



**Diocese of Trenton**

# **Sacrament Guidelines**

**First Penance  
First Eucharist  
Confirmation**

*A Comprehensive Guide  
for  
Preparation  
and  
Celebration*

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January 25, 2016  
Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul

### **DECREE**

As Bishop of the Diocese of Trenton, recognizing the need for clarity in teaching the Roman Catholic faith and for consistency in pastoral practice throughout the Diocese in a variety of ecclesial settings, I hereby promulgate these “Sacrament Guidelines for First Penance, First Eucharist and Confirmation: A Comprehensive Guide for Preparation and Celebration” as normative for use throughout the Diocese of Trenton. They are to be implemented, as the title suggests, as “guidelines” for the preparation of teaching regarding the nature, purpose and administration of the Sacraments concerned according to the current approved rituals of the Roman Catholic Church. Such teaching should be adapted, without compromising the truth of its content, to the age and developmental needs and circumstances of the learner and should always recognize the canonical responsibilities and prerogatives of the pastor of the parish as well as the role and responsibilities of parents.

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Trenton on this, January 25, 2016, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul.

Most Reverend David M. O’Connell, C.M., J.C.D.  
Bishop of Trenton

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## Abbreviations and Bibliography

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| AA    | <i>Apostolicam actuositatem</i> : The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity. 1965   |
| AG    | <i>Ad Gentes Divinitus</i> : The Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity. 1965   |
| CCC   | Catechism of the Catholic Church. Second Edition. (Libreria Editrice Vaticana). 1997  |
| CT    | <i>Catechesi Tradendae</i> on Catechesis in Our Time. 1979  |
| CLE   | Circular Letter Concerning the Preparation and Celebration of the Easter Feasts. 1988   |
| CIC   | <i>Codex iuris canonici</i> : Code of Canon Law. 1983   |
| GDC   | General Directory for Catechesis. 1998  |
| GIRM  | General Instruction of the Roman Missal   |
| GPD   | Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities. 2002   |
|       | Guidelines from the Dioceses of Camden, Metuchen, Paterson, Raleigh<br>Draft Directory: Archdiocese of Philadelphia. 1998                           |
| LG    | <i>Lumen gentium</i> : The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. 1964  |
| NCD   | National Catechetical Directory. 1979   |
| NDC   | National Directory <i>for</i> Catechesis. 2005  |
| NSC   | National Statutes for the Catechumenate. 1986   |
| NDRHC | Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion Under Both Kinds for the Dioceses of the United States of America. CDWDS. March 22, 2002 |
|       | Parish Religious Education Administration Manual: Diocese of Trenton. 2012  |
|       | The Rites of the Catholic Church. Volume One and Two. Study Edition. 1990   |
| RCIA  | Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults  |
|       | The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: Diocese of Trenton: A Practical Guide. 2001   |
| RP    | The Rite of Penance. 2009   |
|       | The Roman Pontifical In Accord with THE ROMAN MISSAL Third typical Edition. 2012 (RC Rite of Confirmation)  |
| SC    | <i>Sacrosanctum concilium</i> : The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. 1963  |

Statutes

The Statutes of the Fourth Synod of the Diocese of Trenton. Revised and Promulgated December 8, 2014

The Holy Bible. Revised Standard Version. Second Catholic Edition. Ignatius Edition. 2006

The Monitor: Series of Articles on The Sacraments. Bishop David M. O’Connell, C.M. 2014

- The Sacrament of Penance:
  - Penance is a Sacrament of Healing. May 8, 2014
  - “Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more. (John 8:11)” (Part II). May 22, 2014
  - “What I Have Done and What I Have Failed to Do”; How to Go to Confession. (Part III). June 5, 2014
- The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist:
  - Do This in Memory of Me. April 9, 2014
  - Do This in Memory of Me (Part II). April 23, 2014
- Confirmation:
  - Strength for the Christian Catholic journey through life. March 27, 2014

## Introduction

“The whole liturgical life of the Church revolves around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments.” (CCC, no. 1113)

“Sacraments are ‘powers that come forth’ from the Body of Christ... They are actions of the Holy Spirit at work in his Body, the Church. They are ‘the masterworks of God’ in the new and everlasting covenant.” (CCC, no. 1116)

“The purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify men, to build up the Body of Christ and, finally, to give worship to God.” (SC, no. 59)

The following “Sacrament Guidelines” have two purposes:

- 1) to provide, in one set of “Guidelines”, the documents of the Church and Diocese that impact the preparation and celebration of the Sacraments of **First Penance/Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation.**
- 2) to help catechists and Catholic school teachers have ready access to the materials that affect the catechetical and liturgical celebrations of the Sacraments of **First Penance/Reconciliation, First Eucharist and Confirmation.** These “Guidelines” are also a help to the Pastors, Catholic School Principals, and Catechetical Leaders who oversee and guide the catechesis and celebration for these Sacraments.

This Introduction section of the “Guidelines” includes material *common* to all the Sacraments.

### Initial Preparation for the Sacraments

The first years of a child’s life are important preparation for her/his entry into formal catechesis. The program chosen for the immediate preparation for sacraments will continue to enhance the child’s faith life and formally prepare her/him for the reception of First Penance/Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation.

This program may take place in the

- Parish Religious Education Program
- Parish Catholic School
- Private Catholic School
- Regional Catholic School
- Home School Setting

## **Multicultural Catechesis**

From the General Directory for Catechesis (GDC)

#208: “Inculturation of the faith, under certain aspects, is a linguistic task. This implies that catechesis respect and value the language proper to the message, especially biblical language, as well as the historical-traditional language of the Church (*creed, liturgy*) and doctrinal language (*dogmatic formulations*). It is also necessary for catechesis to enter into dialogue with forms and terms proper to the culture of those to whom it is addressed. Finally, catechesis must stimulate new expression of the Gospel in the culture in which it has been planted. In the process of enculturating the Gospel, catechesis should not be afraid to use traditional formulae and the technical language of the faith, but it must express its meaning and demonstrate its existential importance. Similarly, it is also the duty of catechesis ‘to speak a language suited to today’s children and young people in general and to other categories of people – the language of students, intellectuals and scientists; the language of the illiterate or of people of simple culture; the language of the handicapped, and so on.’”

### **All celebrations of the sacraments should follow the approved liturgical norms.**

Parish policies for preparing and celebrating sacraments for the first time should be clear, written, and shared with the families of the candidates early in the time for preparation. All procedures must be based on sound liturgical, catechetical, and pastoral principles and should, through dialogue with pastors, parents, catechists/teachers, and liturgical planners, achieve a pattern that is somewhat consistent from year to year.

Children who are retained in a grade for academic reasons may not automatically be excluded from entering into preparation for a sacrament.

### **Textbooks and Supplemental Materials**

Textbooks and materials used for sacramental preparation are chosen by the Pastor and the Catechetical Leader (Director/Coordinator/Administrator of Religious Education), in consultation with the principal of the Catholic School (where applicable). The materials need to be in conformity with the USCCB Guidelines (with an Imprimatur, Nihil Obstat and Declaration of Conformity [where applicable]).

### **Retreat and Prayer Experiences**

Catechesis in the liturgical celebrations, the deepening of the prayer life of those preparing to celebrate sacraments, and developing a life of service to God’s people is integral to ongoing formation in the faith. Retreats and prayer experiences may be considered part of sacramental preparation. Service and the Works of Mercy invite the candidates to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church and bring that joy into the world as faithful Christians living in society.

## Roles

### Role of Parents

*In this document parents refers to parent(s)/guardian(s)/step-parent(s).*

The role of parents and families is always of primary importance in the sacramental preparation of their children. It is the right and responsibility of parents to decide when their children are ready to receive sacraments (canon 914). Parents themselves should be ready to commit to the entire process of preparation offered by the parish community.

“Parents are the most influential agents of catechesis for their children. They have a unique responsibility for the education of their children; they are the first educators, or catechists. They catechize primarily by the witness of their Christian lives and by their love for the faith. One way that parents communicate Christian values and attitudes to their children is by loving each other within the context of a Christian marriage and their love for Christ and his Church. Their participation in the life of the parish – above all in the Sunday Eucharist – their willingness to evangelize and serve others, and their dedication to daily prayer demonstrate the authenticity of their profession of faith.” (NDC, 54C)

It is in the home that the relationship of the sacraments to the children’s lives is made most clear. Families should receive not only practical information concerning the preparation for sacraments, but also opportunities for their own personal spiritual preparation for the sacramental celebrations and catechesis concerning the Church’s sacramental life. Parents and families with particular pastoral concerns (i.e. family crisis, alienation from the Church) need to receive some assistance to enable them to participate fruitfully in the celebration of the sacraments.

“Adult catechesis, designed especially for parents, also helps them nourish their own faith, as well as that of their children. Such programs help parents to understand important issues in their own lives and the lives of their children, such as the preparation for reception of the sacraments or questions raised by particular moral concerns in the light of the Catholic faith. This enables them to practice the faith in their everyday lives. These programs that prepare parents whose children will be receiving sacraments should encourage parents to ensure that their children receive formal catechetical instruction in programs sponsored by the parish.” (NDC, 54C)

“When formally participating in the catechesis of their children, parents must be mindful of the preeminent right of the Church to specify the content of authentic catechesis. They always have an obligation to catechize according to the teaching authority of the Church.” (NCD, #212)

Parents need catechetical family activities to share with their children at home. Every effort should be made to familiarize parents with the plan for the faith formation of their children. This plan needs to be adapted to the particular culture and demographics of the parish’s families. Every effort should be made to support parents in their role as the primary educators of their children in the ways of faith. If the axiom “religion is more caught than taught” proves true, then catechesis will remain incomplete until it is reinforced by and translated into practical skills integrated into the children’s everyday lifestyle.

“Children must be educated, too, in such fashion that transcending the family circle, they may open their minds to both ecclesiastical and temporal communities. They should be so involved in the local community of the parish that they will acquire a consciousness of being living and active members of the People of God.” (AA, no. 30)

As the first educators of their children parents should be encouraged to

- share their own faith story with their children
- participate in Sunday Eucharist with their children
- model a Christian commitment of prayer, community, worship, and service
- be committed to help their children to participate fully on a regular basis in the parish faith formation program
- pray for, and with their children

### **Formation Programs for Parents**

The parents who first brought their child to the Church on the day of Baptism, now bring their child to be nourished at the Table of the Lord and be confirmed in faith through the Holy Spirit. Ideally, these parents are aided in passing on the faith to their children by the grace of God which continually flows from the Sacrament of Marriage they celebrated, and their ongoing participation in the sacramental life of the Church. In addition, the parents are to be supported by the parish through opportunities of faith formation. These programs should assist the parents to grow in their own understanding and appreciation of the sacramental life of the Church and enable them to catechize their child more effectively. In this way, the parish assists the parents in carrying out what is their right and responsibility.

