



Most Reverend Daniel Edward Thomas
Bishop of Toledo

DECREE

REGARDING THE PREPARATION AND RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION (BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, AND FIRST HOLY EUCHARIST)

The parish, under the leadership of the pastor, is the proper place for the faithful to hear the Word of God, celebrate the Sacraments and provide service to one another throughout the course of their Christian lives (*CIC* 515 §1, 519, 528 §§1-2, 856, 857 §1, 881, 932 §1). “The pastor is to see to it that the Most Holy Eucharist is the center of the parish assembly of the faithful,” (*CIC* 528 §2) at all times and most particularly on Sunday. This principle underscores this policy of the Diocese of Toledo.

The following norms apply to those individuals in the Diocese of Toledo who attend a parish, private, or non-parochial Catholic school, as well as those who attend a parish religious education program, including parishioners who have been granted permission for home-based catechesis.

Catechesis for the Sacraments of Initiation

Catechetical preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist) begins in the family and continues through the preparation provided by the parish (Catholic school or religious education programs, including the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults), private or non-parochial Catholic school, or homeschooling. It is the hope of the diocese that all private and non-parochial Catholic schools would provide sacramental preparation in their curriculum according to diocesan guidelines. In cases where a private or non-parochial Catholic school does not include sacramental preparation in its curriculum, those students are requested to participate in a parish program of preparation.

All catechesis for the reception of sacraments in the Diocese of Toledo must follow the curriculum content as provided in the preparation programs approved by the diocese.

Preparation for the Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

“Pastors of souls and other members of the Christian faithful, according to their respective ecclesiastical function, have the duty to take care that those who seek the sacraments are prepared to receive them by proper evangelization and catechetical instruction, attentive to the norms issued by competent authority” (*CIC* 843 §2). Parish, school, and homeschool sacramental preparation programs assist in this duty. All such preparation is to be conducted under the guidance of the pastor and in close collaboration with the parish director/coordinator of religious education.

Each parish, private, and non-parochial Catholic school is to identify an individual or several individuals who will work closely with the parish director/coordinator of religious education of the candidate’s parish of membership, in preparation for the celebration of the sacraments, particularly for the celebration of First Holy Eucharist and Confirmation, but also for the reception of the Sacrament of First Penance. Homeschool families are likewise to maintain a close collaborative relationship with the pastor and the parish director/coordinator of religious education.

The normative age for First Penance and First Holy Eucharist is second grade (approximately age seven). Candidates for Confirmation are to be presented when they are in the eighth grade.

Proper Place for the Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation

The parish church where the candidate is a member, or Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Cathedral, the mother church of the diocese, is the proper place for the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation. Where pastoral prudence dictates, the parish celebration of a Sacrament of Initiation may be combined with the celebration of another local parish, with the permission of the pastors.

Prior to the reception of the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist, preparation for and the reception of First Penance is to take place. This sacrament, likewise, is to be celebrated in the parish church of the candidate.

Recording the Reception of a Sacrament of Initiation

The *Code of Canon Law (CIC)* requires that both Baptism and Confirmation be recorded in the proper sacramental registers of the parish (or parish territory) in which they were celebrated (*CIC* 877 §§1-3, 878, 895). The sole exception to this norm is the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation at Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Cathedral. This sacrament should be recorded in the proper parish of the individual receiving the sacrament.

Decree

Regarding the Preparation and Reception of the Sacraments of Initiation

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Notification of the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation is to be sent to the parish of baptismal record. While it is not required by the universal law of the Church to record the reception of First Holy Eucharist, it is highly recommended that this register be used and that notifications of the reception of First Holy Eucharist be sent to the parish of baptismal record. It is also highly recommended that all other sacraments be noted in the electronic registration system of the Diocese of Toledo for easy reference. This, however, may not be used to substitute for the recording in the parish sacramental registers.

The reception of First Penance is not to be recorded in any sacramental register, in writing or electronically.

The norms found in the particular law of the Diocese of Toledo (*The Pastoral Policy Handbook of the Diocese of Toledo*, "Appendix T: Sacramental Records") provide the appropriate method for properly recording the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation.

Effective Date of these Norms

In order that all parishes, parochial, private and non-parochial Catholic Schools, as well as religious education and homeschooling programs can properly review and prepare to implement these norms, I hereby also decree that the abovementioned norms shall come into effect from the first day of July of the year 2017.

All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at the Chancery of the Diocese of Toledo this twentieth day of December, two-thousand sixteen.


Reverend Monte J. Hoyles, JCL
Chancellor



Most Reverend Daniel E. Thomas
Bishop of Toledo in America