

**Fort Lee Catholic Community
Memorial Chapel**



**Sacramental Preparation
First Reconciliation
&
First Holy Communion
2026/2027**

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Welcome Letter

1 September 2026

From: Fr. Eugene Savarimuthu

To: Parents preparing their children for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the Fort Lee Catholic Community First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion Preparation. On behalf of the Catechists, I am delighted to welcome you and your child as we look forward to accompanying your family on this significant stage of your child's faith journey.

The Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion are important sacraments for your child, for all your family, for our Church and for the whole Catholic Community to which we belong. We wish you every blessing as we embark on this journey together.

If there is any further information you need now or as the sacraments develop, please contact your Catechists or myself.

We want your child to enjoy this preparation time and ask you to look on it as an opportunity for your family to grow in faith and knowledge and love of God, together.

I do ask you and your child for all your support and cooperation to help make this preparation time a blessing for us all.

With all God's Blessing,

Fr. Eugene



First Sacrament Requirements

1. Baptismal Certificate
 - a. Any person receiving the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion must have been previously Baptized in the Catholic Church. Please provide your Baptismal Certificate to your Catechist; dated within 6 months of the Sacrament.
 - b. If you have not been previously Baptized in the Catholic Church, please contact your Catechist to be enrolled in the Order of Christian Initiation for Adults/Teens/Children.
2. Attendance
 - a. Class and Group Celebrations
 - i. It is important that students attend all sessions (classes and group celebrations). You and your child are asked to plan ahead to ensure that this happens. If your child is unwell or there is a valid reason why you cannot attend, please let your catechist know in advance of the session. Your support and encouragement during this process is vital to your child's faith development. Sports events, parties and other such competing attractions must come second to First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion preparation. In the event that your child misses two sessions, you and your child will be advised to meet with our Priest.
 - b. Sacramental Retreats
 - i. The First Reconciliation Retreat and the First Holy Communion Retreat are mandatory and fundamental components to your child's sacraments. Parents will be asked to attend and participate in portions of these retreats.
3. Prayers, Practices and Sacramentals
 - a. Memorize the Lord's Prayer
 - b. Memorize the Hail Mary
 - c. Memorize the Glory Be
 - d. Memorize the Act of Contrition
 - e. Memorize the Ten Commandments
 - f. Memorize the Guardian Angel Prayer
 - g. Demonstrate the Sign of the Cross
 - h. Demonstrate respect for God's presence in the Eucharist by genuflecting or bowing
 - i. Demonstrate Mass responses
 - j. Identify the Tabernacle
 - k. Identify the Holy Water fonts
 - l. Identify statues of Mary and Joseph
 - m. Identify the Easter Candle
 - n. Identify the Stations of the Cross



Roles and Responsibilities

1. Fort Lee Catholic Community
 - a. Your Catechists, Priest and Church Community recognize that you are the primary teachers of your children in their faith and it is our sincere pleasure to work alongside you and your child to prepare for First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion, which are important faith steps in the life of your child.
 - i. Catechist
 1. Catechists will provide sacramental preparation classes, prayer and every attention your child will need or want as they prepare for these sacraments.
 2. All the resources you and your child need will be provided. It is essential that each child bring their Bible and workbook to every session.
 - ii. Priest & Church Community
 1. Our Priest will provide prayer and Sacramental guidance IAW the Archdiocese for the Military Services.
 2. The Catholic Community will be asked to support your child through prayer and Catholic lifestyle.
2. Parent
 - a. As parents, you are the primary educators of your children. In the Sacrament of Baptism, you promised to be your child's "first teachers in the ways of the faith" and to be "the best of teachers." The Fort Lee Catholic Community, our Priest and your child's Catechists are there to help and support you in this important task.
 - i. Accompany your child to every Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation
 - ii. Pray for and with your child and our Catholic Community
 - iii. Witness to your faith by your family life style and conversation
 - iv. Support all sacramental program requirements
3. Godparents
 - a. Although the Church does not specify a formal role for Godparents with respect to First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion, their promise, made at the child's Baptism, to assist the parents "in their duty as Christian mothers and fathers," still holds. By remaining in regular contact with their Godchild, Godparents can help parents to discern the child's readiness for First Holy Communion. Those who live nearby can take a more active role in their Godchild's sacramental preparation. With the help of technology, even Godparents who live at a distance can share with their Godchild the value and the meaning of the Eucharist in their lives.
 - b. A letter of prayer and support for your children will be asked of their Godparents.
4. Child
 - a. Complete all assigned homework
 - b. Memorize, demonstrate and identify prayers, practices and sacramentals
 - c. Attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation



Important Dates to Remember

1. September
 - a. CRE Meeting
 - i. 20 September
 - b. CRE Sessions
 - i. 27 September
2. October
 - a. CRE Sessions
 - i. 4, 18, 25 October
 - ii. No CRE on 11 October
3. November
 - a. CRE Sessions
 - i. 1, 15, 22 November
 - ii. No CRE on 8, 29 November
4. December
 - a. CRE Sessions
 - i. 6, 13 December
 - ii. No CRE on 20, 27 December
5. January
 - a. CRE Sessions
 - i. 3, 10, 24, 31 January
 - ii. No CRE on 17 January
6. February
 - a. CRE Sessions
 - i. 7, 21, 28 February
 - ii. No CRE on 14 February
7. March
 - a. CRE Sessions
 - i. 7, 14, 21 March
 - ii. No CRE on 28 March
 - b. Sacramental Program
 - i. First Reconciliation Retreat & Sacrament: 20 March 1000 – 1200
8. April
 - a. CRE Sessions
 - i. 11, 18, 25 April
 - ii. No CRE on 4 April
9. May
 - a. CRE Sessions
 - i. 16, 23 May
 - ii. No CRE on 2, 9, 30 May
 - b. Sacramental Program
 - i. 1 May 1000 – 1200, First Holy Communion Retreat & Rehearsal
 - ii. 2 May, First Holy Communion



The Sacrament of First Reconciliation

Saturday, 20 March 2027

Reconciliation is a special sacrament of healing and forgiveness. It will help your children to grow in awareness of choices they make and enable them to feel closer to God.

Reconciliation, like Baptism, must be received before a student can receive their First Holy Communion. Reconciliation can be received multiple times throughout a person's life. As Catholics, we are required to receive the Sacrament at least once per year. However, it is recommended that Catholics receive Reconciliation once per month.

Anyone who is aware that they have committed a mortal sin must receive Reconciliation before they can receive the Eucharist, either for the first time, or before receiving Eucharist again during Mass.

All First Reconciliation children should arrive, sign in and be ready to begin by 1000. At least one parent is required to attend the First Reconciliation Retreat and Sacrament with their child.

1000 – 1130: First Reconciliation Retreat

1130 – 1200: First Reconciliation

*Catechists, Parents and Volunteers are highly encouraged to participate in Reconciliation.

After receiving their First Reconciliations, children can do their Penance in the pews while waiting for their families and vice versa. After completing their Penance, students and parents may leave as they wish.



The Sacrament of First Holy Communion

Retreat: Saturday, 1 May 2026

Sacrament: Sunday, 2 May 2026

First Holy Communion is a special time when your children are welcomed into the body of the Church and begin to take a more active part in the Catholic Community. This celebration of the Mass is the center of the whole Catholic faith. All other liturgical rites and all the works of the Christian life are linked to the Eucharistic celebration, flow from it, and have it as their end.

Retreat: All Communicants should arrive, sign in and be ready to begin by 1000 on 1 May. One parent is required to attend the retreat with their child.

1000 – 1130: First Holy Communion Retreat

1130 – 1200: Rehearsal

Sacrament: All Communicants should arrive at Memorial Chapel by 0745 on 2 May. We will meet in the main sanctuary.

0745 – 0755: Gather & Pray

0755 – 0815: Rehearsal

0815 – 0830: Photos

0900: Mass

1000: Reception in the Family Life Center



Class Session Information

1. Attendance
 - a. In accordance with the AMS and Garrison safety procedures, attendance will be taken at each session. If your child misses two sessions, your child and you will be advised to meet with our Priest.
2. Preparation
 - a. All students will come to class prepared with their Bible, workbook and completed assigned homework. Sessions will begin on time. We ask that everyone be punctual for all sessions in consideration of others in the class.
3. Homework
 - a. All follow-up home activities should be completed as this is a vital part of the process – giving you and your child an opportunity for quiet time together with each other and God.
4. Rehearsals
 - a. We will walk through each of the Sacraments to teach the practical aspects of their reception and to alleviate any anxiety that might be felt by the students.
5. Contact Information
 - a. Fort Lee Priest: Fr. Eugene Savarimuthu
 - i. eugene.k.savarimuthu.mil@army.mil
 - b. Fort Lee Catholic Religious Education Coordinator: Ms. Patti Ramos
 - i. saintmartin.coordinator@gmail.com
 - c. First Reconciliation & First Holy Communion Catechists: Mr. Jose Cruz, Mr. Kyle Courtway & Ms. Ann Shannon
 - i. saintmartin.firstholychommunion@gmail.com