Effective programs should include:

- recognition of the importance of weekly family participation in the Sunday Eucharist
- opportunities for parents to complete their own sacramental initiation, to explore becoming Catholic through the RCIA, or to discover how to bring their marriage into the Church
- an adult understanding of the theology and experience of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, in their lives
- understanding of the presence of Jesus in the Word, in the people assembled, in the celebrant, and most especially in the Eucharistic species which is His very Body and Blood
- instruction about the ritual, symbols, and structure of the each of the Sacraments

Attendance at parent sessions *must not be a condition* for the reception of any sacrament. It is to be strongly encouraged. However, in order to encourage attendance, parent sessions should be scheduled at a time which is most convenient for the majority of parents, and more than once if possible.

### **Role of the Parish Community**

“The immediate environment, normally the home, remains the principle setting in which children experience a relationship with God. But now the support of the larger community becomes

highly important to education in the faith, and its absence a more serious matter. Children accustomed to seeing others give witness to their faith are more likely to be ready for a fuller, more systematic presentation of concepts, forms, of liturgical expression, and religious practices.” (NCD, #178)

When children are baptized, the Church community promises to help parents foster their faith. It keeps this promise, first of all, by its own witness as a worshipping, believing, serving community and also by providing formal catechesis for adults, youth, and children. Adult catechesis, which deepens the faith of parents, helps them nurture faith in their children.

### **Role of the Pastor**

“Attentive to the norms established by the diocesan bishop, the pastor is to take care in a special way:

- That suitable catechesis is imparted for the celebration of the sacraments.” (NDC, 54B #1)

The pastor, in consultation with the Catechetical Leader and parents, determines the readiness of candidates for the reception of the sacraments. He will approve the Form of Confession used by the children in the preparation of the Sacrament which is in accordance with the ritual for the Sacrament of Penance approved by the USCCB and the Holy See. Confessors involved in the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation need to be advised of the Form and Act of Contrition taught.

### **Role of the Catechetical Leader: Director/Coordinator/Administrator of Religious Education (Parish Catechetical Leader)**

The Catechetical Leader (D/C/ARE) often assumes many responsibilities in parish sacramental preparation programs that were previously included in the pastor’s or parochial vicar’s role.

Specifically, when the Catechetical Leader serves as the chief coordinator of the sacramental preparation, celebration, and ongoing formation program, s/he must be ready and willing to collaborate with all those involved in the process. This collaboration may include, though not exclusively: Bishop’s secretary, pastor, parochial vicar, permanent deacon(s), school principal, school teachers and administrators, parish catechists, parish liturgist, music ministry, art and environment ministers, parents, staff from other parishes and even maintenance personnel.

The Catechetical Leader needs to be sensitive to parents’ different stages of faith development. Using care to respect their level of self-development, faith response, and desire to participate will enable the Catechetical Leader to empower parents to take responsibility for their child’s initiation. By acknowledging the role parents have already played in bringing their child to the faith, the Catechetical Leader can encourage them in future steps. Invitations to parents to participate in parent sacramental sessions need to be properly advertised.

It is necessary for the Catechetical Leader to see that all catechists and aides who will have significant contact with minors are in compliance with the Diocese of Trenton Child and Youth Protection Policies. Their names are to be given to the parish staff member who supervises this activity.

The Catechetical Leader should continuously evaluate the sacramental catechesis offered by the parish school teachers, parish catechists, and parents who have chosen to home school their children. Resources that will allow for optimum evangelization should be available to all those who prepare candidates for sacraments. It is further expected that they secure the Baptismal Certificate for each candidate for the Sacrament. Likewise, they will see that all children who received Confirmation and Eucharist have their names recorded in the parish register.

### **Role of the Catechist/Catholic School Teacher of Religion**

Catechists and Catholic School Teachers of Religion should encourage the child to approach the sacraments freely and regularly by modeling this practice in their own lives. Success in catechesis lies not only in the communication or teaching of accurate doctrinal content, but also in the personal witness of the catechist/teacher as a person of prayer, committed to the Christian message and its power to transform lives. Catechists/teachers by their example of Christian charity, forgiveness, and service to the faith community testify to their own deep and genuine faith. Catechists/teachers need to have a willingness to give time and attention to their own continued growth in faith and understanding by availing themselves of the opportunities for continued faith formation. Only men and women of faith can share faith with others.

“Like all the faithful, catechists are called to holiness. Because of their ministry and mission, however, the call to holiness has a particular urgency. The spiritual life of a catechist should be characterized by

- A love of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – and of Christ’s Church, our Holy Father, and God’s holy people
- A coherence and authenticity of life that is characterized by their faithful practice of the faith in a spirit of faith, charity, hope, courage, and joy
- Personal prayer and dedication to the evangelizing mission of the Church
- A missionary zeal by which they are fully convinced of the truth of the Catholic faith and enthusiastically proclaim it
- Active participation in their local parish community, especially by attendance at Sunday Eucharist
- A devotion to Mary, the first disciple and the model of catechists, and to the Most Holy Eucharist, the source of nourishment for catechists.” (NDC, 54B #8)

Catechists/teachers can build on the faith experience of the family by offering systematic knowledge of the faith. By personal witness and teaching, the catechist/teacher introduces the child to the larger community we call Church. Catechists/teachers make the faith tradition come alive by proclaiming the Word of God and by sharing personal stories of how God has touched their lives. By facilitating discussion in the classroom, catechists/teachers enable children to relate doctrinal instruction to their lived experience. When catechists listen to children tell their own stories and help the children relate their own experiences to the Gospel stories, catechists show how believing in Jesus makes a difference in their lives. In interviews or small group discussions, children need the opportunity to chat with someone other than their peers about how life is going and what difference Jesus and the faith community make in their world.

# The Sacrament of Penance

*Jesus said to them,*

*“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” (Mk. 2:17)*

## Introduction

Bishop David M. O’Connell, C.M. writes, “The forgiveness of sins is an essential part of the mission of the Catholic Church” (The Monitor, May 8, 2014). The Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation calls us to walk together again, to examine our past, do penance for our sins, and to recommit ourselves to live in peace, unity, justice, and freedom. The experience of the sacrament is at the heart of the Gospel message. On February 19, 2014, during his General Audience in Rome, Pope Francis said, “Jesus receives you with so much love. Be courageous and go to confession.” Penance is an encounter with a loving and forgiving God. Penance repairs and strengthens our relationship with God, the Church, self and helps us freely to receive the grace of the other Sacraments.

## Names for This Sacrament

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC, nos. 1422-1424) states that this Sacrament is called the sacrament *of conversion, of Penance, of confession, of forgiveness and of Reconciliation*. The Rite itself is called the Rite of Penance and has three individual Rites of Reconciliation. In these Sacrament Guidelines, the Sacrament is called the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation.

## Theology and History of the Sacrament

Bishop David M. O’Connell, C.M. writes “In the Sacrament of Penance, the ‘matter’ is sorrow for sin or contrition. The ‘form’ is how the Church deals with the matter; namely, confession to and absolution by the priest. These are the ‘outward signs’ of this sacrament in search of its grace, God’s mercy, and forgiveness.

In a famous passage of St. Matthew’s Gospel, known as ‘Peter’s Confession,’ Jesus asks his disciples who people say that he is. After several responses, Simon Peter exclaims, ‘You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.’ Jesus then says in reply: ‘You are Peter, and upon this rock, I will build my church; and the gates of Hell will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.’ (Mt. 16:18-19)

Peter is the chief of the apostles and, as such, is the foundation of Jesus’ Church. In this passage, Jesus identified Peter’s authority which scripture scholars say included many things, among them the forgiveness of sins. The point here is that ‘God will ratify and stand behind what Peter (and the others) enact.’ (Daniel J. Harrington, SJ. *Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Matthew*, pg. 248)

In the Gospel of St. John, when Jesus appears to the disciples after his resurrection, the sacred author recalls, He greeted them saying: ‘As the Father has sent me so I send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them: ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, their sins have been forgiven them. If you retain the sins of any, they have been

retained.’ (Jn. 20:21-24) Jesus again extends a special authority to the apostles who share in his divine mission: to forgive or retain sins.

From the Catholic Church’s perspective, these two passages form the heart of the institution of the Sacrament of Penance insofar as Jesus himself gives Peter and the apostles the power to forgive or retain sins. This power, the Catholic Church believes and teaches, has been handed down through the ages to those who succeed the apostles and are ordained by them.

The forgiveness of sins is an essential part of the mission of the Catholic Church. The earliest recorded teachings of the Christian community, the writings of the Father of the Church, popes, theologians, and the decrees of early Church councils affirm this belief. Although the ‘form’ of the Sacrament of Penance or ‘confession’ developed over the centuries, it was the Fourth Lateran Council that decreed in 1215:

Let everyone of the faithful of both sexes after he has reached the age of discretion, devoutly confess in private all the sins he has committed at least once a year to his own priest and let him strive to fulfill to the best of his ability penance enjoined upon him.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Council of Trent established more specific regulations about the manner in which sacramental confession and the absolution of sins would take place through the ministry of the priest, regulations that formed the core of the Sacrament of Penance as it was known and practiced until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 1917 Code of Canon Law, the Second Vatican Council, the 1983 Code of Canon Law and the Catechism of the Catholic Church further presented the Catholic Church’s teaching and practice of the Sacrament of Penance or sacramental confession, also called ‘The Sacrament of Reconciliation’ in ways with which we have become familiar.” (The Monitor, May 8, 2014)

### **Effects of Reception of the Sacrament**

In the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance, the Church reveals itself as the sacrament of God’s mercy in the world but also as an “imperfect community on the way” to building the Kingdom of God. Jesus himself is the Church’s model. Jesus is the reconciler, the healer, and the forgiver. The Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation does what Jesus does. At the beginning of his ministry Jesus proclaims, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel.” (Mk. 1:15) The effect of the sacrament is identified as reconciliation with God and with the Church. (RP, no. 4)

### **Eligibility for Reception of the Sacrament**

This includes the following:

- proof of Baptism
- has reached the age of reason (age 7)
- has knowledge of right and wrong

“Since conversion is a lifelong process, catechesis for the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is ongoing. Children have a right to a fuller catechesis each year.” (NDC, 36B #2)

As stated in the Rite of Penance, “The most important act of the penitent is contrition, which is ‘heartfelt sorrow and aversion for the sin committed along with the intention of sinning no

more'. The genuineness of penance depends on this heartfelt contrition. For conversion should affect a person from within toward a progressively deeper enlightenment and an ever-closer likeness to Christ.” (RP, no. 6a)

The experience of contrition is vital in the life of the penitent who is being prepared for the sacrament, an encounter with the living God.

### **Readiness for the Sacrament**

Included in the NDC, 36B #2, are the following:

- penitent is properly prepared
- knows God as a loving and merciful God
- knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ and the Gospel message of forgiveness
- knowledge of sin and its effect
- acknowledge God’s unconditional love for us
- willingness to turn to Christ and the Church for sacramental forgiveness and reconciliation

Catechesis for children prior to their first reception of the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation must always respect their natural disposition, ability, age, and circumstance.

