

# *Restored Order*

*Receiving the Sacraments  
of Initiation  
in their original order*



**+ *Baptism***



**+ *Confirmation***



**+ *Eucharist***



# Restored Order



Recently Bishop Thomas Paprocki promulgated a new norm

- restoring of the original order of the Sacraments of Initiation.
- “Looking at the question of the sequence and age for the reception of the Sacraments of Initiation, the (Diocesan) Synod voted that the Sacraments of Christian Initiation shall be offered in the proper sequence (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist)
- *for children as well as adults.*

# Restored Order



- To promote discipleship and stewardship as a way of life from an early age,
- those who are baptized as infants are to receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist at about the age of reason, which in this diocese will normally be in their third grade of elementary school,
- after they have properly prepared and have made sacramental **confession.**" (Homily from the Closing of the Fourth Diocesan Synod, November 26, 2017)

# What is the historical and theological vision for Christian Initiation?



- *In the early Church the sacraments of initiation were three: Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.*
- *They were celebrated together in a single rite, with a bishop as celebrant.*
- *This was the practice of the Roman Rite up until the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century when bishops could no longer be present at all baptisms, leading to a time of separation between baptism and confirmation.*
- *At first the time of separation was short, but as time went on, the delay for the bishop to arrive grew.*
- *Still the Church celebrated the sacraments in the order of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist until last century.*

# What is the historical and theological vision for Christian Initiation?



- In 1910 Saint Pius X recognized that children were not being allowed First Communion until they were much older.
- He felt that such a denial was contrary to the vision of Jesus who always drew children to himself.
- Pius X ordered that children be allowed to come to the table of the Eucharist as soon as they could distinguish the Eucharist from ordinary bread.
- The age was then lowered to around seven.
- Confirmation then came after First Holy Communion



# What is the historical and theological vision for Christian Initiation?

- The reforms of Vatican Council II called the Church to restore the original order of sacraments.
- This is not without challenge and difficulties.
- Such a change presumes a *deep commitment on the part of the family to nurture the life of the young.*
- Such a commitment means that parents have a need to understand the reasons for change and the ways in which they can help their children.





## Why Confirmation before Eucharist?



- During the first five hundred years or so of the history of the Roman Catholic Church (and still today in the Christian churches of the East), it was always the case that the sacraments of Christian initiation were celebrated in an invariable sequence: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.
- And it was almost always the case that all three sacraments were celebrated together at the same time, even with infants.
- The RCIA (*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*) requires that children and adults in the catechumenate receive all three sacraments together, even if the children are younger than the age at which the Catholic children of the parish are routinely confirmed.

# What about age? Doesn't the Church require a certain age for Confirmation?

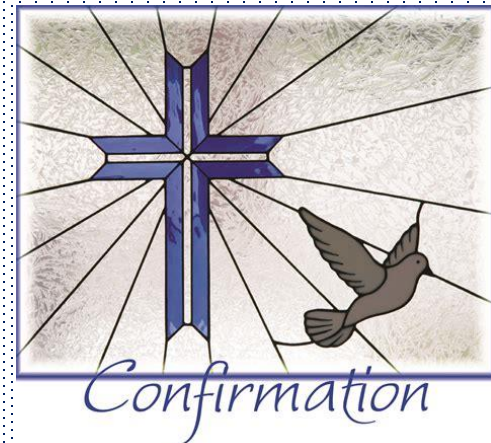


- Both the *Rite of Confirmation* and Canon Law (Canon #891) set the age of discretion (age 7) as the age for Confirmation.
- Effective July 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops designated the age for Confirmation to be between the age of discretion and age 16.
- Within that range, local bishops may determine their own diocesan policy, which is third grade for the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois.



# Isn't Confirmation a sacrament of maturity that should come after First Holy Communion?

- Confirmation is actually the completion of Baptism (by the full gift of the Holy Spirit).
- The perfection of baptismal grace found in the Sacrament of Confirmation is not dependent upon age or knowledge of the confirmand.
- The grace that is conferred is a free gift and 'does not need ratification to become effective' (CCC 1308).
- The common practice of junior high school reception of Confirmation has given the impression that somehow the sacrament is merited by virtue of age or training.



# Isn't Confirmation a sacrament of maturity that should come after First Holy Communion?

- In truth, the **Sacrament of Confirmation** is an effective vehicle of grace at any age as long as it is validly conferred.
- Thus, those who receive the sacrament are able to reap its benefits from the moment of reception.
- The grace of this sacrament conferred at a young age could be of great assistance to young people as they grow toward adolescence and young adulthood.
- Regardless of age, Confirmation is always a **Sacrament of Initiation**.
- The important thing to remember is that sacraments are not about age alone, they are about growing in faith, about sharing in God's grace.



