



## **Restore, Renew Proclaim: the Hope that is Christ**

The Diocese of Manchester has launched a new initiative for strengthening and renewing lifelong faith formation, known as “**Restore, Renew, Proclaim the Hope that is Christ.**” The Secretariat for Catholic Formation has developed five announcements to inform parishioners about the initiative. They have been in our bulletin the past few weeks. Here they are all together for your convenience:

For more information on the Lifelong Faith Formation and Restored Order of the Sacraments of Initiation, you can visit the RESTORE, RENEW, PROCLAIM page on the diocesan web site [www.catholicnh.org/lifelong](http://www.catholicnh.org/lifelong) or you can contact the Catholic Formation Offices at 669-3100.

### **Week 1—September 17, 2017, Catechetical Sunday**

#### **RESTORE, RENEW, PROCLAIM THE HOPE THAT IS CHRIST!**

The Diocese of Manchester is launching an initiative to strengthen faith formation in our parishes and schools. It is called “Restore, Renew, Proclaim the Hope that Is Christ.” The goal of this initiative is to make lifelong faith formation a priority and a reality in all our parishes. To accomplish this, we will be looking at ways to strengthen our youth ministry and adult faith formation processes, as well as reimagining our sacramental preparation programs. At the heart of all this is a desire to form disciples of all ages. Exciting things will be happening in all our parishes as we look forward with hope and with confidence that the Holy Spirit will guide all our efforts. Our parish will continue to be a place where disciples are formed in the faith and sent out on mission.

### **Week 2—September 24, 2017**

#### **OUR DIOCESE WILL BE RESTORING THE ORDER IN WHICH THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION ARE CELEBRATED: BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, FIRST HOLY COMMUNION**

Over the next few years, the standard age of Confirmation is going to be third grade throughout the Diocese of Manchester, and Confirmation will be celebrated before, not after, First Communion. This practice restores Confirmation to its original place. Through this process, the three Sacraments of Christian Initiation return to the logical order in which they were designed to be received: first Baptism, then Confirmation, then Eucharist. It also restores the practice of administering the Sacraments of Christian Initiation to young children as early as possible. Our parish has a plan for an implementation schedule, as well as a renewed vigor for implementing this change within the context of Lifelong Faith Formation. This will help us to provide an enriching experience of God's through the sacramental life of the Church.

**Week 3—October 1, 2017, Respect Life Sunday**

**“THE THREE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION  
LAY THE FOUNDATIONS OF EVERY CHRISTIAN LIFE.”**

**(CCC 1212)**

Through the waters of Baptism, we are incorporated into the Body of Christ through the Spirit. We die to sin and become new creations in Christ. Confirmation is a special outpouring and strengthening of the Holy Spirit. This sacrament permanently seals us to Jesus Christ. Through the sacrament of the Eucharist we receive Christ—Body, Soul, and Divinity—in the bread and wine. The Eucharist completes our initiation and unites us as one body in Christ.

**Week 4—October 15, 2017**

**ALL PARISHES WITHIN THE DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER  
ARE RESTORING THE ORIGINAL ORDER OF  
CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION  
BETWEEN 2018-2021.**

In the early church, people were initiated into the community at one single event. They were baptized, anointed with chrism, and shared in the Eucharist. The sacraments, over time, have been separated from one another and this happened for a variety of reasons. The Second Vatican Council asked the Church to make it more clear that Confirmation is intimately connected with Baptism and the whole of Christian initiation. This also helps us to see that the Eucharist completes our initiation into the Church.

**Week 5—October 22, 2017**

**CONFIRMATION IS NOT  
A SACRAMENT OF MATURITY IN THE FAITH  
NOR DOES IT IMPLY AN ADULT COMMITMENT TO THE FAITH**

For quite some time, many Catholics have referred to the sacrament of Confirmation as kind of a rite of passage in the faith. Confirmation is, and has always been, a sacrament of initiation, not transition or graduation. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says this: “Although Confirmation is sometimes called the ‘sacrament of maturity,’ we must not confuse adult faith with the adult age of natural growth...St. Thomas reminds us of this: Age of body does not determine age of soul. Even in childhood one can attain spiritual maturity.” (CCC 1308) We do not confirm our faith in the sacrament of Confirmation. It is not about what we do, but it is about the work of God.