



FIRST EUCHARIST NORMS - AUGUST, 2012

Last week I presented a summary of the new Archdiocesan Policies regarding the Sacrament of Baptism. This week I will do the same for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. Here too, the new guidelines primarily repeat and clarify the guidelines that have been in place.

In regard to First Eucharist, the guidelines make it clear that the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation must precede the reception of First Eucharist for any child already baptized.

If a child is to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time, a copy of his/her Baptismal Certificate, issued by the church of baptism within six months of the celebration, must be presented to the church where Reconciliation will happen. (This is a new requirement.) This same certificate is also a requirement for First Eucharist. The child must be at least seven years old. The child must be enrolled in a parish process of preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. (This is required, regardless of the place or program of education in which a child is engaged - including home schooling).

A child who wishes to receive First Communion must also be at least seven years of age and able to demonstrate an understanding of the difference between the consecrated bread and wine (the Body & Blood of Christ) and ordinary bread and wine. A child must be engaged in a program of "systematic, approved catechesis" through a Catholic School, a Parish Faith Formation Program or as part of their Home Schooling. They must also be enrolled in a parish process of preparation, specifically designed for the reception of First Holy Communion.

Finally, if a child is to be considered for the reception of First Holy Communion, that child and at least one parent (or guardian) is expected to be attending Sunday Mass each week.

-Fr. Tom Sieg