to exercise this ministry outside of their parish.
- When an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion discontinues this ministry, for whatever purpose, the Diocesan Chancery Office is to be notified.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION**

---

The love and care with which the Most Holy Eucharist is handled helps to bring together the faithful so we can truly know “It is the Lord.” (John 21:7). The privilege of distributing Holy Communion, whether the Sacred Host or the Precious Blood, is not simply a ministry among many others, as important as others may be – distributing Holy Communion is a great service to the Church and our brothers and sisters in the family of God. For this reason, since participation in this ministry is a privilege and not a right, prayer and preparation are required, and the selection process is a bit more intentional and thorough. The questions asked below, similar to those asked on parish registration forms, help the Diocese know better those to whom this privilege is extended.

Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion must fulfill requirements listed in the *Code of Canon Law* for sacramental sponsors. (Cf. *CIC*, c. 874 §1, nn. 2-4). Additionally, they must have completed their sixteenth year; be a Catholic who has received the Sacrament of Confirmation and leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be undertaken; not bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared; be reverential, respectful of his or her Catholic faith and the Most Blessed Sacrament; and of good moral character.

# BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Parish or Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

5. E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Year joined present parish: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Education:

Schools attended: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Marital Status (If married, it must be a valid marriage according to the Catholic Church:

Please indicate place, church and date): \_\_\_\_\_

10. Employment: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Contributions of service to:

a) Parish Community: \_\_\_\_\_

b) Civic Community: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Other helpful information:

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

All candidates for service as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion are required to sign a *Profession of Faith for an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion*. A copy is to be filed at the Chancery Office.

# PROFESSION OF FAITH FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER OF HOLY COMMUNION

This *Profession of Faith for an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion* is a privileged opportunity to witness to our brothers and sisters of our belief in the Presence of Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist.

Our belief in the Real Presence is expressed in the following teaching taken from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

“The mode of Christ’s presence under the Eucharistic species is unique. It raises the Eucharist above all the sacraments as “the perfection of the spiritual life and the end to which all the sacraments tend.” In the most blessed sacrament of the Eucharist ‘the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, *the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained.*’ “This presence is called ‘real’ - by which is not intended to exclude the other types of presence as if they could not be ‘real’ too, but because it is presence in the fullest sense: that is to say, it is a *substantial* presence by which Christ, God and man, makes himself wholly and entirely present.” (no. 1374).

“The Council of Trent summarizes the Catholic faith by declaring: ‘Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation.’” (no. 1376).

I, \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby renew my belief in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist taught and proclaimed by the Roman Catholic Church.

Moreover, as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion I rejoice in my belief in Christ’s Real Presence in this Sacrament, and under the direction and supervision of the pastor/administrator, exercise my ministry with reverence and devotion.

Also, I believe and profess all that the holy Catholic Church believes, teaches and proclaims to be revealed by God. (Cf. *RCIA Profession of Faith*, 491).

---

Signature of Pastor/Administrator

---

Signature of Candidate

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# ADDENDUM 2

## *Circular Letter*

### THE RITUAL EXPRESSION OF THE GIFT OF PEACE AT MASS

1. “Peace I leave you; my peace I give you!”<sup>1</sup> As they gathered in the cenacle, these are the words with which Jesus promises the gift of peace to his disciples before going to face his passion, in order to implant in them the joyful certainty of his steadfast presence. After his resurrection, the Lord fulfills his promise by appearing among them in the place where they had gathered for fear of the Jews saying, “Peace be with you!”<sup>2</sup> Christ’s peace is the fruit of the redemption that he brought into the world by his death and resurrection — the gift that the Risen Lord continues to give even today to his Church as she gathers for the celebration of the Eucharist in order to bear witness to this in everyday life.
2. In the Roman liturgical tradition, the exchange of peace is placed before Holy Communion with its own specific theological significance. Its point of reference is found in the Eucharistic contemplation of the Paschal mystery as the “Paschal kiss” of the Risen Christ present on the altar<sup>3</sup> as in contradistinction to that done by other liturgical traditions which are inspired by the Gospel passage from St. Matthew (Cf. Matthew 5: 23). The rites which prepare for Communion constitute a well expressed unity in which each ritual element has its own significance and which contributes to the overall ritual sequence of sacramental participation in the mystery being celebrated. The sign of peace, therefore, is placed between the Lord’s Prayer, to which is joined the embolism which prepares for the gesture of peace, and the breaking of the bread, in the course of which the Lamb of God is implored to give us his peace. With this gesture, whose “function is to manifest peace, communion and charity,”<sup>4</sup> the Church “implores peace and unity for herself and for the whole human family, and the faithful express to each other their ecclesial communion and mutual charity before communicating in the Sacrament,”<sup>5</sup> that is, the Body of Christ the Lord.
3. In the Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum caritatis*, Pope Benedict XVI entrusted to this Congregation the competence of considering questions about the exchange of peace,<sup>6</sup> in order to safeguard the sacred sense of the Eucharistic celebration and the sense of mystery at the moment of receiving Holy Communion: “By its nature the Eucharist is the sacrament of peace. At Mass this dimension of the Eucharistic mystery finds specific expression in the sign of peace. Certainly this sign has great value (Cf. John 14:27). In our times, fraught with fear and conflict, this gesture has become particularly eloquent, as the Church has become increasingly conscious of her responsibility to pray insistently for the gift of peace and unity for herself and for the whole human family. [ ... ] We can thus understand the emotion so often felt during the sign of peace at a liturgical celebration. Even so, during the Synod of Bishops there was discussion about the appropriateness of greater restraint in this gesture, which can be exaggerated and cause a certain distraction in the assembly just before the reception of Communion. It should be kept in mind that nothing is lost when the sign of peace is marked by a sobriety which preserves the proper spirit of the celebration, as, for example, when it is restricted to one’s immediate neighbours.”<sup>7</sup>
4. Pope Benedict XVI, further than shedding light on the true sense of the rite and of the exchange of peace, emphasized its great significance as a contribution of Christians, with their prayer and witness to allay the most profound and disturbing anxieties of contemporary

humanity. In light of all this he renewed his call that this rite be protected and that this liturgical gesture be done with religious sensibility and sobriety.