### **Preparation for the Sacrament**

This includes the following (NDC, 36B #2):

- recognize the presence of good and evil in the world and their personal capacity for both
- recognize their need for forgiveness, not only from parents and others close to them, but also from God
- explore the meaning of the symbols, gestures, prayers, and scriptures of the Rite of Penance and the Rites of Reconciliation
- understand how to celebrate the Rite(s) of Reconciliation within the Rite of Penance
- understand that “sacramental Confession is a means offered children of the Church to obtain pardon for sin, and furthermore that is even necessary *per se* if one has fallen into serious sin.”
- have an understanding and experience of sorrow, forgiveness, and conversion

Bishop David M. O’Connell, C.M. has written about this regarding the discernment of readiness by parents, guardians, catechists, child: “Any baptized Catholic who has ‘attained the age of discretion’ not only can but must receive the Sacrament of Penance and confess serious sins at least once a year (canon 989). This is one of the ‘precepts or commandments of the Church.’ The ‘age of discretion’ means that the baptized Catholic penitent is able to distinguish right from wrong and has some understanding of what sin means and the purpose of sacramental confession.” (The Monitor, May 8, 2014)

An experience of sorrow begins in love. We are asked to love as God loves us. Conscience, then, “is the most basic awareness that some things are right and some things are wrong and we need to know the difference and act accordingly. It is our most ‘secret core’ where we are alone

with God whose voice echoes within us. We cannot ignore it. In fact, when we listen to our conscience, we can hear God speaking.” (cf. CCC, nos. 1776-1777) Conscience is developed or informed by proper understanding of or acquaintance with natural human law, divine revelation and the teaching and practice of the Church, according to one’s age, circumstances and ability to understand. This enables us to understand the difference between right and wrong.

The Sacrament of [Penance/]Reconciliation for children is to be celebrated prior to and distinct from the reception of First Eucharist. Sacramental preparation is conducted in conjunction with, but not replacing, the standard curriculum content of that particular year, and is in compliance with the policies and guidelines provided by the Department of Evangelization & Catechesis. (Statutes, #240)

### **The Statutes of the Fourth Synod of the Diocese of Trenton**

#### *Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA)*

**#231:** Ordinarily, unbaptized children who have completed their seventh year are presumed to have the use of reason (Can. 97, para. 2) and are thus considered, for purposes of Christian initiation, to **be adults** [emphasis added]. They should follow the general pattern of the ordinary catechumenate as far as possible, with the appropriate adaptations permitted by the ritual. *[A catechumen is one who is unbaptized and who has been admitted into the Order of Catechumens through the Rite of Acceptance.]*

*[The Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation is not received before Baptism. Preparation for First Penance needs to occur in a timely fashion (2-3 months) after receiving the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.]*

**#233:** Children over age seven who were baptized Catholics as infants (below age seven) and are seeking to complete their initiation, are to be provided the catechetical formation required in order to be integrated into the appropriate religious education class for their age. These children, also, are to be suitably prepared through a separate sacramental preparation process for the reception of the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist and receive these Sacraments at a time deemed appropriate.

*[Catechesis for First Penance should also be provided. This is not stated in the Statutes.]*

**#235:** Children over age seven who were baptized in a separated ecclesial community and are seeking full communion with the Catholic Church are to be provided the catechetical formation required so that they may be integrated, when determined appropriate, into the regular parish/school religious education classes. These candidates ordinarily receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist after making a Profession of Faith in the same celebration.

*[Catechesis for First Penance should also be provided. This is not stated in the Statutes.]*

### **Persons with Disabilities**

From the Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities (GPD)

**#23:** Only those who have the use of reason are capable of committing serious sin. Nevertheless, even young children and persons with mental disabilities often are

conscious of committing acts that are sinful to some degree and may experience a sense of guilt and sorrow. As long as the individual is capable of having a sense of contrition for having committed sin, even if he or she cannot describe the sin precisely in words, the person may receive sacramental absolution. Those with profound mental disabilities, who cannot experience even minimal contrition, may be invited to participate in penitential services with the rest of the community to the extent of their ability.

**#24:** Catholics who are deaf should have the opportunity to confess to a priest able to communicate with them in sign language, if sign language is their primary means of communication. They may also confess through an approved sign language interpreter of their choice. The interpreter is strictly bound to respect the seal of confession. When no priest with signing skills is available, nor sign language interpreter requested, Catholics who are deaf should be permitted to make their confession in writing. The written materials are to be returned to the penitent or otherwise properly destroyed.

**#25:** In the case of individuals with poor communication skills, sorrow for sin is to be accepted even if this repentance is expressed through some gesture rather than verbally. In posing questions and in the assignment of penances the confessor is to proceed with prudence and discretion, mindful that he is at once judge and healer, minister of justice as well as of mercy.

### **Place for Confession**

Bishop David M. O’Connell, C.M. states, “Confession can be made any time. The proper place to hear sacramental confession is

- a designated confessional or reconciliation room in a Catholic Church
- a Catholic chapel or oratory (canon 964, para. 1). Confessions may be heard elsewhere but not without a ‘just cause’ or reason (canon 964, para. 3).
- a hospital
- some other place of confinement
- a rectory during a meeting with a priest are possible places where confessions may be heard

Confessions may be heard at time when it would be otherwise impossible, very difficult, or significantly burdensome for a person to go to confession in a Catholic Church confessional.

The priests should always use good judgment about this since we are dealing with a sacrament. It is always better for a person to go to confession when needed rather than not.” (The Monitor, May 8, 2014)

### **The Statutes of the Fourth Synod of the Diocese of Trenton**

#### *The Sacraments of Healing: Penance and Reconciliation*

**#237:** Pastors shall provide facilities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation that allow each penitent the option of celebrating this Sacrament either face-to-face or anonymously behind a grill or partition.

**#238:** Pastors shall provide opportunities for the communal celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation with individual Confession, especially during the liturgical times of Advent and Lent, preferably according to the format presented in the Rite of Penance. General absolution is never permitted in the Diocese of Trenton, except in the cases allowed by canon 961 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law.

**#239:** Particular care must be taken to protect the sacredness and the seal of Confession when confessions are heard face-to-face in the main body of the Church. To preserve this sacredness, as well as the sacramental seal, no penitential service or Confession shall be recorded or videotaped. This shall apply in a particular way to the celebration of the First Penance of children.

### **Parish Celebrations**

Parish celebrations of First Penance/Reconciliation should normally be communal in nature but always with individual confessions and absolution. Participation of parishioners, especially the families of the children, is to be encouraged. The tone should be celebrative and joyful.

*No penitential service or confession should be recorded, photographed or videotaped.*

***How To Go To Confession*** (The Monitor, June 5, 2014)

Greeting

The Sign of the Cross

Confession (which concludes with these or similar words, "I am sorry for my sins.")

Penance

Act of Contrition

Absolution

Praise

Dismissal

## **Rite of Penance**

### ***Rite for Reconciliation of Individual Penitents***

Reception of the Penitent

Greeting

Sign of the Cross

Invitation to Trust in God

Reading of the Word of God

Confession of Sins and Acceptance of Satisfaction

Prayer of the Penitent and Absolution

Proclamation of Praise of God and Dismissal

### ***Rite for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with Individual Confession and Absolution***

#### **INTRODUCTORY RITES**

Song

Greeting

Introduction

Opening Prayer

#### **CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD**

First Reading

Responsorial Psalm

Second Reading

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel

Homily

Examination of Conscience

#### **RITE OF RECONCILIATION**

Invitation to General Formula for Confession (The Confiteor...)

Litany or Song

Lord's Prayer

Individual Confession and Absolution

Proclamation of Praise for God's Mercy

Concluding Prayer of Thanksgiving

#### **CONCLUDING RITE**

Blessing

Dismissal

*[In the Diocese of Trenton, circumstances that allow for General Confession and Absolution are restricted to crisis/catastrophic situations. General confession and Absolution are not otherwise permitted.]*

***Rite for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with General Confession and Absolution***

**INTRODUCTORY RITES**

Song  
Greeting  
Introduction  
Opening Prayer

**CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD**

First Reading  
Responsorial Psalm  
Second Reading  
Gospel Acclamation  
Gospel  
Homily  
Examination of Conscience

**GENERAL CONFESSION**

Sign of Penance  
General Confession of Sins  
Litany or Song  
Lord's Prayer

**GENERAL ABSOLUTION**

**PROCLAMATION OF PRAISE AND CONCLUSION**

Song or Hymn  
Blessing  
Dismissal

## The Sacrament of Eucharist

*The Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and,  
when he had given thanks, he broke it and said,  
“This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”  
In the same way also the chalice, after supper, saying,  
“This chalice is the new covenant in my blood.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”  
For as often as you eat this bread and drink the chalice,  
you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.  
(1 Cor. 11:23-26)*

### Introduction

Bishop David M. O’Connell, C.M. writes, “The sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ, whole and entire. It is not a ‘sign’ or a ‘symbol’ or a ‘representation of the Body and Blood of Christ – it IS the Body and Blood of Christ. When we receive Holy Communion, the minister offers us the host and says, ‘The Body of Christ,’ in parishes or places where the chalice is also offered, the minister says, ‘The Blood of Christ.’ And we respond, ‘Amen,’ a Hebrew word found throughout the Old and New Testaments that means ‘yes, truly,’ ‘so be it,’ ‘I believe it.’ The Lord Jesus Christ is fully present in the host and wine consecrated by the priest at Mass.” (The Monitor, April 9, 2014)

### Theology of the Sacrament

“The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life.” (CCC, no. 1324) Jesus gave this pledge of His love on the night before His Passion. Following the command of Jesus, “Do this in remembrance of me,” the faithful gather for the celebration of the Paschal Mystery. We are strengthened and nourished by Christ as we celebrate this memorial of His death and resurrection.

“The Lord, having loved those who were his own, loved them to the end. ... In order to leave them a pledge of this love, in order never to depart from his own and to make them sharers in his Passover, he instituted the Eucharist as the memorial of his death and Resurrection, and commanded his apostles to celebrate it until his return.” (CCC, no. 1337)

The Eucharist is the living and lasting center around which the entire community of the Church gathers. It is the outstanding moment of encounter with the living Christ. As such it is the sacramental sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise; memorial; and, presence which feeds and forms the Church.

- As **thanksgiving and praise**, the Church, through the sacrifice of the Eucharist, “sings the glory of God in the name of all creation.” (CCC, no. 1361)
- As the **memorial sacrifice**, the Eucharist makes present the sacrifice of the cross. Under the species of bread and wine, upon which has been invoked the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Christ offers himself to the Father in the same act of sacrifice by which he offered himself on the Cross. (cf. CCC, no. 1366)

- Sharing in the Lord’s Supper is always **communion** with Christ. This unity with Christ is deeply tied to communion with our brothers and sisters. The Eucharist is the sign and cause of our sharing in the divine life of the Trinity and our unity as the People of God, the Mystical Body of Christ. (cf. CCC, nos. 1391-1397)
- The Eucharist as a sacrament of **presence** uncovers and proclaims the reality of the crucified and risen Lord in our midst and calls us to bear witness to that gift in word and action. (cf. CCC, nos. 1373-1374)

### **Effects of Reception of the Sacrament**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC, nos. 1391-1397) reminds us that receiving Holy Communion produces certain fruits

- increases our union with Christ
- preserves, increases, and renews the life of grace received at Baptism
- separates us from sin
- wipes away venial sin
- preserves us from future mortal sin
- makes the Church
- commits us to the poor

### **Eligibility for Reception of the Sacrament**

Children who have been welcomed into God’s family in the waters of Baptism are nourished in the Eucharist. “Pastors and Catechetical Leaders shall take care that children who have reached the use of reason (age 7) (canon 97, para. 2) are prepared properly and, after having made sacramental confession, are provided the opportunity to celebrate their First Eucharist (canon 914). Sacramental preparation is conducted in conjunction with, but not replacing, the standard curriculum of that particular year, and is in compliance with the policies and guidelines provided by the Department of Evangelization & Catechesis.” (Statutes, #228)

### **Readiness for Reception of the Sacrament**

**Can. 913 §1** “For holy communion to be administered to children, it is required that they have sufficient knowledge and be accurately prepared, so that according to their capacity they understand what the mystery of Christ means, and are able to receive the Body of the Lord with faith and devotion.”

