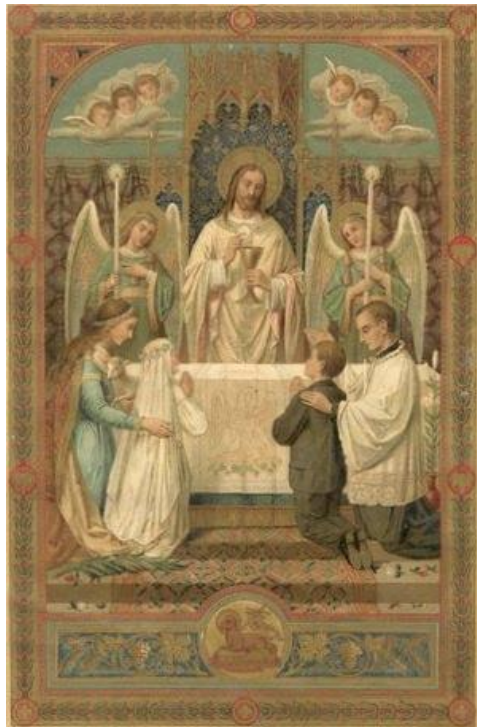
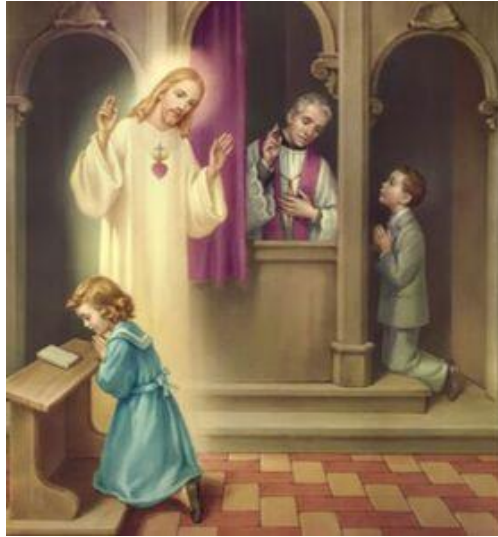


Preparation for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion



**St Thomas More Parish, Mount Eliza,
2022**

Dear Parents,

In the waters of baptism, God's people begin a journey of faith. Every step on this journey summons us to a greater and deeper appreciation of our encounter with the God in our midst. The Sacraments invite us to both a personal relationship with God and a communal relationship with our fellow sisters and brothers in the Body of Christ, the Church.

At the same time, St Thomas More is respectful of each candidate's level of development and readiness during the challenging years of adolescence and young adulthood. Both as a preparation for and a follow-up to these Sacraments, candidates will be connected with the local Catholic Peninsula Youth Ministry program so to help them further mature and learn to live out gifts of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

The Church draws the connection between the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, and Eucharist, or First Holy Communion. Baptism and Reconciliation "initiate" a candidate into the Church, the Body of Christ. Because the Eucharist is the "source and summit" of all activity in the Church, candidates are encouraged to "full, conscious, and active participation" with the Church community. Mass each Sunday should be taken seriously by a candidate for Reconciliation both prior to and after receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Eucharist.

Fr Patrick, Faye and the whole Parish of St Thomas More are available to help all our families through all the steps of this programme, to understand the importance of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and help them prepare well to receive the gifts that are bestowed.

WHAT IS RECONCILIATION?

Our faith journey begins with Baptism. Through Baptism, we learn live as followers of Jesus. As his disciples, we want to make good choices. The Holy Spirit guides us in making good choices. He is our special helper. Some choices are easy. Other choices are not so easy. Sometimes I have to choose between what's right and what's wrong. This is called making a moral choice.

Even when we try to make good choices, sometimes we are tempted to act in ways that hurt ourselves or other people. When we turn away from God's laws, we sin. Sin hurts our friendship with God and other people.