5. This Dicastery, at the request of Pope Benedict XVI, had already approached the Conferences of Bishops in May of 2008 to seek their opinion about whether to maintain the exchange of peace before Communion, where it is presently found, or whether to move it to another place, with a view to improving the understanding and carrying out of this gesture. After further reflection, it was considered appropriate to retain the rite of peace in its traditional place in the Roman liturgy and not to introduce structural changes in the Roman Missal. Some practical guidelines are offered below to better explain the content of the exchange of peace and to moderate excessive expressions that give rise to disarray in the liturgical assembly before Communion.
6. Consideration of this theme is important. If the faithful through their ritual gestures do not appreciate and do not show themselves to be living the authentic meaning of the rite of peace, the Christian concept of peace is weakened and their fruitful participation at the Eucharist is impaired. Therefore, along with the previous reflections that could form the basis for a suitable catechesis by providing some guidelines, some practical suggestions are offered to the Conferences of Bishops for their prudent consideration:
  - a) It should be made clear once and for all that the rite of peace already has its own profound meaning of prayer and offering of peace in the context of the Eucharist. An exchange of peace appropriately carried out among the participants at Mass enriches the meaning of the rite itself and gives fuller expression to it. It is entirely correct, therefore, to say that this does not involve inviting the faithful to exchange the sign of peace “mechanically”. If it is foreseen that it will not take place properly due to specific circumstances or if it is not considered pedagogically wise to carry it out on certain occasions, it can be omitted, and sometimes ought to be omitted. It is worth recalling that the rubric from the Missal states: “Then, ***if appropriate***, the Deacon or the Priest, adds: “Let us offer each other the sign of peace” (emphasis added).<sup>8</sup>
  - b) On the basis of these observations, it may be advisable that, on the occasion of the publication of the translation of the third typical edition of the Roman Missal in their own country, or when new editions of the same Missal are undertaken in the future, Conferences of Bishops should consider whether it might not be fitting to change the manner of giving peace which had been established earlier. For example, following these years of experience, in those places where familiar and profane gestures of greeting were previously chosen, they could be replaced with other more appropriate gestures.
  - c) In any case, it will be necessary, at the time of the exchange of peace, to definitively avoid abuses such as:
    - the introduction of a “song for peace”, which is non-existent in the Roman Rite.<sup>9</sup>
    - the movement of the faithful from their places to exchange the sign of peace amongst themselves..
    - the departure of the priest from the altar in order to give the sign of peace to some of the faithful.
    - that in certain circumstances, such as at the Solemnity of Easter or of Christmas, or during ritual celebrations such as Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, Matrimony, Sacred Ordinations, Religious Professions, and Funerals, the exchange of peace being the occasion for expressing congratulations, best wishes or condolences among those present.<sup>10</sup>

- d) Conferences of Bishops are likewise invited to prepare liturgical catecheses on the meaning of the rite of peace in the Roman liturgy and its proper realization in the celebration of the Holy Mass. In this regard, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments attaches to this Circular Letter, some helpful guidelines.
7. The intimate relationship between the *lex orandi* and the *lex credendi* must obviously be extended to the *lex vivendi*. Today, a serious obligation for Catholics in building a more just and peaceful world is accompanied by a deeper understanding of the Christian meaning of peace and this depends largely on the seriousness with which our particular Churches welcome and invoke the gift of peace and express it in the liturgical celebration. Productive steps forward on this matter must be insisted upon and urged because the quality of our Eucharistic participation depends upon it, as well as the efficacy of our being joined with those who are ambassadors and builders of peace, as expressed in the Beatitudes.<sup>11</sup>
8. In conclusion, the Bishops and, under their guidance, the priests are urged, therefore, to give careful consideration to these observations and to deepen the spiritual significance of the rite of peace in the celebration of the Holy Mass, in their spiritual and liturgical formation and in appropriate catechesis for the faithful. Christ is our peace,<sup>12</sup> that divine peace, announced by the prophets and by the angels, and which he brought to the world by means of his paschal mystery. This peace of the Risen Lord is invoked, preached and spread in the celebration, even by means of a human gesture, lifted up to the realm of the sacred.

*The Holy Father Pope Francis, on 7 June, 2014 approved and confirmed the contents of which is contained in this Circular Letter, prepared by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, and ordered its publication.*

*From the offices of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Rome, 8 June, 2014, the Solemnity of Pentecost.*

Antonio Card. CANIZARES LLOVERS

<sup>1</sup> *Jn* 14, 27.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Jn* 20, 19-23.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. MISSALE ROMANUM *ex decreto Ss. Concilii Tridentini restitutum summorum pontificum cura recognitum, Editio typica*, 1962, *Ritus servandlls*, X, 3.

<sup>4</sup> CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Istr., *Redemptionis sacramentum*, March 25, 2004, n. 71: AAS 96 (2004) 571.

<sup>5</sup> MISSALE ROMANUM, *ex decreto sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum, auctoritate Pauli Pp. VI promulgatum, Ioannis Pauli Pp. II cura recognitum*, editio typica tertia, diei 20 aprilis 2000, Typis Vaticanis, reimpressio emendata 2008, General Instruction of the Roman Missal, n. 82. Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Post-synod. Apost. Exhort., *Sacramentum caritatis*, February 22, 2007, n. 49 : AAS 99 (2007) 143.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Esort. Apost., *Sacramentum caritatis*, February 22, 2007, n. 49, footnote n. 150: AAS 99 (2007) 143.

