



Catholic Diocese of Hamilton



Sacramental Policy Part 1: Christian Initiation

1 August 2025

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Promulgation 2025

When Bishop Denis established the Diocesan Sacramental Policy, he wrote, “These policies must be considered 'living documents' and revisited regularly to ensure their ongoing effectiveness.” Now, 25 years later, we have come to the first revision, and this new document is the fruit of that deliberation.

Baptism is the Doorway to the life of the Sacraments. The Great Commission sends us to the nations: making disciples, baptising and teaching them to keep His commands. As a wellspring of grace, the Lord gives us His very self in the Eucharist, and our Worship of God is paramount to our lives.

The Mass, the Eucharistic Sacrifice, is the Source and Summit of our Life as a Christian People. It is Source, because we receive into our bodies Jesus Christ, the Son of God made Flesh, and in receiving him, we become more and more what we receive. It is summit because at Mass we worship the Living God. Worship requires sacrifice, and ever since the Messiah — that is the Christ — died and rose again, the “pure sacrifice” remaining is the Thanksgiving Sacrifice, the Eucharist. (see Malachi 1:11 Trent: Ses.XXII)

The purpose of this Sacramental Policy is:

- To present a consistent structure for the practice and administration of the Sacraments.
- To build up an understanding and appreciation of the sacramental mysteries that are so large a feature of our Catholic identity and worship.
- To require parish-based preparation for receiving the sacraments
- To focus on the Initiation Sacraments and the Celebration of Eucharist.
- To awaken an awareness within parents of their faith and of their role as first educators of their children.

May the Lord Jesus bless us as we relive his life in the wonderful mystery of his sacraments.

I order this policy to be promulgated and published, coming into effect 1 August 2025


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INTRODUCTION

The Sacraments Of The Church:

A Classic Catholic Definition of *Sacrament* is an “efficacious sign of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. (CCC 1131)

As a Christian people, we most fully experience and express our life in Christ through our participation in the sacramental life of the Church. The sacraments are gifts of Christ to the Church, and at the same time are the actions of a believing people encountering God. It is through our participation in the sacraments of the Church that we become more like Christ, and we transform our world.

The Sacraments contain and cause the Grace they signify. Therefore, well celebrated, they enable a deep experience of God's presence, and an awareness of what God has done and is doing for us. [Ven.S.Aubert] Sacraments put us in touch with the Real. The Spiritual is more real than the material, since the material decays away. The world is the veiled manifestation of God's presence.

The Liturgy Of The Church:

Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, Lex Vivendi: The way of prayer is the way of faith and life.

The liturgy speaks powerfully for itself. It is the public work of the Church. The liturgy forms us, and its agenda is our participation in Christ's saving work. It is not something that we form with our own ideas of how things should be done. The Minister is a Servant of the Liturgy of the Church. *The Christian faithful have the right to worship God according to the prescripts of their own rite.* [Can.214]

It is the right of all of Christ's faithful that the Liturgy, and in particular the celebration of Holy Mass, should truly be as the Church wishes, according to her stipulations as prescribed in the liturgical books and in the other laws and norms. [Redemptionis Sacramentum 12]

The Sacraments were instituted by Christ the Lord and entrusted to the Church. *Accordingly, in the celebration of the sacraments, the sacred ministers and the other members of the Christian faithful must use the greatest veneration and necessary diligence.* [Can.840]

The Liturgical Books allow for some adaptations, and at times direct the ministers to make choices of Readings, Prayers, Blessings, etc. Prudence is required in making adaptations. Therefore, care should be taken to adapt from the Liturgical Books, not from what was done last year. Always go to the Liturgical Books to plan for Liturgies.

The Sacraments Of Christian Initiation:

Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are sacraments of Christian initiation. They ground the common vocation of all Christ's disciples, a vocation to holiness and to the mission of evangelising the world. They confer the graces needed for living life according to the Spirit as pilgrims on the march towards the homeland.

The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist so complement one another that all three are required for full Christian initiation.

The Order of Celebration:

There are three sacraments of Christian initiation - Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. These three steps lay the foundation of Christian life. *The Sacraments are celebrated in this order, so that 'First Eucharist' is the completion of Initiation into the Catholic Church.* [Vat2: SC 71, AG 36; Benedict XVI: Sacramentum Caritatis 17]

Three Modes of Initiation:

There are three modes of Christian Initiation: Adult, Child, Infant. Everyone who can speak for themselves should complete their initiation in the single Liturgical Moment. Infants, baptised soon after birth, should complete their initiation before their 8th birthday.

