

Diocese of Saskatoon
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

100 – 5th Avenue North
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 2N7
web page: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com

Phone: (306) 242-1500
Fax: (306) 244-6010

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Dear Friends:

In 2005, I promulgated a decree for the Diocese of Saskatoon setting out Pastoral Directives for Sacramental Sharing between Catholics and Baptized Christians of other denominations in particular circumstances. After further reflection on our experience and after consultation I wish to now issue an updated set of Pastoral Directives for the implementation of that decree. My chief desire in doing this is to have a sound, pastoral and consistent response across the diocese to requests for sacramental sharing.

The gospel imperative to pray and work for reconciliation and unity among Christians is a fundamental and permanent Christian duty. The Second Vatican Council spelled this out clearly for Catholics and the Church's leadership. This imperative remains as compelling today.

The updated policy and its Pastoral Directives are the result of extensive work carried out by the Saskatoon Diocesan Commission for Ecumenism. The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity has reviewed these Pastoral Directives and found them worthy.

As noted in the introduction to the Pastoral Directives, "By the grace of God, the Catholic Church and other Churches or Ecclesial Communities are united in varying degrees in a real though imperfect communion of fellowship. Unity in baptism impels us toward full communion. It calls all disciples of Christ to faithful discipline in striving toward reconciliation and unity in the hope that we will reach, one day soon, full communion around the eucharistic table of the one Lord".

Catholics believe that the celebration of the Eucharist is a sacramental sign of the oneness of faith, life and worship of the Church and that participation in Communion presupposes this unity. It is for this reason, then, that reception of Holy Communion is **ordinarily** reserved for baptized members of the Catholic Church. However, it is a source of joy that Catholic pastors may in certain cases as outlined in the Pastoral Directives, administer the sacraments of the Eucharist, Reconciliation or Anointing of the Sick to other Christians.

In such cases a baptized Christian individual of another denomination who is experiencing genuine serious need and spiritual hunger and who wishes to receive one of these Sacraments is strongly encouraged to request the sacrament by meeting with the Catholic pastor for a full discussion about the conditions for such a sharing.

Two general principles guide the application of these Pastoral Directives. Firstly the directives and norms are to be applied generously in favour of those eligible with the pastoral and ecumenical sensitivity that each situation requires, and secondly, that the Church does not demand more of our fellow Christians that it does of Catholic people.

Copies of these Pastoral Directives are being made available in all parishes throughout the Diocese. Please pick up one of these brochures for more complete information on this matter.

May I end by quoting, and inviting reflection upon, the closing paragraph of the Pastoral Directives for Sacramental Sharing, "Progress toward the unity Christ wills for his disciples, by the means he wills, urges us toward to deeper discernment and obedience in the ways of the Spirit. Let us encourage one another, learn to carry each other's burdens, and wash each other's feet, across denominational lines, so that, in the words of Jesus, we may we 'all be one' for the credibility of our common mission in Christ and for the glory of God in his reconciling grace".

Sincerely in Christ

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "+Albert LeGatt". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name.

Most Rev. Albert LeGatt
Bishop of Saskatoon

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