<sup>7</sup> BENEDICT XVI, Esort. Apost., *Sacramentum caritatis*, February 22, 2007, n. 49: AAS 99 (2007) 143.

<sup>8</sup> MISSALE ROMANUM, *Orda Missae*, n. 128.

<sup>9</sup> In the Roman Rite, a song for peace is not foreseen by tradition because only the briefest of time is envisaged for the exchange of peace to those who are nearest. The chant for peace presumes, however, a much longer time for the exchange of peace.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. General Instruction on the Roman Missal, n. 82: "It is appropriate that each person, in a sober manner, offer the sign of peace only to those who are nearest"; n. 154: "The priest may give the Sign of Peace to the ministers but always remains within the sanctuary, so that the celebration is not disrupted. He may do the same if, for a reasonable cause, he wishes to offer the Sign of Peace to a small number of the faithful"; CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, Istr., *Redemptianis sacramentum*, March 25, 2004, n. 72: AAS 96 (2004) 572. 3

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Mt* 5: 9f.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Eph* 2: 14.



# ADDENDUM 3

## CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENT

### INSTRUCTION

#### *Redemptionis Sacramentum*

*On certain matters to be observed or to be avoided  
regarding the Most Holy Eucharist*

- [63.] “Within the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy, the reading of the Gospel, which is the “high point of the Liturgy of the Word”, [139] is reserved by the Church’s tradition to an ordained minister. [140] Thus it is not permitted for a layperson, even a religious, to proclaim the Gospel reading in the celebration of Holy Mass, nor in other cases in which the norms do not explicitly permit it. [141]
- [64.] The homily, which is given in the course of the celebration of Holy Mass and is a part of the Liturgy itself, [142] “should ordinarily be given by the Priest celebrant himself. He may entrust it to a concelebrating Priest or occasionally, according to circumstances, to a Deacon, but never to a layperson. [143] In particular cases and for a just cause, the homily may even be given by a Bishop or Priest who is present at the celebration but cannot concelebrate”. [144]
- [65.] It should be borne in mind that any previous norm that may have admitted non-ordained faithful to give the homily during the Eucharistic celebration is to be considered abrogated by the norm of canon 767 §1. [145] This practice is reprobated, so that it cannot be permitted to attain the force of custom.
- [66.] The prohibition of the admission of laypersons to preach within Mass applies also to seminarians, students of theological disciplines, and those who have assumed the function of those known as “pastoral assistants”; nor is there to be any expectation for any other kind of layperson, or group, or community, or association. [146]
- [67.] Particular care is to be taken so that the homily is firmly based upon the mysteries of salvation, expounding the mysteries of the Faith and the norms of Christian life from the biblical readings and liturgical texts throughout the course of the liturgical year and providing commentary on the texts of the Ordinary or the Proper of the Mass, or of some other rite of the Church. [147] It is clear that all interpretations of Sacred Scripture are to be referred back to Christ himself as the one upon whom the entire economy of salvation hinges, though this should be done in light of the specific context of the liturgical celebration. In the homily to be given, care is to be taken so that the light of Christ may shine upon life’s events. Even

so, this is to be done so as not to obscure the true and unadulterated word of God: for instance, treating only of politics or profane subjects, or drawing upon notions derived from contemporary pseudo-religious currents as a source. [148]

[68.] The diocesan Bishop must diligently oversee the preaching of the homily, [149] also publishing norms and distributing guidelines and auxiliary tools to the sacred ministers, and promoting meetings and other projects for this purpose so that they may have the opportunity to consider the nature of the homily more precisely and find help in its preparation.

---

All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

This instruction, prepared by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments by mandate of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II in collaboration with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, was approved by the same Pontiff on the Solemnity of St. Joseph, 19 March 2004, and he ordered it to be published and to be observed immediately by all concerned.

From the offices of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Rome, on the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, 25 March 2004.

**Francis Card. Arinze**  
*Prefect*

**Domenico Sorrentino**  
*Archbishop Secretary*

[139] *Missale Romanum*, General Instruction, n. 60.

[140] Cf. *ibidem*, nn. 59-60.

[141] Cf., e.g., *Rituale Romanum, ex decreto sacrosancti Oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II renovatum, auctoritate Pauli Pp. VI editum Ioannis Pauli Pp. II cura recognitum*: Ordo celebrandi Matrimonium, editio typica altera, 19 March 1990, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis 1991, n. 125; *Roman Ritual, renewed by decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and promulgated by authority of Pope Paul VI: Order for Anointing of the Sick and for their Pastoral Care, editio typica*, 7 December 1972, Vatican Polyglot Press, 1972, n. 72.

[142] Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 767 §1.

[143] Cf. *Missale Romanum, Institutio Generalis*, n. 66; cf. also the *Code of Canon Law*, can. 6, §1, 2; also can. 767 §1, regarding which other noteworthy prescriptions may be found in Congregation for the Clergy et al., *Instruction, Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Practical Provisions, art. 3 § 1: AAS 89 (1997) p. 865.

[144] *Missale Romanum, Institutio Generalis*, n. 66; cf. also the *Code of Canon Law*, can. 767 §1.

[145] Cf. Congregation for the Clergy et al., *Instruction, Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Practical Provisions, art. 3 §1: AAS 89 (1997) p. 865; cf. also the *Code of Canon Law*, can. 6 §1, 2; Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the *Code of Canon Law*, Response to dubium, 20 June 1987: AAS 79 (1987) p. 1249.

[146] Cf. Congregation for the Clergy et al., *Instruction, Ecclesiae de mysterio*, Practical Provisions, art. 3 § 1: AAS 89 (1997) pp. 864-865.