Explanation:

During the Baptism of Infants, the priest is instructed to say: *"These children have been reborn in baptism. They are now called children of God, for so indeed they are. In Confirmation, they will receive the fullness of God's Spirit. In Holy Communion, they will share the banquet of Christ's sacrifice, calling God their Father in the midst of the Church."* [Rite of Baptism, 68]

Canon Law orders the Sacraments as: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

- **Baptism**, the gateway to the sacraments, and necessary for salvation by actual reception or at least by desire. (Can.849)
- **Confirmation** is to be conferred at about the age of discretion. (*defined in 1917 Code c.788 as around the age of 6*) (Can.891)
- **Eucharist**: It is the duty of parents ... to take care that children who have reached the use of reason are prepared properly and, after they have made sacramental confession, are refreshed with this divine food as soon as possible. (Can.914) (*This "use of reason" is presumed by a child's 7th Birthday.* Can.11)

In Brief: infant> **7yrs** <child> **18** <adult> ...

The Sacred Councils, the Catechism, the law of Prayer, and even the canon Law of the church make it clear that this order of initiation is the clear and unbroken tradition of the church, even if, for a while, individual bishops and dioceses have done things differently.

The Sacraments Of Healing:

Penance, and Anointing of the Sick (CCC 1420-21)

Through the sacraments of Christian initiation, people receive the new life of Christ. Now we carry this life 'in earthen vessels,' and it remains 'hidden with Christ in God.' We are still in our 'earthly tent,' subject to suffering, illness, and death. This new life as a child of God can be weakened and even lost by sin.

The Lord Jesus Christ, physician of our souls and bodies, who forgave the sins of the paralytic and restored him to bodily health, has willed that his Church continue, in the power of the Holy Spirit, his work of healing and salvation, even among her own members. This is the purpose of the two sacraments of healing: the sacrament of Penance and the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick.

Explanation:

Both of these Sacraments reconcile a person estranged from God by sin and its effects. Both announce and are a cause of the healing of soul and body. So much spiritual disease is manifest in the body, and our bodily infirmities also may affect and infect our souls. Through confession, wise counsel, the reception of absolution, and the doing of penance, we begin to heal our damaged Souls. Through the prayers of the priest and people, sacred anointing heals the soul and, within God's will, our bodies also.

The intimate connection with the power to forgive sin, and the Binding and Loosing granted the apostles by our Lord and Saviour, is the reason only a Priest has the capacity to confer these gifts for the people of God.

Sacraments At The Service Of Communion:

Holy Orders and Matrimony (CCC 1533-35)

Holy Orders and Matrimony are directed towards the salvation of others; if they contribute as well to personal salvation, it is through service to others that they do so. They confer a particular mission in the Church and serve to build up the people of God.

Through these sacraments, those already consecrated by Baptism and Confirmation and nourished by the Body of Christ, can receive particular consecrations. Those who receive the sacrament of Holy Orders are consecrated in Christ's name 'to feed the Church by the word and grace of God.' On the part of married couples, 'Christian spouses are fortified and ... consecrated for the duties and dignity of their state by a special sacrament.'

The Time And Place For Sacraments:

The celebration of the sacraments should normally be celebrated in the parish. A good celebration both presupposes and helps to build a real Christian community.

The Lord's Day (Sunday) is the most appropriate time for the Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation. After all, the Church into which one is initiated gathers in obedience to the Lord's Command on the Lord's Day. And thus Sunday Mass is a most appropriate time for these sacraments. Easter Vigil is the epitome of Initiation locus.

In most cases, the focus of the parish community is its parish church; this is the usual place for the sacraments to be celebrated.

There are exceptions, based on the pastoral need and exigency of situations, and these need prudential judgement as to when and where this exception might be allowed. One such exception is Infant Baptism, parishes that are large in territory or population may well baptise on Saturdays, or a Sunday after the main mass, simply due to the constant number of infants

needing baptism.

In the Diocese of Hamilton, many parishes have multiple churches. These churches, which are still used regularly by the people to worship God, are places where all the sacraments may be celebrated without question.

The Ministers Of The Sacraments:

The Ordinary Minister of the sacraments differs according to which sacrament is being celebrated. Sometimes it is the Bishop alone (Ordination) or the Bishop, who may also delegate certain priests to do the task (Confirmation/Confession). In some cases, it is the Bishop and the Priests (Holy Eucharist, Sacred Anointing). In some cases, the Bishop, Priest, or Deacon (Baptism, Holy Communion, Benediction). Another time, it is the Layman and Laywoman who are the Ordinary Ministers (Marriage).

The bishop, for pastoral reasons, may also authorise another person as an extraordinary minister for or during the administration of a particular sacrament. The roles and responsibilities of these ministers are prescribed in the Liturgical books and Canon Law.

In the Sacrament of Marriage, the Ordinary ministers are the Bride and Groom, who marry each other, no matter what we might say in shorthand. The Church is careful to state that the priest or deacon assists at the wedding, and alongside two other witnesses, attests to the fact of the marriage.

