



DECREE OF PROMULGATION
Norms for the Preparation for and Celebration
of the Sacraments of Initiation and First Penance

*The sharing of the divine nature, by which men are forgiven by Christ's grace,
bears a resemblance to the beginning of natural life, its growth and nourishment.
For indeed the faithful, reborn by Baptism,
are strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation
and finally are invigorated in the Eucharist by the food of eternal life
so that by these sacraments of Christian initiation
they may receive more and more the treasures of divine life
and progress moreover to the perfection of charity.*

– *Divinae Consortium Naturae*, 1971

Those words of Blessed Paul VI remind us that the theological order of the sacraments of initiation is Baptism, Confirmation, and then first Holy Communion. Celebrating the sacraments in this order was the universal practice of the early Church. With the restoration of the catechumenate as mandated by the Second Vatican Council, this order has become the norm for the initiation of adults throughout the Latin Church, just as this order has been the consistent practice of the Eastern Churches for those of all ages. With the promulgation by mailing copies and posting on the diocesan website of these *Norms for the Preparation for and Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation and First Penance* as particular law for the Diocese of Honolulu, the sacraments of initiation will be celebrated in their original order for all members of the faithful in our diocese.

It is my hope that these norms will be a tool for carrying out a truly joyful evangelization that trusts in the grace of God. “Though it is true that this mission demands great generosity on our part, it would be wrong to see it as a heroic individual undertaking, for it is first and foremost the Lord’s work, surpassing anything which we can see and understand. Jesus is ‘the first and greatest evangelizer.’ In every activity of evangelization, the primacy always belongs to God, who has called us to cooperate with him and who leads us on by the power of his Spirit. ... The life of the Church should always reveal clearly that God takes the initiative, that ‘he has loved us first’ (1 Jn 4:19)” (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 12). Confirming at a younger age allows God to love us first, fill us with his grace, and inspire us to respond.

In addressing new issues that have arisen in our modern society, it is my hope that these norms also reflect an approach to evangelization that is faithful to the fabric of the Gospel. “Just as the organic unity existing among the virtues means that no one of them can be excluded from the Christian ideal, so no truth may be denied. The integrity of the Gospel message must not be deformed. What is more, each truth is better understood when related to the harmonious totality of the Christian message; in this context all of the truths are important and illumine one another” (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 39).

With regard to the particular norms, those matters that are consistent with divine law, universal canon law or current diocesan norms continue to remain in effect.

Matters that reflect changes in diocesan norms take effect on **June 24, 2016**, the Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, with the following exceptions that will follow a longer *vacatio legis*.

Specifically, the references to the celebration of Confirmation in nos. 41, 48-56, 66-68, 72-74 will take effect according to the following schedule:

- For those parishes moving to the original order of the sacraments of initiation in the **first group**, the law will be fully effective on June 24, 2017, with the expectation that Confirmation will be celebrated on Pentecost, May 20, 2018, with first Holy Communion (as applicable) for all those in grades 2-12.
- For those parishes in the **second group**, the law will be fully effective on June 24, 2018, with the expectation that Confirmation will be celebrated on Pentecost, June 9, 2019, with first Holy Communion (as applicable) for all those in grades 2-12.
- For those parishes in the **third group**, the law will be fully effective on June 24, 2019, with the expectation that Confirmation will be celebrated on Pentecost, May 31, 2020, with first Holy Communion (as applicable) for all those in grades 2-12.

The choice of group by the parishes will be contingent on the parish having in place comprehensive youth ministry according to the evaluation of the pastor and his parish catechetical and youth leadership.

At the appropriate time, the faculty needed to confer Confirmation will be delegated to those priests who will be confirming with me on the three Pentecost Sundays in 2018-2020.

Given at the Office of the Bishop at the Diocesan Curia on 10th day of January 2016, the Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord.

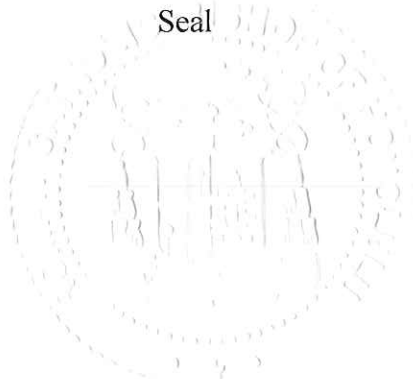
+ Clarence Silva

Most Reverend Clarence Silva
Bishop of Honolulu

Walter Yoshimitsu

Deacon Walter Yoshimitsu
Chancellor

Seal





ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE STATE OF HAWAII
DIOCESE OF HONOLULU
WITNESS TO JESUS

Norms for the Preparation for and Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation and First Penance

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Abbreviations

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| CIGI | Congregation for Divine Worship, <i>Christian Initiation General Introduction</i> , 1969 |
| NSC | National Conference of Catholic Bishops, <i>National Statutes for the Catechumenate</i> , 1986 |
| RC | Roman Pontifical, <i>Rite of Confirmation</i> , 1971 |
| RCIA | Roman Ritual, <i>Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults</i> , 1988 |
| RBC | Roman Ritual, <i>Rite of Baptism for Children</i> , 1970 |
| GDC | Congregation for Clergy, <i>General Directory for Catechesis</i> , 1997 |
| NDC | USCCB, <i>National Directory for Catechesis</i> , 2005 |

All canons are from the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, 1998 CLSA translation