[147] Cf. Ecumenical Council of Trent, Session XXII, 17 September 1562, on the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Chapter 8: DS 1749; *Missale Romanum, Institutio Generalis*, n. 65.

[148] Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Allocution to a number of Bishops from the United States of America who had come to Rome for a visit "ad Limina Apostolorum"*, 28 May 1993, n. 2: AAS 86 (1994) p. 330.

[149] Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 386 §1.

*United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*

## CANON 766 - LAY PREACHING

On November 14, 2001, the Latin Church members of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved complementary legislation for canon 766 of the *Code of Canon Law* for the dioceses of the Latin Church of the United States.

The action was granted recognitio by the Congregation for Bishops in accord with article 82 of the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* and issued by decree of the Congregation for Bishops signed by His Eminence Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, Prefect, and His Excellency Most Reverend Franciscus Monterisi, Secretary, and dated November 27, 2001.

**Complementary Norm:** Preaching the Word of God is among the principal duties of those who have received the sacrament of orders (cc. 762-764). The lay faithful can be called to cooperate in the exercise of the Ministry of the Word (c. 759). In accord with canon 766 the National Conference of Catholic Bishops hereby decrees that the lay faithful may be permitted to exercise this ministry in churches and oratories, with due regard for the following provisions:

If necessity requires it in certain circumstances or it seems useful in particular cases, the diocesan bishop can admit lay faithful to preach, to offer spiritual conferences or give instructions in churches, oratories or other sacred places within his diocese, when he judges it to be to the spiritual advantage of the faithful.

In order to assist the diocesan bishop in making an appropriate pastoral decision (Interdicasterial Instruction, *Ecclesiae de Mysterio*, Article 2 §3), the following circumstances and cases are illustrative: the absence or shortage of clergy, particular language requirements, or the demonstrated expertise or experience of the lay faithful concerned.

The lay faithful who are to be admitted to preach in a church or oratory must be orthodox in faith, and well-qualified, both by the witness of their lives as Christians and by a preparation for preaching appropriate to the circumstances.

The diocesan bishop will determine the appropriate situations in accord with canon 772, §1. In providing for preaching by the lay faithful the diocesan bishop may never dispense from the norm which reserves the homily to the sacred ministers (c. 767, §1; cfr. Pontifical Commission for the Authentic Interpretation of the *Code of Canon Law*, 26 May 1987, in AAS 79 [1987], 1249). Preaching by the lay faithful may not take place within the Celebration of the Eucharist at the moment reserved for the homily.

As President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I hereby decree that the effective date of this decree for all the dioceses of the Latin Church in the United States will be January 15, 2002.

Given at the offices of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, DC, on December 13, 2001.

Most Reverend Wilton D. Gregory  
Bishop of Belleville  
President, USCCB

Reverend Monsignor William P. Fay  
General Secretary





# ADDENDUM 4

## APOSTOLIC LETTER IN THE FORM OF *“Motu Proprio”* SUMMORUM PONTIFICUM

### BENEDICT XVI

---

*The following **unofficial** translation has been prepared by the USCCB Secretariat for the Liturgy. Only the Latin original of the Apostolic Letter may be considered the official text.*

It has always been the care of the Supreme Pontiffs until the present time, that the Church of Christ offer worthy worship to the Divine Majesty “for the praise and glory of his name” and “for the good of all his Holy Church.”

As from time immemorial so in the future the principle shall be respected “according to which each particular Church must be in accord with the universal Church not only regarding the doctrine of the faith and sacramental signs, but also as to the usages universally handed down by apostolic and unbroken tradition. These are to be maintained not only so that errors may be avoided, but also so that the faith may be passed on in its integrity, since the Church’s rule of prayer (*lex orandi*) corresponds to her rule of belief (*lex credendi*).”<sup>1</sup>

Among Pontiffs who have displayed such care there excels the name of Saint Gregory the Great, who saw to the transmission to the new peoples of Europe both of the Catholic faith and of the treasures of worship and culture accumulated by the Romans in preceding centuries. He gave instructions for the form of the Sacred Liturgy of both the Sacrifice of the Mass and of the Divine Office as was celebrated in the City. He made the greatest efforts to foster monks and nuns, who militating under the Rule of St. Benedict, in every place along with the proclamation of the Gospel by their life likewise exemplified that most salutary expression of the Rule “let nothing be given precedence over the work of God” (ch. 43). In this way the sacred liturgy according to the Roman manner made fertile not only the faith and piety but also the culture of many peoples. Moreover it is evident that the Latin Liturgy in its various forms has stimulated in the spiritual life very many Saints in every century of the Christian age and strengthened in the virtue of religion so many peoples and made fertile their piety.

However, in order that the Sacred Liturgy might more efficaciously absolve its task, several others among the Roman Pontiffs in the course of the centuries have brought to bear particular concern, among whom Saint Pius V is eminent, who with great pastoral zeal, at the exhortation of the Council of Trent, renewed the worship of the whole Church, ensuring the publishing of liturgical books amended and “restored according to the norm of the Fathers” and put them into use in the Latin Church.

It is clear that among the liturgical books of the Roman Rite the *Roman Missal* is eminent. It grew in the city of Rome and gradually down through the centuries took on forms which are very similar to those in vigor in recent generations.

“It was this same goal that as time passed the Roman Pontiffs pursued, adapting or establishing liturgical rites and books to new ages and then at the start of the present century undertaking a more ample restoration.”<sup>2</sup> It was in this manner that our Predecessors Clement VIII, Urban VIII, St. Pius X,<sup>3</sup> Benedict XV, Pius XII and the Blessed John XXIII acted.