**Can. 914** “It is primarily the duty of parents and of those who take their place, as it is the duty of the parish priest, to ensure that children who have reached the use of reason are properly prepared and, having made their sacramental confession, are nourished by this divine food as soon as possible. It is also the duty of the parish priest to see that children who have not reached the use of reason, or whom he has judged to be insufficiently disposed, do not come to holy communion.”

If it is necessary to postpone the reception of a sacrament for an individual child, the decision is made by the Pastor in consultation with the Catechetical Leader. The serious reasons should be

carefully explained to the child and parents. A program of further formation is also to be offered.

### **Preparation to Receive the Sacrament**

The preparation for First Eucharist begins with Baptism. In order that the child be properly prepared and have sufficient knowledge to receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist, it is essential that he/she participate in a preparation program. It is also essential that the parish provide parents with faith formation opportunities as a component of the program.

The child must have completed *at least* one prior year of a parish or school religious education program before being admitted into the Preparation Program for the Sacraments of Penance/Reconciliation and Eucharist.

The child should have a basic knowledge and understanding of the following:

- God, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- God's personal love for each person
- the Church as the People of God
- the Sacrament of Baptism
- prayer as a response to God's love
- traditional prayers: Our Father, Hail Mary, Sign of the Cross, and Glory Be to the Father

Preparation for the Sacrament of Eucharist must be separate and distinct from the preparation for the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation.

In the immediate Sacramental Preparation Program for Eucharist, the child should come to an understanding of the following concepts:

- to know who Jesus is and the main Biblical events of his life
- to recognize the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharistic Bread and Wine
- to express a desire to receive the Eucharist
- to grow in relationship with the Lord

### **The Statutes of the Fourth Synod of the Diocese of Trenton**     *The Sacraments of Initiation*

**#231:** [**Unbaptized children**] Unbaptized children who have completed their seventh year are presumed to have the use of reason (Can. 97, para. 2) and are thus considered, for purposes of Christian initiation, to be adults. They should follow the general pattern of the ordinary catechumenate as far as possible, with the appropriate adaptations permitted by the ritual. They should receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist together at the Easter Vigil (National Statutes for the Catechumenate, norm 18). *[Reception of First Penance should be made shortly after Initiation.]*

**#233:** [**Baptized but un-catechized children**] Children over age seven who were baptized Catholics as infants (below age seven) and are seeking to complete their initiation, are to be provided the catechetical formation required in order to be integrated into the appropriate religious education class for their age. These children, also, are to be suitably prepared through a separate sacramental preparation process for the reception of the

Sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist and receive these Sacraments at a time deemed appropriate.

**#235: [Baptized in a separated ecclesial community]** Children over the age of seven who were baptized in a separated ecclesial community and are seeking full communion with the Catholic Church are to be provided the catechetical formation required so that they may be integrated, when determined appropriate, into the regular parish/school religious education classes. These candidates ordinarily receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist after making a Profession of Faith in the same celebration. *(These candidates should make a confession of sin beforehand. The priest should know that these candidates are being received into full communion.)*

### **Persons with Disabilities**

From the Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities (GPD, see no. 2, 3, 20)

- Children with special needs have a right to the fullest appropriate preparation possible. It is to be adapted to their needs and suited to their level of communication and understanding. They are to be included in the regular parish program of preparation to the extent possible.
- Children with special needs may receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist if they are able to distinguish the Eucharistic bread from ordinary bread. This recognition may be evidenced through manner, gesture, or reverent silence rather than verbally.

### **Celebration of First Eucharist**

Although the preference and tradition is that a child receive the Sacraments of Initiation (Eucharist and Confirmation) in the parish where the child and family regularly participate in Sunday liturgies, it is up to the discretion of the pastors, in consultation with the parents, for the celebration of the Sacrament to take place in the parish where the child is being instructed.

Because of the nature of the celebration of Eucharist as one of the Sacraments of Initiation, serious consideration should be given to the scheduling of this sacrament on the Sundays of the Easter Season. (Circular Letter on the Celebration of the Triduum and the Easter Feast, 1988, #103) On these days the Sunday scripture readings and the Easter focus of the liturgy are most appropriate for the nature of the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation.

If the number of candidates prevents the scheduling of all of the candidates for the Sacrament at one Mass time, it would be possible to make use of the entire Easter Season, dividing the candidates among the regularly scheduled Sunday Masses.

The celebration of First Eucharist may take place at a liturgy that is scheduled for a group of First Communicants and their families, but again, consideration should be given to the recognition that Sunday is the day on which the People of God gather for worship.

The names of those who have received this Sacrament should be recorded in the Parish Register.

## **The Reception of Holy Communion**

From The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM)

Direction on how to receive Holy Communion

- #160:** When receiving Holy Communion, the communicant bows his or her head before the Sacrament as a gesture of reverence and receives the Body of the Lord from the minister. The consecrated host may be received either on the tongue or in the hand at the discretion of each communicant. When Holy Communion is received under both kinds, the sign of reverence is also made before receiving the Precious Blood.
- #161:** The priest raises the host slightly and shows it to each, saying The Body of Christ. The communicant replies, Amen.
- #286:** The minister says, The Blood of Christ, the communicant replies, Amen, and the minister hands over the chalice, which the communicant raises to his or her mouth. Each communicant drinks a little from the chalice, hands it back to the minister, and then withdraws.

The communicant may choose whether to receive the Body of Christ in the hand or on the tongue. When receiving in the hand, the communicant should be guided by the words of St. Cyril of Jerusalem: “When you approach, take care not to do so with your hand stretched out and your fingers open or apart, but rather place your left hand as a throne beneath your right, as befits one who is about to receive the King. Then receive Him taking care that nothing is lost.” (NDRHC, no. 41)

## **Order of Mass**

### **INTRODUCTORY RITES**

Entrance  
Greeting  
Penitential Act  
Glory to God  
Collect

### **LITURGY OF THE WORD**

First Reading  
Responsorial Psalm  
Second Reading (on Sundays and solemnities)  
Gospel Acclamation  
Gospel  
Homily  
Profession of Faith (on Sundays, Solemnities, and special occasions)/Renewal of Baptismal Promises  
Universal Prayer

### **LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST**

Presentation of the Gifts and Preparation of the Altar  
Prayer over the Offerings  
Eucharistic Prayer  
    Preface  
    Holy, Holy, Holy  
    First half of prayer, including Consecration  
    Mystery of Faith  
    Second half of prayer, ending with Doxology  
The Lord's Prayer  
Sign of Peace  
Lamb of God  
Communion  
Prayer after Communion

### **CONCLUDING RITES**

Optional Announcements  
Greeting and Blessing  
Dismissal

## **Eucharistic Hosts**

Special consideration must be given to children who suffer from Celiac disease. These persons may not consume gluten, an ingredient in wheat. Low gluten hosts are to be made available to them. Only matter approved by the Church for the Eucharist may be used.

The following information has been prepared by the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in Clyde, MO.

### **Low Gluten**

***The concern:*** Celiac disease affects as many as one out of every 133 people. Those suffering from this condition cannot ingest any gluten, a protein found in wheat. Eating gluten causes intestinal damage and can lead to many secondary illnesses. Celiacs have to maintain strict gluten free diets to protect their health. Hence, the concern among Catholic celiac sufferers was how they could continue to receive the Body of Christ at Eucharist when it is made with wheat. Since the mid 1980s, we have received calls from faithful Catholics who hoped that we could find a way to provide an altar bread that would fit their special needs. We decided we would give it our best effort.

***The prayer:*** The Catholic Church is firmly rooted in Scripture and Tradition. In keeping with the belief that Jesus used a wheat bread at the Last Supper, the Church has required that breads used for communion be made with wheat and contain gluten. As stated before, the celiac community needed non-gluten bread. We prayed for divine inspiration as we began to research how we could meet the requirements of both these groups we hoped to serve.

***The answer:*** Throughout the years of our research and development we stayed in touch with the Office of the Secretariat for the Liturgy of the U.S. Council of Catholic Bishops. Through their help we discovered a company that produced wheat starch, which is wheat that has had most of the gluten removed. We began experimenting with this new product. There were many failed attempts and much frustration: the resulting breads were either too thin, too hard, or inedible. Then one evening, as our sisters were working, Divine Providence intervened. When mixing the ingredients, the result was a sticky, messy batter that seemed hopeless. They plopped some of it onto the baking plate and then decided to throw out the rest and start over. When they opened the baker they discovered a round, crisp, light wafer that tasted delicious. God had blessed our efforts with success.

***The facts:*** Our low gluten bread is made with wheat starch and water. The gluten content is less than 0.01%. It is made, stored, and shipped in a designated area free from all other wheat products.

## **Low Gluten Use/Storage**

### **Practicalities for Using Low Gluten Hosts**

- Because persons with Celiac disease are highly sensitive to wheat, low gluten hosts must be stored, handled, and distributed completely separate from typical wheat hosts.
- Have a conversation between priest, parishioner, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to determine particulars of distribution and reception of the Eucharist.

### **Storage**

- Freezer storage in an airtight container away from wheat products (lasts at least 6 months).
- Maintain a pyx exclusively for the use of low gluten hosts.
- A consecrated host may be reserved in a pyx in the tabernacle for later use when taken to someone who is ill.

### **Preparation**

- Before handling typical hosts, count out as many low gluten hosts as are needed at a single Eucharistic celebration.
- Place hosts in designated pyx and close.  
(If pyx belongs to parishioner, or if hosts are provided by parishioner, see that pyx/host is given to sacristan well in advance of Mass to ensure time for preparation.)

### **Consecration**

- Place pyx on corporal separate from ciborium or paten containing typical wheat hosts.

### **Fraction Rite**

- See that no wheat particles get into pyx during fraction rite.
- Only break the presider host over the chalice for the priest and/or deacon, so that wheat particles do not get in all the chalices (preventing some from receiving the Precious Blood).

