

ST AGNES CATHOLIC CHURCH

# FIRST PENANCE FIRST COMMUNION HANDBOOK

2023-2024





# ST. AGNES CATHOLIC CHURCH

## ST. AGNES PARISH

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Pastor

**REV. ANDREW HAISSIG**  
Parochial Vicar

**REV. ANTHONY PINIZZOTTO**  
Priest in Residence

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## MISSION STATEMENT

Called by our Lord Jesus Christ, and strengthened by His Word and Sacraments, as faithful Catholics, we strive to be faithful missionary disciples in Jesus Christ, sharing His love with one another and all in need.

## CORE VALUES

**Communion:** Uniting ourselves with Jesus and other baptized Christians in the Church, which has its source and summit in the Eucharist.

**Holiness:** Embracing the "light, love and limitless possibility" communicated by the Holy Spirit and consecrating ourselves to doing God's will by uniting ourselves to His Son, Jesus Christ.

**Joy:** Delighting in the peace that comes from knowing God's love and manifesting His love to others in the hope of sharing in His glory.

**Service:** Promoting the dignity of the human person by sharing our God-given time, talent and treasure with others.

**Discipleship:** Recognizing that conversion is a gradual and lifelong process, we commit to fostering a deeper relationship with God, living a fully sacramental life, sustaining our faith through ongoing catechesis and witnessing to the love of God through Jesus in our words, actions and relationships, and passing this on to our children.

Dear First Holy Communion Parents

This preparation time for First Penance and First Eucharist marks an important step in your child's formation in the Catholic faith. What a wonderful privilege it is for you to talk to your son or daughter about your relationship with Jesus; to teach them how much God loves them and waits for them in the Sacrament of Penance; and how Jesus, the Bread of Life, sustains us for the Christian journey!

Passing on the Church's faith in the love of God and the values taught to us by Jesus Christ, is the most important thing you can do as a parent. As children grow and learn, they make mistakes. It is all part of learning. Teaching your child forgiveness and humbly asking for forgiveness are important lessons in shaping them to become the person that God has created them to be. The Sacrament of Penance is an encounter with the merciful love of Christ that lets children know that there is nothing that they can ever do that will make God love them less. He waits for them with great love in the Confessional to offer His mercy and healing.

As parents, we nourish our children with good food to help them grow strong and healthy. As Catholics, we truly believe Jesus' words in John 6:53-55: "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink." **When we receive the Eucharist, we receive Jesus Himself - Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity - in both the literal and spiritual sense of the word.** Jesus, who takes the form of bread and wine, comes to us to nourish us, strengthen us, and unite with us so that we may be one with Him and the Father and the Holy Spirit, and be empowered to live out our mission. The Holy Eucharist truly is the "source and summit of the Christian life." (CCC 1324)

This is the gift your child receives at First Communion. At every Mass, Jesus becomes entirely and absolutely present among us. Jesus Christ is God's total and absolute Love made flesh. As human beings we can't love like this. Yet, in the Eucharist, we receive Christ's Body and Blood so that we can experience this kind of infinite love. This infinite love is made manifest in the Eucharist. As we partake of the Eucharist, Christ intimately unites Himself to us, so we may participate in the Trinitarian Love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and share this Love with others.

The home is the primary place where faith is cultivated. Parents are their child's primary example of how to live as a Christian and you remain integral to your child's spiritual formation throughout life. By living a fully sacramental life, availing of the Sacrament of Penance regularly and the Holy Eucharist every Sunday, you model the trust, love and faith you desire for your children in their relationship with God. As you attend to your own personal faith formation and holiness, you model the true meaning of discipleship. As expressed in the words of every baptismal liturgy, the handing on of the faith is primarily the responsibility of parents, and you are described as the first and best teachers of your children in the ways of faith. You are not alone in this role. We, at St. Agnes, are ready to guide, support and encourage you as you lead your family to become intentional disciples of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessings,

Lisa Orosa  
Director of Faith Formation  
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## OUR MISSION & VISION

*At St. Agnes, we believe in the inherent dignity of every person, created out of love and for love, in the image and likeness of God.*

*The goal of St. Agnes Religious Education is to provide opportunities for students and families to have a profound encounter with Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, in the Sunday liturgies, the Sacraments, the Word of God and joyful service to become intentional disciples and ambassadors for Christ.*

*By living a grace-filled life, nourished by prayer, strengthened by the Sacraments, and transformed by the Word of God, our students and families are empowered to grow in the Faith, deepen their relationship with God, and live out their mission to love as Christ loves and invite others to experience the joy, peace and hope that comes from a loving personal relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ.*

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**"Be who God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire."**

**- St . Catherine of Siena**

# 1ST COMMUNION AT ST. AGNES

## YEAR TWO REQUIREMENTS

### TAKE HOME WORKBOOKS

Students must complete two workbooks: Penance & 1st Communion. These workbooks are sent home to encourage parents to be more involved in their child's faith formation & grow together in the Faith.  
**DUE DATES:** 2/4/24 (Penance WB) & 4/7/24 (Communion WB).