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I. Introduction

1. “The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Most Holy Eucharist are interrelated in such a way that they are required for full Christian initiation” (canon 842, §2). “In Baptism neophytes receive the remission of sins, the adoption of the sons of God and Christ’s character, by which they are added to the Church and are first made sharers of the Priesthood of their Savior (cf. 1 Peter 2:5, 9). By the sacrament of Confirmation those reborn by Baptism receive the ineffable Gift, the Holy Spirit himself, by whom they are enriched by a special strength and, moreover, sealed with the character of this sacrament, they are more completely bound to the Church and as true witnesses of Christ they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith both by word and by deed. Finally, Confirmation is so connected to the Holy Eucharist that the faithful, already sealed by Holy Baptism and Confirmation, are fully inserted into the Body of Christ through sharing in the Eucharist” (Bl. Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution *Divinae Consortium Naturae* on the Sacrament of Confirmation, 1971).
2. The celebration of the sacraments of initiation and Penance are essential to the process of evangelization. “Jesus approached and said to them, ‘All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age’” (Matthew 28:18-20).
3. In accord with the directives of United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the parish catechesis for sacramental preparation for the sacraments of initiation and first Penance (*NDC 35, B*):
 - Is a comprehensive and systematic formation in the faith, one that integrates knowledge of the faith with living the faith
 - Is fundamentally Trinitarian and centers on initiation into the life of the Triune God
 - Presents Christian life as a lifelong journey to the Father in the Son and through the Holy Spirit
 - Is appropriate to the age level, maturity, and circumstances of those being catechized
 - Is intended for all members of the Christian community, takes place within the community, and involves the whole community of faith
 - Involves parents in the preparation of their children for the sacraments
 - Is integrated into a comprehensive catechetical program
 - Focuses primarily on the symbols, rituals, and prayers contained in the rite for each sacrament
 - Enables the believer to reflect on the meaning of the sacrament received by implementing a thorough experience of mystagogia following the celebration
4. The following norms are supplemental to the 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, *Roman Missal*, *Roman Ritual*, *Roman Pontifical*, 1997 *General Directory for Catechesis* issued by the Congregation for Clergy, and 2005 *National Directory for Catechesis* issued by the USCCB, and are to be interpreted in a manner consistent with those documents. These norms are particular law for the Diocese of Honolulu.

II. General Norms

5. **Age:** According to canon law, the norms for infants apply to those who have not yet reached the age of reason (birth to age 6) and to those who are not responsible for themselves (*Code of Canon Law*, canon 97, §2). At the age of 7, children are ordinarily understood to be “of catechetical age,” “at the age of discretion,” and “at the age of reason.” Adulthood begins at age 18 (canon 97, §1).
6. **Parents:** The term “parents” in the norms that follow also applies to those who can demonstrate legal guardianship of children.
7. **Catechesis:** The pastor is responsible to make sure that adults and children of catechetical age are prepared for the reception of the sacraments of initiation and that parents are prepared for the initiation of their children. He may fulfill this responsibility with the assistance of fellow clerics, a catechetical leader, Catholic schools, trained catechists and other qualified persons (canons 776-777, 851, 2°).
8. The pastor and catechetical leader, in collaboration with those involved, are to determine what resources are to be used in the parish in accord with directives of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The catechetical offerings in use by parishes are to follow the curriculum established by the diocesan offices and approved by the bishop.
9. Ordinarily the catechesis takes place in the same parish where the person will receive the sacraments and will remain as a parishioner (canon 857, §2). A letter from one’s pastor giving permission and attesting to appropriate preparation is required in order to receive the sacraments at a different parish.
10. With due respect for the unique status of catechumens (who are not yet baptized), the catechetical formation of adults in different circumstances may be conducted together. Thus, catechetical sessions can be planned for adult catechumens, uncatechized Catholic adults in need of Confirmation and/or first Holy Communion, and baptized adults seeking reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church. However, with regard to the baptized, the catechetical requirements are to be tailored to their need and take into account their prior Christian formation.
11. Similarly, the catechetical formation of unbaptized children who have reached the age of discretion is to be done with children in the same age group who are baptized and are being prepared for Confirmation and first Holy Communion or reception into full communion with the Catholic Church (*RCIA* nos. 254.1, 256). In order for the children to experience a sense of belonging to a community when there are only small numbers of children of a given age, children in the catechumenate and baptized children may be prepared for the sacraments together in age clusters (e.g., grades 1-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12) (*RCIA* no. 255).
12. **Liturgical Celebrations:** While catechesis usually take place together among adults and children of certain age clusters, all rites celebrated must clearly distinguish between those who are catechumens and those who are already baptized. The spiritual reality behind this distinction is to be clearly explained. Those who are validly baptized are not to be dismissed before the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
13. **Recording the Sacraments:** The recording of the celebration of the sacraments of initiation and of reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church is to be done in accord with the *Sacrament Register Instruction*. In the event that celebrations are combined between parishes, the sacraments are to be recorded in the parish registers where the celebration took place.

III. Baptism of Infants

14. Every effort should be made to ensure that the parents' initial contact with the parish and the baptismal preparation process are occasions of welcome and hospitality which celebrate the gift of life.
15. Parish pastoral staff are to encourage the Baptism of infants within the first weeks after birth. Preparation is encouraged to take place even before the birth of the child (canon 867, §1). The preparation of parents is to include:
 - An individual meeting with the pastor or the person he designates
 - A group catechetical session with other parents
16. A copy of a child's birth certificate may be requested if needed to establish parentage. Parents married in the Catholic Church who present their own child for Baptism are not required to provide a copy of the birth certificate.
17. For an infant to be baptized, the parents are to consent. If only one parent is listed on the birth certificate or if one parent has full custody, then only that one parent is required to consent (canon 868, §1).
18. The Baptism of a child offers a unique opportunity for the greater evangelization of the parents and for educating them on their role as primary teachers of their children (canons 226, §2, 774 §2, 793, §1, 851, §2, 1136; *RC* no. 3).
19. **Individual Meeting:** An individual pastoral meeting between the parents and a parish priest, deacon, or other person designated by the pastor is to be scheduled:
 - The principal goal of the meeting is to discuss the faith life of the parents and their plans for the religious practice of their family.
 - For Catholic parents, inquiry should be made about whether they are fully initiated. If Catholic parents have not received Confirmation and first Holy Communion, information is to be provided to assist them to complete their initiation. If a non-Catholic parent expresses interest in becoming Catholic, information can be provided to him or her on how to do this.
 - The intake of information on the child needed for the baptismal register is to be done. Parish registration may also be completed if this has not previously been done. (There is no minimum length of time requirement for having been registered in the parish before the Baptism can take place, provided that the parents live in the parish's territory or regularly participate in the parish.)
 - Since marriage strengthens parents in their duties (canons 226, §1, 835, §4), if parents are not married in the Catholic Church, information is to be provided and encouragement given to getting married or having a civil marriage validated. Marriage or validation is to be encouraged, but it is not strictly required before the Baptism of the child.
 - If the parent is single or the parents are in an immoral living situation that cannot be rectified by marriage in the Catholic Church (e.g., same-sex relationship), catechesis is to be provided regarding the Church's moral teachings. Same-sex couples must be told in advance that they cannot be listed in the manner of a married couple in the Baptism register and on the Baptism certificate. (See the *Instruction for Sacramental Registers* nos. 18-19.)
20. **Group Catechetical Session:** A group catechetical session for parents is to be offered to teach parents about the meaning and obligations of Baptism and about their role as parents as primary educators of their children. At this catechetical session, parents are to be explicitly reminded that by choosing to have their children baptized, they are committing to having their children receive Confirmation and first Holy Communion, preceded by first Penance, and to raising their children in the practice of the faith (canon 914; *RBC* no. 5).

