



**DECREE OF PROMULGATION**  
*Norms for the Preparation for and Celebration*  
*of the Sacraments of Initiation and First Penance*

*The sharing of the divine nature, by which men are forgiven by Christ's grace, bears a resemblance to the beginning of natural life, its growth and nourishment. For indeed the faithful, reborn by Baptism, are strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation and finally are invigorated in the Eucharist by the food of eternal life so that by these sacraments of Christian initiation they may receive more and more the treasures of divine life and progress moreover to the perfection of charity.*

– *Divinae Consortium Naturae*, 1971

Those words of Blessed Paul VI remind us that the theological order of the sacraments of initiation is Baptism, Confirmation, and then first Holy Communion. Celebrating the sacraments in this order was the universal practice of the early Church. With the restoration of the catechumenate as mandated by the Second Vatican Council, this order has become the norm for the initiation of adults throughout the Latin Church, just as this order has been the consistent practice of the Eastern Churches for those of all ages. With the promulgation by mailing copies and posting on the diocesan website of these *Norms for the Preparation for and Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation and First Penance* as particular law for the Diocese of Honolulu, the sacraments of initiation will be celebrated in their original order for all members of the faithful in our diocese.

It is my hope that these norms will be a tool for carrying out a truly joyful evangelization that trusts in the grace of God. “Though it is true that this mission demands great generosity on our part, it would be wrong to see it as a heroic individual undertaking, for it is first and foremost the Lord’s work, surpassing anything which we can see and understand. Jesus is ‘the first and greatest evangelizer.’ In every activity of evangelization, the primacy always belongs to God, who has called us to cooperate with him and who leads us on by the power of his Spirit. . . . The life of the Church should always reveal clearly that God takes the initiative, that ‘he has loved us first’ (1 Jn 4:19)” (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 12). Confirming at a younger age allows God to love us first, fill us with his grace, and inspire us to respond.

In addressing new issues that have arisen in our modern society, it is my hope that these norms also reflect an approach to evangelization that is faithful to the fabric of the Gospel. “Just as the organic unity existing among the virtues means that no one of them can be excluded from the Christian ideal, so no truth may be denied. The integrity of the Gospel message must not be deformed. What is more, each truth is better understood when related to the harmonious totality of the Christian message; in this context all of the truths are important and illumine one another” (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 39).

With regard to the particular norms, those matters that are consistent with divine law, universal canon law or current diocesan norms continue to remain in effect.

Matters that reflect changes in diocesan norms take effect on **June 24, 2016**, the Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, with the following exceptions that will follow a longer *vacatio legis*.

Specifically, the references to the celebration of Confirmation in nos. 41, 48-56, 66-68, 72-74 will take effect according to the following schedule:

- For those parishes moving to the original order of the sacraments of initiation in the **first group**, the law will be fully effective on June 24, 2017, with the expectation that Confirmation will be celebrated on Pentecost, May 20, 2018, with first Holy Communion (as applicable) for all those in grades 2-12.
- For those parishes in the **second group**, the law will be fully effective on June 24, 2018, with the expectation that Confirmation will be celebrated on Pentecost, June 9, 2019, with first Holy Communion (as applicable) for all those in grades 2-12.
- For those parishes in the **third group**, the law will be fully effective on June 24, 2019, with the expectation that Confirmation will be celebrated on Pentecost, May 31, 2020, with first Holy Communion (as applicable) for all those in grades 2-12.

The choice of group by the parishes will be contingent on the parish having in place comprehensive youth ministry according to the evaluation of the pastor and his parish catechetical and youth leadership.

At the appropriate time, the faculty needed to confer Confirmation will be delegated to those priests who will be confirming with me on the three Pentecost Sundays in 2018-2020.

Given at the Office of the Bishop at the Diocesan Curia on 10<sup>th</sup> day of January 2016, the Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord.

+ Clarence Silva

Most Reverend Clarence Silva  
Bishop of Honolulu

Walter Yoshimitsu

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Seal