In more recent time, however, the Second Vatican Council expressed the desire that with due respect and reverence for divine worship it be restored and adapted to the needs of our age. Prompted by this desire, our Predecessor the Supreme Pontiff Paul VI in 1970 approved for the Latin Church liturgical books restored and partly renewed, and that throughout the world translated into many vernacular languages, have been welcomed by the Bishops and by the priests and faithful. John Paul II revised the third typical edition of the Roman Missal. Thus the Roman Pontiffs have acted so that “this liturgical edifice, so to speak,...might once again appear splendid in its dignity and harmony.”<sup>4</sup>

However in some regions not a small number of the faithful have been and remain attached with such great love and affection to the previous liturgical forms, which had profoundly imbued their culture and spirit, that the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II, prompted by pastoral concern for these faithful, in 1984 by means of a special Indult *Quattuor abhinc annos*, drawn up by the Congregation for Divine Worship, granted the faculty to use the Roman Missal published by John XXIII in 1962; while in 1988 John Paul II once again, by means of the *Motu Proprio Ecclesia Dei*, exhorted the Bishops to make wide and generous use of this faculty in favor of all the faithful requesting it.

Having pondered at length the pressing requests of these faithful to our Predecessor John Paul II, having also heard the Fathers of the Consistory of Cardinals held on 23 March 2006, having pondered all things, invoked the Holy Spirit and placed our confidence in the help of God, by this present Apostolic Letter we DECREE the following.

Art. 1. The Roman Missal promulgated by Paul VI is to be regarded as the ordinary expression of the law of prayer (*lex orandi*) of the Catholic Church of Latin Rite, while the Roman Missal promulgated by St. Pius V and published again by Blessed John XXIII as the extraordinary expression of the law of prayer (*lex orandi*) and on account of its venerable and ancient use let it enjoy due honor. These two expressions of the law of prayer (*lex orandi*) of the Church in no way lead to a division in the law of prayer (*lex orandi*) of the Church, for they are two uses of the one Roman Rite.

Hence it is licit to celebrate the Sacrifice of the Mass in accordance with the typical edition of the Roman Missal promulgated by Blessed John XXIII in 1962 and never abrogated, as the extraordinary form of the Liturgy of the Church. The conditions laid down by the previous documents *Quattuor abhinc annos* and *Ecclesia Dei* for the use of this Missal are replaced by what follows:

Art. 2. In Masses celebrated without the people, any priest of Latin rite, whether secular or religious, can use the Roman Missal published by Pope Blessed John XXIII in 1962 or the Roman Missal promulgated by the Supreme Pontiff Paul VI in 1970, on any day in the Sacred Triduum. For celebration in accordance with one or the other Missal, a priest does not require any permission, neither from the Apostolic See nor his own Ordinary.

Art. 3. If Communities or Institutes of Consecrated Life or Societies of Apostolic Life of either pontifical or diocesan rite desire to have a celebration of Holy Mass in accordance with the edition of the Roman Missal promulgated in 1962 in the conventual or

community celebration in their own oratories, this is allowed. If an individual community or the entire Institute or Society wants to have such celebrations often or habitually or permanently, the matter is to be decided by the Major Superiors according to the norm of law and the particular laws and statutes.

Art. 4. With due observance of law, even Christ's faithful who spontaneously request it, may be admitted to celebrations of Holy Mass mentioned in art. 2 above.

Art. 5. 1. In parishes where a group of faithful attached to the previous liturgical tradition exists stably, let the pastor willingly accede to their requests for the celebration of the Holy Mass according to the rite of the Roman Missal published in 1962. Let him see to it that the good of these faithful be harmoniously reconciled with ordinary pastoral care of the parish, under the governance of the Bishop according to canon 392, avoiding discord and fostering the unity of the whole Church.

2. Celebration according to the Missal of Blessed John XXIII can take place on weekdays, while on Sundays and on feast days there may be one such celebration.

3. Let the pastor permit celebrations in this extraordinary form for faithful or priests who request it, even in particular circumstances such as weddings, funerals or occasional celebrations, for example pilgrimages.

4. Priests using the Missal of Blessed John XXIII must be worthy and not impeded by law.

5. In churches, which are neither parochial nor conventual, it is the Rector of the church who grants the above-mentioned permission.

Art. 6. In Masses celebrated with the people according to the Missal of Blessed John XXIII, the Readings can be proclaimed even in the vernacular, using editions that have received the recognitio of the Apostolic See.

Art. 7. Where some group of lay faithful, mentioned in art. 5 no. 1 does not obtain what it requests from the pastor, it should inform the diocesan Bishop of the fact. The Bishop is earnestly requested to grant their desire. If he cannot provide for this kind of celebration, let the matter be referred to the Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei.

Art. 8. A Bishop who desires to make provision for requests for lay faithful of this kind, but is for various reasons prevented from doing so, may refer the matter to the Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei, which should give him advice and help.

Art. 9 1. Likewise a pastor may, all things duly considered, grant permission to use the older ritual in administering the Sacraments of Baptism, Matrimony, Penance and the Anointing of the Sick, as the good of souls may suggest.

2. Ordinaries are granted the faculty to celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation using the former Roman Pontifical, as the good of souls may suggest.

3. It is lawful for clerics in holy orders to use even the Roman Breviary promulgated by Blessed John XXIII in 1962.

Art 10. It is lawful for the local Ordinary, if he judges it opportune, to erect a personal parish according to the norm of canon 518 for celebrations according to the older form of the Roman rite or appoint a rector or chaplain, with due observance of the requirements of law.

Art. 11. The Pontifical Commission *Ecclesia Dei*, erected in 1988 by John Paul II, continues to carry out its function. This Commission is to have the form, duties and norm for action that the Roman Pontiff may wish to assign to it.