I am concerned that if children are now confirmed in the third grade, they will drop out of religious education later.

- Confirmation has been misunderstood and treated as graduation from learning about the Faith.
- This is neither the true meaning of the sacrament nor the intention of the Church.
- Growth in the understanding and living out of our faith is the result of a life-long effort.
- Parents and siblings have the first responsibility of being an example of Jesus Christ to each other and living the Gospel each day.



I am concerned that if children are now confirmed in the third grade, they will drop out of religious education later.

- Children will stay in religious education if they see their parents striving to grow in holiness through family prayer, Scripture reading, Sunday Mass, regular confession, and living a life of charity.
- Parents are to keep their children in religious education programs just as they keep their child in school until graduation.
- While there will be an emphasis on parent involvement, it is the parent's responsibility to see that their children grow in the faith.
- Our parishes are there to assist in this process.



# How can a young child know everything about the faith?

- *Religious education or catechesis is a life-long process.*
- *Adults should regularly study our faith, read the Scriptures, participate in the sacraments, and practice charity.*
- *Children and youth from kindergarten through high school are expected to participate in processes of faith formation.*
- *With this in mind, Confirmation preparation is simply an explanation of the sacrament itself in the context of an active family faith life and parish catechesis.*
- *This is similar to what took place for First Penance/Reconciliation and First Holy Communion.*



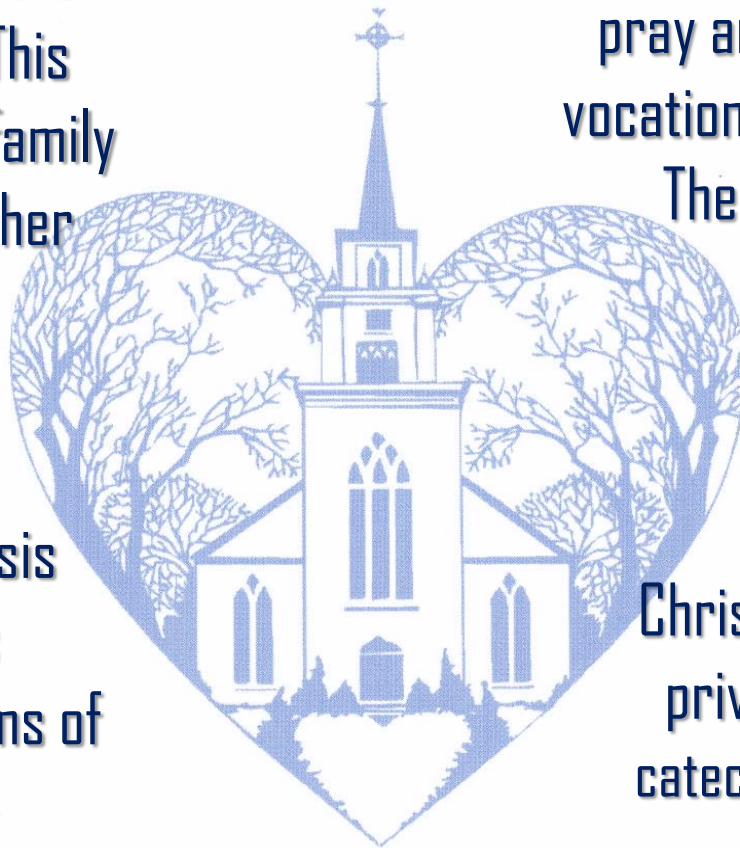
## What is the role of the parents in the preparation?

- Saint John Paul II constantly called for us to help families become a domestic Church, a place where faith is taught and lived both in word and in deed.
- Ever since Vatican II, the Church has considered the parents to be the primary religious educators of their children.
- It is also our hope that as parents work with their children, they, too, will seek to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation if they are not, themselves, confirmed.
- The grace of this Sacrament, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, can be very helpful to us as adults living in the society we do.



## *Family Catechesis*

Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith.



Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God.

The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents. *Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2226*

# How will my child be preparing for Confirmation?

- In original order, Confirmation preparation is integrated into the preparation for Eucharist.
- This means that the close connection between Baptism and Confirmation is emphasized, while recognizing the importance of the Eucharist as the culmination of Christian initiation.