They also may bless the Sacramental Action of the Spouses, and a priest may celebrate a Nuptial Mass for two Catholics who wed.

If one of the Spouses is Eastern Catholic or Orthodox, the wedding must be performed by the priest, and he is to give the Nuptial Blessing. (If not, the marriage is null for lack of form.)

The faithful gathered to celebrate the sacraments also have a role to fulfil. It is their role to support and pray with and for those being baptised; the couple being married; those who go forward for Eucharist; those who are unable to receive the sacrament; those who approach the healing power of the Lord in the sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick.

Holy Scriptures:

Sacramental action is preceded by a proclamation of the Scriptures. The Vatican 2 Council reminds us that: "It is He Himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church" (SC 7). The Scriptures demand a dignity, both in the way it is proclaimed and the place from which it is proclaimed. For this reason, only approved versions of Scripture are to be used, and the dignity of the Word of God is enhanced by its proclamation from a book or lectionary. When Christ speaks, no one else should speak.

The Liturgy of the Word admits no competition from lovely poems, or other readings or songs. In the liturgy of the Word, readings from other sources must not replace the Scriptures, nor should they be read at the time when the Scriptures are normally read, nor from the place reserved for the reading of God's Word. In a funeral or wedding these things might be suitable as a reflection after Holy Communion, or part of the "In Memoriam".

Everything is Sacred Scripture, and nothing else. Even the Homily is an explanation of the Sacred Texts, taking into account the particular needs of the listeners. (GIRM 65) The homily, breaking open the word of God, belongs to the ordained ministry, which is a ministry of word and sacrament.

Legitimate Adaptations:

There are seasons, times, and circumstances when it is less appropriate to celebrate certain sacraments, or it is necessary to modify their celebration. For example:

- The whole Church doing penance or fasting (during Lent) takes a certain priority over the festivities of individuals. Any wedding during this time requires a certain simplicity.
- Because sacraments are encounters with the risen Christ, it is therefore most appropriate to celebrate the sacraments of initiation within the Easter period (Easter Vigil through to Pentecost).
- The Church does not celebrate the sacraments after the liturgy of Holy Thursday and through Holy Saturday, when the death of Christ is remembered; sacraments are encounters with the risen Christ. (*Penance in need and Viaticum excepting*)

On the occasion of a funeral, a member of the family is permitted, even encouraged, to speak in memory of the deceased. It should be a single movement, relatively short in time. Ideally spoken by a single person or a couple giving support to each other, perhaps adding a poem by a child or a message from family unable to make the event.

The Christian Order of Funerals places the *In Memoriam* after the Communion Prayer and before the Final Commendation. The reason is that Worship of God is always first. A possible adaptation is to have the *In Memoriam* before the Opening Hymn, or before the Sign of the Cross in the Liturgy, setting the scene as it were.

[NB Eulogies are for pagans. We do not praise the dead; we speak in their memory and commend them to God. — Let us keep to catholic words in our expressions.

There is more scope for adaptation in a Funeral Prayer Liturgy than for a Funeral Mass.



CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

Every Parish is to prepare the ground for Christian Initiation through different styles of Evangelisation, a welcoming spirit, a parish that has something for them to join after RCIA, a system of response to enquiries, and a functional Catechumenate. The norms found in the Liturgical books known in NZ as “RCIA” are to be followed.

1. Success in the Catechumenate means that they now lead a life in harmony with the Gospel and the Church. They are in a marital state recognised by the Catholic Church.
 - a. **Unbaptised Adults** must be instructed in a catechumenate programme in their parish.
 - b. **Many baptised adults** need the catechumenate, especially those who have not been raised in any Christian faith, or in an ecclesial setting that is deeply foreign to catholic sensibilities.
 - c. **Christians who are close to the faith**, but not yet fully part, may benefit from a more individualised approach, and Confession, Reception, Confirmation, Communion may happen at a time different than the Easter Vigil.
2. Parishes receive enquiries about the faith all the time. To facilitate this, they need to use all available resources.
 - a. Catholic Enquiry Centre booklets or other ‘faith’ pamphlets of quality.
 - b. Enquiry nights, Come and see events,
 - c. Alpha style events, St Paul Street Evangelisation methods
 - d. Engagement with active disciples who may eventually sponsor the enquirer.
3. In the space between enquiry and entry into the catechumenate proper, through the Rite of Acceptance, the pastor is to ascertain:
 - a. The marital status of the catechumen (and partner),
 - b. The style of life,
 - c. How much they have already been living a Christian life,
 - d. Any groups they belong to that might obstruct their Christian life, (e.g., masons, some political movements)
 - e. If they come from an anti-Catholic background, explore possible reactions of family, friends, and colleagues.
4. Issues discovered here do not block someone from entering the catechumenate but must be resolved before a Catechumen may enter the Rite of Election, or a Candidate be received into Full Communion. Use of tribunal, spiritual direction, wise counsel, and help in navigating relationships are aspects of help that should be fully utilised.
5. Catechesis of Catechumens will differ from place to place and person to person. However, each method will:
 - a. Introduce them to Christ and deepen their relationship with Christ and his Church.
 - b. Be Scripture or lectionary focused, as ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ.
 - c. Align with the Catechism of the Catholic Church.
 - d. Introduce people to the practices, beliefs, liturgy, and life of the church.
 - e. Introduce and join catechumens to the practical apostolic works of Christians. e.g., SVdP, Caritas, Visiting Sick, _____, prayer groups, study groups.

