

Parents Meeting for First Penance and First Holy Communion

First Holy Communion

The Class Assignments for First Holy Communion Masses and Rehearsals are as follows:

Group 1—May 4th, 10:00am Mass (Rehearsal – Tuesday, April 30th, 6:00pm)

2A - Miss Michaela Tracy/Mrs. Robin Scarola
2B - Mrs. Linda Price/Mrs. Catherine Rainville
2MF – Mrs. Mary Hanley/Mrs. Deana Grammo
2TB – Mrs. Angela Cusumano/Mrs. Kimberly Strong

Group 2—May 4th, 2:00pm Mass (Rehearsal – Thursday, May 2nd, 6:00pm)

2MA - Mrs. Aarin Wiltz/Mrs. Lisa Dean
2MB - Mrs. Erin Poe/Mrs. Margarita Bolivar
MSP1 – Mr. Joseph Scully
MSP2 – Mrs. Christine Brooks

Group 3--May 11th, 10:00am Mass (Rehearsal – Tuesday, May 7th, 6:00pm)

2TA - Mrs. Katie McDonald/Mrs. Mary Cornista
2WA – Mrs. Jamie Fano/Mrs. Jennifer Payne
2WB – Mrs. Stephanie Konold/Mrs. Tina Humbert
2WE – Mrs. Joanne Moore
Homeschool Students (Home2 + Home2RE)

Changing Masses: Due to the large number of students receiving First Communion, we ask that you make every possible effort to arrange your schedule in order to keep your child's assigned Mass Time. If you must switch to a different day though, please contact the RE Office no later than February 28th to request a change, and we will do what we can to assist you. It is vital that you contact us by this date, as it takes our office a substantial amount of time and work to create the lists and details for each of the 3 Masses. Requesting changes close to the date can cause a number of difficult challenges, so please assist our staff by clearing your calendar early for First Communion.

Rehearsal Information – EVERY STUDENT MUST ATTEND REHEARSAL! There will be only one rehearsal for each of the First Communion Masses. Rehearsals will start in the church vestibule. Please drop your child off on time on the evening of their Rehearsal. Their teachers and aides will meet them there. The children may be picked up at church at the end of the rehearsal, which will last one hour. If you wish to stay for the rehearsal, you are welcome to do so, but must sit quietly in the back pews of the church.

(NOTE: For Petition Readers and Gift Bearers ONLY - Students selected for these roles will have an extra Practice Session in April, shortly before the date of First Communion. Details will be announced closer to the actual date. If a student is unable to attend the Practice Session, another student will be selected to take their place.)

On the evening of Rehearsal, those students designated as Gift Bearers and Petition Readers will have a final opportunity to practice. If any of these children are late or absent from rehearsal, another child will be selected to take their place.

First Penance

The children will be going to Confession for the first time the week of February 4-6 during class time; both School and Religious Education. Parents are normally not permitted in the Church during these times, as we have found that it affects the children's comfort level.

If you would prefer to be with your child during First Penance, you may take them to any of the normally scheduled parish Confession times, and then contact the RE Office letting us know that they have received the Sacrament.

Questions? Please contact the RE Office at 703-729-3714, or at reoffice@sainttheresaparish.com.

Reflections on Penance and Holy Communion

From Scripture

[Jesus] said to them again, "Peace be with you. 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. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." **John 20:21-23**

The prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed any sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. **James 5:15-16**

[Jesus addressed the people, saying] "I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, but they died; this is the bread that comes down from heaven so that one may eat it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us [his] flesh to eat?" Jesus said to them, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever." **John 6:48-58**

From the Catechism

2041 The precepts of the Church are set in the context of a moral life bound to and nourished by liturgical life. The obligatory character of these positive laws decreed by the pastoral authorities is meant to guarantee to the faithful the very necessary minimum in the spirit of prayer and moral effort, in the growth in love of God and neighbor:

2042 The first precept ("You shall attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor") requires the faithful to sanctify the day commemorating the Resurrection of the Lord as well as the principal liturgical feasts honoring the mysteries of the Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the saints; in the first place, by participating in the Eucharistic celebration, in which the Christian community is gathered, and by resting from those works and activities which could impede such a sanctification of these days.

The second precept ("You shall confess your sins at least once a year.") ensures preparation for the Eucharist by the reception of the sacrament of reconciliation, which continues Baptism's work of conversion and forgiveness.

From the Saints

In the life of the body a man is sometimes sick, and unless he takes medicine, he will die. Even so in the spiritual life a man is sick on account of sin. For that reason he needs medicine so that he may be restored to health; and this grace is bestowed in the Sacrament of Penance. - *St. Thomas Aquinas*

"Do you realize that Jesus is there in the tabernacle expressly for you - for you alone? He burns with the desire to come into your heart...go without fear to receive the Jesus of peace and love... Receive Communion often, very often...there you have the sole remedy, if you want to be cured. Jesus has not put this attraction in your heart for nothing...The guest of our soul knows our misery; He comes to find an empty tent within us - that is all He asks."
- *St. Therese of Lisieux*