21. **Subsequent Children:** For the Baptism of second or subsequent children, the individual meeting and group catechetical session may be omitted if the parents are married in the Catholic Church, and the intake of the child's information can be done informally. Otherwise, the parents are to attend the individual meeting and group catechetical session before each child's Baptism.
22. **Childcare:** Unless the parish offers this service, parents are to arrange for childcare for the individual meeting and catechetical session so that they may fully participate in and benefit from the catechesis offered to them.
23. **Celebration of Baptism:** Baptism "should be conferred in a communal celebration for all the recently born children, and in the presence of the faithful, or at least of relatives, friends, and neighbors, who are all to take an active part in the rite" (*RBC* no. 32). "In this way it is clear that the faith in which the children are baptized is not the private possession of the individual family, but is the common treasure of the whole Church of Christ" (*RBC* no. 4).
24. "To bring out the paschal character of Baptism, it is recommended that the sacrament be celebrated during the Easter Vigil or on Sunday, when the Church commemorates the Lord's resurrection" (*RBC* no. 9).
25. "On Sunday, Baptism may be celebrated even during Mass, so that the entire community may be present and the necessary relationship between Baptism and Eucharist may be clearly seen, but this should not be done too often" (*RBC* no. 9). If Baptism is celebrated within Sunday Mass, it is to be done according to the directives in the Rite of Baptism of Children no. 29.
26. Deacons may celebrate Baptism outside of Mass. Baptism within Mass is to be conferred by the priest. Other than in situations of danger of death, deacons are not to confer Baptism on those 7 years of age and older since it is necessary for a priest to be present to give Confirmation.
27. If one of the parents cannot make the profession of faith because he or she is not Catholic, the parent may keep silent. All that is asked of him or her is that he or she should make arrangements, or at least give permission, for the child to be brought up in the Catholic faith (*RBC* no. 5).
28. **Delay of Baptism:** While it is never permitted to refuse Baptism, the sacrament may be delayed if, in the judgment of the pastor, a founded hope is altogether lacking that the child will be raised in the Catholic faith (canon 868, §1, 2°). Often this will surface in the individual meeting with the parents. If the pastor did not conduct this meeting, then he is to consult with the person who did and then meet with the parents himself before deciding upon any delay.
29. In the case of single parents, parents in invalid marriages, or parents in immoral living situations, Baptism should not be delayed for those reasons alone, provided that there is a founded hope that the child will be raised in the Catholic faith. Other factors may also be considered, such as the positive influence of godparents and extended family members, which give reassurance that the child will be raised in the faith.
30. If a Baptism is delayed, the reasons are to be explained to the parents (canon 868, §1, 2°). A plan should be set out for meeting the requirements so that the Baptism can eventually take place.
31. In cases of a pending adoption, Baptism should ordinarily be delayed until the adoption is finalized so that there is greater certainty that the child can be raised in the Catholic faith.

IV. First Penance

32. For those already baptized, the sacrament of Penance is to be celebrated for the first time prior to the reception of Confirmation and first Holy Communion (canon 914; *NDC* no. 36B, 2). This applies to both adults and children, including those be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church.
33. The preparation for the sacrament of Penance is to include the memorization of an act of contrition (*NDC* no. 29F).
34. **Considerations for the Celebration of First Penance by Adults:** For adults preparing for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church and/or Confirmation and first Holy Communion, an opportunity to celebrate first Penance is to be offered, ordinarily during Lent (*RCIA* nos. 408, 461). For those about to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church, they should be instructed to mention this fact to the priest in confession (*RCIA* no. 482).
35. Those seeking to complete their initiation into the Catholic Church who are invalidly married should have their marriages (con)validated prior to the celebration of the Rite of Welcoming the Candidates. In cases where a declaration of marital nullity is needed, the person should be advised early in the process that initiation will need to be delayed (Diocese of Honolulu, 2012 *Norms for the Preparation for and Celebration of Marriage*, no. 115). Validation of invalid marriages is to take place before or at least in conjunction with the celebration of fist Penance. No date or promise of a date for initiation is to be given until this matter is satisfactorily resolved.
36. Unless they never intend to marry again, those seeking to complete their initiation into Catholic Church who are currently unmarried but who have prior marital bonds should complete the process for a declaration of marital nullity prior to the celebration of the Rite of Welcoming the Candidates. In cases where a declaration of marital nullity is needed, the person should be advised early in the process that initiation may need to be delayed (Diocese of Honolulu, 2012 *Norms for the Preparation for and Celebration of Marriage*, no. 84).
37. Candidates living in gravely immoral situations (e.g., cohabiting outside of marriage) need to be advised that their living situation needs to be resolved prior to the reception of the sacrament of Penance and the sacraments of initiation.
38. **Considerations for the Celebration of First Penance by Children of Catechetical Age:** “Since the family is intimately involved with the formation of a child’s moral conscience and ordinarily integrates the child into the wider ecclesial communities, parents should be involved in the preparation of their children for this sacrament so that they can affirm and reinforce frequent participation in the sacraments” (*NDC* no. 36B, 2). It is recommended that a communal celebration that includes the family be used for the celebration of first Penance.
39. Parents who choose to prepare their child at home with the help and direction of the pastor are required to use the same or equivalent materials used in the parish catechetical process. Home-schooling parents and their children are to participate in certain elements of the parish process, including parent sessions and liturgical celebrations.
40. For children in Catholic schools, nos. 48-52 below also apply to first Penance.