6. Parishes should collate and use well-prepared material for their catechumens.
 - a. The Pastoral Team of the Diocese will be a source of coordination for resources and methods in use in the diocese.
 - b. In time, the pastoral team will collate and make available a bank of resources for Catechesis.
 - c. In time, the Pastoral team will organise ongoing formation of our catechetical leaders.
7. Principal Catechists will normally be laity, supported by the pastor. They need to have an adequate knowledge of the Catholic faith and lead a life in accord with Church teaching. While a diploma from Te Kupenga is not necessary, it would be useful.
8. Sponsors ideally should accompany their catechumen from Acceptance to Baptism and Beyond. This means they need to be sufficiently versed in the faith themselves and be consistent role models in discipleship for their charge.
9. Once a person becomes a Catechumen, they may:
 - a. Apply for tagged positions in Catholic Integrated Schools.
 - b. Be granted preferential enrolment for their children at Catholic Integrated Schools;
 - c. Celebrate the Catholic form of marriage and receive blessings and ecclesiastical burial.
10. The Pastor and parochial vicar are to be intimately involved in the RCIA, helping each person discern their journey into Christ and His Church, offering spiritual support and guidance.
11. The Pastor must consent to each Catechumen entering the Rite of Election. He is to be involved in their discernment. He must know that they are ready, free from any obstacle to their living the catholic faith, and already living what amounts to a full catholic life.
12. The Period of Mystagogia is a vital time of reflection on the journey thus far. Parishes are to ensure that this time unpacks what has happened to the person and shows what is to happen next in their formation as Christians.
 - a. This period should culminate in a revisit of the Sacrament of Penance and an opportunity for first Confession for the neophytes.
 - b. The Parish has a functioning adult formation process that allows ongoing formation of neophytes and those restored to full communion.
 - c. It is a time to discern how these new catholics can contribute to the life of the church.
 - d. Every parish that is serious about evangelisation has the R.C.I.A. as an ordinary feature of parish life.



CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF CHILDREN

A phenomenon, not recent but gaining prominence, is the request for membership in the Church connected to the issue of Preference Cards for Secondary Education. Often, the only clear way to obtain preference is to enrol in the RCIC. Due to pressure on school rolls, it is permissible for the pastor to obtain enrolment in RCIC and issue a certificate (5.1, with note of enrolment in RCIC) before beginning the catechumenate process itself. Schools are interested in the progress of their future students through the RCIC.

Some parents wait for their children to “make a choice,” and now, since they are not infants, they must enter the Catechumenate, culminating in the one liturgy of Baptism, Confirmation Communion. Sometimes an older child, baptised only, may join in and complete their initiation. Some come from other Christian traditions, and the RCIC is a good place to complete their initiation.

1. When an infant reaches the age of reason (7 years old), they are called “Children”, and the Law requires them to be initiated more and more like adults. (Can 852)
2. Parishes are to be ready to help these children with a system adapted to their needs.
 - a. A catechetical component is available through the Pastoral Team.
 - b. It can be taught with parents accompanying their children.
 - c. Catechesis involves relationships, coming to know Jesus, reading his Good News, learning and practising the faith. This takes time, sometimes a whole year.
 - d. Due to enrolment issues, the most effective time for RCIC seems to be about the end of July. Some parents have joined RCIA after their children complete RCIC.
3. Chapter 7 of RCIA is “Christian Initiation of Children who have reached Catechetical Age”. The steps and ceremonies described therein are to be followed, so that the children are Baptised, Confirmed, and Eucharisted in the one ceremony.
4. RCIC is a parish process.
 - a. Children are to be initiated within the parish community in which they live.
 - b. Teachers and principals are to give active support to the parish in this process, but it cannot be a school-focused program.
5. RCIC is a family process:
 - a. Parents, older siblings, and younger siblings are all catechised together.
 - b. At initiation, baptise family infants at the same time as children
 - c. Parents might seek reception/confirmation at the same time.
 - d. Unbaptised parents might seek entry into RCIA. It is all to be encouraged.
6. Part of the process is catechesis before each step, followed by ongoing reflection and catechesis after each ceremony.
 - a. Relationship with the Lord is more important than pure catechism.
 - b. Learning the scriptures and the Gospel narratives is central.
 - c. Focusing at the same time on the concrete actions of the sacraments.
 - d. Rite of Scrutinies for the unbaptised, with Penance for the Baptised, is a significant step.
7. Children need a child’s perception of the mysteries, not an adult understanding. The process of becoming a full disciple of Christ in His Church is lifelong.
8. Mystagogia is important. It should be exercised after each step and continued after initiation is done. This Mystagogia should culminate in a Penitential service.

