



IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

"MY IMMACULATE HEART WILL TRIUMPH."

934 Highway #8, Stoney Creek, ON L8E 5H7, CA | 905-643-1637 | ihmchurch@cogeco.net

Dear Parents and Guardians of students preparing for First Holy Communion,

Our parish joyfully invites you to share our excitement at the opportunity of our students to receive the Sacrament of First Holy Communion this coming year. Grade two is the year when our young people are invited to prepare for and receive the Sacrament of First Reconciliation followed by First Holy Communion. As a result, along with this letter, you will be provided with a *Registration Form* for this Sacrament.

You are asked to please complete the registration form, along with providing a copy of the baptismal certificate of the one receiving First Holy Communion (unless they were baptized here at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church). **Please return the registration form (and baptismal certificate as appropriate) to your child's teacher before March 7, 2025.**

Together, as home, school and parish, we can help our children to have a wonderful experience of God's unconditional love in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and of His desire to be very close to them in Holy Communion.

To help you grow in faith as you prepare for the celebration of these two Sacraments, you are invited to visit our parish website www.ihmchurch.ca, and click on the "Parish Info" tab where you will be able to register for www.formed.org. Our parish has subscribed to this service, and so it is a free subscription for you (if you type "Stoney Creek" while signing up, our parish will pop up). There are many good resources available there that can help someone grow in faith. There are programs there both for children and for adults.

To register for First Holy Communion, you may use the form that will have been sent along with this information letter. Alternatively, you will be able to register digitally by using a Google Form on our parish website, found on the 'Parish Info and Formed' tab.

First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion for Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish will take place on the following dates:

Immaculate Heart of Mary School:

First Reconciliation: Saturday, March 29 at 10 AM

First Holy Communion: Saturday, April 26 at 5 PM

St. Gabriel School:

First Reconciliation: Saturday, March 22 at 10 AM

First Holy Communion: Saturday, May 3 at 5 PM



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You may have noticed that this year, there is one time for First Reconciliation for each school. At each First Reconciliation service, there will be enough priests so that the students will all be able to have their confessions heard in a reasonable time, and we also plan to have another priest available to hear the confessions of family or friends who join the celebration.

Similarly, you may have noticed that this year, the First Holy Communions are at 5 PM on Saturday, during the regularly scheduled vigil Mass. The reason for this is that according to the guidelines from the Hamilton Diocese, First Holy Communions are to take place in the context of the regularly scheduled Sunday Masses of the parish. The purpose of this rule is to help strengthen the bonds of home, school, and parish, allowing the parishioners a chance to celebrate this great milestone in the children's lives alongside the school community as well. After a discussion with the principals, we collectively decided that this year, 5 PM on Saturday was a reasonable way to abide with Diocesan guidelines while also offering the Mass at a time that suits the needs of families. Thankfully, our church has a very large seating capacity, so everyone will still easily be able to fit at these celebrations. Here is some other information you might like to know:

- You and your loved ones are always warmly invited here to our parish. Our weekend Mass times are Saturday at 5 PM, and on Sunday 9 AM, 11 AM, and 4 PM. We offer confessions before all regularly scheduled Masses at the parish. Coming to Church regularly, along with reading the Bible, is a wonderful way to prepare for these Sacraments and grow together in faith as a family.
- You are encouraged as our young people prepare for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion to pray *with* and *for* them, as they continue their spiritual journey. I personally ask God to bless you, your family, and all those who attend and serve at our schools!
- At any point, please feel welcome to reach out if you should have any questions at any time. Our parish wants to serve you the very best we can.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. Fr. Gregory Merkley
Pastor, Immaculate Heart of Mary parish

