

FHC Parent Meeting

Wednesday February 3.

Hi Everyone

Thank you all for support throughout this very special year.

We made it through Reconciliation - what a wonderful job by children & teachers (& our Friars!)

Now we are going to get ready for First Holy Communion

This is a once in a lifetime event – the first time your children receive the Body of Christ

The families of our students fall basically into 2 broad categories

The **first** group will take the task of raising their children in the faith very seriously and actively participate in their child's Religious Education and have an active faith life

The **second** group have enrolled in a Catholic school or Religious Education program but allow the “professionals” to take on the role of providing “formal” Religious Education with little or no active faith life

It is my hope that whatever group you fall into you will take the responsibility of preparing your child for this sacrament very seriously and maybe some of you might take that leap of faith back into the faith

At the Last Supper Jesus asked us to remember, when we teach our children and bring them to the table of the Lord, we are helping to ensure that Jesus' words and actions, our family faith and the faith of our community will be remembered and celebrated into the next generation.

We never know what challenges we might face in life's journey, but we do know that journey will be made easier with the graces we receive through the consumption of the Body of Christ.

Communion Masses

This year we will move forward with our First Holy Communions as we did last year

Since at this point we anticipate we will still be experiencing restrictions on capacity in our churches – and even if not, we need to make plans now and secure dates.

This means no large FHC Masses –instead we will offer 4 places at every 4:00 p.m. Vigil Saturday Mass, & 9:30 & 11:30 a.m. Sunday Masses throughout the months of May and June.

We did this last year and it was very successful.

All safety guidelines of the Archdiocese will be in place
Each family will be offered 1 pew (this is just the same as we would do if we were having FHC Masses)

We will set up a Signup Genius Account and all families will be sent the link on Friday February 5 and then sign up for the Mass of their choice.

Parent Role in Preparation

- **Prayers – keep saying them**
- **Attend Mass as a family – it is so important.**

We do not want or expect your children to be mini theologians, but to be children who understand what is happening in the Mass and who enjoy being part of the parish community. If you are not able or feel comfortable to come to Mass during covid times you may join in the celebration online

<https://staugustineparish.org/live-stream/>

Here is the link to our livestreaming page

Children who enjoy the Mass and “get it” are normally in homes where prayer and religion are an everyday part of life and participation in Mass is active and positive and where parents lead by example

I have heard children say when they come into the church.

Wow what is this place!

You can go to Mass on Saturday!

I cannot tell you the numbers of times children will say – *I do not get it you say we should go to Mass, and my parents will not take me.*

- **Show interest – ask questions**
- **Attend FHC virtual retreat for Rel Ed students**
- **Use this preparation time as a time to reenergize your own faith – this time is not just about your children’s FHC – do not isolate it as such.**

We will be entering the season of Lent on February 17 – wonderful time to reconnect with your faith – prayer, fasting & almsgiving

Read about all the wonderful Lenten events & Projects happening in the church & school – try and participate in them

Look at introducing a Lenten Tradition into your family life

- **Keep up with our FHC emails – please read them.**
- **Regular class attendance (Religious Education students)**
- **On the day of FHC gather as a family to pray and reflect on the meaning**

Do not get swept up with the frills of the day.

Reception of the Body of Christ

Normally we begin to practice with unconsecrated hosts – this will be challenging for our Religious Education families since we are not allowed to have in person classes as long as we remain a high-risk town – however I will work on a way for you to collect unconsecrated hosts and practice at home.

We practice reception in the hand – this is the only way to receive in these covid times.

The hosts do contain a small amount of gluten - if you are going to need low gluten hosts you need to let us know – forms must be completed and sent to the Archdiocese.

Procession to altar – Immediate family, non-Catholics for blessing, remaining family follow later.

Reception of Communion by family members

If your family wants to receive and feel uncomfortable, maybe feel they are not in a state of grace - impediment for some reason Fr. Peter will be happy to talk to them

Attire

Girls

White dresses

May wear a veil or headband/flowers in hair

White shoes/sandals

**No makeup and if they insist on wearing nail polish
very light pink or natural– no vivid colors**

Boys

White/dark suits

Blue blazers/khaki or dress pants

Collared shirt/tie

Shoes (no sneakers)

Please try and follow the guidelines especially for girls–
not a prom/dance recital/party.

Church Etiquette

We are in Church

Please explain this to guests who might not be familiar with
the practices of the Catholic Church

Photography

This year we will allow discrete photography during Mass
from the family pew.

There will be an opportunity to take additional photographs
after Mass.

The Mass will be live streamed so families may watch from home

<https://staugustineparish.org/live-stream/>

Priests/Deacons

If you have someone in your family who is a member of the clergy and they wish to take part in the Mass please let us know in advance

Informational video

As we approach the time of FHC we will make an instructional video to go out to everyone about what to expect on the day of your child's First Holy Communion

If you have any questions or concerns please phone (978 475 0050 ex 28) or email brao@staugustineparish.org

This is going to be a most wonderful time for everyone!

A Parent's Prayer

Loving God,

You are the giver of all we possess,
the source of all of our blessings.

Thank you for the gift of our children.

May they come to know you, the one true God
and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

May your Holy Spirit help them to grow
in faith, hope, and love,
so they may know peace, truth, and goodness.

As we bring our children before you to meet you in a new and special
way through the sacrament of the Eucharist

May their ears hear your voice.

May their eyes see your presence in all things.

May their lips proclaim your word.

May their hearts be your dwelling place.

May their hands do works of charity.

May their feet walk in the way of Jesus Christ,
your Son and our Lord.

Amen.

Thank you and God Bless.

Bridget Rao Director of Religious Education