Some of the choices we can make are so serious that we can turn away from God's love and grace. If this happens God offers us a way to come back to him – through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Sometimes we can turn away from God and others in a less serious way. Then we commit a "venial" sin. Every time we sin, we hurt our friendship with God and with others. Jesus always loves us, even if we sin. Jesus looks into our hearts. He sees that we are good. If we do something wrong and we are sorry, Jesus forgives us. Jesus gives us another chance.

It's important to remember that mistakes and accidents are not the same thing as sins. It's only when we do things on purpose that we need to say sorry. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Jesus comforts us. He strengthens us on our journey. We are reconciled with God, with the Church, and with the people we have hurt. Through this sacrament the Church celebrates Jesus' gift of forgiveness.

Who is eligible to make their first Reconciliation?

Children who have been baptised normally make their first Reconciliation in Grade 3, roughly at the age of 7. At this age, children begin to understand their choices and are better able to make decisions about what is right or wrong. We normally receive reconciliation before receiving the First Eucharist, so that we're well prepared and ready to receive Jesus' life into us.

Only a Priest or Bishop can hear a Confession

WHAT IS FIRST COMMUNION?

First Communion is the very first time that someone receives the Blessed Eucharist. The word 'communion' means to be united with; Catholics believe that in Holy Communion we are united in a special way with Jesus Christ.

At his last supper, Jesus said of the bread that he shared among his followers, "Take and eat, this is my body." When we receive Holy Communion, Catholics believe that in a mysterious way we are sharing in the body and blood of Christ.

Holy Communion and the whole celebration of Mass also known as Eucharist, from a Greek word meaning thanksgiving. First Eucharist is a special occasion - a further step in becoming one with Christ and united with the People of God. For most people first Eucharist takes place at about the age of seven. Children should have an understanding of the sacrament that is appropriate to their age. Hopefully, this understanding will develop over the years.

The Church affirms that parents are the first educators of their children in the faith. You are handing on your faith to your children all the time. You have the wonderful responsibility of preparing your child to receive the Eucharist for the first time.

Since you as parents know your children, you are in the best position to determine when your child is ready to receive the Eucharist. You might ask yourself: Does my child have a real relationship with God? Does she or he talk to God - at bedtime, before meals, at special times? Does my child know many of the stories of Jesus, including the Last Supper? Is my child developing an understanding that God is important in her life and in our family life? Is she or he used to coming to Mass? Does she or he know the parish priest?

Who is eligible to make their first Eucharist

Any baptised child has made their first reconciliation. The Church presumes that these children are able to make moral choices and understand deeper realities. It is important that each candidate is mature enough to understand the difference between ordinary "bread" and the 'Bread of Angels', the Blessed Eucharist.

Sacramental Preparation

The celebration of Reconciliation and first Communion provides an opportunity for catechesis, or instruction, involving the whole parish. It is important that candidates, parents and caregivers understand the importance of these sacraments and their responsibilities.

Faye Melhem is our catechist (or teacher) for the Sacramental programme here at St Thomas More, Mount Eliza. If you need to get in touch about the material being presented, homework, class times or places and what will happen on the day please contact Faye. The best way to reach Faye is by Email: fayesayah@hotmail.com.

For any questions about administration including enrolments, paperwork, eligibility or other requirements please contact the Parish Office: mounteliza@cam.org.au or call us when the office is attended, usually Tuesday, Thursday and Friday on 03 97877777. You are also welcome to contact Fr Patrick directly: Patrick.bradford@cam.org.au

Children will not be able to attend classes until their registration form has been completed and handed in to Faye or the Parish Office. Classes will take place on Tuesday nights at the Undercroft, which is underneath the Church near the office for St Thomas More Primary School. Classes begin at 5:45PM and will conclude with Mass which is scheduled at 7pm and will run for approx. half an hour. You will be able to pick your children up at around 7:30PM.

We ask that candidates (children) make attending classes a priority. We are not able to accept any further enrolments after the second week of classes has commenced. If you are not able to attend a class due to special circumstances within your family please speak with Faye and also let Fr Patrick know before the class begins by email, and we will try our best to accommodate.