RECEPTION OF CHRISTIANS

(from other denominations)

Many Christians from other forms of Christianity express a wish to come into full communion with the Catholic Church. The method of receiving these Christians will differ according to age, baptismal status, previous experiences, familiarity with catholic life, and other factors. However, there is a general rule to be followed.

1. Only Heretics rebaptize. Therefore, a Christian properly baptised already must not even be conditionally baptised.
2. Once Valid Baptism has been verified and the Christian is ready:
 - a. All “Orthodox” that is Eastern non-Catholic Churches (and all those who have real apostolic succession) go to confession, make a profession of Faith, are received, and if already confirmed, are brought straight to communion.
 - b. Other Non Catholics, commonly known as Protestant, go to Confession, profess their Catholic Faith, are confirmed and admitted to Communion.
3. If valid baptism (2b) is provably doubtful, conditional baptism may be performed.
 - a. The Pastor must prove his doubt. A Baptism that the Church presumes to be valid must be proven to have been invalidly done.
4. Reception may be done at a weekday mass or a Sunday mass.
 - a. They do not have to wait for Easter, although it might be good that they do so.
 - b. RCIA is designed for the unbaptised and uncatechised person.
5. A Baptism is Valid when:
 - a. The intention is to Baptise “into Christ”
 - b. Using the formula, ‘I baptise you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit’. (Orthodox may use the passive voice “N is baptised in the name...”)
 - c. Water must be used and flow over some part of the skin
6. These churches have Valid Baptisms:

All 23 sui iuris Catholic Churches. Anglican, Armenian, Church of Christ, Church of South India, Church of Sri Lanka, Congregational Churches (Except Baptist see later), Coptic Church, Disciples of Christ, Dutch Reformed Church, Episcopalians, Ethiopian Church, Free Church of England, French Protestant Church Union, Holy Catholic Church of Japan, Independent Calvinist Churches, Jacobite Churches, Liberal Catholic Church, Lusitanian Churches, Lutheran Churches, Syro-Malankara, Mar Thoma Church, Methodist, Nestorian Churches, Old Catholic Church, Orthodox Churches, Presbyterian, Protestant Church of Tuvalu, United Church of Canada, United Reformed Church, Uniting Church of Australia, Waldensian Churches, Zion Churches.
7. These Churches Do Not have Valid Baptism:

Pentecostal Churches including Assemblies of God, New Life Churches, Harvest Churches, churches of God, Holiness Assn, Christadelphian, Christian Scientists, Jehovah’s witnesses, Mennonites, Moravian Church, Mormons, Plymouth Brethren, Quakers, Moonies, Salvation Army, Seventh Day Adventists, Shakers, Spiritualist Churches, Unitarian Churches, Established Ratana Church.
8. Sometimes valid, sometimes not. Many dedicate infants and baptise later:

Amish Church, Adventist, Baptist, Four Square, Some Pentecostal Churches.

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF INFANTS

BAPTISM OF INFANTS:

Baptism marks the entry of the individual into the community of the faithful. It is the gateway to the sacraments and the life of Grace. It is a new birth into life in Christ, and as such is necessary for salvation. “For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him” (Acts 2.39)

