



The Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester **Policies for the Administration of the Sacraments**

The adult community is called upon to support our children and young adults by our own practice and witness to the faith. (from a letter from the Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano, Bishop of Rochester)

In accordance with the promulgation of the new Policies for the Administration of the Sacraments by Bishop Salvatore R. Matano, we at the Cathedral Community will do the following to prepare your child(ren) to celebrate the sacraments and to participate fully in the life of the Catholic Church.

Sacramental Policies – General Principles

- *All policies and procedures in this document find their origin in Universal norms and legislation and are promulgated by the Bishop for the entire Diocese of Rochester and for all clergy, religious and laity engaged in pastoral ministry in this Diocese. **They are to be followed in totality.** (p. 4)*
- *Recorded proof of valid Baptism is required before admission to preparation for First Penance, First Communion, Confirmation and Marriage. (p. 4)*
- *For every Catholic, participation in parish life is both a right and a duty. (p. 4)*

Sacraments of Initiation

- *To fulfill the true meaning of the Sacrament, children must later be formed in the faith in which they have been baptized. Because of this, the faith of the parents is a critical pastoral concern since they are accepting the responsibility of forming their children in the practice of the faith. (cf. RBC, no. 3). (p. 10)*
- **First Eucharist**
 - * *Ordinarily, candidates for First Penance and First Eucharist have participated in regular religious education or attend Catholic School for the year preceding enrollment for preparation for First Eucharist. (In other words, these children were part of a formal first grade faith formation experience.) (p. 14)*
 - * *The catechesis and celebration of First Eucharist is to be separated from that of First Penance, and these Sacraments shall ordinarily take place when a child is in grade two. (p. 15)*
 - * *An interview to help determine readiness to prepare for First Eucharist is desirable. (p. 15)*
 - * *The careful preparation required is more than the intellectual preparation; it includes formative experiences in faith such as are promoted by attendance at weekly Mass even before the children receive the Most Holy Eucharist. (p. 15)*
 - * *It is recommended that reception of First Eucharist take place within a family context within one of the Lord's Day celebrations of the Mass. (p. 15)*

** The First Communion of children must always be preceded by sacramental Confession and absolution. (p. 16)*

- **Confirmation**

** To celebrate Confirmation, baptized candidates, if they have the use of reason, must be in a state of grace, properly instructed and able to renew their baptismal promises. (Cf. RC, 12, 13). (p. 23)*

** No one should be forced to celebrate the Sacrament. However, parents by word, example and participation in the life of the Church are a true support and encouragement to their children. (p. 23)*

** Proximate preparation for Confirmation is a two-year process beginning in the fall of the eighth grade. Each year should include 25 hours of classroom instructions, as well as opportunities for retreat and service. (p. 24).*

** At the end of proximate preparation, evaluations for readiness to celebrate Confirmation should attend to all proximate preparation components and the candidate's own personal development. Readiness for Confirmation shall not be judged solely on the basis of only one program component. (e.g. the service project, the retreat). However, regular attendance at Holy Mass must be an essential component of the program. (p. 24)*

** It is desirable that the sponsor (godparent) at Baptism be chosen as sponsor for Confirmation, if they still meet the qualifications. (Cf. CIC, c. 893, 2; RC, no. 5). (p. 25)*

** Following the administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation, ongoing catechesis (mystagogia) should be offered to the newly confirmed in an effort to assist their continued practice of the faith and to encourage their ongoing participation in the parish. (p. 26)*

- **First Penance**

** Children should be encouraged to prepare for the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation as they near the age of seven. (p. 34)*

** Parents are to be intimately involved in preparation for a child's first reception of the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation. (p. 34)*

** After the initial celebration, regular opportunities for celebration of the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation should be made available to children who have celebrated first Penance. (p. 34)*

These are but a few of the policies that we have been asked to follow. If you are interested in reading the entire text of "Policies for the Administration of the Sacraments," a copy is available to look at in the cathedral office.