

September 10, 2022

Dear Parents of First Communicants,

You are the principal teachers and models of faith for your children. When you presented them for baptism, you promised to train them in the practice of the faith. Therefore I want to enlist your cooperation in preparing your children for their first sacramental encounter with our Lord since their baptism: their first confession. You should review with your children their understanding of the Sacrament of Penance. Help them learn how to examine their consciences. All those preparing for this sacrament should know the Ten Commandments, and you should review these with them.

At the request of the teachers at St. Charles School, the schedule for First Confession is a little later than in recent years. Our first meeting with parents will be on Saturday morning, November 12, 2022, at 10:00, in St. Charles Church. At that time you will receive an activity book which you are to complete with your children. Please return the completed activity book at our meeting with parents and children on Saturday morning, January 14, 2023, at 10:00, in St. Charles Church.

By then all the children should have memorized an Act of Contrition. The one most of them are learning is:

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended You, Who are all-good and deserving of all my love. With Your help, I will sin no more. Amen.

Please work on this with your children and be sure they know this, or another version, by heart.

To show that this sacrament is part of your life as a Catholic, you are urged to accompany your children on the day of their first confession, and you are welcome to go to confession at this time yourselves. The time for first confession will be 10:00 AM on Saturday, February 4, in St. Charles Church.

Soon after this your children will take another major step in their initiation into the Church—a process begun at baptism and completed by confirmation: their First Communion. This will be a time for rejoicing for your families and for the whole parish, as these young members join us at the table of the Lord to share the banquet of Christ's sacrifice. This is indeed a privilege for them, but also a time of commitment to continue their study and practice of the Catholic faith. This is an area where you are indispensable. Your children learn how to be Catholics by following your example. For their First Communion to be more than a time for your children to be the center of attention, weekly attendance at Sunday Mass is essential, since it is the primary expression of the Catholic faith by all who profess it. An atmosphere of reverence and prayer at home is also necessary to show that religion is a way of life, and not

something limited to Sundays. Only you can provide the necessary example and environment for your children to grow in their faith.

There will be two meetings in preparation for First Holy Communion, which will be held at St. Peter Church in Tilden. The first, for parents only, will be on Saturday, February 25, at 10:00 AM. The second, for parents and children, will be on Saturday, April 1, at 10:00 AM. In addition there will be a retreat on Saturday, April 29, beginning at 8:00 AM, in St. Charles Church. That will be followed by a practice and confessions for those receiving their First Holy Communion at St. Charles.

First Communion will be celebrated at St. Charles during the 10:30 AM Mass on Sunday, April 30. First Communion will be celebrated at St. Peter during the 9:00 AM Mass on Sunday, May 14. Because I will be in La Crosse on May 7 for the ordination of deacons, we have not yet scheduled the practice for First Holy Communion at St. Peter.

Sacraments are to be received in the parish where the children belong, not where they go to school or attend religion classes. This is proper, since we are members of parishes, not of schools or classes. The children should learn that they are members of a larger church community and their parish is the place where they should be attending Mass regularly. I hope you understand this, too. Exceptions require the written permission of your proper pastor.

We all look forward to these joyous occasions. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael J. Gorman".

Rev. Msgr. Michael J. Gorman
Pastor