V. Confirmation and First Holy Communion at the Age of Discretion

41. For children baptized Catholic as infants, Confirmation is to be celebrated at the age of discretion, that is, about 7 years old, and will be celebrated at the same Mass with first Holy Communion (*RC* no. 11; canon 891).
42. A certificate of Catholic Baptism must be presented to the parish where Confirmation and first Holy Communion will be celebrated, unless the child was baptized at that same parish and the record of Baptism has been verified.
43. **Preparation for the Sacraments:** As primary educators of their children, parents have the right and the duty to be involved in preparing their children for Confirmation and first Holy Communion. The parish is to offer programs to parents to teach them practical ways to fulfill their role and deepen their own faith life. The catechesis offered to parents should help them grow in their own understanding and appreciation of the sacraments and enable them to catechize their children more effectively (*NDC* no. 36A, 3a).
44. While attendance in a parish, school, or home catechetical program is required, it is not sufficient preparation in and of itself for the reception of the sacraments. Parents are to be reminded that they must accompany their children to Sunday Mass, initiating their children into the worship of the community and encouraging them to participate as fully as possible.
45. However, the fundamental decision about receiving the sacraments of initiation takes place at Baptism. Having received Catholic Baptism, children have the right to be prepared for and to receive Confirmation and first Holy Communion (canons 843, 912). Baptized Catholic children may not be denied the sacraments because their parents do not regularly practice the faith. Such parents should be encouraged to participate in the sacramental preparation process with their child with the hope of encouraging the parents to greater practice.
46. Baptized Catholic children are not to be denied the sacraments because of difficult family situations, as long as they can be adequately prepared for the sacraments. In situations where divorced, separated, or unmarried parents have joint custody of their child, both parents should ordinarily consent to their child receiving the sacraments. The reception of the sacraments may be delayed until the parents are able to agree.
47. Parents who choose to prepare their child at home with the help and direction of the pastor are required to use the same or equivalent materials used in the parish catechetical process. Home-schooling parents and their children are to participate in certain elements of the parish process, including parent sessions, rehearsals, and liturgical celebrations.
48. **Considerations regarding Students in Catholic Schools:** If the child attends a Catholic school, catechetical preparation is to be done there. Pastors are to presume that children enrolled in second grade in a Catholic school have received sufficient catechetical preparation for the sacraments.
49. However, family participation in retreats, parent sessions, rehearsals, and liturgical celebrations are to take place in their own parish. Also the celebration of the sacraments of initiation always takes place in the parish, not in a school.
50. In a parochial school, special sensitivity must be shown to children from other parishes enrolled in the school. The proper place of celebration of the sacraments remains the child's home parish. Every effort must be made to safeguard and support participation of the child in his or her proper parish.

51. At the start of the second grade, all Catholic schools are to remind parents in written form of the need to attend Mass at their home parish, inform the parish that their child will be catechized for the sacraments in a Catholic school, register with the parish if this has not been done, and begin the process of family integration with their home parish in order to receive the sacraments there.
52. Parish and school programs are to be closely coordinated and conducted in conjunction with one another to the maximum extent possible. Although students may be in separate catechetical programs, those children who are members of the same parish are to celebrate the sacraments together and retreats, parent sessions, rehearsal are to be done together.
53. **Content for Catechesis:** For children baptized as infants, preliminary preparation takes place in the first grade or earlier and a more intentional and focused preparation for first Penance, Confirmation, and first Holy Communion takes place in the second grade.
54. The administration of Confirmation and first Holy Communion to children requires that they have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so that they understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity, are able to renew baptismal promises, and can receive the Body and Blood of Christ with faith and devotion (canons 889, §2, 913).
55. **Scheduling the Date:** A date for Confirmation and first Holy Communion is set by the parish contacting the Office of the Bishop. Ordinarily these will take place beginning during the Easter season until the early fall. What is said below regarding the bishop applies equally to the vicar general or other priest who substitutes for the bishop on occasion.
56. **Attire:** Since Confirmation and first Holy Communion are sacraments of initiation, completing Baptism, and since the newly baptized are given a white garment, white should be considered as the preferred color for shirts or dresses. Veils are permitted but not required for girls.
57. **Celebration of the Liturgy:** The parish is to consult with the Office of Worship regarding the details of the liturgical ceremony. The Office of Worship must approve worship aides prepared by the parish.
58. "Ritual Masses are connected to the celebration of certain sacraments or sacramentals. They are prohibited on Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, on Solemnities, on the days within the Octave of Easter, on the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day), on Ash Wednesday, and during Holy Week (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal* no. 372)." If the sacraments of initiation are celebrated on those days, the prayers and readings must be those assigned to the day, not those of the ritual Mass. On other days, the selections for ritual Masses in the *Roman Missal* may be used for the prayers, and the *Lectionary for Mass*, Volume IV, provides options for readings for Christian initiation in nos. 750-769.
59. If the candidates for the sacraments are to perform the function of reader, they should be well prepared. Providing the readers a copy of the text is a good idea so that they may practice in advance. However, readers are to read from the lectionary during the Mass. (See the *Guidelines for Lectors* available from the diocesan Office of Worship.)
60. A deacon, if present, is to read the Gospel and hold the chrism for the bishop while confirming. In the absence of a deacon, a concelebrating priest should fulfill these functions. The Universal Prayers, prepared in advance, are also to be read by the deacon or, in his absence, by members of the faithful.

61. The pastor of the parish, or another priest, deacon, or catechist, is to present the candidates to the bishop before the homily (*RC* no. 21). If multiple parishes are present, each pastor may present his own candidates.
62. For the renewal of baptismal promises, the candidates should be rehearsed to respond, "I do," loudly and clearly. The candidates should also be well rehearsed for the reception of Confirmation, including their responses.
63. **Confirmation Name:** Due to the unity between Baptism and Confirmation, the candidates may use their baptismal name for Confirmation. However, by custom, they may take a different name for Confirmation. A new Confirmation name may be chosen from among the names of holy men and women of the Scriptures, of the saints, or of virtues (e.g., faith, charity). If the name of a saint is chosen, the title "saint" and the place are omitted. (E.g., if St. Catherine of Siena is chosen, then the Confirmation name is "Catherine.")
64. **Communion under Both Forms:** Catechesis should include the importance of the full sign of the Eucharist. While children are strongly encouraged to receive Communion under both forms, they should not be forced to do so, especially in regard to the chalice. Children should be taught they never receive wine at Holy Communion, but the Blood of Christ. Children may be given a small taste of unconsecrated wine during their preparation or at least be warned about the taste so that they will not make unpleasant faces when they receive the Blood of Christ. They and their parents may then decide whether they should receive Communion from the chalice. Even when children do not receive Communion from the chalice, they should be taught about it so that they will understand what is being offered when they see others receiving Communion from the chalice.
65. Ideally those receiving first Holy Communion receive the Body of Christ from the bishop or another priest and the Blood of Christ from a deacon. Pastors are encouraged to invite clergy from neighboring parishes in order to achieve this ideal.
66. **Sickness:** If a child misses the celebration due to illness or other serious reason, the pastor may administer Confirmation and first Holy Communion on another occasion. However, the pastor must first request delegation to confirm from the bishop, vicar general, or judicial vicar/director of canonical affairs. Without the delegated faculty, Confirmation of a baptized Catholic by a priest is invalid.
67. **Mystagogy:** After the celebration of the sacraments of initiation, celebrations proper to a period of mystagogy are to be planned (see *RCIA* nos. 244-251).
68. **Continuing Catechesis on the Sacraments:** Since young people develop gradually in their ability to understand the mystery of the sacraments of initiation, continued catechetical formation is needed after the celebration of the sacraments. Children and teenagers should be provided with catechesis each year on Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist as well as Penance as they mature in their practice of the faith.

