



# Saint Cecilia Church and School

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434-440 Norton Road, Columbus OH 43228 | Church 614.878.5353 | School 614.878.3555

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I appreciate your inquiry about you and/or your child or children being able to receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Eucharist (First Communion) and/or Confirmation. I am writing to share with you that in the Catholic culture in the United States there are some expectations in regards to being able to celebrate the Sacraments. Among them is parish membership, which actually involves registering in a parish, as well as formation in terms of Catholic Teaching of the understanding of each of the Sacraments and an active presence and participation regularly at weekend Masses.

These requirements come from an understanding that one celebrates the Sacraments as part of their ongoing participation in the life of the Catholic faith that is to be constant in one's life as opposed to something that is done every few years or so. Sacraments are celebrated in public and are a testimony that one is a Disciple of Christ who desires to live out the faith every day. We celebrate and receive the Sacraments to sustain us in our call to be a sacrament to others. The call to discipleship and faith is a full-time vocation; not part-time.

It makes no sense for anyone of any age to celebrate/receive any Sacrament without knowing why they are doing so and what the grace of the Sacrament really is. Grace and faith are not earned. They are gifts and as such are to be accepted in a genuine and long-term way. Sacraments are not magic pathways to God's favor but moments of grace in which we constantly and regularly are sustained in the ongoing life of grace.

As is the situation in many, if not most, Catholic parishes in the United States, Saint Cecilia Parish has published Policies and Procedures that reflect the understanding articulated in this letter. Please read them, pray about them, and discern if you are willing to make the genuine commitment to Christ, yourself, your children and to the Church that living the Gospel entails. If so, our parish is anxious to make a commitment to you and your children to help them live that ongoing call.

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Thomas Buffer

Pastor



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## **Policies for the Celebration of First Eucharist and Confirmation of Children at St. Cecilia Parish**

1. Parents who wish their child to celebrate First Eucharist and/or Confirmation must be registered at Saint Cecilia Parish or at another Catholic Parish. Parents from other parishes must submit in writing a Letter of Permission from their Pastor if they wish either of these celebrations to take place at Saint Cecilia.
2. Children wishing to celebrate these Sacraments must have been attending a Parish School of Religion or a Catholic School for a minimum a year before the celebration of the Sacrament. This means that a child must have completed the Grade Level prior to the Grade Two or Grade Eight. Documentation of Attendance may be required when such attendance took place at a parish other than Saint Cecilia. In certain situations, a Supplemental Class that addresses Eucharist or Confirmation may be needed. Children preparing for these Sacraments must participate in the formation activities for each of these Sacraments.
3. First Eucharist is normally celebrated on or near the First Sunday of May for children in Grade Two. Children who are in Grades Three and above and have fulfilled all the Requirements may celebrate First Eucharist with Grade Two or at another Mass as agreed upon by the Pastor and the Family.
4. Confirmation is celebrated for students in Grade Eight on a date determined by the Office of the Bishop of Columbus.
5. Confirmation Candidates must have a Sponsor for Confirmation. The Sponsor must be a practicing Catholic and be a least sixteen years of age. They must have completed the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. It is not required that a Sponsor be a person who was a Sponsor at the Candidate's Baptism. However, they should be a person who has been a role model for the Candidate. If the sponsor is married, the marriage must be recognized by the Church. Sponsors from parishes other than Saint Cecilia will be asked to obtain an Eligibility Certificate from their Pastor/Parish.
6. Candidates for Confirmation from a parish other than Saint Cecilia may be confirmed at Saint Cecilia Parish with the written permission of their Pastor.
7. Priests and Deacons from other parishes or who may be relatives or friends of the First Communicant or Candidate for Confirmation may concelebrate or serve as Deacon at the First Communion Mass or Confirmation Mass. If they are from another diocese, they may need to submit of Letter of Good Standing.