



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF GREEN BAY

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September 27, 2010

My dear Brother Priests,

From time to time I receive requests from parents to allow their children to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation at an age earlier than the 11<sup>th</sup> grade as specified in our diocesan guidelines. In speaking with some of you, I understand the concern about making exceptions to the age and our requirements for reception of the Sacrament. Sound teaching, participation in the Liturgy, and involvement in parish life are all part of the preparation for the Sacrament, and there are specific guidelines about the information I expect students to have as they approach Confirmation.

Catechesis and faith formation are among the most important ministries in our Diocese and touch the lives of our children, youth, and adults. I know that parents, and you and your educational staff work to share and to help deepen your people's faith and to prepare them for participation in the life of the parish. Sound teaching goes hand-in-hand with participation in worship and parish life.

During the past two years I have been working with the Department of Education to strengthen the catechetical ministry in our diocese. We have already implemented several initiatives and will continue to find ways to assist parishes, especially in the sacramental preparation of our students. One of the issues we will consider is the appropriate age for the celebration of Confirmation in our Diocese. This will be decided within a comprehensive approach to sacramental preparation, and your experience and ideas will be a significant part of the process.

In the interim, I am asking that parents and pastors use the following procedure regarding requests for Confirmation at an age and time earlier than our current policy. Please share this information with the members of your parish so they will understand the procedure and the avenue for making such requests:

Parents' requests for an exception to the policy on the age and time for reception of Confirmation will be made to the pastor of the parish in which they are members. The pastor (and if he chooses, his religious education director) will review the request and meet with the child to determine whether the student has received adequate preparation and has the knowledge and proper disposition to receive the Sacrament. If there is a special health related need, of course we will make appropriate adjustments.

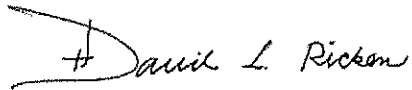
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The pastor will then send me the request for an exception, stating his support for (or concern about) the request and his reasons. I will then respond to the pastor.

This interim policy will help me to provide a pastoral response to serious requests and to be supportive of you and your educational staff as you carry out this important ministry.

With every good wish for God's continued blessing in your ministry, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David L. Ricken". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

The Most Reverend David L. Ricken, DD, JCL  
Bishop of Green Bay

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