VI. Confirmation and First Holy Communion for Adults and Older Children

69. With Confirmation and first Holy Communion ordinarily being celebrated at the age of discretion for those baptized Catholic as infants, many situations will arise of those who are older who have never received Confirmation and/or first Holy Communion. The norms above are to be followed as applicable, with the following considerations being taken into account. The general principle is to be followed that catechesis is to be tailored to the person's needs.
70. **Catechesis for Uncatechized Catholic Adults Needing to Receive Confirmation and/or First Holy Communion:** "Even though uncatechized adults have not yet heard the message of the mystery of Christ, their status differs from that of catechumens, since by Baptism they have already become members of the Church and children of God. Hence their conversion is based on the Baptism they have already received, the effects of which they must develop. ... A program of training, catechesis suited to their needs, contact with the community of the faithful, and participation in certain liturgical rites are needed in order to strengthen them in the Christian life" (*RCIA* nos. 400-401). Their preparation should go from at least the Easter season of one year until the next; preferably it should begin before Lent in one year and extend until Easter of the following year. The time period should be in accord with the needs of the candidate without being forced into a "school year" model.
71. **Preparation for Catechized Catholic Adults Needing to Receive Confirmation:** For Catholic adults who are catechized and active in the practice of the faith but who for some reason never received Confirmation, immediate preparation only needs to be provided. This would involve a few sessions that provide catechesis on the sacrament of Confirmation, a retreat or other prayer experience, and an opportunity to celebrate the sacrament of Penance.
72. **Catechesis for Baptized Children Older than the Age of Discretion Needing to Receive Confirmation and First Holy Communion:** In the case of baptized children who are older than the age of discretion, a catechetical approach tailored to their needs should be offered which should prepare them for Confirmation and first Holy Communion. The length of time required should consider the catechetical needs and faith experience of the person and parental and family involvement. A one-year catechesis plan is acceptable for those with a strong background of involvement in the faith and higher levels of parental and family participation. Pastors may extend the catechesis plan for children with no prior faith experience.
73. Catholic schools may provide the catechetical component described in the prior paragraph. In this situation, nos. 48-52 above apply. If the school does not provide the catechetical component, then the catechesis also is to take place in the parish.
74. **Faculty to Confirm Catholics:** Pastors, parochial vicars, and chaplains are delegated the faculty by the bishop to celebrate Confirmation on any Sunday of the Easter season, from the Easter vigil until Pentecost, for those baptized Catholics who are 13 years old or older. This provides an alternative for teenagers or adults to be confirmed by the priest at a parish Mass or by the bishop at the parish celebration of Confirmation and first Holy Communion.
75. To give Confirmation on other occasions, the priest must first request delegation to confirm from the bishop, vicar general, or judicial vicar/director of canonical affairs. Without the delegated faculty, Confirmation of a baptized Catholic by a priest is invalid.

76. The Sacraments of Confirmation and First Holy Communion Before Marriage:

“Confirmation should be conferred before marriage if it can be done without grave inconvenience (canon 1065, §2). For baptized Catholics who have not received the sacraments of Confirmation or first Holy Communion, the use of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is appropriate, with the amount of catechesis adapted to the needs of the person” (Diocese of Honolulu, 2012 *Norms for the Preparation for and Celebration of Marriage*, no. 33).

77. “A person, however, should not be rushed into the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation and first Holy Communion without adequate preparation (canon 889, §2). The reception of these sacraments also should not be appropriated merely as legalistic steps to fulfill as a preparation for marriage. In cases of more limited time frames before marriage, it may be better to defer reception of the sacraments of Confirmation and first Holy Communion so that the preparation for their fruitful celebration is not shortchanged” (Diocese of Honolulu, 2012 *Norms for the Preparation for and Celebration of Marriage*, no. 34).

VII. Initiation of Adults and Children of Catechetical Age

78. According to the plan set out in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, those 7 years and older seeking Baptism are to be admitted to the catechumenate and are to be led through the various stages to sacramental initiation (canon 851, 1°). Careful attention should be paid to which rites are obligatory and which are optional.
79. **Precatechumenate:** The period of evangelization and precatechumenate should be offered on an ongoing basis to inquirers. The catechetical offerings during this period should be adapted to the needs and questions of the inquirers.
80. **Catechumenate:** “The period of catechumenate, beginning at acceptance into the order of catechumens and including both the catechumenate proper and the period of purification and enlightenment after election or enrollment of names, should extend for at least one year of formation, instruction, and probation. Ordinarily this period should go from at least the Easter season of one year until the next; preferably it should begin before Lent in one year and extend until Easter of the following year” (*NSC* no. 6).
81. The catechumenate is to include three components:
- A thoroughly comprehensive catechesis on the truths of Catholic doctrine and moral life (*NSC* no. 7)
 - Celebrations of the word of God as described in the *RICA* nos. 81-89, which may take place following dismissal from Mass after the homily
 - The celebration of rites given in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, including an anointing of the catechumens with the oil of catechumens at least once by a priest or deacon before the rite of election (*RCIA* nos. 98-101)
82. **Rite of Election:** Each parish is to maintain a *Book of the Elect* for use during the Rite of Election. Each year the diocesan Office of Worship will provide information on the celebration of the Rite of Election as celebrated by the bishop or vicar forane.
83. **Period of Purification and Enlightenment:** This period coincides with Lent and includes the celebration of three scrutinies on the third, fourth and fifth Sundays of Lent and other special rites. The comprehensive catechesis and the celebrations of the word of God continue, as during the catechumenate.
84. **Easter Vigil:** Adults and children of catechetical age are to receive Baptism, Confirmation, and first Holy Communion at the same Mass, ordinarily at the Easter vigil (canons 852, §1, 866; *NSC* no. 18; *NDC* no. 36A).
85. A priest who baptizes anyone 7 years and older can and must confer the sacrament of Confirmation and give first Holy Communion immediately following Baptism (canons 883, 2°; 885, §2).
86. **Mystagogy:** After the celebration of the sacraments of initiation, celebrations proper to the period of mystagogy are to be planned in accord with *RCIA* nos. 244-251. Mystagogy ordinarily coincides with the Easter season.
87. An opportunity should be planned for the neophytes to celebrate the sacrament of Penance no later than 1 year following their Baptism.

