



Dear families,

I am very excited to let you know about a significant change in St. Rita's celebration of First Holy Communion by your children. Beginning with this coming year, all our children in the First Holy Communion program will be receiving their First Holy Communion at regularly scheduled Weekend Masses. Communion is meant to be celebrated within one's parish community, and we want to start this new tradition to create lasting memories of this special day with children's friends, family, and their community.

This change allows your children to receive their first Holy Communion with their parish community and lets those at Sunday Masses support and appreciate your child in our Faith community. Because we will schedule several celebrations throughout the Easter season, you will also be able to invite more of your loved ones than we could include at the separate Saturday morning Masses. Rest assured, the most important parts of this special day will remain the same. In particular, I know it is important to many of you to coordinate your child's celebration with their friends or cousins. You will still have the flexibility to do so in the new schedule.

Here are the details: On the weekends of April 18-19 through May 16-17, the Saturday evening Mass at 5:00 pm and the 10:30 Mass on Sunday Morning will host up to 8 First Communions each. 8:00am Masses are also available by request. Your child will sit with you in your family's reserved pew in one of the center sections.

Logistics:

- Celebrating children will be welcome to volunteer for liturgical ministries like greeting and reading.
- The entrance procession will include your children.
- When it is time for Holy Communion, your children will come up in the center aisle to receive while everyone else remains seated.
- Then their family and friends will join the rest of the congregation in coming forward to receive. With this change in communion distribution, Mass will be much shorter than our separate Saturday celebrations were.

There will be plenty of availability: With 8 openings at each of two Masses per weekend over 5 weekends, this will provide good flexibility as you plan your weekends.

Thank you for your understanding and I look forward to being part of this spiritual journey of your family.

Sincerely,

Rev. Timothy Niven