### MASS JOURNALS & BINGO

*Attending Sunday Mass is the most important preparation to receiving First Communion.* Students are asked to thoughtfully complete the weekly Mass Journal sheets. In addition, Bingo cards will be given to students each month. Submit the completed Mass Journal & Bingo cards for a special prize at the end of the month.

### PARENT FORMATION & INVOLVEMENT

This special time of preparing children to receive Jesus in the Most Holy Eucharist becomes more meaningful and memorable with the parents' active involvement in their child's preparation. With the Flipped classroom approach, students are able to prepare for their Religious Education classes beforehand using Word of Life. This allows the catechist to devote more time in delving deeply into the Faith, allowing for more creative learning and liturgical celebrations in the classroom.

Parents are expected to be more actively involved with the formation of their children by helping them with online lessons and workbooks, praying together as a family, and faithfully attending Mass and availing of the Sacrament of Penance. In addition, parents are highly encouraged to participate in a 7 week adult faith formation session beginning January 2024. These sessions allow parents to deepen their own relationship with Christ, while modeling the importance of lifelong faith formation to their children.

### RETREATS & MINI CATECHESIS

Students are required to attend a mandatory First Penance retreat on March 2nd and a mandatory First Communion retreat on April 27, 2024.

In addition, both parents and students are expected to attend short talks (15 minutes) with Fr. Saunders after the 9AM Mass on April 7, 14, 21, 28 and May 5th.

### FIRST PENANCE & FIRST COMMUNION

Students will receive their First Penance on March 2nd, immediately after the First Penance Retreat. Students are asked to wear their Sunday's best.

First Holy Communion will take place on two Sundays in May. Appropriate First Communion attire is required.

Parents may sign up for either May 12, 2024 or May 19, 2024 to be held during the 11AM Mass.

### OTHER KEY DATES

Online registration & fees: October 29, 2023  
Start Mass Journal & Bingo: October 1, 2023  
Start Adult Formation: January 11, 2024

*NOTE: Non-St. Agnes parishioners will need to submit a permission letter from their pastor to receive the Sacraments at St. Agnes*





# FIRST PENANCE/COMMUNION IMPORTANT CALENDAR DATES

2023

September  
12 & 17  
RE CLASSES  
BEGIN

October  
1  
MASS JOURNAL  
& BINGO BEGINS

October  
29  
APPLICATION,  
POLICY & FEE  
DUE

November  
1  
ALL SOULS  
HOLY DAY OF  
OBLIGATION

December  
8  
IMMACULATE  
CONCEPTION  
HOLY DAY

December  
25  
CHRISTMAS  
HOLY DAY OF  
OBLIGATION

2024

January  
1  
MARY, MOTHER  
OF GOD  
HOLY DAY

January  
11, 18, 25  
ADULT  
FORMATION  
SESSIONS 1-3

February  
1, 8, 15, 17, 22  
ADULT FORMATION  
SESSIONS 4-7 &  
RETREAT

February  
4  
1ST PENANCE  
WORKBOOK DUE

March  
2  
1ST PENANCE  
RETREAT &  
LITURGY

April  
7  
1ST HOLY  
COMMUNION  
WORKBOOK DUE

April  
7, 14, 21, 28  
MINI CATECHESIS  
WITH  
FR. SAUNDERS

April  
27  
1ST COMMUNION  
RETREAT

May  
5  
MINI CATECHESIS  
WITH  
FR. SAUNDERS

May  
12, 19  
1ST COMMUNION  
@11AM MASS

# THE EFFECTS OF HOLY COMMUNION

## THE UNITY OF THE MYSTICAL BODY: THE EUCHARIST MAKES THE CHURCH

Those who receive the Eucharist are united more closely to Christ. Through it Christ unites them to all the faithful in one body - the Church.

## THE EUCHARIST COMMITS US TO THE POOR.

To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, his brethren

## THE EUCHARIST AND THE UNITY OF CHRISTIANS.

Before the greatness of this mystery St. Augustine exclaims, "O sacrament of devotion! O sign of unity! O bond of charity!"

## HOLY COMMUNION SEPARATES US FROM SIN.

The body of Christ we receive in Holy Communion is "given up for us," and the blood we drink "shed for the many for the forgiveness of sins."

## HOLY COMMUNION AUGMENTS OUR UNION WITH CHRIST

The principal fruit of receiving the Eucharist in Holy Communion is an intimate union with Christ Jesus.

## THE EUCHARIST HELPS US TO BECOME MORE MATURED IN FAITH

It helps us to become like Christ to others.

