

Sacrament Preparation

In His great love, God desires to remain with us always and bestow His divine life upon us. His Son, Jesus Christ, instituted the sacraments to fulfill the will of His Father. Through the Sacraments, we truly receive God's life within us.

Because of the great dignity and value of the sacraments, it is important that those who are to receive a sacrament are adequately prepared for this great gift. The Church of St. Boniface offers the following preparation programs:

Baptism

In Baptism, we are filled with Divine Life and enter into God's family, the Church. All sin is removed, and the baptized person belongs forever to Christ.

Parents should call Fr. Balluff, the pastor, at his St. Boniface office (952-446-1054) several months before their baby is born. A baptism preparation class is scheduled in January, March, May, August and October for parents who have not had a child baptized here in the past four years.

Reconciliation

All of the baptized are called to live life according to God's plan. Sin separates us from God and prevents us from receiving all that He has for us. In order to restore us fully to His grace, Christ instituted the Sacrament of Reconciliation, by which our sins are forgiven and our communion with God is restored.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered at the Church of St. Mary of Czestochowa on Saturdays before the 8:00 PM Mass and before 8:30 AM Mass on Sundays, Thursdays, and Fridays, or by appointment.

Preparation for First Reconciliation is a part of our 2nd grade Faith Formation curriculum. Students will receive this sacrament on **Saturday, December 12, 2009** at 9:00 AM.

Eucharist

The Eucharist is the "source and summit of the Christian life" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1324). The life of the Church and all of her members is sustained by the Eucharist. It is truly the heart of the Church. At the Last Supper, Jesus instituted the Eucharist and instructed His Apostles to continue this memorial. He gives us His Body and Blood because He desires to remain with us. In His great love, He wants to be in communion with us. We call this sacrament "Holy Communion" because by it, we are intimately united to Christ. Jesus tells us: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him" (John 6:56). When we receive the Eucharist, we are receiving a taste of heaven, where we will spend eternity in communion with God.

Preparation for First Communion is a part of our 2nd grade Faith Formation curriculum. Below are important dates in this process:

Saturday, April 10, 2010 at 9:00 AM – Practice and Reconciliation

Sunday, April 18, 2010 at 8:30 AM Mass – First Communion

Confirmation

In Baptism, our lives were radically changed: our sins were forgiven, we became a part of God's family the Church, and we received sanctifying grace – God's life within us. The Sacrament of Confirmation completes the grace we received at baptism.

Jesus promised His Apostles that He would send them His Holy Spirit. At Pentecost, the Apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and then went forth to lay hands on those who had been baptized to share with them the gift of the Holy Spirit. This tradition is seen as the origin of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Therefore, this Sacrament gives us a share in the grace of Pentecost. At the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation, the bishop lays his hands on the heads of those being confirmed, anoints them with a sacred chrism, and says, "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit."

The Sacrament of Confirmation brings about the following effects in our lives:¹

- It deepens our identity as children of God
- It unites us more firmly to Christ
- It increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us
- It unites us more perfectly with the Church
- It gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation helps our students understand the meaning of this great Sacrament. At the Church of St. Mary of Czestochowa, preparation for Confirmation is a two-year program, and because ours is a small parish, we send our young people to the Cathedral or to the Basilica to be confirmed only every other year, in the late fall of years that end in an odd number. Students usually receive the sacrament of Confirmation in the late fall of the school year in which they are in 10th and 11th grades. That means that they begin the process in the late fall when they are in 8th and 9th grades. While we are glad to welcome older students who have not yet been confirmed, we cannot allow anyone to start the process early.

Below are important dates in this process:

Tuesday, October 13, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. at the Cathedral of St. Paul in St. Paul – Confirmation of 10th and 11th graders

Sunday, November 1, 2009 at the 8:30 AM Mass at St. Mary of Czestochowa – Confirmation Welcoming Mass (to honor those confirmed the week before)

Wednesday, October 21, 2009 at 7:00 – current 8th and 9th graders become "the Confirmation class." Current 10th and 11th graders begin to meet in the rectory on Wednesdays.

Late Fall 2010 – Current (i.e., in fall 2010) 8th and 9th graders will be confirmed as 10th and 11th graders.

Holy Matrimony

¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1303.

God is love, and He created man and woman to love and be loved. In the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, man and woman enter into communion with one another. They enter into this sacred union for the sake of each other's good and for the procreation and education of children. This Sacrament gives husband and wife a special grace to live out the demands of their vocation and establishes a perpetual and exclusive bond between the spouses.

Couples should call Fr. Balluff at his St. Boniface office (952-446-1054) six months to a year before the date they desire for their marriage.

Holy Orders

The Sacrament of Holy Orders is the sacrament by which a man becomes a deacon, priest, or bishop. This Sacrament ensures that the mission Christ entrusted to His Apostles continues to be exercised in the Church today. Through the person of the priest, Jesus Christ truly remains with His people. St. John Vianney said, "The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus Christ."

For more information on discerning a vocation to the priesthood, visit the vocations website for the Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis: www.10000vocations.org

Anointing of the Sick

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick can be received by any member of the faithful who is in danger of death because of sickness or old age. This sacrament gives a special grace to the sick and dying, uniting them more closely to the Suffering Christ and prepares them for the journey to Heaven.

If you or someone you know is in need of this Sacrament, please call Fr. Balluff at 952-446-1054.