

CATHOLIC
PARENT
KNOWHOW

Restored Order

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ALL YOUR
QUESTIONS
Answered

Overview of Restored order

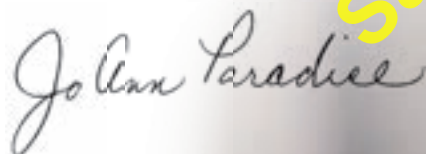
Dear Parent,

In the midst of the often incredible pace of our lives there are moments and events that break into our ordinary routine — moments that call for reflection and bring forth questions that often lead to a deeper understanding. The moment or event may be a success we've worked for, a broken relationship, the news of an engagement, or the unexpected death of someone we love. You may sense that this — the beginning of a journey with your child to the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist — is one of these moments. Anytime we prepare for a sacrament, the desire to grow deeper in relationship with Jesus breaks us out of our ordinary routines and asks us to reflect upon the gift we are being offered.

As you guide your child in this journey to complete the sacraments of initiation, you may have many questions: "Isn't it unusual for children to receive Confirmation before the Eucharist? Why are people using the words "restored order" or "original order"? I thought or was taught that you needed to be more of an adult to receive Confirmation — why is the Church changing what it has always done?"

This resource is meant to help you reflect on those very questions. It will invite you to move to a deeper understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the Sacraments of Initiation and explore the celebration of the sacraments from a historical perspective. Follow the coral boxes as they tell the Church's story. Most importantly this resource will offer you the opportunity to hear the call of the Holy Spirit to live a more conscious life of faith. Take the time to listen with the "ear of your heart" and experience the urging of the Holy Spirit to lead your child to the mystery of God's overwhelming love in the sacraments.

May this time help you grow closer to one another in the love of God,



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The Holy Spirit and the Sacraments of Initiation

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” This is how we begin each time we gather for Mass and the celebration of all the sacraments.

Every Catholic child is taught to begin his or her prayers with this simple yet profound gesture that confesses our belief in the Holy Trinity. Growing in faith we learn that the God the Father, as one in being with the Son and Spirit, made the universe and all that is in it. God the Son, Jesus, became man and saved us from sin and death. And God the Holy Spirit ... well, who is God the Holy Spirit? In order to come to a deeper understanding of the Holy



Spirit, it seems that we must enter into the sacred waters of the mystery of God's own being.

In whatever order we receive them, in the Sacraments of Initiation we experience the mystery of a God who

is so personal that he invites us to encounter him through sign and symbol. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, water, oil, bread, and wine become transformed into the very presence of God. How can we be loved so much? How is it possible that the God of the universe who created the heavens and earth would choose to allow us to experience him in the simplicity of these elements? That is the mystery that envelops us as we humbly accept the graces our merciful and generous God offers as we move into deeper union with him and his Church.

Who Is the Holy Spirit?

Speaking about the mystery of God's inner nature is a journey into humility. On one hand, we know that any language we use to describe God is limited and inadequate. Isaiah tells us: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (55:8-9).

On the other hand, we know that God created us for relationship with him and that all relationships require a revelation of oneself to another. God chooses to reveal himself to us and created us with a capacity to know him. It is actually the grand adventure of our lives — to respond to God's invitation to know him and to come to know who he has created us to be. It is the very purpose of our lives.

The Scriptures reveal that throughout human history God's plan to communicate to us that the

three divine persons in one God are “committed to the same mission: to accompany humanity in the discovery of love, and to the understanding of who God is” (The Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life, p. 21). God offers us an invitation to relationship. That invitation is offered again and again throughout the Old Testament. And then, in one miraculous moment in the history of salvation, the perfect and complete revelation of God, the fullness of his invitation, is given to us in his Son, Jesus. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son” (John 3:16).

In his death, resurrection, and sending of the Holy Spirit, Jesus makes visible a God whose inner nature is a communion of three Persons, who is personally involved in our salvation. To put it simply, God whose nature is love has created each of us for an eternal life of joy — the



joy that comes from responding to his invitation and choosing to love him above all persons and things — to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27).

Brought to You By...

Do you remember when at the end of some television broadcasts we would hear the phrase “brought to you by...”? In a heart that is open to the invitation of God, we would hear that phrase whenever we experience goodness, beauty, truth, peace, justice, and love.

The face of a child when she sees a butterfly for the first time ...

brought to you by the Holy Spirit.

The look in the eyes of a couple about to make their wedding vows ...

brought to you by the Holy Spirit.

The appreciation of the human body when you witness an incredible athletic feat ...

brought to you by the Holy Spirit.

The longing for the end of violence ...

brought to you by the Holy Spirit.

The anger that moves you to action so that no child will die of hunger ...

brought to you by the Holy Spirit.