88. **Considerations for Adults:** Potential catechumens who are invalidly married should have their marriages validated prior to the celebration of the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens. In cases where a declaration of marital nullity is needed, the person should be advised early in the process that initiation will need to be delayed (Diocese of Honolulu, 2012 *Norms for the Preparation for and Celebration of Marriage*, no. 115).
89. Unless they never intend to marry again, potential catechumens who are currently unmarried who have prior marital bonds should complete the process for a declaration of marital nullity prior to the celebration of the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens. In cases where a declaration of marital nullity is needed, the person should be advised early in the process that initiation may need to be delayed (Diocese of Honolulu, 2012 *Norms for the Preparation for and Celebration of Marriage*, no. 84).
90. Potential catechumens living in gravely immoral situations (e.g., cohabiting outside of marriage) need to be advised that their living situation needs to be resolved prior to the reception of the sacraments of initiation.
91. **Considerations for Children Who Have Reached Catechetical Age:** Permission from parents is required for children of catechetical age to be initiated and live the Christian life (*RCIA* no. 254.2). The child must also desire to receive the sacraments of initiation.
92. Often children who enter the catechumenate have parents who are not fully catechized. Therefore, it is important that the periods of initiation include opportunities for catechesis of the parents and involvement of the families so that the children will receive as much support and good example from their parents and family as possible (*RCIA* no. 254.2; *NDC* 36A).
93. The children enrolled in Catholic schools may receive their comprehensive catechesis on the truths of Catholic doctrine and moral life in the school. In this situation, nos. 48-52 above apply. However, they are to participate in celebrations of the word of God and the rites in the parish.

VIII. Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church

94. **Eastern Christians Desiring to Be Received into Full Communion:** “In the case of Eastern Christians who enter into the fullness of Catholic communion, no liturgical rite is required, but simply a profession of Catholic faith” (*RCIA* no. 474). Eastern Christians retain their original ritual Church identity even if being received into full communion at a Latin Church parish. Ordinarily they have already received Confirmation (Chrismation) and first Holy Communion with Baptism. If not, they should be appropriately prepared to receive these sacraments.
95. **Catechesis for Adults Baptized in a Non-Catholic Ecclesial Community Seeking Reception into Full Communion:** “Those who have already been baptized in another Church or ecclesial community should not be treated as catechumens or so designated. Their doctrinal and spiritual preparation for reception into full Catholic communion should be determined according to the individual case, that is, it should depend on the extent to which the baptized person has led a Christian life within a community of faith and been appropriately catechized to deepen his or her inner adherence to the Church” (*NSC* no. 30). “In all cases, however, [individual] discernment should be made regarding the length of catechetical formation required for each individual candidate for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church” (*RCIA* no. 478).
96. For those adults seeking reception into full communion who come from a strong practice of the Christian faith, catechesis can be just a few months and is to focus on topics with which the person may be unfamiliar because they are unique to Catholicism (e.g., the seven sacraments, the role of the Magisterium, doctrines regarding the Blessed Virgin Mary). For those adults coming with little or no prior Christian practice, their preparation should go from at least the Easter season of one year until the next; preferably it should begin before Lent in one year and extend until Easter of the following year.
97. **Catechesis for Children Baptized in a Non-Catholic Ecclesial Community Seeking Reception into Full Communion:** In the case of baptized children who have reached the age of discretion, a catechetical approach tailored to their needs should be offered which should prepare them for first Penance, reception into full communion, Confirmation and first Holy Communion. The length of time required should consider the catechetical needs and faith experience of the person and parental and family involvement. A one-year catechesis plan is acceptable for those with a strong background of involvement in the faith and higher levels of parental and family participation. Pastors may extend the catechesis plan for children with no prior faith experience.
98. Catholic schools may provide the catechetical component described in the prior paragraph. In this situation, nos. 48-52 above apply. If the school does not provide the catechetical component, then the catechesis is also to take place in the parish.
99. **Liturgical Celebrations and Reception into Full Communion for Adults and Children of Catechetical Age:** Rites may be celebrated for candidates for full communion with the Catholic Church as set out in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. The rites are to be celebrated with ecumenical sensitivity, avoiding any appearance of triumphalism (*RCIA* no. 475). “Anything that would equate candidates for reception with those who are catechumens is to be absolutely avoided” (*RCIA* no. 477).
100. If the person was validly baptized in another Christian denomination, after the celebration of first Penance, he or she is to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church then receive Confirmation and first Holy Communion at the same Mass (canon 883, 2°). A priest who receives into full communion anyone 7 years and older can and must confer the sacrament of Confirmation immediately following reception (canons 883, 2°; 885, §2).

