



June 10, 2020

Sacraments of Initiation

First Holy Communion Confirmation RCIA Catechumens & Candidates

Dear Priests, Deacons, Parish and School Formation Leaders,

As parishes across the diocese begin to open their doors for Sunday Masses, it is now possible for us to consider how to prudently celebrate the sacraments of initiation that were postponed during the pandemic. I plan to announce this Sunday that parishes can now look to reschedule these sacramental celebrations. Parishes with approved reopening plans may begin, at their discretion and ability to accommodate families safely, to celebrate sacraments according to the space available. Below are the next steps for each sacrament:

First Communion

This Sunday, June 14th at 2:00, I will be celebrating a special live-streamed Mass (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-VaQThwIYs>) for those preparing to receive their First Holy Communion. I am happy to offer this opportunity to gather the families of those awaiting First Communion for this special Mass on the Diocese of Joliet YouTube channel, and I will have a special message just for them. We appreciate all parents' patience and their dedication to making sure their children celebrate this special milestone in their lives as Catholics.

First Communions can be celebrated at Saturday or Sunday Masses or at another suitable time, such as a Saturday morning or a weekday Mass, to serve the most families. Please help families understand that each parish's ability to do this is conditional on worship space capacity based on social distancing and guidelines current for the State of Illinois. Thus, for a given parish, there may be multiple times when the First Communions can occur. Please direct any questions that you have regarding First Communion to Joyce Donahue in the Office of Youth Formation: jdonahue@dioceseofjoliet.org.

Confirmation

For all Confirmations postponed from March 14th (more than 50), it is our desire to celebrate these confirmations by mid-September. We have several Bishops at the ready and very desirous of celebrating Confirmation with our youth. We are navigating how best to accomplish this. Once the Bishops' dates of availability are confirmed we will email/release a Sign-up Genius for parishes to select the dates that best fit for them (More information will follow as to how to do this).

The number of attendees for each Confirmation will depend greatly on space availability in each Church and contingent upon each parish being equipped to sufficiently host, direct, (manage) and sanitize the Churches. For any given parish, there may be multiple celebrations of Confirmations which the Bishops are willing to accommodate. They are wanting to respond to the parish's needs. Please direct any questions that you have regarding Confirmation to Sister Sharon Stola, OSB, Director of the Office of Divine Worship at sstola@dioceseofjoliet.org. Sister Sharon will work with Colleen Case in the Office of Youth Formation in arranging the schedules.

Rites of Christian Initiation

The celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation and Reception into the Full Communion in the Catholic Church may begin now in those parishes with approved reopening plans. These celebrations should be scheduled in such a way as to first provide for a time to complete the preparations for the reception of the Sacraments. If possible, at least one of the Scrutinies may be celebrated with the Elect prior to the reception of the Initiation Sacraments. The reception of these Sacraments is to be celebrated during Mass, and it is most appropriate to celebrate these Rites at a Sunday Mass with the faithful present. The guidelines for the Baptismal water and anointing with Sacred Chrism as given in the Reopening Policies should be followed. Please direct any questions that you have regarding the Rites of Christian Initiation to Sr. Sharon Stola in the Office of Divine Worship and the Catechumenate: sstola@diocesofjoliet.org.

Further communications pertinent to each sacrament will follow. It is recommended that parishes with smaller capacity and large numbers of communicants should consider contacting nearby parishes with larger spaces to explore the possibility of sharing their facility.

We are ever so grateful for the patience exercised by the candidates for the Sacraments, their parents and all of their proud relatives and friends. It is fully realized that the arranging of these sacraments will depend greatly on the circumstances of each Parish. Please do not hesitate to contact the offices of Youth Formation and that of Divine Worship for guidance in making arrangements.

All are very enthused about the upcoming celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation. Their reception is a significant milestone for so many.

Assuring you of my prayers and best wishes, I remain —

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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Most Reverend Richard E. Pates
Apostolic Administrator
Diocese of Joliet