### **Distribution**

- Designate one point of distribution for a chalice which does not contain any particles of wheat.
- Determine when the communicant will come for Communion. Options include:
  - Communicant sits where s/he can be near the front of the Communion line to receive the Precious Blood before wheat particles from other communicants get into the chalice.
  - A specific Extraordinary Minister distributes separately to the individual during the regular Communion time.
  - Parishioner comes first or last to the priest or deacon who retrieves the pyx from the altar and gives the Body of Christ.
  - Priest, deacon, or Extraordinary Minister opens pyx for the communicant to take Communion.  
(If pyx belongs to parishioner, it may be taken after the reception of the Sacred Host. If crumbs remain in pyx, wipe with finger and consume.)

## **Ordering**

Hosts may be ordered by the parish or the parishioner.

If ordered by parishioner, arrange with parish for billing/shipping (who/where).

In the dioceses of the United States, there are four approved distributors of low-gluten hosts know to the Secretariat of Divine Worship.

- 1) Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration  
Altar Breads Department  
31970 State Highway P  
Clyde, MO 64432-8100  
1-800-223-2772  
Web: [www.BenedictineSisters.org](http://www.BenedictineSisters.org)
  
- 2) Parish Crossroads  
P.O. Box 64  
Zionsville, IN 46077-0084  
1-800-510-8842  
Web: [www.ParishCrossroads.com](http://www.ParishCrossroads.com)
  
- 3) GlutenFreeHosts.com Inc.  
100 Buckley Road  
Liverpool, NY 13088  
1-800-668-7324 ext. 1  
Web: [www.GlutenFreeHosts.com](http://www.GlutenFreeHosts.com)
  
- 4) Cavanagh Company  
610 Putnam Pike  
Greenville, RI 02828  
1-800-635-0568  
Web: [www.CavanaghCo.com](http://www.CavanaghCo.com)

# The Sacrament of Confirmation

*“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”*

(Acts 2:1-4)

## Introduction

“Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the ‘sacraments of Christian initiation,’ whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For ‘by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence, they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.” (CCC, no. 1285).

## Theology of the Sacrament

In his January 29, 2014 public audience, Pope Francis made these comments on the Sacrament of Confirmation:

“Confirmation unites us more firmly to Christ. It strengthens our relationship with the Church, and it gives us a special strength from the Holy Spirit to defend the faith and confess the name of Christ.”

“Confirmation together with Baptism and the Eucharist, is one of the sacraments of Christian initiation ... through which we are gradually inserted in Christ, dead and risen, and we receive a new life, making us members of the Church.”

“Confirmation ratifies baptismal grace. ... through the sacramental sign of anointing with sacred chrism, we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit in order to be more closely conformed to Christ, God’s ‘anointed one.’ ... We are also strengthened – ‘confirmed’ – in the grace of our baptism and in our mission of bearing daily witness to Christ and his love ... (and Confirmation) ... ensures that our life be embodied in the image of his Son, for us to love like him, infusing his Holy Spirit. This Spirit acts with strength within us, within all people and during one’s whole life ... when we receive him in our hearts, Christ makes himself present and takes shape in our lives.”

## Effects of Reception of the Sacrament

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC, no. 1302) states that “the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost.” During the homily, at any Confirmation with Bishop David M. O’Connell, C.M., he often reminds those to be confirmed and their parents, sponsors and loved ones, “This is your Pentecost!”

Confirmation, among other things:

- increases and deepens (confirms) baptismal grace
- unites us more firmly to Christ
- increases the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit within us, as identified in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah 11:1-2: wisdom, understanding, counsel, knowledge, fortitude, piety, and fear of the Lord
- makes our bond with the Church stronger and more perfect
- renders us true witnesses of Christ, able to spread and defend our Catholic faith by word and action

“Like Baptism, Confirmation can be received only once because, like Baptism, its effects are meant to last a lifetime. This is what is meant by the unique, indelible ‘sacramental character’ that these sacraments impart. I mentioned in a previous catechesis that ‘sacraments follow us through life’s significant moments.’ Baptism parallels our human birth as a ‘new life’ in Christ. Confirmation parallels the rite of passage into adulthood as a ‘confirming or strengthening’ that life. The Holy Eucharist parallels our daily nourishment throughout life as ‘the Bread of Life,’ Jesus Christ.” (Bishop David M. O’Connell, C.M., *The Monitor*, March 27, 2014)

### **Eligibility for Reception of the Sacrament**

#### **The Statutes of the Fourth Synod of the Diocese of Trenton**

#### *Confirmation*

Diocesan Statute #226 mandates that the candidate for the Sacrament of Confirmation:

- completes his/her fourteenth year
- has been suitably instructed
- is properly disposed
- is able to renew Baptismal promises

It is recommended that *two full years of preparation* for the reception of this sacrament would provide suitable formation.

The immediate preparation should be separate from the regular religion curriculum.

### **Readiness for the Sacrament**

Readiness of a candidate for the Sacrament of Confirmation can be measured in any way deemed fit by the Pastor and the Catechetical Leader (Director/Coordinator/Administrator of Religious Education), but should demonstrate the following:

- a personal love for Jesus Christ and the Church he founded
- an understanding of what happened at Pentecost
- an understanding of the theology as well as an appreciation for the Sacrament of Confirmation
- a knowledge and understanding of the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit
- a knowledge and practice of the Faith consistent with the candidate’s age, maturity, and intellectual abilities

## **Name Selection**

The candidate may retain her/his baptismal name or choose a new name. The taking of a new name symbolizes embracing a new way of life or a new direction in one's life. This is found in the story of Abram (Abraham), Sarai (Sarah), Saul (Paul) and the tradition of many religious communities. One's life is a daily call to conversion. For this reason, a candidate *may* select a "Confirmation Name."

- It is common practice in the Diocese of Trenton to choose the name of a saint. The name of a saint is encouraged as saints are our role models in living lives that evidence the practice of heroic virtue.
- No name may be taken that is offensive to the Faith.
- The name does not need to be gender consistent.

## **Preparation to Receive the Sacrament**

*"They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common."* (Acts 2:42-44)

Formation for the candidate of the Sacrament of Confirmation begins on the day of Baptism. Immediate preparation should cover all six tasks of catechesis prescribed in the National Directory *for* Catechesis (NDC, 20).

- promote knowledge of the Faith
- promote a knowledge of the meaning of the Liturgy and Sacraments, emphasizing regular participation in both (Statutes, #226)
- promote moral formation in Jesus Christ
- teach the candidate how to pray with Jesus Christ
- prepare the candidate to live in community and participate actively in the life and mission of the Church
- prepare the candidate to be present as a Christian in society

"The Church must make every effort through a revised and revitalized catechesis to ensure that adolescents do not view their preparation for and reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation as the end of their formal catechesis. They must be encouraged to continue to participate in catechetical programs, the celebration of Sunday Eucharist, and the practice of Christian living." (NDC, 48D)

## **Parents**

"Of course, [Confirmandi] are not technically "adults" as society understands the term but they are capable of making some decisions for themselves and with the support, guidance and help of their parents – the first and most important teachers of their faith – and with the instruction they receive in Catholic school or parish religious education programs, the decision to present themselves for reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is (or should be) a very important

moment in their lives of faith. Here, again, the attitude and influence of Catholic parents cannot be overstated.” (The Monitor, March 27, 2014)

Parents will ensure that the sponsor chosen is one who will assist the child in living her/his faith. “These are joyful occasions and parents are rightfully proud of their daughters and sons as they take this important step into Catholic Christian adulthood.” (The Monitor, March 27, 2014)

### **Sponsor for Confirmation**

“Christian initiation...should not be left entirely to the priests and catechists, but should be the care of the entire Christian community” (AG, 14d). The selection and role of the sponsor is an important part of the Confirmation process. The sponsor needs to be familiar with his or her responsibilities and given opportunities for inclusion in the candidate’s preparation program. Since it is the role of the sponsor to serve as an example to the candidate and lead him or her in the Faith, it is important that the sponsor be an actively practicing Catholic who participates regularly (weekly) in the Eucharist. A proxy sponsor may stand in for the individual sponsor if pastoral considerations warrant this. However, the same eligibility requirements apply. Parents are not eligible to act as sponsors.

The following prerequisites are necessary to for a sponsor to be considered eligible:  
(canons 872-878, 893)

- The sponsor must have completed 16 years of age and be fully initiated in the Catholic Church.
- If married, the sponsor must be in a valid Catholic marriage. In all cases, the sponsor’s living situation should be in conformity with Catholic morality.
- The sponsor cannot be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared.
- The sponsor may be the Baptismal godparent or a new sponsor.
- The sponsor may not be the candidate’s father nor mother.
- The sponsor must submit a certificate or letter from current parish stating eligibility.

### **The Ceremony**

*“On that day, a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him; a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a Spirit of counsel and of strength, a Spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord, and his delight shall be fear of the Lord.”* (Is 11:1-3)

In the Diocese of Trenton, after consultation by the Bishop with the priests of the diocese, the Sacrament of Confirmation is celebrated outside of Mass according to the approved and prescribed liturgical texts. An exception to this would be the occasion when Confirmation is administered at a Sunday Mass. Since joys are celebrated perfectly in the Eucharist, a Mass of celebration can be offered by the Parish separately from the Rite of Confirmation.

The names and all required information of those who have received this Sacrament are recorded in the Parish Register. Notification of the reception of this Sacrament is also sent to the Church of Baptism for each candidate.

Dress for receiving this Sacrament should be in keeping with the dignity of the sacramental occasion. To that end, it is the recommendation that:

- Dress of all participants, candidates, sponsors, and attendees needs to be modest and suitable for the occasion.
- The use of robes for the candidates *is* acceptable.
- The use of stoles **is not** permitted: stoles are part of the Rite of Ordination of Deacons and Priests

### **The Statutes of the Fourth Synod of the Diocese of Trenton**

*Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA)*

**#231: [Unbaptized children]** Unbaptized children who have completed their seventh year are presumed to have the use of reason (Can. 97, para. 2) and are thus considered, for purposes of Christian initiation, to be adults. They should follow the general pattern of the ordinary catechumenate as far as possible, with the appropriate adaptations permitted by the ritual. They should receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist together at the Easter Vigil (National Statutes for the Catechumenate, norm 18). *[Reception of First Penance should be made shortly after Initiation.]*

**#233: [Baptized but un-catechized children]** Children over age seven who were baptized Catholics as infants (below age seven) and are seeking to complete their initiation, are to be provided the catechetical formation required in order to be integrated into the appropriate religious education class for their age. These children, also, are to be suitably prepared through a separate sacramental preparation process for the reception of the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist and receive these Sacraments at a time deemed appropriate.

The *Call to Continuing Conversion* **may** be done at the same time as the Optional Rite of Sending; however, in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults *Study Edition*, the *Call to Continuing Conversion* is really envisioned to be done, during Lent, at a time when there are no Catechumens. Since the baptized, un-catechized Candidates are not sent to the Bishop, this reinforces the fact that these candidates should be separated from the Catechumens.

