

# The Sacraments of Initiation; A Restored Order

*“The Sacraments of Christian Initiation – Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist – lay the foundations of every Christian life.” (The Catechism of the Catholic Church)*

Change can be difficult, it means learning different ways of doing things, different ways of thinking about things, and making a commitment to understand the hows and the whys of what it is that we are attempting to change. We can feel especially challenged when we are asked to change something that has become rooted in tradition, whether personal, or communal.

I recall the challenge my own family faced as our children grew into independent teens and young adults and our own family traditions, formed when they were young, had to be changed to take into account their growth in maturity, understanding and desires for more freedom. It wasn't easy for my wife and I, and it remains a constant challenge, and yet, an openness to change is exactly what is required of us as parents, as families, as a community and as a Church. We are not a static people and while we remain a Church steeped in tradition, our understanding of what tradition means, both its promises and the limitations we place upon it, must remain open to change and growth as well.

100 years ago Pope Pius X made a change to the age at which children could receive the Eucharist. His hope was that the children of the Church in that time would not be denied access to the full spectrum of gifts and spiritual nourishment that the Eucharist could bring them (at that time children were often not fully received into the church until well into their teens). His intention was that the initiation of our children would begin and be completed at a much younger age (beginning in their 7<sup>th</sup> year). The actual effects of his changes resulted in something much different. Rather than children completing their initiation when they had reached the 'age of reason' (in the Church this is about 7 years of age) and continuing to be nurtured and formed in the faith throughout the rest of their lives both in their families and their parish communities, the order of the sacraments themselves became disrupted (something Pius X never intended), our teachings regarding the nature and purpose of Baptism and Confirmation were altered (to fit a new and unintended model of initiation), and families and their children began to treat Confirmation as a 'graduation' of sorts from the need for further religious formation.

The Restored Order of the Sacraments of Initiation for children seeks to set these things to rights with the expressed goal of bringing consistency and Truth between what we are celebrating, and how we are living out our faith. Change is a challenge, but one that can bring new energy, opportunity and vitality to our parish, our community, and our family.