POLICY

1. The Church wishes that Infants are baptised when there is some hope that they will be brought up (*educatum*) in the Catholic faith. (Can 868.2)
 - a. Hope exists when a ‘parent’ seeks enrolment in a catholic school.
 - b. Hope exists when a parent, not under pressure from grandparents, seeks baptism.
 - c. It may well exist even under grandparental pressure. It will be clear in interviewing the parent.
 - d. It is hard to see how hope can exist if, for example, a practising Hindu seeks baptism for school and professes to remain Hindu.
 - e. Perfection in a parenting couple is not required. If a couple in an irregular or immoral relationship seeks baptism for “their” child, baptise. Grace is needed.
 - f. Care is to be taken when parents are estranged and custody is shared. Sometimes the parents are still fighting, and one parent has not consented. Delicacy and prudence is required in deciding to baptise at this time.
2. Preparation should be tailored to the needs of the parents, helping them appreciate the gift that is Baptism into Christ and providing an experience of parish support and involvement.
 - a. Lay Catechists are vital in this work.
 - b. Simple resources exist from around the world.
 - c. The Diocese has a video resource online.
 - d. The Pastoral Team is to be a conduit of information and help.
 - e. One session is usually sufficient, but it will depend.
3. Large and small parishes differ; practice will vary. In some places:
 - a. Baptism at Sunday Mass, once in a while, is great.
 - b. It may be better to be small, a family event.
 - c. It may be that multiple families take part in a communal Baptism service.
 - d. Baptism is most appropriate on a Sunday, but just as births seldom go to schedule, practicality and flexibility in timing is often required.
4. There may only be one Godfather or one Godmother, or one of each. (c.873-874)
 - a. They are to be confirmed, and over 16 years of age.
 - b. If only one Godparent is found, a Christian Witness may be recorded in the other space of the Register.
 - c. Proxy stand-ins for Godparents may be allowed. It is a spiritual relationship before a physical one.
 - d. The “custom” of more than 2 godparents is to be completely avoided.
5. Eastern Rite infants are normally Confirmed and Eucharisted at Baptism.
 - a. If an Eastern Catholic approaches for Baptism, ensure that the appropriate form of Baptism is followed.
 - b. Record the baptism in the Parish Register.
 - c. Unless parents (one Latin, one Eastern) agree to make the child Latin, the child is

- automatically enrolled into the Church of the Father.
 - d. Record the Father's sui iuris Church in the notanda (Can.111).
 - e. If only one parent is Catholic, the child is enrolled in the church of that parent.
 - f. Easterners who receive all three sacraments as infants will benefit from the Sacramental Catechesis with their peers at the time, and while they cannot be reconfirmed, they can take part in the Communion celebrations.
- 6. The Trinitarian Formula must be used.
 - a. Father, Son and Holy Spirit must be named as such
 - b. using water that actually washes skin.
- 7. Symbols used should be glorious.
 - a. Real reception, dialogue, and signing at the foyer of the church.
 - b. A procession to the place
 - c. Good amount of Oil of Catechumen.
 - d. Enough water to "make a splash"
 - e. Copious amount of Chrism, "to runneth down the beard" even.
- 8. Explanation of the Rite:
 - a. If only other adults are present, the Rite will explain itself.
 - b. If older children are there, timely explanations of the major actions may help with the celebration. For example,
 - i. Explain Door rituals (marae, home)
 - ii. Explain why we listen to Scripture pray now
 - iii. Let them smell the oils at the right time
 - iv. Catechumens for strength
 - v. Chrism = to elevate to Christ Status, etc
- 9. Children who are more than 10 years of age and are not baptised must be enrolled in the RCIC and baptised, confirmed, and admitted to Eucharist in a single ceremony with other catechumens.
 - a. RCIA and RCIC are the normative means by which we become Catholic.
 - b. Infant Baptism is the adaptation of the norm to the reality of infants
- 10. Unless the RCIC caters for younger children, those under 10 could be prepared for baptism, and baptised shortly before entering the parish sacramental programmes for those baptised as infants.
- 11. After Baptism, parishes may wish to maintain contact with their parents, exploring the Mystery they have participated in.



CONFIRMATION:

Of those Baptised as Infants

Confirmation is the completion of Baptism by the full gift of the Holy Spirit. This perfection of baptismal grace found in Confirmation is not dependent upon age or knowledge of the confirmand. The grace that is conferred is a free gift of God and, like Baptism, 'does not need ratification to become effective (Cf CCC 1308). Proving this gift, Church Law grants to any priest the faculty to immediately confirm baptised babies in danger of death. (c.891)

This gift fundamentally changes us in our very being, deepening and strengthening our relationship with Christ and his church. By God's Grace, we are equipped to live for Jesus in His Church, to witness to Christ, and build up his body in faith and love. This sacrament so profoundly changes the person in their very being that it cannot be repeated.

1. Preparation for Confirmation will take place in a parish-based programme.
 - a. Confirmation is the second of the initiation sacraments.
 - b. Initiation is completed by the reception of Holy Communion at Confirmation Mass.
2. Preparation for Confirmation should include not only the theories of Service and Gifts of the Holy Spirit but also simple and practical experiences of the same. Service to the poor, love of God, Love of neighbour.
3. Confirmation Preparation needs the participation of Parents with their child.
 - a. Parents are the primary teachers in the faith of their children.
 - b. Parents must be intimately involved in their child's catechesis.
4. Sponsors have a significant role to play in the spiritual life of the candidate. It is optimal if they can be part of the Preparation process. They must be:
 - a. At least 16 years of age and confirmed themselves
 - b. Attend Sunday Mass and be regular in the practice of their faith
 - c. Aware of their responsibilities towards the candidate.
 - d. It is optimal if the sponsor is also a Godparent. Parents are not eligible for this role.
5. If a sponsor cannot be proposed by the family, then the parish should supply one.
6. Confirmation is to be celebrated when and where the whole parish gathers
 - a. In practice, this means Sunday Mass, so the whole parish can be invited to attend.
 - b. When larger numbers of candidates exist, multiple masses on the weekend may be for Confirmations.
 - c. If the Bishop is prevented from celebrating, the Pastor has the faculty to Confirm.
7. Once they are confirmed, our children can:
 - a. Serve Mass, take up the Collection,
 - b. Read the Lectionary,
 - c. When they reach 16-18, become EMOs.
 - d. Join Vinnies and other service groups.
 - e. Participate in scripture and other formation groups. Therefore:
8. Parishes must have apostolic activities ready for them and all members of the parish, so that everyone can put into practice the gifts they have received in the sacrament.