101. Children baptized in a non-Catholic ecclesial community who have reached the age of discretion may either be received into full communion by the priest at a parish Mass or by the bishop at the parish celebration of Confirmation and first Holy Communion.
102. **Reception into Full Communion of Baptized Children Age 6 or Younger:** Use the Rite of Bringing a Baptized Child to the Church from the *Rite of Baptism for Children*. The rite should be adapted to the circumstances (*RBC* no. 31). Regarding preparation of the parents, nos. 14-31 above apply.
103. **Doubts about the Fact or Validity of Baptism:** “The sacrament of Baptism cannot be repeated and therefore it is not permitted to confer it again conditionally, unless there is a reasonable doubt about the fact or validity of Baptism already conferred” (*RCIA* no. 480).
104. Canon 869 states about doubts about Baptism. “§1 If there is a doubt whether a person has been baptized or whether Baptism was conferred validly and the doubt remains after a serious investigation, Baptism is to be conferred conditionally. §2. Those baptized in a non-Catholic ecclesial community must not be baptized conditionally unless, after an examination of the matter and the form of the words used in the conferral of Baptism and a consideration of the intention of the baptized adult and the minister of the Baptism, a serious reason exists to doubt the validity of the Baptism. §3. If in the cases mentioned in §§1 and 2 the conferral or validity of the Baptism remains doubtful, Baptism is not to be conferred until after the doctrine of the sacrament of Baptism is explained to the person to be baptized, if an adult, and the reasons of the doubtful validity of the Baptism are explained to the person or, in the case of an infant, to the parents.”
105. “There may be a reasonable and prudent doubt concerning the Baptism of such Christians which cannot be resolved after serious investigation into the fact and/or validity of Baptism, namely, to ascertain whether the person was baptized with water and with the Trinitarian formula, and whether the minister and the recipient of the sacrament had the proper requisite intentions. If conditional Baptism then seems necessary, this must be celebrated privately” (*NSC* no. 37). The reception into full communion is to be celebrated later in the usual manner with confirmation and first Holy Communion.
106. When considering a community’s baptismal practices, note the following:
- Some communities celebrate a “dedication of children” ceremony which does not involve the conferring of the sacrament.
 - Some communities distinguish between water Baptism as an “ordinance” and “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” The “ordinance” Baptism is usually valid; a “baptism of the Holy Spirit,” without water and the Trinitarian formula, is invalid.
 - Baptisms celebrated by “oneness” denominations “in the name of Jesus” without the Trinitarian formula are invalid.
 - Communities that are part of the “restoration movement” often lack standardized baptismal practices and belief in the Trinity; baptisms by such communities are doubtful.
107. For a list of churches and ecclesial communities with valid Baptisms and communities with invalid or doubtful baptism, see <www.catholichawaii.org/valid_baptism>. This list is based as far as possible on information on websites of the communities themselves. If the community's website supports a conclusion that the community celebrates Baptism with a genuine washing with water and the use of the Trinitarian formula ("in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"), then the proper intention by the minister can be presumed. This list does not guarantee that each particular minister celebrates Baptism validly. If invalidity of baptism is certain, the person may be treated as unbaptized.

IX. Requirements for Godparents (Sponsors)

108. In addition to being witnesses to the ceremony of Baptism and Confirmation, godparents (sponsors) help the baptized to lead a Christian life in keeping with Baptism and to be a true witness to Christ in keeping with Confirmation (canons 872, 892).
109. To take on the function of a godparent, a person must:
- Be a fully initiated Catholic, having received Baptism, Confirmation, and first Holy Communion (canon 874, §1, 3°)
 - Have completed his or her sixteenth year unless the pastor makes an exception for a just cause (canon 874, §1, 2°)
 - Be a practicing Catholic, leading a life in harmony with the Catholic faith and, if married, be in a marriage recognized as valid in the Catholic Church (canon 874, §1, 3°)
 - Be someone other than a parent (canon 874, §1, 5°)
110. A Catholic who is irregular in his or her attendance at Mass but is otherwise qualified may be selected as a godparent. Encouragement is to be given to the godparent to become regular in the practice of the faith in order to be a good example to the person being initiated.
111. “Because of the close communion between the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches, it is permissible for a just cause for an Eastern faithful to act as godparent, together with a Catholic godparent, at the Baptism of a Catholic infant or adult” (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *Directory for the Application of the Principles and Norms of Ecumenism*, no. 98b). An Eastern Orthodox godparent must meet the same requirements as a Catholic godparent, other than the requirement of being Catholic.
112. A validly baptized member of another ecclesial community may not serve as a godparent, but may serve as a Christian witness, along with a Catholic godparent, and should be recorded as a witness (canon 874, §2).
113. Adults and older youth receiving the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation are to choose their own godparents. Parents ordinarily choose the godparents of infants and young children (canon 874, 1°).
114. The selection of two godparents is customary for Baptism, but only one is required. If two godparents are chosen, one is to be male and the other female (canon 873). Candidates for full communion may similarly choose one or two (*RCIA* no. 483).
115. It is desirable to use the same godparent for Confirmation as was used for Baptism (canon 893, §2). However, the choice of a new godparent is not excluded.
116. A special catechetical session ought to be provided for godparents to enable them to understand the importance of sharing their faith with the one being initiated and to be a good role model in living their faith.
117. Where cultural practice involves multiple sponsors, pastors may allow the family to have a number of people participate in the celebration as honorary/secondary godparents. However, the names of only one set of godparents, one male or one female or one of each, are recorded in the baptismal register and listed on the certificate (canon 873).
118. A proxy may be designated if a godparent cannot be present for the actual Baptism or Confirmation celebration. The proxy is not required to meet the qualifications of a godparent.

X. Danger of Death and Other Exceptional Circumstances

119. **Danger of Death:** “An adult in danger of death can be baptized if, having some knowledge of the principal truths of the faith, the person has manifested in any way at all the intention to receive Baptism and promises to observe the commandments of the Christian religion” (canon 865, §2). The same applies to children of catechetical age, with the expectations being age appropriate.
120. An infant in danger of death is always to be baptized without delay (canons 867, §2, 868, §2).
121. If death is imminent and time is short, the minister of baptism, who can be anyone, is to omit all but the pouring of water and the sacramental formula (*RCIA* no. 373).
122. If chrism is available, any priest is to confirm anyone baptized in danger of death, even an infant (canon 883, 3°; *RC* nos. 7, 11).
123. For adults and children who have reached the age of reason and are in danger of death, Viaticum is to be given immediately after Baptism (and Confirmation), insofar as possible (*RCIA* no. 393).
124. For children under the age of reason in danger of death, they may receive Viaticum if they can distinguish the Body of Christ from ordinary food and can receive Holy Communion reverently (canon 913, §2).
125. **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults in Exceptional Circumstances:** Other than in danger of death, the use of the rite for Christian Initiation of Adults in Exceptional Circumstances (*RCIA* nos. 331-369) is meant for situations, for example, of sickness, old age, change of residence, or long absence due to travel (*RCIA* no. 332).
126. **Rite of Bringing a Baptized Child to the Church:** Included in the *Rite of Baptism* of Children, there is “the rite of bringing a baptized child to the church, which has been drawn up for use only when the child has been baptized in danger of death, [and] should be adapted to cover other contingencies” (*RBC* no. 31).

