

The Cathedral of St. Mary Of the Immaculate Conception

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Dear Parents and Guardians of Candidates for the Sacrament of Reconciliation Holy Eucharist and Confirmation:

As you are all well aware the pandemic's closing of our schools beginning in March of 2020 and the temporary closing of our churches meant that those preparing for First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation were unable to receive the Sacraments this past Spring.

It is time for us to complete the preparation and celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation of those candidates who were expecting to receive these Sacraments last Spring and begin to prepare those who hope to receive the Sacraments this upcoming year. Because of the pandemic restrictions the parish will be taking over the Sacramental Preparation for this year. The details will be different but the result will be the same – the three best possible gifts – the reception of the Lord's loving mercy in Reconciliation and the reception of the Lord Himself, given to our young sisters and brothers in Holy Communion and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon those candidates receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation.

As you know students at École Cathédrale come from all over the city of Kingston and thus, most of you are not parishioners of St. Mary's Cathedral but other parishes in Kingston, meaning you attend or live in parishes throughout the City of Kingston. Parents and guardians are asked to now contact the parish office of the parish which you attend or in which you live to register your child for preparation and celebration of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion and follow the instructions of your pastor in your parish. Each of the parishes will have slightly different requirements.

The following is for those who attend St. Mary's Cathedral Parish on Sundays or live in the parish or who do not attend another parish in Kingston.

For those who attend or live in St. Mary's Cathedral Parish or for those who are not attending anywhere else you are asked to contact Father Shawn for a brief appointment. I will reserve a couple of evenings a week in December and January to be able to schedule appointments. This gives us a time to sit down, observing all pandemic protocols of

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course, and briefly go over the program for each of the Sacraments for which your child will be preparing. Due to the pandemic, Sacramental Preparation this year will be almost entirely based in your homes.

All students in grade two or three, and anyone older who is Catholic and has not received their First Holy Communion is encouraged to prepare for the reception of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. If your daughter/son is in grade one and is particularly mature in their Faith and keen to receive these Sacraments they are warmly welcomed and encouraged to do so.

All students in grade seven or eight or older, who have not received their Sacrament of Confirmation are encouraged to prepare to do so. If your son/daughter in grades 5 or 6 are particularly mature in their Faith and keen to be Confirmed they are warmly welcomed and encouraged to do so.

After preparation your daughter/son, together with you and myself, will decide if they are ready to receive these very important Sacraments. Only when they fully feel prepared and desire to receive the Sacraments are they encouraged to ask the Church to grant them these Sacraments.

At that point you would contact me by email to arrange a date for the celebration of First Reconciliation, just as you would for Baptism. Father Paul Mawalla or myself would hear their First Confession. After First Confession they would complete their preparation for First Holy Communion. You would contact me and they would receive their First Holy Communion, not as a group or a class, but individually at one of our Sunday Celebrations of the Eucharist.

Your first reaction to this letter might be that you may think you are not qualified to prepare your son/daughter for these Sacraments. I remind each of you that you are qualified, able, blessed, and called to prepare your child by your love, your faith, your sincerity, and especially by your God-given privilege of having your child entrusted to you.

You will probably have questions or concerns. Hopefully most of these will be answered in our individual meeting but of course you are welcome and invited to contact me so that the parish and I may be of encouragement and assistance. I look forward to hearing from you and meeting with you. I am praying for you and your children as we enter into this new way of Sacramental Preparation at the parish of the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception.

Sincerely Yours,

Father Shawn

Father Shawn J. Hughes, Rector