Dear Families with children preparing for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist,

At Our Lady of Grace parish, children prepare for the sacraments of First Reconciliation (confession) and First Eucharist (communion) in second grade or higher. Through our sacramental preparation program, we focus on First Reconciliation during the first half of the school year and on First Eucharist during the second half of the school year. Your child needs to receive First Reconciliation before preparing for First Eucharist, so we begin First Reconciliation preparation with a required retreat in the fall.

In the "Blessed" materials the children use for study, there are good descriptions of why the Catholic Church has the sacrament of Reconciliation. These teachings are valuable for both children and parents to consider.

"We all stray away from God from time to time. When we do, it is a good time to go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and say sorry to God. You might be tempted to fall into the trap of thinking that your sin is too big for God to forgive. But, there is nothing you can do that will make God stop loving you. . . The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a great blessing!"

Another important quote is: *"Regular Reconciliation is one of the most powerful ways that God shares his grace and mercy with us. God asks us to be sorry for our sins, confess them out loud to a priest, and do an act of penance so that our friendship with God can be restored and strengthened. The more you go to Reconciliation the more you will come to realize the incredible power of God's grace and mercy in your life."*

FIRST RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION)

There are two options from which you may choose for the **required First Reconciliation (Confession) Retreat.** They are Sunday, Oct. 11, from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. OR Thursday, Oct. 15, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. At least one parent must attend with the child, but it is best if both parents can be present. This retreat is required for all families/students who wish to receive the sacrament at Our Lady of Grace, including those who attend Bishop Ryan Catholic School, are home schooled, attend Faith Formation, etc. This is also required for students who are older than grade 2 (including those in middle or high school) who are preparing for these sacraments. Again, the two Retreat options from which you may choose are:

Sunday, Oct. 11, 1:00-2:30 p.m. in the dining room – OR –
Thursday, Oct. 15, 6:00-7:30 p.m. in the dining room

If you have questions about the retreat, please contact me – Tanya Watterud, Faith Formation Coordinator – at 701-839-6834 (office), education1@olgminot.org or text 701-219-3194.

The students will **receive the sacrament of First Reconciliation** (make their first confession) on Saturday, December 5, during one of two services in the church: at 9:00 AM or 10:30 AM. Times will be assigned. Changes may be made if needed.

FIRST EUCHARIST (COMMUNION)

Looking ahead, the **required First Eucharist (Communion) Retreat** will be held in January. Again, you will have two options from which you may choose:

Thursday, January 21, from 6:00-7:30 p.m. in the dining room – OR –
Sunday, January 24, from 1:00-2:30 p.m. in the dining room

The children will **receive the sacrament of First Eucharist** (receive Communion for the first time) during the Masses on the weekend of April 3-4. They will have **rehearsal with our Pastor, Fr. Adam Maus, the morning of Saturday, April 3** (as well as earlier practices about which you will be notified).

For the First Eucharist Masses, the children will be divided in this way, and changes may be made if needed:

4:00 PM Mass on April 3: The students who attend the Wednesday 5:30 PM Faith Formation classes AND the children who attend Bishop Ryan Catholic School

10:30 AM Mass on April 4: The children who attend Wednesday 4:00 PM Faith Formation classes AND the children who attend Sunday 9:20 AM Faith Formation classes

Much more information will be shared with you as the school year progresses.

We look forward to meeting with you and your children as they begin their preparation for receiving these sacraments. If you know of other parents who desire these sacraments for their children, please remind them that registration is required by visiting the parish website – olgminot.org – or by meeting with me in the Faith Formation office.

Sincerely,

Tanya Watterud
Faith Formation Coordinator