The celebration of First Penance is to be made before receiving these Sacraments of Initiation

**#235: [Baptized in a separated ecclesial community]** Children over the age of seven who were baptized in a separated ecclesial community and are seeking full communion with the Catholic Church are to be provided the catechetical formation required so that they may be integrated, when determined appropriate, into the regular parish/school religious education classes. These candidates ordinarily receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist after making a Profession of Faith in the same celebration. *(These candidates should make a confession of sin beforehand. The priest should know that these candidates are being received into full communion.)*

It is appropriate to invite the candidates to the *Call to Continuing Conversion*. The *Call to Continuing Conversion* **may** be done at the same time as the Optional Rite of Sending; however, in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults *Study Edition*, the *Call to Continuing Conversion* is

really envisioned to be done, during Lent, at a time when there are no Catechumens. Since the baptized, un-catechized Candidates are not sent to the Bishop, this reinforces the fact that these candidates should be separated from the Catechumens.

No **Rite of Enrollment of Names** that would in any way overshadow the name written in the Baptismal Register is to be done!

There may be a case where a family is coming from another ecclesial community and they have young children that they would also like to become Catholic. A profession of faith should be made by the parents on behalf of the children; however, the preference is that this is done as a juridical act and not as a ceremony. In other words, instead of doing this at a Mass, the parents, sponsors and child should be brought to the parish (ex., pastor's office) and the profession of faith is made in that setting. Since there is no Catholic Baptismal record, the date of the profession of faith should be noted in the Register of the parish.

## **NOTES ON THE CONFIRMATION CEREMONY**

### **SEATING OF THE CANDIDATES**

The candidates take part more freely in the dialogue with the Bishop (or other Minister of Confirmation) when they are seated together, rather than interspersed with the sponsors. One seating arrangement that works well in many parishes is to seat the candidates in the inner half of the pew along the middle aisle, with their sponsors seated in the outer half of the same pew.

### **ANOINTING**

Bishop David M. O'Connell, C.M. will have the candidates kneel for the anointing. The candidates may approach the Bishop one or two at a time.

### **MUSIC**

During the anointing, music and/or singing should not prevent candidates from hearing the Bishop and vice versa.

### **LAYING ON OF HANDS**

The Order of Confirmation calls for “the Bishop and the priests who will minister the Sacrament with him” to extend their hands over the candidates. This refers to priests who will actually anoint candidates along with the Bishop in extraordinary circumstances, not merely any priests who are taking part in the ceremony.

### **READERS**

The candidates for Confirmation **are not** to proclaim the readings. It is very appropriate for those who regularly serve as Readers to proclaim the readings at the Rite of Confirmation, since it is a parish celebration.

### **SIGN OF PEACE**

Because the minister of Confirmation's thumb contains the oil of Chrism, the greeting “Peace be with you” is not ordinarily accompanied by a handshake, in order to avoid spilling or dripping Chrism on the one being confirmed.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

- A. Normally, Confirmation is administered in each parish every year, in the Spring or Fall, except in cases where the small size of the parish or small number of Confirmation candidates makes it appropriate to schedule Confirmation less frequently. The Bishop's Office should be notified when a parish changes its usual pattern of scheduling Confirmation.
- B. A preliminary letter, indicating that a parish is due to be scheduled for Confirmation in the upcoming season, is sent to the Pastor well in advance (e.g., in Spring for Fall Confirmations and in Fall for Spring Confirmations). Included with this letter is a "Preliminary Confirmation Form", which should be filled out and returned to the Bishop's Office at the Chancery/Pastoral Center. The form should be returned even if the parish decides not to have Confirmation in the upcoming season. Special considerations for scheduling (specific dates, days of the week, times of day) can be indicated in the form.
- C. Notice of the actual Confirmation date is sent to the Pastor.
- D. Prior to the Confirmation date, just the preliminary Confirmation form should be sent to the Bishop's Master of Ceremonies or to the priest who will be administering the Sacrament.
- E. At the celebration of Confirmation, the dress of the candidates and sponsors should be **suitable and modest** for the occasion. Parishes should have a clear dress code for the candidates and sponsors. Confirmation robes may be used, if desired.
- F. The "Final Confirmation Form" should be given to the Master of Ceremonies or the vicar administering the Sacrament immediately following the celebration.
- G. Parents of candidates with special needs are encouraged to discuss with the Pastor and Catechetical Leader the circumstances of their child to determine if the child will be comfortable celebrating the sacrament with the class or through special arrangements, which should be made prior to the confirmation date.



## GUIDELINES FOR CONFIRMATION

### With Bishop David M. O'Connell, C.M. & Episcopal Vicars

1. Please have a clearly marked parking space reserved for the Bishop/Vicar near the door closest to the Sacristy.
2. Since the Bishop/Vicar will arrive early (approximately 30 minutes) so that his Master of Ceremonies can set up and prepare for the Confirmation, please have some refreshments and a place for the Bishop/Vicar to spend some time with the Pastor/Administrator and other priests.
3. Please make sure that programs and other binders reflect the new translation; all wording, prayers, etc., are to be taken exactly from the approved Rite.
4. **[Bishop Only]** The Bishop does not prefer clip-on microphones or microphones that loop around the ear. Please have a stationary microphone or a handheld cordless microphone with a stand available for the Bishop to use  
*Note:* The Bishop will provide his own red Cope.
5. The Scriptural texts suggested in the Rite will be used. There should be ONE Reading, a Responsorial Psalm (which is usually sung) and the Gospel. These readings should not be altered in any fashion. If the Readings are to be done in several languages, they should only be done once. Translations can be printed in the program.
6. Please ensure that the hymns are theologically accurate and liturgically appropriate and do not impede any part of the Ceremony. Hymns should accompany certain actions and once those actions are finished, the music should finish as well. Parishes are encouraged to have either a hymn or instrumental music played during the anointing of the candidate.
7. Artistic expressions such as “liturgical dance/movement”, mini-plays, performances and other such expressions, since they are not part of the liturgy, are best suited to other times and places not associated with the Liturgy.
8. There should be three Altar Servers scheduled for the Confirmation Ceremony. When the Bishop is the Celebrant please make sure there are five Altar Servers scheduled. They are the cross/book bearer, two candle bearers and two servers assigned as the Bishop’s ministers (Mitre and Crozier). Servers should arrive 30 minutes before the start of the Confirmation ceremony. If there is a Deacon, he should also arrive 30 minutes before the start of Confirmation.
9. Please have a bowl with lemon, a pitcher of water and towel ready to wash the Bishop/Vicar’s hands after the anointing.

10. Candidates should wear a name tag which is clearly visible in large bold letters. (Please make sure that the tag is not obstructed by the candidates hair, jacket, etc.) The name tag should have the Confirmation name **ONLY** on it.
11. The Confirmation Ceremony will begin on time. If the Confirmation candidates walk in procession, please have them in place before the start time of the Ceremony. This should be timed so that the candidates are standing in their pews for the beginning of the official procession led by the cross-bearer (Crucifer) at the time designated for the start of the Ceremony.
12. Parishes have the option of having one of the confirmand lead the candidates in procession holding, at chest height, the Sacred Chrism. If this option is exercised, the Sacred Chrism should be placed, in a dignified manner, on a stand/pedestal near the Altar or Ambo.  
*Note:* See #11 above regarding the procession of the candidates.
13. Following the Gospel the Pastor/Administrator presents the candidates for Confirmation to the Bishop/Vicar. The Pastor/Administrator should, prior to presenting the candidates, ask the faithful gathered to be seated, except for the confirmandi who should remain standing. Candidates are to be presented as a group, not individually by name.
14. Unless the Pastor decides otherwise, photography is permitted during the ceremony in a respectful and discreet manner. Parishes are advised to arrange for a professional photographer to take the photographs; there is no cost to the parish when using a photographer.
15. When the Bishop is celebrating, a secondary chair and a kneeler should be placed off to the side, in the Sanctuary, prior to the start of the Ceremony. During the Ceremony the Bishop, with the Pastor sitting to his left and the Deacon, if one is present, to his right, sit together in the usual celebrant chairs in the Sanctuary. Following the Prayers for Confirmation, the secondary chair and kneeler are brought out and placed in front of the Altar for the Anointing of the Candidates. The candidates are to kneel when they are anointed. If the parish does not have a kneeler one should be acquired or borrowed from a neighboring parish. **If a Vicar has been assigned to your parish, please contact him to determine his preference for administering the Sacrament.**
16. The candidates, immediately following the Renewal of their Baptismal Promises, should kneel, in their pew, for the Prayer of Confirmation. The congregation should remain seated for both the Renewal of the Baptismal Promises and the Prayer of Confirmation.
17. For the Anointing with Sacred Chrism, the candidates line up as they would to receive Holy Communion. They approach and kneel for the Anointing. Their sponsor should stand behind them with their hand on the candidate's shoulder. Please have a staff member keep the candidates moving without delays. As one candidate gets up another should be ready to kneel.
18. Please make sure that candidates and sponsors are dressed modestly and appropriately for the ceremony. Please give clear guidelines to the candidates and their sponsors.

19. A parish may select EITHER to have a group photo with the Bishop/Vicar, or individual photos, consisting of the newly confirmed, their sponsor, and the Bishop/Vicar, immediately following the ceremony. When the Bishop is the celebrant, there is NO recessional. Immediately following the Final Blessing the closing hymn should start, (one verse only), in order to allow for the Veneration of the Altar and the movement of the Bishop, accompanied by the Pastor/Administrator, to the chair in front of the Altar, where the photo(s) will be taken.
20. Staff member(s) should coordinate the movement of the photographs to prevent delays. It is recommended that the newly confirmed and their sponsor approach the Bishop/Vicar for an individual photo, when this option is chosen, in the same manner used during the Anointing. The newly confirmed are permitted ONE pose with the Bishop/Vicar, typically consisting of only the newly confirmed and his/her sponsor.

21. Order of the Rite

Introductory Rites

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Psalm

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel

Presentation of Candidates – Pastor

Homily – Bishop/Vicar

Sacrament of Confirmation

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

Laying on of Hands

Anointing with Chrism

General Intercessions – Deacon (*When Present*)

The Lord's Prayer

<<**BRIEF Comments/Announcements**>>

Concluding Rite – Solemn Blessing/Prayer over the People

22. When a Deacon is scheduled to assist during the Confirmation Celebration, the parts of the rite proper to the Deacon, which includes the Proclamation of the Gospel and the leading of the faithful in the Universal Prayers, are to be fulfilled by the Deacon. Only ONE Deacon should be vested for the Confirmation Ceremony. The Deacon should be wearing an Alb and red Diaconal Stole.
23. The Deacon assisting should process with the *Book of the Gospels*; if the Gospel reading chosen is not contained in the *Book of the Gospels*, please print out the Gospel text and paperclip it into the *Book of the Gospels*. The Deacon will bow upon reaching the foot of the Sanctuary, during the Entrance Procession, and then proceed to the Altar where he will place the *Book of the Gospels*. The Deacon will then stand behind the altar and wait to reverence the Altar with the Bishop/Vicar.