FIRST COMMUNION:

The Sacrifice of the Mass is Worship of God, and Holy Communion is the Highpoint of our Worship and also of our Initiation into the Mysteries of the church.

All people receiving Communion should have first been confirmed. There is an anomaly where several dioceses across the world do not conform to the teachings and the Law of the Church.

The 1917 Code of Canon Law insisted on Confirmation by 7 and First Communion by 8. The Present code is not as prescriptive, but still insists on Confirmation before Communion, as do the Council Fathers of Vatican 2.

1. Candidates for the sacrament of Holy Eucharist and their parents will undergo a period of preparation in a parish-based programme, which also includes preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation. Detailed prescriptions can be read above.
2. Preparation Catechesis should in some way:
 - a. Revisit the sacrament of Penance.
 - b. Underscore the sacred dignity of the Eucharist and the need for a clear conscience before communion.
 - c. Show Communion as the new Manna, Heavenly Food for our Exodus.
 - d. Point to the mass as being both a visit to heaven and a participation in Calvary.
3. Parents and parish priests together have an obligation to ensure the candidates for these sacraments, Confirmation and Eucharist, have received adequate instruction and have an understanding of what and whom they are receiving, appropriate to their age.
4. Children with learning disabilities need special care and attention in this phase of their coming to the Lord. If a child is older, and disability prevents proper cognition, do not deny the child the grace, but find all means of engaging them with the Lord Himself
5. For Holy Communion will be offered under both kinds
 - a. A taste test and training to receive both species is to be part of their prior preparations.
 - b. They are to learn to receive in the hand and standing, which is the received posture of this diocese.
 - c. They are to be drilled to say 'Amen' in the Holy Dialogue before Bishop will even think about giving them Communion.

The Mass for Confirmation & First Communion

Aside from the Normal things that are to be achieved in celebrating a Sunday or Festival Mass (See below) the following differences are to be noted:

1. Before Mass:
 - a. The candidates are to be seated with their families and sponsor.
 - b. Dress for the occasion should be regular “Sunday Best”, or other culturally appropriate celebratory costume.
 - c. In large places, they may be seated together with their sponsors beside them.
2. Vestments will usually be Red, although it may be White/Gold if the occasion fits.
3. A designated Photographer is to be appointed.
4. After the Gospel
 - a. Candidates are presented to the Bishop.
 - b. A dialogue ensues, testifying to the candidate's readiness.
 - c. A homily is preached
5. The Administration of Confirmation will vary between large and small groups.
 - a. Small Groups <10-15: Gather them with sponsors behind on the Sanctuary steps, facing the Congregation.
 - i. We will recite Baptism Promises, Lay hands on them individually, and confirm them without having them move.
 - b. Larger Groups 10-40: Gather the children together in a group.
 - i. Recite Promises,
 - ii. Line up along the Steps for Laying of Hands
 - iii. Go retrieve the Sponsors and prepare to be confirmed
 - iv. Bishop will be seated to confirm
When approaching, do not bow, come straight up, and kneel
 - c. V.large Groups: 40+ (Here logistics will vary)
 - i. Depending on space, the reciting of Promises and Communal Laying of Hands will be either in their seats as a group or with them all gathered in a Group at the foot of the Sanctuary.
 - ii. Bishop will be seated for the Confirmations.
6. Some of the Candidates or sponsors should read the Prayers of the Faithful
 - a. They should also bring the offertory gifts forward and perhaps help with the collection.
7. For smaller groups, a group photo may be taken before the Blessing, in which case the children may process out straight to the banquet. Otherwise, bishop will return for a photo after the Final Hymn.
8. Individual photos can be taken but directed by the Photographer.

The Sacrament of Confession, Penance, Reconciliation:

In the context of the Initiation of Infants

The current discipline of the Church is that a child is first introduced to the sacrament of Penance and then to the sacrament of Eucharist. [Cf. General Catechetical Directory] Catholics are only bound to confess the grave sin of which they are aware. (Can. 914). A greater obligation than this cannot be imposed on anyone, let alone a child.