Classes offer the chance for parents and children to be involved together at an important time in their lives. Parents are warmly invited to join their children on any given night for classes, and/or to join us for Mass at 7:00PM. Current diocesan and civil standards require two adults to be at every class.

IMPORTANT DETAILS

- First Reconciliation will take place on Tuesday 16th of September at 6:00pm
- First Eucharist will take place on Sunday 13th of November at 10am.

- Classes will be hosted at the Saint Thomas More Parish Pastoral Centre from 5:45- 7:30PM Tuesday nights and one Saturday on September 10th
- For any administration queries or to enrol, please contact the Parish Office
- Faye Melhem is our Catechist. Faye can be reached at 0421443632 . Her email address is: fayesayah@hotmail.com .
- An administration charge of \$60 is requested per child, per Sacrament to help cover some of our staffing and administrative costs. This includes the two catechesis books which can be taken home and filled out to assist with homework. A credit card slip is included on the application form. Please fill out the form with a copy of your child's baptism certificate. If you are already contributing to the parish through thanksgiving (envelopes), the charge is waived.

All preparation meetings begin at 5:45PM in the Undercroft and will conclude at 7:30PM at the Church. There will also be a Saturday Class (see below) at 2pm

DATES (all classes commence 5:45pm unless otherwise advised)

21 st June	Reconciliation week 1
	School Holidays
12 th July	Reconciliation week 2
19 th July	Reconciliation week 3
26 th July	Reconciliation week 4
2 nd August	Reconciliation week 5
9 th August	Reconciliation week 6
16 th of August	Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation at 6pm
23 rd August	Eucharist week 1
30 th August	Eucharist week 2
6 th September	Eucharist week 3
10 th September	Eucharist Saturday Class – 2pm
13 th September	Eucharist week 4
	School holidays
4 th October	Eucharist week 5
11 th October	Eucharist week 6
18 th October	Eucharist week 7
25 th October	Eucharist week 8
1 st November	Melbourne Cup – No Class
8 th November	Eucharist week 9
13 th November	First Eucharist - Sunday morning 10am



Application for Preperation for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion (Please circle all that apply)

Child's Full Name:.....

Date of Birth: Boy/Girl

Father's Full Name:.....

Religion:

Mother's Full name:.....

Religion:

Address:.....

Phone: (mobile preferred).....

Email:

Emergency Contact:.....

School Attending:Grade Level.....

Any other needs we should be aware of? (Please include details of any safeguarding, learning or special requirements that will help us support your child)

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Previous Sacraments Received

<p>Baptism</p> <p>(Please include copy of certificate)</p>	<p>First Reconciliation (if applicable)</p>
<p>Date: Parish:</p>	<p>Date: Parish:</p>

Credit Card Authorisation for Confirmation

Name:
Number:
Expiry:
Amount: \$60 per enrolment
Signature:

Your privacy is important to us

1. The Parish collects personal information, including sensitive information about members of the faithful. The primary purpose of collecting this information is to enable it to administer the sacraments and pastoral care to the faithful, and often to children of the faithful. Information may be required to allow the Parish to meet some of its legal obligations, provide care for the child while under supervision and discharge its duty of care. If you reside in the Parish or otherwise continue to use its services, the information may also be used to solicit donations and/or request your services as a volunteer from time to time.
2. The Parish from time to time discloses personal and sensitive information to others for administrative purposes. This includes other Parishes, the diocese, medical practitioners and people providing services to the school including volunteers.
3. If we do not obtain the information requested, we may not be able to administer the sacraments.
4. Personal information collected from children is disclosed to their parents or guardians. Parents or guardians may seek access to personal information collected about them and their son/daughter by contacting the Parish on 9787 7777.
5. Adults may also seek access to information collected about them in the same manner.
6. As the Parish is largely reliant upon locally raised funds and local effort for its continuation, information received from those who reside in the parish or avail themselves of its services may be used to solicit donations and other forms of support from them. On occasions it uses the resources of the Archdiocese to support this process and in the course of this, information is made available to those people. We will not disclose your personal information to other third parties for other fundraising purposes without your consent.