

December 13, 2017

Dear First Communion Parent,

The time is fast approaching for celebration of First Eucharist!! As the Church recalls Jesus' First Coming, we also prepare for His coming to your child in this sacrament. Each parent is vital to the sacramental formation process. The Church affirms the parent as primary catechist of their child. It is the parent who is ultimately responsible for the child's formation. In partnership with you, catechist and teachers work together so that you are supported in this role. Because we share this partnership, we depend on you to encourage your child. Help him/her attend Mass, classes and events regularly. Participate, yourself, in parent meetings and family celebrations.

Often when we discuss First Eucharist we begin with the ceremony. While this information is necessary, the most important questions focus on Eucharist, itself. Why is the Eucharist so important to us as Catholics? Are we, as a family, ready and willing to commit ourselves to a Eucharistic lifestyle—including weekly participation at Mass, learning more about Jesus, offering daily prayer and serving others? Please explore these questions at home as we will be doing here in class, also.

The sacrament of First Eucharist is celebrated with the Saint Mary parish assembly at a regularly scheduled weekend mass. It is wonderful to have our parish share the celebration of Communion!! The children will process in and there will be reserved seating for the First Communicant with their **immediate** family. Each child will have special participation in the Mass when they celebrate their First Eucharist. These celebrations are sure to be especially meaningful to the children, their families and all in our Saint Mary Parish community.

Please see the **reverse side of this letter** for the schedule of when your child's class is scheduled to celebrate First Communion. We are celebrating all First Communions during this First Communion weekend!! In addition to these Masses, your family can choose the 7:30am mass or 9:30am Mass, also. For the First Communion celebration your **immediate family** will have reserved seating and your child will have special participation in the liturgy of his/her First Communion. If you need to change the date of your child's First Communion, please submit a written request with your preferred date and time. ***The information you provide on the attached yellow information sheet will help us to plan. Return this form at the parent meeting, please.*** (or earlier!!) *Please note that there will be a practice on the Wednesday and Thursday the week before your child's First Communion for RE students and the Thursday before for school students. A child with a parent are to participate in the practice. These practices are mandatory and most important to have a meaningful celebration of the sacrament.

PLEASE MARK THESE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR:

*** 1/11/18 Parent meeting, 7:00-8:30pm in Church * VERY IMPORTANT FOR PARENTS TO ATTEND*Special guest speaker at the meeting for the inspiration and enrichment of all parents for sacramental preparation. AT LEAST ONE PARENT MUST ATTEND THIS MEETING. PLEASE ARRANGE YOUR SCHEDULE. (not for children)**

INFORMATION SHEET TO BE TURNED IN AT THE PARENT MEETING (or sooner)

*** 2/24/18.....Last day to give a written request to change First Eucharist Mass date or time**

***2/24/18Jesus Day, 1:45pm-5:30pm; required afternoon of reflection for First Communicant and parent.** (Please make other arrangements for siblings...contact the RE office if you need help with babysitting arrangements so that you and your First Communicant can have a rewarding experience.) This event includes the 4:30 Mass where the children will celebrate the Rite of Enrollment.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR A **PARENT** OF EACH CHILD TO ATTEND the parent meeting on 1/11/18. There is a wonderful guest speaker presenting at the 1/11 meeting. Make arrangements to attend, please.

Information regarding your child's First Eucharist Mass, rehearsal dates and times, clothing guidelines, camera use, banner-making, special rites during Lent, and other information will be given to you at the January parent meeting. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call. May God continue to bless you and your family as you prepare for this wonderful event! May this proclaimed Jubilee Year of Mercy bring the light and peace of Christ to you and your family.

In Christ,

Teri Toenjes
Coordinator of Religious Education

Dr. Stephanie Stoneberg
School Principal

over