Art. 12. The same Commission, in addition to the faculties it already enjoys, will exercise the authority of the Holy See by maintaining vigilance over the observance and application of these dispositions.

Whatever is decreed by Us by means of this *Motu Proprio*, we order to be firm and ratified and to be observed as of 14 September this year, the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, all things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, on 7 July in the Year of Our Lord 2007, the Third of Our Pontificate.

BENEDICT XVI

---

<sup>1</sup> *General Instruction of the Roman Missal, third edition, 2002*, n.397

<sup>2</sup> Pope John Paul II, Ap. Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 4 December 1988, n.3: AAS 81 (1989) p.899.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>4</sup> Pope St. Pius X, *Motu Proprio A bhinc duos annos*, 23 October 1913: AAS 5 (1913) 449-450; cf. Pope John Paul II, Ap. Letter *Vicesimus quintus annus*, 4 December 1988, n.3: AAS 81 (1989) p.899.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Motu proprio Ecclesia Dei adflicta*, 2 July 1988, n.6: AAS 80 (1988) p. 1498.

# LETTER OF POPE BENEDICT XVI

## *Accompanying the Apostolic Letter Summorum Pontificum*

My dear Brother Bishops,

With great trust and hope, I am consigning to you as Pastors the text of a new Apostolic Letter “*Motu Proprio data*” on the use of the Roman liturgy prior to the reform of 1970. The document is the fruit of much reflection, numerous consultations and prayer.

News reports and judgments made without sufficient information have created no little confusion. There have been very divergent reactions ranging from joyful acceptance to harsh opposition, about a plan whose contents were in reality unknown.

This document was most directly opposed on account of two fears, which I would like to address somewhat more closely in this letter.

In the first place, there is the fear that the document detracts from the authority of the Second Vatican Council, one of whose essential decisions — the liturgical reform — is being called into question.

This fear is unfounded. In this regard, it must first be said that the Missal published by Paul VI and then republished in two subsequent editions by John Paul II, obviously is and continues to be the normal Form — the *Forma ordinaria* — of the Eucharistic Liturgy. The last version of the *Missale Romanum* prior to the Council, which was published with the authority of Pope John XXIII in 1962 and used during the Council, will now be able to be used as a *Forma extraordinaria* of the liturgical celebration. It is not appropriate to speak of these two versions of the Roman Missal as if they were “two Rites” Rather, it is a matter of a twofold use of one and the same rite.

As for the use of the 1962 Missale as a *Forma extraordinaria* of the liturgy of the Mass, I would like to draw attention to the fact that this Missal was never juridically abrogated and, consequently, in principle, was always permitted. At the time of the introduction of the new Missal, it did not seem necessary to issue specific norms for the possible use of the earlier Missal. Probably it was thought that it would be a matter of a few individual cases which would be resolved, case by case, on the local level. Afterwards, however, it soon became apparent that a good number of people remained strongly attached to this usage of the Roman Rite, which had been familiar to them from childhood. This was especially the case in countries where the liturgical movement had provided many people with a notable liturgical formation and a deep, personal familiarity with the earlier Form of the liturgical celebration. We all know that, in the movement led by Archbishop Lefebvre, fidelity to the old Missal became an external mark of identity; the reasons for the break, which arose over this, however, were at a deeper level. Many people who clearly accepted the binding character of the Second Vatican Council, and were faithful to the Pope and the Bishops, nonetheless also desired to recover the form of the sacred liturgy that was dear to them. This occurred above all because in many places celebrations were not faithful to the prescriptions of the new Missal, but the latter actually was understood as authorizing or even requiring creativity, which frequently led to deformations of the liturgy which were hard to bear. I am speaking from experience, since I too lived through that period with all its hopes and its confusion. And I have seen how arbitrary deformations of the liturgy caused deep pain to individuals totally rooted in the faith of the Church.

Pope John Paul II thus felt obliged to provide, in his *Motu Proprio Ecclesia Dei* (2 July 1988), guidelines for the use of the 1962 Missal; that document, however, did not contain detailed

prescriptions but appealed in a general way to the generous response of Bishops towards the “legitimate aspirations” of those members of the faithful who requested this usage of the Roman Rite. At the time, the Pope primarily wanted to assist the Society of Saint Pius X to recover full unity with the Successor of Peter, and sought to heal a wound experienced ever more painfully. Unfortunately this reconciliation has not yet come about. Nonetheless, a number of communities have gratefully made use of the possibilities provided by the *Motu Proprio*. On the other hand, difficulties remain concerning the use of the 1962 Missal outside of these groups, because of the lack of precise juridical norms, particularly because Bishops, in such cases, frequently feared that the authority of the Council would be called into question. Immediately after the Second Vatican Council it was presumed that requests for the use of the 1962 Missal would be limited to the older generation which had grown up with it, but in the meantime it has clearly been demonstrated that young persons too have discovered this liturgical form, felt its attraction and found in it a form of encounter with the Mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist, particularly suited to them. Thus the need has arisen for a clearer juridical regulation which had not been foreseen at the time of the 1988 *Motu Proprio*. The present Norms are also meant to free Bishops from constantly having to evaluate anew how they are to respond to various situations.

In the second place, the fear was expressed in discussions about the awaited *Motu Proprio*, that the possibility of a wider use of the 1962 Missal would lead to disarray or even divisions within parish communities. This fear also strikes me as quite unfounded. The use of the old Missal presupposes a certain degree of liturgical formation and some knowledge of the Latin language; neither of these is found very often. Already from these concrete presuppositions, it is clearly seen that the new Missal will certainly remain the ordinary Form of the Roman Rite, not only on account of the juridical norms, but also because of the actual situation of the communities of the faithful.

