



31 January 2019

Dear Parents,

Re: **2019 Sacramental Programme**

As you know the preparation of all Sacraments are now primarily parish based rather than school based as is the case with most parishes in Melbourne. This is because the 'Sacramental' and Spiritual Life of a child is not the responsibility of the school but the parents as first educators in faith. Please refer to our parish website for all information concerning the Sacraments.

Parish Boundaries

There seems to be some confusion regarding the reception of the Sacraments at Sacred Heart Parish, Kew. Attending Sacred Heart School entitles you and your family to be part of our Sacramental Programme, but Sacraments should be celebrated in the parish in which your family reside. Hopefully the following will explain things for you.

1. The Parish Priest of Sacred Heart is primarily responsible for parishioners within this parish.
2. Catholics living outside the parish boundaries are the responsibility of their Parish Priest. This is because they live within another parish boundary.
3. A parishioner may also be someone who belongs to this parish but lives outside the parish boundary. This person needs to be a registered parishioner, is someone who attends weekend Mass regularly, is part of our faith community, supports the parish financially and should be known to the Parish Priest.
4. Attending Sacred Heart School does not automatically make your child or your family parishioners of this parish if you do not live within the parish boundaries.
5. Sacraments should be celebrated in the parish in which your family reside, except for #3 (see above).
6. The reception of the Sacrament is not a school celebration but a sacred celebration of faith.
7. The reception of a Sacrament is a 'Sacred Celebration of Faith'; through which one belongs to one's own local parish community and the wider Church of God.

If you are residing outside our parish boundaries, and do not qualify as a parishioner, but have a child in our school then you will need to contact your local parish. Each parish will have its own sacramental policy so please inform yourself of what is required from your local parish.

The only other exception to this is a personal written letter from your Parish Priest, not his secretary, granting permission for the Sacrament to be administered here on his behalf. I will then contact the parish priest to discuss your request before a decision is reached.

Fee

Since the Sacraments are now parish based there is a fee of \$150 per Sacrament to offset administration costs, adult education and any other support you might require. This is a matter of justice as it is unfair to expect the wider parish community to pay for this sacramental programme.

While some may object to this fee the fact remains that this is the equivalent of one night's entertainment or \$3.00 per week. I do not believe this would overburden any family residing in the Kew area. If you are having financial difficulties, I am happy to make an appointment for you to meet with myself as your Parish Priest, or a member of the Finance Committee to discuss your situation as we have no wish to overburden anyone. Please note there is no cost for the Sacrament itself as it is a Sacred Act.

Due Date

To assist families returning from holidays we have extended the due date to 5PM Wednesday 6 February 2019.

In conclusion I believe this is essentially a wonderful opportunity to re-connect with your local parish faith community. It is surprising how many Catholics avail of a 'Catholic Education' but seldom if ever connect with the local parish. Cultural Catholics appear to want a Catholic Education but seldom see the primary importance of belonging to their local faith community. I hope this will enable many to re-evaluate their commitment to parish sacramental life as expressed in the vows taken at Baptism.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John Madden", is written above a long, thin horizontal line that extends across the width of the signature.

Father John Madden
Parish Priest