



Diocese of Austin

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Vicar General

September 12, 2019

Dear Brother Priests:

Today, I write on behalf of Bishop Vásquez and in collaboration with the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, to address an increasing number of inquiries concerning the ***Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults Adapted for Children***. This letter addresses the two most common inquiries:

- A. Unbaptized children, seven years of age or older, presented by parent or guardian for Baptism
 - B. Catholic children, baptized as infants but uncatechized, who have reached their seventh birthday and are seeking the completion of their Sacraments of Initiation
- A. ***RCIA adapted for Children*** is for unbaptized children who have reached the age of reason (seven years).¹ In accord with the universal law of the Catholic Church, the practice in the Diocese of Austin is for unbaptized children, seven years or older and after suitable preparation, to be baptized, confirmed, and receive First Communion at the Easter Vigil. Confirmation may not be delayed to a later age. The same bishop or priest who baptizes must also administer Confirmation. The celebration of First Communion then follows at the prescribed time of the Mass. It is not necessary that the same minister who baptizes and confirms also administer Holy Communion. At a minimum, the child's sacramental preparation should span no less than a full liturgical year, with the best practice being two years. After these children are fully initiated, it is the mind of the Church that they continue in catechetical formation as active members of the community for the remainder of their youth and throughout their lives. This will require of our parishes an intentional marketing initiative that expresses the benefit of religious education to each family.
- B. ***Baptized Catholic children who have never been catechized*** and enter faith formation after their seventh birthday, receive Confirmation and First Communion in the same liturgy by the Bishop or his delegate. Catechesis for these children should span at least two years, include preparation for First Reconciliation and incorporate a process for the formation of their parents. The celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation may take place at the parish Confirmation Mass, a diocesan Adult Confirmation Mass, or a Confirmation Mass at another parish.

Please keep in mind these additional Confirmation guidelines for the Diocese of Austin:

1. Baptized adolescents (eighth grade or beyond) who have celebrated First Communion are prepared over a 2-year period. Confirmation is conferred by the Bishop or his delegate at the parish Confirmation Mass. They may also receive Confirmation at a diocesan Adult Confirmation Mass or that of another parish within the diocese. Please refer to the *Diocese of Austin Guidelines for Confirmation* for details on the preparation requirements.
2. Baptized Catholic adults, 18 years of age and older, seeking only Confirmation should not be in the RCIA process and are not confirmed at the Easter Vigil. They are confirmed by the Bishop, or

¹ Canon 852

his delegate, at the parish Confirmation Mass or a diocesan Adult Confirmation Mass. Please consult the *Diocesan Guidelines for Adult Confirmation* for the suggested formation process.

3. Baptized Catholic adults, 18 years of age and older, seeking both Confirmation *and* First Communion should not be part of the RCIA process, unless by prudential judgment of the pastor, they need RCIA. Special attention should be exercised to distinguish between Catechumens and baptized Candidates. They receive both sacraments at the same time from the Bishop, or his delegate, at the parish Confirmation Mass or a diocesan Adult Confirmation mass. Instruction on, and participation in, the Sacrament of Reconciliation precedes the Sacraments of Initiation. The reception of First Communion takes place at the same Confirmation Mass.
4. Priests have ongoing faculties in universal canon law to confirm those they baptize or those seven years of age or older, whom they baptize or receive into the Church in the same liturgy in which they are baptized or received. In these cases, a request for permission to confirm is not necessary. Requests to confirm baptized Catholics are considered in the case of hardship and must be submitted in writing to the Bishop and include the details of the special circumstance, including the name(s), date and place, and proof of baptism.

In summary, the following indicates the normal minister of Confirmation:

<i>PRIEST CONFIRMS</i>	<i>BISHOP CONFIRMS</i>
Unbaptized person age 7 and older immediately following baptism and prior to reception of 1 st Communion at Easter Vigil	Baptized, uncatechized Catholics receiving Confirmation and First Communion
Baptized, non-Catholic Christians admitted into full communion (within any Sunday Eucharist even outside the Easter Season)	Baptized Catholics who have celebrated First Communion and are seeking Confirmation
Baptized Catholics who through no personal fault have been instructed in or adhered to a non-Catholic religion	
A baptized Catholic in danger of death	

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please don't hesitate to call Gustavo Rodriquez, Director of the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis, or Maryrae Stein, Associate Director. You can also email them at gustavo-rodriquez@austindiocese.org or maryrae-stein@austindiocese.org. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for endeavoring to make these particulars to the liturgical law and our local protocol clear and able to be understood to all the faithful.

With kind regards,



Very Reverend James A. Misko
 Vicar General