



SAINT CECILIA CATHOLIC CHURCH

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 regard to being able to celebrate the Sacraments. Among them is parish membership, which 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 the Sacrament of Baptism of Children at Saint Cecilia Parish

1. Parents who request to have their child baptized at St. Cecilia must be registered parishioners of St. Cecilia Parish or another Catholic parish. The Parent must provide a copy of the child's birth certificate. Saint Cecilia Parishioners must have registered at least three months prior to the Baptism during which families attend Mass 70-75% of the Weekends. Mass Attendance will be verified through envelopes provided by the parish. No monetary donation is required. Children of Kindergarten age and above must attend the Parish School of Religion or the Parish School. Parishioners from other parishes must obtain written permission from their pastor for the Baptism to take place at Saint Cecilia.
2. At least one of the parents and the Godparents must have attended a Parent Baptism Preparation Class before the Baptism takes place. Evidence of having completed the Class must be submitted in writing. Parents wishing to take the class at St. Cecilia must register for the class in advance.
3. Each child being baptized at St. Cecilia Parish may have only one male or one female Sponsor (Godparent) or one of each sex. If the Sponsor is married, either to each other or to another individual, the marriage must be recognized by the Church. A sponsor who lives with a partner outside of a religious marriage or in a same-sex relationship are not eligible to be godparents. A Sponsor must be at least sixteen years of age and who has already been confirmed and received the Holy Eucharist. He/she must be active in the practice of the Catholic faith. Sponsors must submit a Sponsor Eligibility Form from the parish at which they are registered. A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community may serve as a Witness to Baptism and together with a Catholic Sponsor.
4. Baptisms may take place during a Weekend Mass or following the last Sunday obligation Mass. In special circumstances and with the approval of the Pastor, a Baptism may be scheduled at another time. Baptisms must take place at the church. A Baptism may take place at a hospital in emergency situations and a ceremony may take place on another date. However, the official date of the Baptism will be the day on which it took place at the hospital.
5. Families are free to have their child clothed in a Baptismal Garment and to supply their own Baptismal Candle.
6. Priests and/or Deacons who may be relatives or friends of the family are welcome to celebrate Baptisms at Saint Cecilia Parish. If he is from another diocese, he may be asked to submit a Letter of Good Standing.