

Spiritual and Practical
Parent Guide to

First Communion
&
First Reconciliation



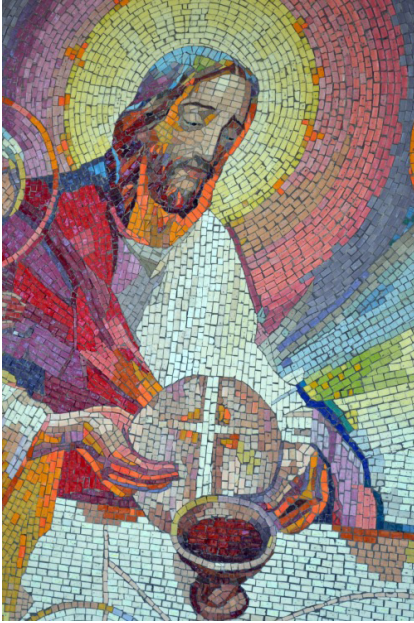
CHURCH OF THE LITTLE FLOWER

Dear Parents,

We intend this guide to be a helpful resource for you as you walk with your child in these last weeks of preparation for their First Reconciliation and First Communion. We hope that the wisdom of the Church given here is a spur to learn more about the spiritual riches that God gives us for lifelong growth in his love, joy and peace. May the Lord bless you and keep you in the palm of his hand.

Church of the Little Flower Clergy and Ministry Staff

CATHOLIC TEACHING ON THE EUCHARIST



At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet ‘in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.’”

The Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life.”

“The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it.

For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch.” *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1323-1326

Saints' Sayings on the Eucharist

St. Therese: “When preparing for Holy Communion, I picture my soul as a piece of land and beg the Blessed Virgin to remove from it any rubbish that would prevent it from being free; then I ask her to set up a huge tent worthy of heaven; finally, I invite all the angels and saints to come and conduct a magnificent concert there. It seems to me that when Jesus descends into my heart at Holy Communion, he is content to find himself so well received and I, too, am content.”

St Euphrasia: “To speak of the Blessed Sacrament is to speak of what is most sacred. How often, when we are in a state of distress, those to whom we look for help leave us; or what is worse, add to our affliction by heaping fresh troubles upon us. He is ever there, waiting to help us.”

St Thomas Aquinas: “The Eucharist is the sacrament of love: it signifies love, it produces love. The Eucharist is the consummation of the whole spiritual life.”

St Francis de Sales: “When the bee has gathered the dew of heaven and the earth’s sweetest nectar from the flowers, it turns it into honey, then hastens to its hive. In the same way, the priest, having taken from the altar the Son of God (who is as the dew from heaven, and true son of Mary, flower of our humanity), gives him to you as delicious food.”

St John Chrysostom: “It is not the man who is responsible for the offerings as they become Christ’s Body and Blood; it is Christ Himself who was crucified for us. The standing figure belongs to the priest who speaks these words. The power and the grace belong to God. ‘This is My Body,’ he says. And these words transform the offerings.”

St Maximilian Kolbe: “If angels could be jealous of men, they would be so for one reason: Holy Communion.”

St Pio of Pietrelcina: “A thousand years of enjoying human glory is not worth even an hour spent sweetly communing with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.”

St Angela of Foligno: “If we paused for a moment to consider attentively what takes place in this Sacrament, I am sure that the thought of Christ’s love for us would transform the coldness of our hearts into a fire of love and gratitude.”

St Francis of Assisi: “O sublime humility! O humble sublimity! That the Lord of the whole universe, God and the Son of God, should humble himself like this and hide under the form of a little bread, for our salvation.”

FIRST RECONCILIATION

Act of Contrition

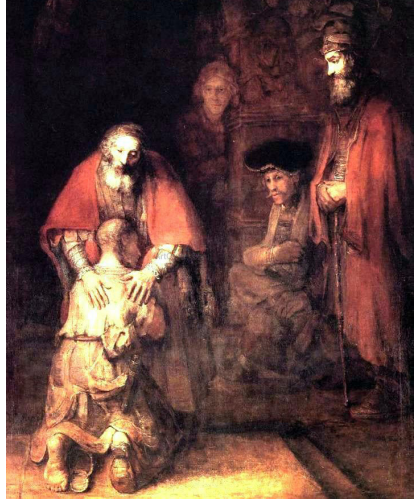
to learn and pray together

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you; and I detest my sins because of your just punishments. But most of all because they offend you, my God, who are all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve, with the help of your grace, to sin no more and to avoid what leads me to sin. Amen.

Catholic Teaching on Reconciliation

Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy for the offense committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labors for their conversion.

Sin is before all else an offense against God, a rupture of communion with him. At the same time, it damages communion with the Church. For this reason, conversion entails both God's forgiveness and reconciliation with the Church, which are expressed and accomplished liturgically by the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.



