530.7 RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION BY STUDENTS WHO ARE NON-PRACTISING CATHOLICS

Revised April 2001

Introduction:

Full participation in Mass involves reception of Holy Communion. This is always to be encouraged. However, teachers will be aware of those in their care who are not regular in attendance at Sunday Mass - but who wish nonetheless to go to communion at school or class Masses.

Guidelines:

1. Reception of the Eucharist is both a personal and a communal action. It is an expression of one's personal relationship with Christ, but also of one's unity with the Eucharist community.

2. Sacraments belong to the church community, which has always established a "discipline" concerning their celebration. The Archbishop, guided by universal church directives, is responsible for the local sacramental discipline. Individuals, whether clergy or laity, do not have a right to determine practices contrary to those established by law.

3. Teachers have a responsibility to teach students clearly, regularly and sensitively about the church's sacramental discipline.

4. The school's pastoral concern in this area expresses itself in three ways:

[a] Avoidance of any sense of judgement towards students who are not regular in Mass attendance.

[b] Willingness to talk the issue through with individual students and their parents.

[c] Careful planning and preparation of school liturgies so as to minimise this problem.

5. Teachers should seek the advice and assistance of the Parish Priest or the Mass Celebrant when planning liturgy.

6. It is of great importance that this difficult matter not be overlooked or avoided.