24. **[Bishop Only]** At the end of the Gospel reading, the Deacon does not venerate (kiss) the *Book of the Gospels*. He brings the *Book of the Gospels* to the Bishop, keeping it open. The Bishop kisses the *Book of the Gospels*. The Deacon then closes the Book, hands it to the Bishop and steps to the side so that the Bishop can bless the people. When the blessing is done, the Bishop hands the *Book of the Gospels* back to the Deacon who puts it away.
25. Concelebrating priests should process up two by two, bow towards the altar, and then go to their designated seats. Concelebrating priests should be seated together, either off to one side of the Sanctuary, or in a front pew. The concelebrating priests should wear an Alb and red priest Stole (or a cassock, surplice and red stole, as they will be asked to join the Bishop/Vicar in extending their hands, for the Prayer of Confirmation over the candidates.
26. The Universal Prayers must always begin with the prayer intention for our Holy Father, Pope Francis, and our Bishop David, (they should both be mentioned by name).
27. BRIEF comments may be made by the Pastor or another person appointed by him following the Our Father and before the Final Blessing. Please let the Bishop/Vicar know if there will be any announcements and who will make them prior to the start of the liturgy.
28. **CONFIRMATION FORMS**
  - The Preliminary Confirmation Form will be sent out by the Bishop's Office in January to the parish Pastor/Administrator. The Pastor/Administrator, in dialogue with the Parish Catechetical Leader, completes this form and returns it by mail or fax to the Bishop's Office by the designated date, as expressed on the form. **Failure to return this form by the designated date, or failure to list three different dates, as requested on the form, may result in a date for Confirmation being assigned to you by the Bishop's Office.**
  - The Confirmation Program Form should be completed by the individual responsible for coordinating the Confirmation Ceremony at the parish and be mailed/faxed to the assigned celebrant, a minimum of two weeks prior to your Confirmation date. This form is included in the packet sent to the Pastor/ Administrator announcing the assigned celebrant and date of Confirmation for the parish, which is typically mailed out in early March to the attention of the Pastor/Administrator.
  - The Final Confirmation Form is to be completed immediately following the Confirmation Ceremony, and requires the Pastor/Administrator's signature. This form is to be given to the assigned celebrant the day of the Confirmation, who will in turn submit the form to the Bishop's Office for record keeping purposes.

The general ritual of the Order of Confirmation is taken from the *The Roman Pontifical*.

## THE ORDER FOR THE CONFERRAL OF CONFIRMATION WITHOUT MASS

### THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

34. When those to be confirmed are assembled with their sponsors and parents, and the whole gathering of the faithful, the Bishop approaches the sanctuary (with the Priests who are associated with him,) one or more Deacons and the ministers while all sing, if appropriate, a psalm or other suitable chant.

35. After making, together with the ministers, the usual reverence to the altar, the Bishop greets the congregation:

**Peace be with you.**

**All:** And with your spirit.

Then he says the prayer:

**Let us pray.**

**Grant, we pray, almighty and merciful God,  
that the Holy Spirit, coming near  
and dwelling graciously within us,  
may make of us a perfect temple of his glory.  
Through Christ our Lord.**

**R.** Amen.

**Other optional prayers, nos. 58, 59, 60.**

### THE CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

36. The sacred celebration of the word of God takes place, in which at least one of the readings proposed for the Mass of Confirmation (cf. nos. 61-65) is read.

37. If two or three readings are chosen, the traditional order of readings is followed, that is, from the Old Testament, the Apostles, and the Gospel. After the First and Second Reading there should be a Psalm or another chant, but, in its place, sacred silence may also be observed.

38. After the Gospel the Bishop (as do the Priests who are associated with him) take assigned seats. The candidates for Confirmation are presented by the Pastor or another Priest, or by a Deacon, or even by a catechist, in accordance with the custom of each region, in this way: if possible, each of those to be confirmed is called by name and

individually approaches the sanctuary; but if they are children, they are accompanied by one of their sponsors or parents and stand before the celebrant.

If there are very many candidates, they are not called by name; but, they are assigned to a suitable place before the Bishop.

## THE HOMILY OR ADDRESS

39. The Bishop then gives a brief homily, by which, shedding light on the readings, he leads, as if by hand, those to be confirmed, their sponsors and parents, and the whole gathering of the faithful to a deeper understanding of the mystery of Confirmation.

He may do so in these or similar words:

**The Apostles, who had received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in fulfillment of the Lord's promise, had power to complete the work of Baptism by the giving of the Holy Spirit, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles. When Saint Paul had laid his hands on certain people who had been baptized, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.**

**The Bishops, as successors of the Apostles, possess the same power and, either in their own right or through Priests lawfully appointed to fulfill this ministry, they confer the Holy Spirit on those who have already been born again in Baptism.**

**Even if today the coming of the Holy Spirit is no longer widely made manifest by the gift of tongues, we know by faith that the Spirit, through whom the love of God has been poured into our hearts and through whom we are gathered in unity of faith and in diversity of callings, is received by us and is working invisibly to make the Church holy and one.**

**Dearly beloved, the gift of the Holy Spirit, which you are to receive, will be a spiritual seal, by which you will be conformed to Christ and will be made more fully members of his Church. For Christ himself, anointed by the Holy Spirit in the baptism he received from John, was sent forth for the work of his ministry, to pour out on the earth the fire of the same Spirit.**

**Therefore, you who are already baptized will now receive the power of his Spirit and be signed with his Cross on your foreheads. And so, you must always bear witness to his Passion and Resurrection before the world, so that your manner of life, as the Apostle says, may be in every place the pleasing fragrance of Christ. His Mystical Body, which is the Church, the People of God, receives from him diverse graces, which the same Holy Spirit distributes to individuals for the building up of that Body in Unity and love.**

**Be living members of this Church, therefore, and, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, seek to serve all people like Christ, who came not to be served but to serve.**

**And now, before you receive the Spirit, call to mind the faith which you professed in Baptism or which your parents and godparents professed with the Church.**

## THE RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

40. **After the Homily the Bishop questions those to be confirmed, who stand, as he says:**

**Do you renounce Satan,  
and all his works and empty promises?**

**Together, all those to be confirmed reply:**

I do.

**Bishop:**

**Do you believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth?**

**Those to be confirmed:**

I do.

**Bishop:**

**Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered death and was buried,  
rose again from the dead  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father?**

**Those to be confirmed:**

I do.

**Bishop:**

**Do you believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord, the giver of life,  
who today through the Sacrament of Confirmation**

**is given to you in a special way  
just as he was given to the Apostles  
on the day of Pentecost?**

**Those to be confirmed:**

I do.

**Bishop:**

**Do you believe in the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting?**

**Those to be confirmed:**

I do.

**The Bishop gives his assent to the profession by proclaiming the faith of the Church:**

**This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church.  
We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

**The gathering of the faithful gives its assent by replying:**

Amen.

**For the formula This is our faith, it is permitted to substitute, if appropriate, some other formula or even some suitable chant, by which the community is able to express its faith.**

## **THE LAYING ON OF HANDS**

**41. Then the Bishop (while the Priests associated with him remain by his side) standing, facing the people, with hands joined, says:**

**Dearly beloved,  
let us pray to God the almighty Father,  
for these, his adopted sons and daughters,  
already born again to eternal life in Baptism,  
that he will graciously pour out the Holy Spirit  
upon them**

**to confirm them with his abundant gifts,  
and through his anointing  
conform them more fully to Christ, the Son of God.**

And all pray in silence for a while.

42. Then the Bishop lays hands over all those to be confirmed (as do the Priests who are associated with him). But the Bishop alone says:

**Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who brought these your servants to new birth  
by water and the Holy Spirit  
freeing them from sin:  
send upon them, O Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete;  
give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and fortitude,  
the spirit of knowledge and piety;  
fill them with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.  
Through Christ our Lord.**

**R.** Amen.

Text with music, p. 93.

## THE ANOINTING WITH CHRISM

43. The Sacred Chrism is brought by the Deacon to the Bishop. Each of those to be confirmed goes to the Bishop; or, if appropriate, the Bishop goes to each of those to be confirmed. The sponsor who presents the person to be confirmed places his (her) right hand on his (her) shoulder and says the name of the one to be confirmed to the Bishop; or the one to be confirmed alone says his (her) own name.

44. The Bishop dips the tip of the thumb of his right hand in the Chrism and, with the thumb, makes the Sign of the Cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed, as he says:

**N., BE SEALED WITH THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

The newly confirmed replies:

Amen.

The Bishop adds:

**Peace be with you.**

The newly confirmed:

And with your spirit.

45. If Priests assist the Bishop in conferring the Sacrament, all the vessels of sacred Chrism are brought to the Bishop by the Deacon or by the ministers. As each of the Priests comes to the Bishop, he gives each a vessel of Chrism.

Those to be confirmed go to the Bishop or to the Priests; or, if appropriate, the Bishop and Priests go to those to be confirmed. The anointing is done as described above (no. 44).

46. During the anointing a suitable chant may be sung. After the anointing he washes his hands (as do the Priests).

## THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

47. The Universal Prayer follows in this or a similar form determined by the competent authority.

Bishop:

**My dear brothers and sisters,  
let us humbly pray to God the almighty Father  
and be of one mind in our prayer,  
just as faith, hope and charity,  
which proceed from his Holy Spirit, are one.**

Deacon or minister:

**For these his servants,  
whom the gift of the Holy Spirit has confirmed,  
that, planted in faith and grounded in love,  
they may bear witness to Christ the Lord  
by their way of life,  
let us pray to the Lord.**

**R.** Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Deacon or minister:

**For their parents and sponsors:  
that by word and example**

**they may continue to encourage  
those whom they have sponsored in the faith  
to follow in the footsteps of Christ,  
let us pray to the Lord.**

**R.** Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

**Deacon or minister:**

**For the holy Church of God,  
together with **N.** our Pope, **N.** our Bishop, and all the Bishops:  
that, gathered by the Holy Spirit,  
the Church may grow and increase in unity of faith and love  
until the coming of the Lord,  
let us pray to the Lord.**

**R.** Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

**Deacon or minister:**

**For the whole world:  
that all people, who have one Maker and Father,  
may acknowledge one another as brothers and sisters,  
without discrimination or race or nation,  
and with sincere hearts seek the Kingdom of God,  
which is peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,  
let us pray to the Lord.**

**R.** Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

**Deacon or minister:**

**For all pastors and parish priests of our diocese,  
that they will recognize and invite  
those young men and women  
being called to ordained and consecrated lives  
to answer the call,  
let us pray to the Lord.**

**R.** Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

**Bishop:**

**O God, who gave the Holy Spirit to your Apostles  
and willed that through them and their successors  
the same Spirit be handed on to the rest of the faithful,  
listen favorable to our prayer,  
and grant that your divine grace,  
which was at work when the Gospel was first proclaimed,  
may now spread through the hearts of those who believe  
in you.  
Through Christ our Lord.**

**R.** Amen.

#### THE RECITATION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

**48. All then say the Lord's Prayer, which is introduced by the Bishop:**

**Dearly beloved, let us gather together our petitions,  
praying with one voice,  
as our Lord Jesus Christ taught us to pray.**

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us,  
and lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.**

## THE BLESSING

49. After this the Bishop blesses all present. Instead of the usual blessing, the following blessing or Prayer over the People is used.

The Deacon or, in his absence, the minister of Confirmation himself, says the invitation  
Bow down for the blessing.