Appendix

Excerpts from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities*, June 15, 2017

General Principles

1. All human beings are equal in dignity in the sight of God. Moreover, by reason of their Baptism, all Catholics also share the same divine calling.
2. Catholics with disabilities have a right to participate in the sacraments as fully as other members of the local ecclesial community (see c. 835, §4). “Sacred ministers cannot deny the sacraments to those who seek them at appropriate times, are properly disposed, and are not prohibited by law from receiving them” (c. 843, §1).
3. Parish sacramental celebrations should be accessible to persons with disabilities and open to their full, active, and conscious participation, according to their capacity. ... Full accessibility should be the goal for every parish. ...
4. Since the parish is the center of the Christian experience for most Catholics, pastors and other parish ministers should make every effort to provide for all Catholics with disabilities who reside within a parish’s boundaries. Special effort should be made to reach out to and welcome all parishioners, including persons with disabilities who live independently, with their families, in institutions, or in other living arrangements. Pastoral visitation, the parish census, and the diverse forms of parish and diocesan social communication are just a few of the many ways in which the pastoral staff can work toward the inclusion of all parishioners in the parish’s sacramental life.
5. Pastors are responsible to provide evangelization, catechetical formation, and sacramental preparation for parishioners with disabilities (see c. 777, 4°). ...

Baptism

9. Through the Sacrament of Baptism the faithful are incorporated into Christ and into his Church. They obtain forgiveness of all their sins and are formed into God’s people. They become a new creation and are called, rightly, the children of God. ...
11. Because it is the sacrament of universal salvation, Baptism is to be made available to all who freely ask for it, are properly disposed, and are not prohibited by law from receiving it. In the case of infants and those who cannot request it for themselves, Baptism may be deferred only when there is no reason for hoping that the person will be brought up in the Catholic faith (see c. 868, §1, 2°). Disability, of itself, is never a reason for deferring Baptism. Persons who lack the use of reason are to be baptized provided at least one parent or guardian consents to it (see cc. 868, §1, 1° and 852). ...
13. ... Adults and children of catechetical age with disabilities should be welcomed into all stages and rites of the initiation process. If the catechumen is of catechetical age, the rites may be adapted according to need (see cc. 851, 1° and 852, §1; see *RCIA*, 34 and 35). In these cases, catechesis for persons with disabilities must be adapted in content and method to their particular situations (see *NDC*, 49). Like others, adults and children of catechetical age with disabilities should normally receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist in a single celebration (see *NSC*, 14).
14. A sponsor is to be chosen who will assist the catechumen in preparing for the Sacraments of Initiation. ... Catholics with disabilities may serve as sponsors and godparents, and like others who fulfill these roles, they are to be carefully chosen and formed for these responsibilities (see cc. 872 and 874). ...

Confirmation

18. All baptized Catholics who possess the use of reason may receive the Sacrament of Confirmation if they are “suitably instructed, properly disposed and able to renew the baptismal promises” (c. 889). Persons who because of intellectual or developmental disabilities may never attain the use of reason can receive the Sacrament of Confirmation and should be encouraged either directly or, if necessary, through their parents, to receive it. ... To the degree possible, those with disabilities should be included along with others during the preparation and celebration of the sacrament. At times, pastoral need may necessitate an accommodated setting and a simpler manner. ...

Eucharist

22. Parents or guardians, together with pastors, are to see to it that children who have reached the use of reason are correctly prepared and are nourished by the Eucharist as early as possible. Pastors are to be vigilant lest any children come to the Holy Banquet who have not reached the use of reason or whom they judge are not sufficiently disposed (see c. 914). It is important to note, however, that the criterion for reception of Holy Communion is the same for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities as for all persons, namely, that the person be able to “distinguish the body of Christ from ordinary food,” even if this recognition is evidenced through manner, gesture, or reverential silence rather than verbally (c. 913, §2 ...). Pastors are encouraged to consult with parents, those who take the place of parents, diocesan personnel involved with disability issues, psychologists, religious educators, and other experts in making their judgment. If it is determined that a parishioner who is disabled is not ready to receive the sacrament, great care is to be taken in explaining the reasons for this decision. Cases of doubt should be resolved in favor of the right of the Catholic to receive the sacrament. The existence of a disability is not considered in and of itself as disqualifying a person from receiving Holy Communion.

23. Given the paramount significance of the Eucharist in the lives of the faithful, and in light of medical and technological advancements that affect Catholics with disabilities, new questions have arisen regarding the reception of Holy Communion, and circumstances that were once rare have even become relatively common. Clergy and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are encouraged to become familiar with the needs of their parishioners. In many instances, simple accommodations can be very helpful, and should be embraced by all at the parish level. ...

Reconciliation

28. Only those who have the use of reason are capable of committing mortal sin. Nevertheless, even young children and persons with intellectual disabilities often are conscious of committing acts that are sinful to some degree and may experience a sense of guilt and sorrow. As long as the individual is capable of having a sense of contrition for having committed sin, even if he or she cannot describe the sin precisely in words, the person may receive sacramental absolution. Those with profound intellectual disabilities, who cannot experience even minimal contrition, may be invited to participate in penitential services with the rest of the community to the extent of their ability.

29. In the case of individuals who are nonverbal or have minimal verbal communication ability, sorrow for sin is to be accepted even if this repentance is expressed through some gesture rather than verbally. Many Catholics experience significant communication difficulties related to autism spectrum disorder, traumatic brain injury, post-stroke complications, and other conditions. Catholics with significant communication disorders may be permitted to make their confessions using the communication system with which they are most fluent. Individuals preparing for the sacrament are to be taught to be as independent as possible in the use of their communication system to allow for the norm of private reception of the sacrament.

Confessors are encouraged to work with families and individuals to familiarize themselves with various alternative communication options to ensure that all who desire to celebrate this sacrament may do so, provided that the seal of confession is properly safeguarded. In posing questions and in the assignment of penances the confessor is to proceed with prudence and discretion, mindful that he is at once judge and healer, minister of divine justice within the context of divine mercy (see cc. 978, §1, 979, and 981).

30. Catholics who are deaf should have the opportunity to confess to a priest able to communicate with them in sign language, if sign language is their primary means of communication. They may also confess through an approved sign language interpreter of their choice (see c. 990). The interpreter has the obligation to observe secrecy (see cc. 983, §2 and 1388, §2). When neither a priest with signing skills nor a sign language interpreter is available, Catholics who are deaf should be permitted to make their confession in writing or through the use of an appropriate portable electronic communication device that can be passed back and forth between the penitent and confessor. The written or digital materials are to be returned to the penitent and properly destroyed or deleted. ...

For full document, go to: <http://www.usccb.org/about/divine-worship/policies/guidelines-sacraments-persons-with-disabilities.cfm>