The gaze of grandparents as they look upon their grandchildren ...

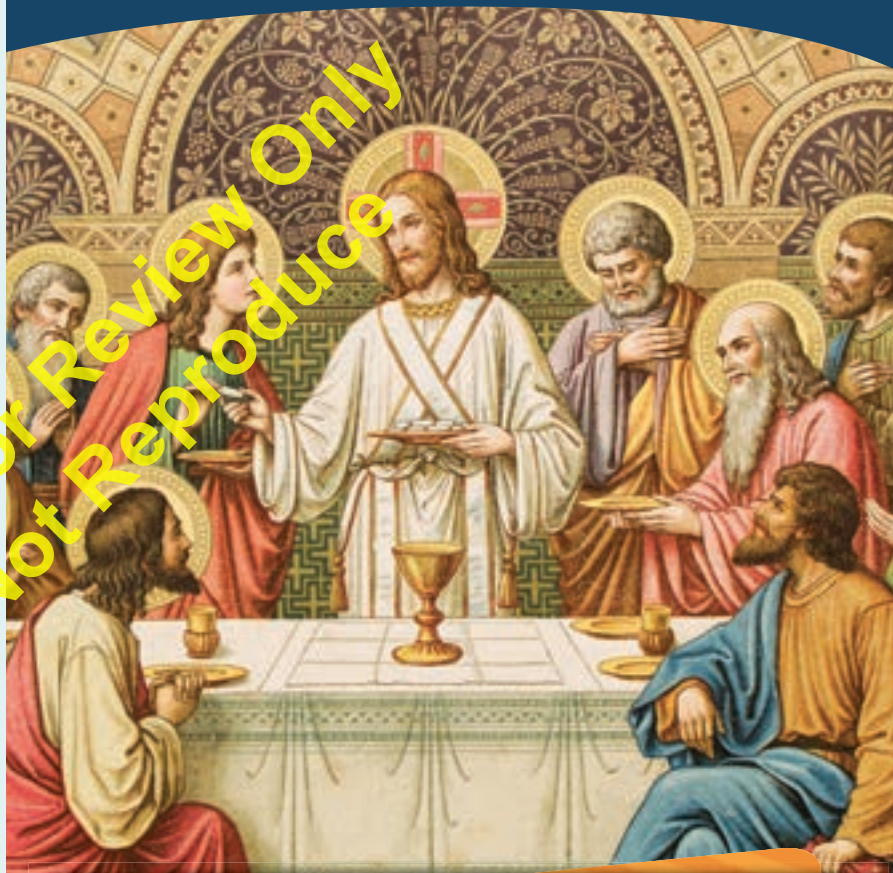
brought to you by the Holy Spirit.

In the Holy Spirit we know God-for-us, God-with-us, and God-among-us. When we respond in faith to God’s invitation, we are overwhelmed with the need to give praise. In the Spirit and through the Son we reach the Father. In and through the Holy Spirit new life in Christ is given to us — in and through the Holy Spirit we begin the journey of giving glory to God by our words and actions.

Our lives are “in-Spirited” or spiritual. Life is a gift from God, a life in which our yearning to be loved and to love is God’s desire for us to experience here on earth a taste of what we will know fully in heaven. The Father creates us for heaven. Jesus redeems humanity through his sacrifice of love to make that possible. And the Holy Spirit? Listen to a familiar prayer from the Mass: “And that we might live no longer for ourselves but for him [Jesus] ... he sent the Holy Spirit from you, Father, as the first fruits for those who believe, so that, bringing to perfection his work in the world, he might sanctify creation to the full” (Eucharistic Prayer IV, *The Roman Missal*).



In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells the apostles that he must go so that he can send an “Advocate.” In Greek the word is Paraclete, another name for the Holy Spirit. We often translate that word to mean “helper” or “guide,” and while that is part of the truth, we can also think about it in another way. Did you ever have someone advocate for you? When we find ourselves in situations where we may be overwhelmed or over our heads, what a grace it is to have someone who knows more or who is better connected “fight” for us — someone who can see the bigger picture and is passionate about helping us.



In the early Church, adults experienced the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil. They were immersed in water three times as they were baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The newly baptized then experienced the laying on of hands and anointing with the sacred chrism as the sign of being sealed by the Holy Spirit. Through this action they were strengthened to participate in Jesus’ ministry of priest, prophet, and king. The fullness of communion with Christ and his Church happened at the table of the Lord when they received the Eucharist.



In Baptism

The Holy Spirit is passionate about you. The Spirit's passion is directed at helping you to know and love God by leading you to an encounter with Christ, an encounter that begins a lifelong journey of conversion. That encounter began in Baptism.