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- *There is a two year preparation program.*
  - *So children will prepare for and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in second grade.*
  - *They will also be preparing for Confirmation and First Communion which they will receive in third grade*

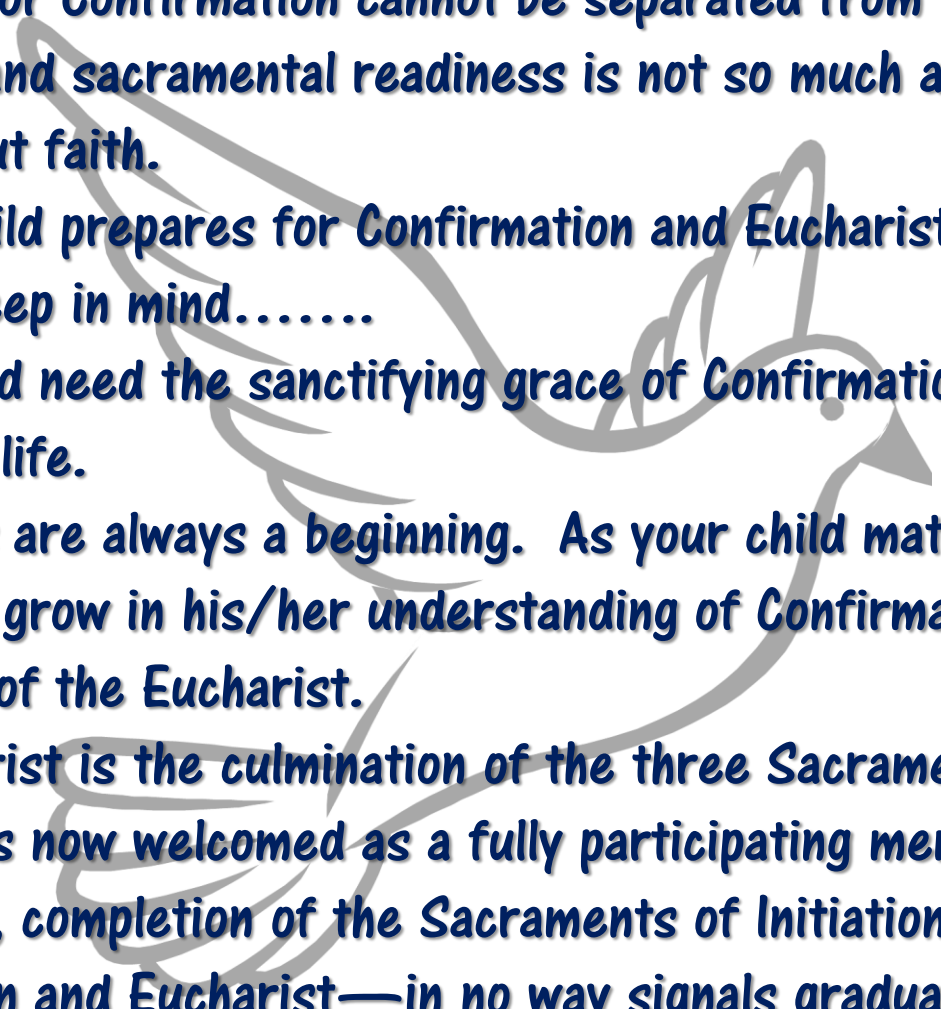


## Will my child be learning about the Holy Spirit?



- Naturally, as your child continues to participate in religious education, he/she will continue to learn more and more about the Holy Spirit's action in our lives.
- Just as your child was first empowered by the Spirit in Baptism, your child will continue to grow in the Spirit through the grace of Confirmation

## How will I know if my child is ready for Confirmation?

- Readiness for Confirmation cannot be separated from readiness for Eucharist, and sacramental readiness is not so much about learning as it is about faith.
  - As your child prepares for Confirmation and Eucharist, here are four things to keep in mind.....
  - The baptized need the sanctifying grace of Confirmation earlier, not later in life.
  - Sacraments are always a beginning. As your child matures in faith, he/she will grow in his/her understanding of Confirmation and experience of the Eucharist.
  - The Eucharist is the culmination of the three Sacraments of Initiation. Your child is now welcomed as a fully participating member of the Church
  - At any age, completion of the Sacraments of Initiation—Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist—in no way signals graduation.
  - Rather it is the beginning of a lifetime of being nourished at the table of the Lord.
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# Sacraments of Initiation



† *The Sacraments of Christian initiation - Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist - lay the foundations of every Christian life.*

† *"The sharing in the divine nature given to men through the grace of Christ bears a certain likeness to the origin, development, and nourishing of natural life. (Blessed Paul VI, Catechism of the Catholic Church)*

# *Sacraments of Initiation*



✦ ***Baptism*** *The faithful are born anew by Baptism,*



✦ ***Confirmation*** *strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation,*



✦ ***Eucharist*** *receive in the Eucharist, the food of eternal life.*

*By means of these sacraments of Christian initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of the divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity. (Catechism of the Catholic Church)*