It is true that there have been exaggerations and at times social aspects unduly linked to the attitude of the faithful attached to the ancient Latin liturgical tradition. Your charity and pastoral prudence will be an incentive and guide for improving these. For that matter, the two Forms of the usage of the Roman Rite can be mutually enriching; new Saints and some of the new Prefaces can and should be inserted in the old Missal. The “*Ecclesia Dei*” Commission, in contact with various bodies devoted to the *usus antiquior*, will study the practical possibilities in this regard. The celebration of the Mass according to the Missal of Paul VI will be able to demonstrate, more powerfully than has been the case hitherto, the sacrality which attracts many people to the former usage. The most sure guarantee that the Missal of Paul VI can unite parish communities and be loved by them consists in its being celebrated with great reverence in harmony with the liturgical directives. This will bring out the spiritual richness and the theological depth of this Missal.

I now come to the positive reason which motivated my decision to issue this *Motu Proprio* updating that of 1988. It is a matter of coming to an interior reconciliation in the heart of the Church. Looking back over the past, to the divisions which in the course of the centuries have rent the Body of Christ, one continually has the impression that, at critical moments when divisions were coming about, not enough was done by the Church’s leaders to maintain or regain reconciliation and unity. One has the impression that omissions on the part of the Church have had their share of blame for the fact that these divisions were able to harden. This glance at the past imposes an obligation on us today: to make every effort to make it possible for all those who truly desire unity to remain in that unity or to attain it anew. I think of a sentence in the Second Letter to the Corinthians, where Paul writes: “Our mouth is open to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. In return ...widen your hearts also!”(2 Cor 6:11-13). Paul was certainly speaking in another context, but

his exhortation can and must touch us too, precisely on this subject. Let us generously open our hearts and make room for everything that the faith itself allows.

There is no contradiction between the two editions of the Roman Missal. In the history of the liturgy there is growth and progress, but no rupture. What earlier generations held as sacred, remains sacred and great for us too, and it cannot be all of a sudden entirely forbidden or even considered harmful. It behooves all of us to preserve the riches which have developed in the Church's faith and prayer, and to give them their proper place. Needless to say, in order to experience full communion, also the priests of the communities adhering to the former usage cannot, as a matter of principle, exclude celebrating according to the new books. The total exclusion of the new rite would not in fact be consistent with the recognition of its value and holiness.

In conclusion, dear Brothers, I very much wish to stress that these new norms do not in any way lessen your own authority and responsibility, either for the liturgy or for the pastoral care of your faithful. Each Bishop, in fact, is the moderator of the liturgy in his own Diocese (*cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 22: "Sacrae Liturgiae moderatio ab Ecclesiae auctoritate unice pendet quae quidem est apud Apostolicam Sedem et, ad normam iuris, apud Episcopum"*).

Nothing is taken away, then, from the authority of the Bishop, whose role remains that of being watchful that all is done in peace and serenity. Should some problem arise which the parish priest cannot resolve, the local Ordinary will always be able to intervene, in full harmony, however, with all that has been laid down by the new norms of the *Motu Proprio*.

Furthermore, I invite you, dear Brothers, to send to the Holy See an account of your experiences, three years after this *Motu Proprio* has taken effect. If truly serious difficulties come to light, ways to remedy them can be sought.

Dear Brothers, with gratitude and trust, I entrust to your hearts as Pastors these pages and the norms of the *Motu Proprio*. Let us always be mindful of the words of the Apostle Paul addressed to the presbyters of Ephesus: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the Church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son" (Acts 20:28).

I entrust these norms to the powerful intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, and I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you, dear Brothers, to the parish priests of your dioceses, and to all the priests, your co-workers, as well as to all your faithful

Given at Saint Peter's, 7 July 2007.

BENEDICT XVI





---

# ADDENDUM 5

## ELEMENTS OF A CONFIRMATION PREPARATION PROGRAM

### I. DEVELOPING FAITH/HEARING THE MESSAGE:

---

This is a two-year formation program that is intended to be taught to young people in eighth and ninth grades.

It is important that candidates for Confirmation understand the basic teachings of the Catholic Church as well as their own level of faith development. Instructional content for Confirmation preparation should focus directly on Confirmation and should include:

- **an understanding of Confirmation as a sacrament of initiation with special connections to Baptism and First Eucharist.**

The Sacrament of Confirmation is the completion of baptism in which the candidates receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and are strengthened in their resolve to follow Christ. In the Eucharist their initiation is completed as they join the community of faithful in receiving the Body and Blood of our Lord.

- **an understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual and of the Church.**

The seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, Fear of the Lord) are divine sources of strength and sustenance in the Christian life. The candidate needs to learn ways of remaining open to the power of the Holy Spirit, growing in relationship with God through prayer.

- **a greater awareness of the person of Jesus and his teachings as found in Scripture.**

The Church teaches that Jesus Christ is true God and true man. Through Him we approach the Father. The candidate needs to develop a personal relationship with Jesus, knowing Him as a friend with whom one journeys throughout life. Jesus models for us the virtues of love, forgiveness, justice, and compassion.

- **an understanding of the importance of social justice.**

We are called to live out our faith. St. Paul tells us that faith without works is dead. Using Jesus as our model, we are called to help those in need both locally and globally. Providing the theory of social justice as well as opportunities for service will help the candidate find ways to contribute to the world.

- **an understanding of the Catholic Church: its Divine origin, Sacraments, doctrines, history, and hierarchical structure.**

An understanding of the seven Sacraments (Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony) is essential to knowledge of the Church. The doctrines of the Church, as found in the Nicene Creed, provide the candidate with a

working knowledge of the beliefs of the Church. A summarized history, as well as knowledge of the Church's organization highlights the basic movements of the Church over time. In order for one to understand the present Church, one needs to know the Church's history beginning in apostolic times.