The Bishop, with hands extended over the newly confirmed, says:

**May God the Father almighty bless you,  
whom he has made his adopted sons and daughters  
reborn from water and the Holy Spirit,  
and may he keep you worthy of his fatherly love.**

R. Amen.

**May his Only Begotten Son,  
who promised that the Spirit of truth would  
abide in his Church,  
bless you and confirm you by his power  
in the confession of the true faith.**

R. Amen.

**May the Holy Spirit,  
who kindles the fire of charity in the hearts of disciples,  
bless you and lead you blameless and gathered as one  
into the joy of the Kingdom of God.**

R. Amen.

And he blesses all the people, adding:

**And may almighty God bless all of you,  
who are gathered here,  
the Father, + and the Son, + and the Holy + Spirit.**

R. Amen.

## THE PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE

Instead of the preceding formula of blessing, the Prayer over the People may be used.

The Deacon or, in his absence, the minister of Confirmation himself, says the invitation:

Bow down for the blessing.

The Bishop, with hands extended over the newly confirmed, says:

**Confirm, O God,  
what you have brought about in us,  
and preserve in the hearts of your faithful  
the gifts of the Holy Spirit:  
may they never be ashamed  
to confess Christ crucified before the world  
and by devoted charity  
may they ever fulfill his commands.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.**

R. Amen.

The Bishop adds immediately:

**And may the blessing of almighty God,  
the Father, + and the Son, + and the Holy + Spirit,  
come down on you and remain with you for ever.**

R. Amen.

## Glossary

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b><i>Age of Reason</i></b>     | Suitable age for the first reception of the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist. It is deemed to be that, in the documents of the Church, at which the child begins to reason, that is, about the seventh year, more or less.   |
| <b><i>Candidate</i></b>         | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Baptized children who are preparing for completion of Initiation in Penance, Confirmation, and Eucharist.</li><li>2. RCIA – Baptized Christians in a separated ecclesial community who, once properly catechized, will make a Profession of Faith in the Catholic Church and receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.</li></ol> |
| <b><i>Catechesis</i></b>        | “An education of children, young people and adults in the faith, which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life.” (CT, #18)   |
| <b><i>Catechetical Age</i></b>  | Children who have reached the age of reason are considered to be of catechetical age. The children have the ability to begin to comprehend the Mystery of Faith. (Children who have reached the USE of reason [CIC c. 852, #1] are considered, for the purpose of Christian Initiation to be adults.)   |
| <b><i>Catechumen</i></b>        | One who is unbaptized and who has been admitted into the <i>Order of Catechumens</i> through the Rite of Acceptance.<br><br><i>Convert</i> – term reserved for those who have grown from an unbelief to Christian belief. (The terms <i>catechumen</i> and <i>convert</i> are never used of those baptized Christians who are received into Full Communion of the Catholic Church.)   |
| <b><i>Christian Service</i></b> | Sharing in the mission of Jesus Christ for the baptized person. This is rooted in the Sacraments of Initiation.   |
| <b><i>Conversion</i></b>        | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The baptized continues the process of becoming more like Christ by continually dying to sin and rising to new life in Christ.</li><li>2. In the strict sense, movement from no belief to belief in Christ. (convert)</li></ol>   |
| <b><i>Eligibility</i></b>       | The various requirements necessary for a candidate to receive a sacrament.  |
| <b><i>Formation</i></b>         | The process by which the Holy Spirit and the Church configure persons to Christ as disciples and help them to respond to their baptismal call.  |

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b><i>Full Communion</i></b>       | The liturgical rite by which a baptized Christian enters the Catholic Church through a Profession of Faith and reception of Confirmation and Eucharist.  |
| <b><i>Initiation</i></b>           | Incorporation into the Body of Christ, the Church, through the reception of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.   |
| <b><i>Mystagogy</i></b>            | The period of post baptismal catechesis following the celebration of initiation, as well as the period of reflection following the reception of each sacrament.  |
| <b><i>Penance</i></b>              | The name of one of the seven sacraments in the Roman Catholic tradition, the Sacrament of Penance, which celebrates the forgiveness of sin. This also applies to the part of the ritual within the Sacrament of Penance in which one shows sorrow for one's sins and attempts to make up for one's sinfulness.       |
| <b><i>Purpose of Amendment</i></b> | In the Sacrament of Penance, it is part of the most important act of the penitent, which is contrition: heartfelt sorrow and aversion for the committed, along with the intention of sinning no more. (RP, no. 6)  |
| <b><i>RCIA</i></b>                 | The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. This is the process of initiation of adults into the Church. It consists of four periods of inquiry and growth and three liturgical rites marking the catechumen's progress. This same process is used and adapted for unbaptized children seven years of age and older. |
| <b><i>Readiness</i></b>            | Acknowledgment of a person's capacity to celebrate a sacrament with respect to an individual's natural disposition, ability, age and circumstances.  |
| <b><i>Real Presence</i></b>        | Jesus Christ present whole and entire in the consecrated bread and wine, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. Catholics believe that the Lord's presence endures in the reserved sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.   |
| <b><i>Repentance</i></b>           | To turn from what is wrong and, in sorrow, to turn to Christ in the Church.  |
| <b><i>Reconciliation</i></b>       | Restoration of one's relationship with God, with neighbor, and to self which is celebrated in the Eucharist and is the fruit of the Sacrament of Penance. The Rite of Reconciliation is within the Sacrament of Penance.   |
| <b><i>Rites</i></b>                | Words and actions prescribed for liturgical celebrations.  |
| <b><i>Ritual Gesture</i></b>       | Symbolic action contained within a Rite, such as the laying on of hands, the anointing with oil and eating and drinking.   |

***Sacrament*** Words and actions instituted by Christ by which the Holy Spirit spreads the grace of Christ throughout the Church. There are seven sacraments in the Roman Catholic Church.

***Satisfaction for Sin*** An act which is an expression of repentance and a willingness to change.

## Appendix

### Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation

#### Act of Contrition

Two *Acts of Contrition* are submitted; these are presently in practice in parishes of the diocese.

O My Jesus, I am sorry for my sins.  
In choosing to sin,  
And failing to do good,  
I have sinned against you and your Church.  
I firmly intend  
With the help of your Son,  
To make up for my sins  
And to love as I should.  
My God,  
I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.  
In choosing to do wrong  
And failing to do good,  
I have sinned against you  
Whom I should love above all things.  
I firmly intend, with your help  
To do penance  
To sin no more,  
And to avoid whatever leads me to sin.  
Our Savior Jesus Christ  
Suffered and died for us.  
In his name, my God, have mercy.

## **Example of an Examination of Conscience with Children**

**Leader:** Let us reflect on the actions of our lives which cause us to separate ourselves from God's love as well as from the love of our brothers and sisters.

Jesus says, "Love the Lord with all your heart."

Do I think about God and pray to Him every day?

Do I praise and thank God because He loves me?

Do I care for all the beautiful things God has given me?

Do I ask God to forgive me when I do something wrong?

Jesus says, "Love one another as I love you."

Do I thank God for all the people He gives me to care for me?

Do I help my parents without being told?

Do I ask my parents and teachers to forgive me?

Do I forgive others?

Do I share my things with my brothers and sisters?

Do I share my things with my friends?

Do I always tell the truth?

Do I respect what belongs to other people?

The Lord forgives our sins and grants us peace. He is kind and merciful. He gives His life for each of us. He looks after us, care for us, loves us, and brings us back to our heavenly Father and each other.

## **Sacrament of the Eucharist**

### **Determining your child's readiness for First Communion**

Determining your child's readiness for First Holy Communion takes time, thought, and prayer. As your child moves through preparation for the sacrament, take note of how his or her awareness of the Eucharist grows. Consider not only what your child knows about the Eucharist, but also how he or she *responds* to the Eucharist, feels about it, and relates to Jesus in the Eucharistic liturgy. Here are some questions that might aid you in this discernment.

#### **Does s/he care about the Mass?**

- Is your child beginning to take notice of the parts of the Mass?
- Does s/he sing the hymns and acclamations?
- Does s/he pray with the congregation?
- Does s/he listen attentively during the Liturgy of the Word?
- Does s/he talk about what s/he has heard in the readings or homily after Mass?
- Does s/he pay attention to the Eucharistic prayer and the words reiterating the actions of Jesus at the Last Supper?

#### **Does s/he understand the meaning of the Eucharist?**

- Does your child love Jesus Christ, and know that Jesus loves her/him?
- Is s/he living his/her faith, trying to live as a disciple of Jesus?
- Does s/he understand that at the Last Supper, Jesus gave us a special gift of himself to be with us forever?
- Does s/he understand that when we gather for the Eucharist, the gifts of bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus?
- Does s/he realize that when we receive the consecrated bread and wine, we receive Jesus in our bodies, as food for our hearts and souls?

#### **Is s/he eager to receive First Communion?**

- Does your child feel left out not receiving Communion with others in the community?
- Does s/he ask questions about how we receive Communion, or why others gathered at Mass do not go forward to receive Communion?
- Does s/he talk positively about her First Communion?

***Your role in this process is crucial. The following are some simple things you can do to lead your child to the Eucharist:***

- Model active participation in the Mass regularly.
- Use your own words to explain what is happening at different parts of the Mass.
- Ask simple questions on the way home from Mass about the Scriptures and the homily: What did you hear today during the readings or homily? What was the message?
- Lead a short prayer for your child during the grace at meals, at bedtime, or even during a quiet moment after you receive Communion.

- Reminisce with your child about your own First Communion, and share what you believe about the Eucharist.
- Highlight not just the “milestone” aspects of the upcoming celebration of First Eucharist, but the spiritual as well.
- Read and discuss the story of the Last Supper (See Mt. 26:26; Lk. 22:14; or Mk. 14:22) with your child.

## **Valid Baptisms & Confirmations**

**The Catholic Church regards as valid the Baptism of the following Churches or Ecclesial Communities:**

All Eastern Non-Catholic (Orthodox)  
Adventist African Methodist Episcopal (AME)  
Amish  
Anglican Assembly of God  
Baptist (Adults and Children over 7 years of age) Infants not baptized  
Church of the Brethren  
Church of God  
Congregational Church  
Disciples of Christ  
Episcopal  
Evangelical Churches  
Liberal Catholic Church  
Lutheran  
Methodist  
Church of the Nazarene  
Old Catholic Church  
Old Roman Catholics  
Polish National Catholic Church  
Presbyterian Church  
Reformed Churches  
Society of Pius X  
United Church of Christ

**The Catholic Church regards as valid the Confirmation of the following Churches or Ecclesial Communities:**

All Eastern Non-Catholic (Orthodox)  
Polish National Catholic Church  
Old Catholic Church  
Society of Pius X

NOTE: For information about other churches or communions which are not listed here, contact the Diocesan Office of Worship. See the Second Edition of The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults Diocese of Trenton A Practical Guide pages 37-38. Any additional questions may be referred to the Office of the Bishop.

## **Sacramental Records**

The following records are kept *permanently* in the Parish Office.

|                          |           |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Baptism Register         | Canon 877 |
| Confirmation Register    | Canon 895 |
| First Eucharist Register |           |
| Professions of Faith     |           |