Christ instituted the sacrament of Penance for all sinful members of his Church: above all for those who, since Baptism, have fallen into grave sin, and have thus lost their baptismal grace and wounded ecclesial communion. It is to them that the sacrament of Penance offers a new possibility to convert and to recover the grace of justification. The Fathers of the Church present this sacrament as “the second plank [of salvation] after the shipwreck which is the loss of grace.” Catechism of the Catholic Church

Saints' and Popes' Sayings on the Sacrament of Reconciliation

St. Therese: “Even if I had on my conscience all the sins that can be committed, I would go and cast myself in the arms of Jesus with a heart torn by repentance, for I know how much He cherishes the prodigal child that returns to Him.”

St. John Vianney: “The good God knows everything, even before you confess it to him, he already knows that you will sin again and, nevertheless, he forgives you. How great is the love of our God that leads him even to voluntarily forget the future in order to forgive us!”

St. Pio of Pietrelcina: “If the poor world could see the beauty of the sinless soul, all sinners, all unbelievers would be instantly converted.”

St. Ambrose: “God makes no distinction; He promised mercy to all and granted His priests the authority to forgive without any exception.”

St. Faustina Kowalska: “From confession we should derive two benefits: we confess in order to be healed; in order to be educated; our souls need continual education, like a little child.”

St. Josemaría Escrivá: “You revealed your past wounds – full of pus – in Confession. And the priest dealt with your soul like a good doctor, like a conscientious doctor. He made an incision where he had to, and would not let the wound heal over until everything had been cleaned out. Be grateful.”

Pope Francis: “How good it feels to come back to him whenever we are lost! Let me say this once more: God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy. Christ, who told us to forgive one another ‘seventy times seven’ (Mt 18:22) has given us his example: he has forgiven us seventy times seven. Time and time again he bears us on his shoulders.”

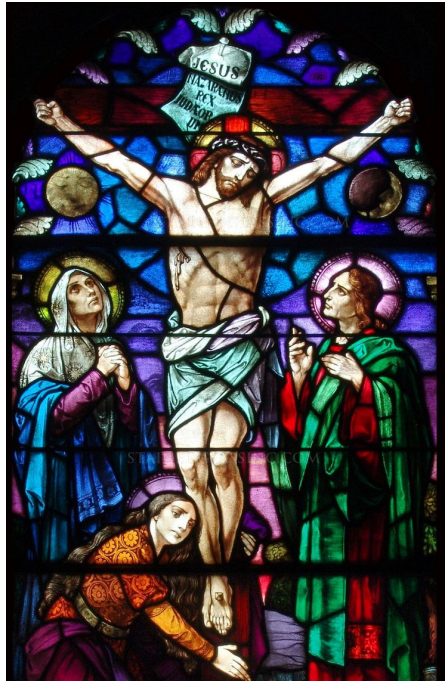
Pope Benedict XVI: “In the Sacrament of Penance, the simple confession of one’s guilt is presented with confidence in God’s merciful goodness. It is important to do this without falling into scruples, with the spirit of trust proper to the children of God. In this way confession can become an experience of deliverance, in which the weight of the past is removed from us and we can feel rejuvenated by the merit of the grace of God who each time gives back the youthfulness of the heart.”

Saint John Paul II: “Confession is an act of honesty and courage – an act of entrusting ourselves, beyond sin, to the mercy of a loving and forgiving God.”

Examination of Conscience for Parents

In preparation for the sacrament

- Have I cared for the spiritual needs of my children?
- Have I been a good Christian witness to my children in what I say and do?
- Have I taught my children the Gospel and the commandments of God? Have I prayed with them?
- Have I paid attention to my children – for instance, talking with them to find out their joys and problems, playing with them, and showing affection?
- Have I corrected them out of love, in order to teach them what is right? Have I treated them with respect?
- Have I forgiven them?
- Have I avoided disagreements and dissension with my spouse that disrupt the educating and disciplining of our children?
- Have I upheld the role of authority in the eyes of my children by speaking respectfully about God, the Church, my spouse, and others who hold legitimate authority over them?
- Have I been properly generous with my children – neither miserly nor extravagant - regarding money and their material well-being?



DAY OF FIRST COMMUNION

Attire

- Girls: A simple white dress is customary; veil or wreath of flowers is optional. No gloves or jewelry, with the exception of a simple cross necklace. Comfortable dress shoes (no sneakers).
- Boys: Slacks, shirt and tie, sports jacket or sweater. Good dress shoes (no sneakers). No jewelry, with the exception of a simple cross necklace.

Important Notes

- First Communicants will meet in the **Rectory Meeting Room at 9:30am**. Please enter the rectory through the basement door, which is to the right of the main entrance.
- Please refrain from taking pictures during the Mass. There will be a professional photographer on site.
- Immediately following the Mass there will be a group photo in the church.
- Please remember to collect your child's certificate at the back of the church before or after the Mass.

Invitation to May Crowning Mass

The day after First Communion, the Communicants and their families are asked to attend the 9:00am Family Mass wearing their First Communion attire. We will honor Our Lady during this May Crowning Mass.

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