

# Restored Order?

## Wait, what? Why are we doing this?

After thoughtful debate and discussion during the Fourth Diocesan Synod in 2017, Catholics from across the diocese, representing every parish, voted overwhelmingly for Catholic schools and PSR programs to move toward the proper sequence of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation: **Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist** for children and adults. This means Confirmation will come before Eucharist and both will occur in third grade (this transition at your parish is happening now). First **Reconciliation** will still occur in second grade.

**But the current system is working just fine, why mess with it?**

### THE CURRENT ORDER: IT'S NOT WORKING

**77%** Never Confirmed

**13** Average age Catholics fall away

**62%** Leave before 18

**37%** Decline in number of Priests

**40%** Decline in number of Baptisms

**SINCE 1970**

**50%** Decline in Mass attendance

**60%** Decline in Catholic Marriages

### But how can moving Confirmation to third grade help?

- ◆ Our children are surrounded by negative news, a false sense of reality through social media, bullying, drugs, pornography, and violence daily. Our children need the fruits of the Holy Spirit sooner!
- ◆ Confirmation renders our bond to the Church more perfect. **It gives us special strength** to live and defend the Catholic faith and **helps us avoid pitfalls and sin.**

### But Confirmation in eighth grade is the way we've always done it!

- ◆ Not historically. Confirmation coming after Eucharist first occurred in the 1840's (in France). For a vast majority of the history of the church, it was Confirmation that came before Eucharist.
- ◆ The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: "The holy Eucharist **completes** Christian initiation (1322)."

### Won't students leave our programs after third grade?

- ◆ Parents don't send their children to our Catholic Schools or PSR programs simply because of the sacraments. They do so because they see these schools and programs as an important tool used to fulfill their baptismal promise to nurture and educate children in our faith.
- ◆ **This is an opportunity** to form lifelong disciples of Christ after third grade, in both schools and PSR programs, instead of simply just focusing on sacramental prep.

"Given what our children are confronting in society, **why would we delay the grace of Confirmation** – a grace that can protect them from those dangers?"

– *Bishop Thomas John Paprocki*

### What Confirmation does:

This Sacramental grace from the Holy Spirit gives us a shield to defend ourselves against evil AND gives us the tools to live our life more perfectly!