- **an understanding of the moral teachings of the Catholic Church including the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes.**

The Church offers a way of life based upon the teachings of Jesus Christ. Catholics understand the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes as God's revealed norms and guides for Christian living. The Church has a body of moral teachings, especially concerning sexuality, medical ethics, and justice which help form the candidate's conscience in living an upright life. Specific issues including the virtue of chastity need to be taught. Life needs to be respected from conception until natural death. Sin needs to be taught as alienation from God and forgiveness of sin is offered through the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation.

- **an understanding of the structure of the Mass and the manner for participating in it.**

Attendance at Sunday Mass is essential to the life of the Catholic. It is the way in which we participate in the life of Christ. Therefore, much time should be devoted to the structure of the Eucharist, the liturgical year, and ways in which one can take part in the Eucharist through various ministries. The Real Presence of Christ, body, blood, soul and divinity, is found in the Eucharist.

- **an understanding of prayer and its importance in our lives.**

Developing a relationship with God goes to the core of any religious education program. Helping the candidates in this regard should be done through examples of people of prayer as well as various modes of prayer. The Sunday Eucharist is to be shown as the center of their Catholic Christian lives. It is important to help the candidates realize that God is in their lives even when things may appear otherwise.

- **a working knowledge of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*.**

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* has been written as the normative guide of Catholic teaching. It is a guide for all people who have questions about their faith. Due to this fact, it should be presented as a resource that the candidates can use throughout their lives. Also, the *Compendium to the Catechism of the Catholic Church* is to be recommended to the students as a resource for on-going faith formation.

- **an understanding of Christian lifestyles.**

The Students need to discern his or her gifts and find ways to contribute positively to society. The students should be encouraged to discern whether God is calling them to a priestly or religious vocation. A special emphasis on marriage and its permanence needs to be presented as well. A one-day retreat experience is strongly recommended as part of the preparation program. The retreat team should include those from the peer group as well as adults and catechists from the parish community.

---

## II. BUILDING COMMUNITY / BELONGING TO THE CHURCH:

---

While preparing for Confirmation, it is necessary for the parish to develop and foster a sense of belonging for young people in the faith community. The parish community plays a vital role in this initiation process by committing itself to sustain, encourage, and nurture the total personal and spiritual lives of its young people. Active membership and involvement by adult members of the community is important in the formation of these young people. At the same time, they should be called to regular, active participation in the liturgy, most especially at Sunday mass.

---

## III. SERVING GOD’S KINGDOM /WITNESSING JUSTICE AND LOVE IN ACTION:

---

The parish community should provide opportunities which help to form its young people to lead an active Christian lifestyle recognizing that full initiation as a Catholic challenges all of us to service as a way of life. Opportunities for the development and sharing of individual gifts and talents are important to the Confirmation process. Such opportunities should be provided both within the context of parish ministries, i.e. lector, musician, catechist, as well as in the service to the poor, elderly, and disadvantaged.

In order for service projects to be viewed as more than simple requirements to earn a stated number of hours, they need to be well planned. Time should be given in preparation and dialogue beforehand as well as in discussing the outcomes and implications after the projects occur.

---

## IV. AFFIRMING ADOLESCENCE / NURTURING YOUNG PEOPLE:

---

Many young people will come forth with questions and doubts about their faith and prior religious experiences. Others will enter with well-developed convictions and much enthusiasm. All young people need to feel positive affirmation for their current level of development, and parish programs must be developed to meet them where they are in this process.

Information about appropriate materials and resources may be obtained by contacting the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis.

---

## ROLES OF THOSE INVOLVED WITH CONFIRMATION

### *The candidate’s role:*

- To be willing, and have a desire, to enter into the process.
- To keep an open mind, always seeking the Truth.
- To recognize that he/she has the choice to stop at any point within the process if he/she is unable to make the commitment necessary to be confirmed and that he/she may return when ready to continue.

### *The parents’ role:*

- To encourage, support, and affirm their child’s involvement in the Confirmation process.

- To attend any orientation sessions, liturgical rites, and practices associated with the Confirmation process.
- To advise their child regarding the choice of a sponsor.

***The sponsor's role: (as identified by the Code Canon Law)***

- The sponsor has the same roles as the parent plus this person should be at least sixteen years of age and be a fully initiated Catholic who has celebrated Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation and be someone who practices his/her faith.
- This person must also be able to receive the Holy Eucharist at the Confirmation ceremony.
- A parent may not be a sponsor.

***The community's role:***

- To support youth before, during, and after Confirmation.
- To integrate youth into the life of the whole Church.
- To have a mission statement for youth ministry and to communicate it clearly to all in the parish.

***The role of the priest/administrator:***

- To encourage parents, sponsors, and the community to take an active part in the process, as well as in the process of growing in their own understanding of their faith.
- To be a real presence in the lives of the young people of the parish in as many ways as possible, i.e. visiting group meetings, coming to retreats, supporting youth at liturgies.
- To conduct a personal interview with each candidate in which he can acknowledge the young person's participation in the process and share thoughts on ways he/she might participate in the life of the parish after the reception of Confirmation.

## DELAYING CONFIRMATION

If there is a question about a candidate's readiness for Confirmation, the decision to delay should not be made hastily or arbitrarily. Consequently, the Confirmation interviews should be scheduled in such a way as to permit adequate time for decision making before the celebration of the sacrament. This interview should help the candidate articulate their personal desire for the Sacrament and manifest their readiness to receive this Sacrament.

The pastor/administrator, in consultation with the candidate, parents, and catechetical staff, will ultimately make the decision regarding the delay. This should be done with sensitivity and the aim of eliciting greater openness to the grace of the Sacrament of Confirmation, and with a conscious awareness that this Sacrament, like all the Sacraments, is an unmerited gift of God.