Think of that joy-filled moment when you brought your child to the Church. As family and friends gathered and greeted the infant in your arms, the love that surrounded your son or daughter, the merest reflection of God's love, overflowed. As you carried that child to the baptismal font, everyone gathered was reminded of the miracle that was about to take place through the prayer: "By the power of the Holy Spirit give to this water the grace of your Son. ... We ask you, Father, with your Son to send the Holy Spirit upon the waters of this font. May all who are buried with Christ in the death of Baptism rise also with him to newness of life" (*The Rite of Baptism for Children*).

The miracle that we witness at each baptism is that through the power of the Holy Spirit we are given new life in Christ. We become one with him. As Christians we relate to everyone and everything through Christ. Our relationships with creation flow through Christ. Our relationships with our spouses, children, and siblings flow through Christ. Our relationships with our wallets and, yes, even our calendars flow through Christ. In Christ alone "we live and move and have our being" (Acts of the Apostles 17:28).

As this unity with Christ is true for all the baptized we are therefore all united with each other — a unity made possible only in the Spirit. In the waters of Baptism we die to a solitary life and rise a member of the Communion of Saints. "From the baptismal fonts is born the one People of God" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1267). It is impossible then to be a baptized person and to

Baptism, Confirmation, and first Eucharist continued to be celebrated during the same liturgy for adults and infants for the first 500 years of the Church. Confirmation became separated from Baptism when the Church grew in size and the priest became the usual minister of Baptism, while the bishop would come periodically to celebrate Confirmation for all the newly baptized. History and the needs of the people would cause further developments as in 1910, when Pope Saint Pius X moved the age of First Communion to the age of seven.

believe that you are spiritual and not religious! "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free" (1 Corinthians 12:13). Dripping wet from the water of Baptism, you are Christ's Church.

We live in an age where the understanding of Baptism is sometimes reduced to a family tradition that celebrates the birth of an infant. While celebrating a new life and the love of family is a deeply human experience, when it is only that, we have missed the unfolding mystery that God has chosen to share his divine life with us through union with his Son, in the Holy Spirit. Baptism is at its core about identity. God has called each of us by name. This day is so important that it should be cause for a yearly celebration. Do you celebrate the day of your child's Baptism and your own each year? Inviting godparents over, stopping in the church where your child was baptized, and perhaps even lighting his or her baptismal candle for a short prayer of thanksgiving are all ways that you can recall God's ongoing invitation to grow in deeper relationship with Jesus and his Church. Helping your child become conscious of the presence of the Holy Spirit as he or she lives each day is the natural preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, for Confirmation can only be understood in relationship to Baptism.

In Confirmation and Eucharist

The Sacrament of Confirmation is so intimately connected to Baptism and to the Eucharist that it is impossible to understand in isolation.

In both Baptism and Confirmation we experience an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The “self-giving of God in his Spirit is never completed because the life of God is inexhaustible and infinite. For this reason the Spirit gives himself to different human beings in different sacraments, with different signs for different purposes, even if the final objective of every intervention of the Spirit is always communion with God” (*The Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life*, p. 102). The Holy Spirit’s one goal then is to unite us with the Father through his Son.

Through Baptism and Confirmation we enter into the dying and rising of Jesus and then, like the disciples, receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Confirmation, our own Pentecost. In each sacrament we receive the Holy Spirit’s grace to equip us with the virtues and gifts that we need to live as disciples. In Confirmation the Spirit unites the baptized with a new bond to Christ. As members of his body, the Church, we are united by the Spirit and strengthened to participate in the mission of the Church. We are called and empowered to manifest God’s kingdom on earth. Confirmation gives the grace necessary for each believer to live in the service of the reign of God.

During Confirmation, the minister of the sacrament, a bishop or a priest delegated by him, extends his hands over the candidates and prays, “Send upon them, O Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete; give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety; fill them with the spirit of the fear of the Lord” (*Order of Confirmation*). The Bishop then anoints each candidate with sacred chrism, an oil consecrated by the bishop during Holy Week. This sacred oil is mixed with a balsam fragrance for a very specific reason. The Second Letter to the Corinthians tells us that “we are the aroma of Christ” (2:15). The *Catechism* tells us that “this anointing highlights the name ‘Christian,’ which means ‘anointed.’ ... This seal of the Holy Spirit marks our total belonging to Christ, our enrollment in his service for ever” (1289, 1296).

Through the grace of Confirmation we are given all that we need to manifest God’s kingdom in this world. The Holy Spirit stands at the ready, longing to equip us with the gifts we need to set the world on fire with the good news of God’s love made visible in Christ Jesus. Confirmation is indeed another Pentecost.