The first celebration of the sacrament of Penance provides an occasion for the child to appropriate more fully this gift of conversion received in Baptism. However, it must be understood that at a tender age, a child's understanding of sin and personal culpability differs from that of an adult, and must be taken into account.

For younger children, the experience of the sacrament, regularly repeated, is the most significant education they receive in its meaning. Their conceptual level is quite concrete; they learn most by doing.

1. Preparation for Penance will be separated from Confirmation preparation by a reasonable time. E.g., Advent/Easter, Lent/Easter, or Easter/October. There are sound educational and pastoral reasons for this. If too closely linked, Penance will be seen simply as a necessary preparation for Eucharist, and the value of the sacrament in its own right is lost.
2. Reconciliation is to be presented as a sacrament in its own right, with its own purpose and value. This necessitates a period of ongoing experience of the sacrament supported by suitable instruction.
3. Preparation for the sacrament of Confession involving candidates and parents will take place in a parish-based programme.
 - a. Reconciliation's connection to Baptism should be explored.
 - b. Children will be led to note the difference between wrongdoing and sin.
This is the 'test' for reaching the use of reason.
 - c. Both forms of confession are to be explored.
4. Celebration of the Sacrament.
 - a. Do not certificate the celebration, it may be a breach of the seal.
 - b. The Pastor is obliged to prepare the child, but not police the actual confessing.
 - c. Making a child's confession a welcoming and joy-filled moment with Jesus is vital.
 - d. Encourage Parents to come to confession too. Teaching their children by example.
5. Safeguarding rules prescribe the method for hearing children's confessions.
 - a. Children's confessions must be heard in the visual range of the congregation.
 - b. Confessionals with no glass portal to observe the confessor must be avoided.
6. Rite 1 or Rite 2:
 - a. Rite2: Communal Preparation, General Confession of Guilt followed by individual Confessions. Care should be taken to avoid a feeling of rush for each child.
 - b. Rite 1 may be used carefully. Avoid rushing, and have well-prepared children. If several priests are spread around the Church, it may look like Rite 2 but be Rite 1.

rites of Passage:

Toward Christian Adulthood

Due to modern living, a double gap has developed in the growing of our Children in the faith and in society. When Confirmation was mid-teens, this sacrament was often usurped (and thus diminished) as a type of graduation, in spite of any catechesis to the contrary at the time.

Many cultures have Rites of Passage. Even the Anglo-Saxon culture of NZ used to have Debutante Balls and other Coming of Age Rituals. This is largely missing now in our culture and our church. It is necessary to restore a Christian Rite of Passage. How this is to be achieved needs to be developed. In the meantime:

1. Rites of Passage should be developed in each Parish.
 - a. There are two obvious moments:
 - i. At or about 12-13 in transition from Child to Adolescent.
 - ii. At or about 17-18 or Year 13 in transition from Adolescent to Adult.
 - b. In a Parent/Child, or Dad/Son and Mum/Daughter configuration.
 - i. Solo Parent configuration needs to be cared for in a special way.
 - c. Time and Ritual should be spent together.
 - i. OHS and safeguarding rules to be observed.
2. Preparation should focus on:
 - a. The Future.
 - b. The Joys and Dangers of Adulthood.
 - c. The Spiritual Life.
 - d. Discussion of Vices and Virtues:
 - i. How to navigate and recover from Vice.
 - ii. How Virtue requires Penance, both personal and Sacramental.
3. The Rituals can be celebrated in Church.
 - a. Parents will directly address and initiate their child into the next stage in life.
 - b. They should:
 - i. Identify the goodness of their child.
 - ii. Pledge a future together.
 - iii. Present a gift to mark the moment - e.g.
 1. A tiara for the modern Princess.
 2. A sword for the modern knight.
 3. A hammer for a modern builder of virtue.
 4. A scapular for the modern saint.
 5. A Golden Pen for the modern Psalmist.
 6. (examples only)
 - iv. Pray a blessing on their child.
4. This ceremony is probably best to stand alone and apart from the sacraments.
 - a. Mass and Confession could be mystagogical, celebrated a week later, with parent and child together, reflecting on the future.
5. Idea Resources:
 - a. Becoming a Modern Day Princess - by Maureen Hanna.
 - b. King Me: What Every Son Wants and Needs from His Father by Steve Farrar.
 - c. Rite of Passage: A Father's Blessing by Jim McBride.
 - d. Milestone to Manhood: A Christian Rite of Passage to Help Your 13-Year-Old Son Make the Leap from Boyhood to Manhood by Steven and David Arms.

Part II

Will Focus on Matrimony, Holy Orders, Anointing, Penance

Part III

Will focus on the Liturgical Celebration in the Life of the Diocese