The Second Vatican Council, which opened in 1962, called the Church to renew the celebrations of the sacraments. In the documents that followed, as a result of study and reflection the Church restored the order of initiation to Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist for all people over the age of seven whose parents are, or who are themselves asking to become, members of the Catholic Church. Individual bishops are given the right to choose when Confirmation is celebrated in their dioceses for children who are baptized before the age of seven.

While Baptism and Confirmation cannot be repeated, the Eucharist is amazingly available, for some of us, every day. It is both the summit and source of our lives as Catholics. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, and the words and actions of the priest, ordinary bread and wine become the sacred Body and Blood of Jesus. We are present as Jesus sacrifices himself, and we are given the Bread of Life. Our belief in the Eucharist is rooted in the very words of Jesus: “This is my body which is given for you.” We behold a miracle of love beyond measure. We know this is true because God has promised, and he is always faithful to his promises. These sacraments of initiation bring us into the fullness of Catholic life as disciples of Christ and members of his body, the Church.

In Us

"Everything comes from the Father, everything is accomplished and actualized by the Son, everything reaches humanity and becomes present to and experienced by humanity through the Holy Spirit" (*The Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life*, p. 19). St. Athanasius talks about the Trinity by describing all goodness coming from the Father, through the Son, and reaching us in the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity who makes us capable of receiving God's revelation and invitation. And then through the Spirit, God draws near to us and becomes God among us. That means it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that we experience the urging to discover the purpose of our lives, sense the majesty of God in nature, and gain a capacity for generosity and forgiveness and the desire to know truth. The Holy Spirit unites us and draws us into the Body of Christ through our Baptism. It is the Spirit that leads and guides the Church and strengthens and equips each of its members to live as disciples of Christ.

In You

Confirmation deepens our capacity to live our Baptism, and Eucharist strengthens and nourishes us as we are sent out on mission. We are given every gift necessary to live as disciples. Practically, that means in our spiritual life there is nothing that we cannot do, nothing that we cannot become, because we are the temples of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the source of our capacity to live a just, compassionate, generous, and truthful life. In God, all things are possible.



These sacraments can be given to anyone at any age for they are not dependent upon an intellectual grasp of theological principles. The sacraments are gifts from God. What is necessary is an openness to the mystery of God and his love for us. At any age, what is important in preparing for the sacraments is a willingness to accept what God wants to give and an understanding that the journey of growing into communion with God is a lifetime commitment. An open heart is possible at any age and may be what Jesus referred to when he said, "Unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).



In the Family

As Catholic parents you are responsible for the ongoing faith formation of your children. Every day you are called to give them the gift of seeing their lives through the eyes of faith. You are called to help them understand that they were created to know, love, and serve God and their neighbors as disciples of Jesus. This daily journey of prayer, service, and listening for God's voice in his word will prepare them for those moments when they will encounter him in the seven sacraments. You started preparing your child for Confirmation and First Communion on the day of his or her Baptism. In truth, your daughter's or son's journey to eternity had already begun in your arms.

Pope Francis beautifully said: "Let us try asking ourselves: am I open to the action of the Holy Spirit? Do I pray to him to give me illumination, to make me more sensitive to the God's things? This is a prayer we need to pray every day: 'Holy Spirit, make my heart open to the word of God, make my heart open to goodness, make my heart open to the beauty of God every day'" (May 15, 2013).

The story of Adam and Eve reminds us that there is no happiness outside of who we are in God, who God created us to be. What a gift you give your child when you bring your son or daughter to the sacraments. You are leading him or her into the heart of God — God who loves him or her even more than you — and God the Holy Spirit who will never stop advocating for your child's happiness. The Spirit whispers, urges, and sometimes even shouts, "You belong to Christ!" And the Spirit guides and empowers the Church to give your child a bigger family to help your child understand the mystery of salvation as he or she is supported and even challenged in the journey of faith.

While immediate preparation for any sacrament requires reflection on the symbols, signs, gestures, and prayers used during the celebration, we are always preparing for and being nourished by the grace that flows from them.

How good is our God! How blessed are we his people! How sacred is the family, the place where God first gathers us, forms us, and then sends us out into the world so that his kingdom comes as his will is done. How grateful we are that we can experience his very presence in the sacraments, brought to you, of course, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

HELP YOUR CHILD GROW

in Holiness Each Day

- Pray with your child in the car, at the table or at bedtime.
 - Pray for your child when you are apart.
 - Read a short passage of the Bible at mealtime.
- Look for opportunities to be of service in your family, parish, and community.
- Examine your day with eyes of faith. Where is God in this day?
- Develop a disposition of gratitude by giving thanks for God's blessings, no matter how small.



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