

# Restoring the Order of the Sacraments

To Form Life-long Disciples of Jesus Christ

# A Brief History in Denver

- **Beginning of 2014:** Archbishop meets with EFLM and asks for a committee to be formed to see how best to proceed
- **May 14, 2015:** ABA releases *Saints Among Us* which officially launches the step-down process which culminates in 2020.
- **Spring 2019:** 98% of the parishes will be fully transitioned.



Why Restore the  
Order in Denver?:  
Theological  
Perspective

Eucharist  
Focused





# BAPTISM

- CCC 1213 Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit, and the door which gives access to the other sacraments

# Confirmation

- CCC 1285: Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the "sacraments of Christian initiation," whose unity must be safeguarded...the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace.
- For "by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed."



# Eucharist

- 1322 The holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation. Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by Baptism and configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation participate with the whole community in the Lord's own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist.
- 1324 The Eucharist is "the source and summit of the Christian life." "The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it.



# Should Confirmation be received before the Eucharist?

- Theologically, Yes.
- Confirmation completes Baptism, not Eucharist
- Eucharist completes Christian Initiation
- Pattern of Natural Growth
  - Birth/baptism -> Growth/Confirmation -> Spousehood/Eucharist
- RCIA pattern

# Is it more fitting for Confirmation to be received at the age of reason or maturity?

- 1306 Every baptized person not yet confirmed can and should receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Since Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist form a unity, it follows that "the faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the appropriate time," for without Confirmation and Eucharist, Baptism is certainly valid and efficacious, but Christian initiation remains incomplete.
- 1307 For centuries, Latin custom has indicated "the age of discretion" as the reference point for receiving Confirmation. But in danger of death children should be confirmed even if they have not yet attained the age of discretion.
- 1308 Although Confirmation is sometimes called the "sacrament of Christian maturity," we must not confuse adult faith with the adult age of natural growth, nor forget that the baptismal grace is a grace of free, unmerited election and does not need "ratification" to become effective.

# Preparation for Confirmation

- 1309 Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit - his actions, his gifts, and his biddings - in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community. The latter bears special responsibility for the preparation of confirmands.
- 1310 To receive Confirmation one must be in a state of grace. One should receive the sacrament of Penance in order to be cleansed for the gift of the Holy Spirit. More intense prayer should prepare one to receive the strength and graces of the Holy Spirit with docility and readiness to act.
- 1311 Candidates for Confirmation, as for Baptism, fittingly seek the spiritual help of a sponsor. To emphasize the unity of the two sacraments, it is appropriate that this be one of the baptismal godparents.

# Effects of Confirmation

- **1303** From this fact, Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace:
  - it roots us more deeply in the divine filiation which makes us cry, "Abba! Father!";
  - it unites us more firmly to Christ;
  - it increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us;
  - it renders our bond with the Church more perfect;
  - it gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross:

# Obstacles to Sacramental Grace according to St. Thomas Aquinas

- Lack of Faith/Insincerity - ST III q.68-69
- Lack of Repentance - ST III q. 68-69
- Presence of Demons - ST III q.66, 71
  
- How does delaying Confirmation effect these obstacles?

# Why Restore the Order in Denver?: Pastoral Perspective

- Kids need the grace at an earlier age!
  - Secularism
  - Pornography
  - Hedonism
  - Confusion about Marriage, Gender, and Humanity



# Epidemic of Pornography

- 97% of boys have viewed pornography. (Under 18)
- Of those, 23% said they tried to stop watching it but could not.
- 13% reported content they watch has “become more and more extreme.”
- 7% sought professional help because they felt their porn habit was getting out of control.

Moralistic  
Therapeutic  
Deism

Moralistic - Be  
good

Therapeutic -  
Feel Good

Deism - God is not  
a personal God

# CARA Frequently Requested Statistics

CARA Report 2017	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2017	Percentage
Catholic Population	51.0m	56.8m	62.4m	71.7m	74.6m	74.3m	+ 45.7%
Total priests	59,192	58,398	52,124	45,699	39,993	37,181	- 37.2%
Former Catholics	7.5m	8.6m	10.3m	17.9m	26.8m	30.0m	+ 400%
Infant Baptisms	1.089m	943,632	986,308	996,199	806,138	660,367	- 39.4%
Marriages	426,309	350,745	326,079	261,626	168,400	144,148	- 66.2%
Funerals	417,779	417,047	452,526	472,789	417,387	386,126	- 7.6 %
Mass Attendance	48%	41%	39%	22%	24%	23%	- 52.1 %

# Historically Speaking...

- Clues from Scripture
  - Acts 8, Receiving the Spirit
  - Hebrews 6, Laying on of Hands
- Catechumenates in the Patristic Ages: One continuous Rite
- Around 5<sup>th</sup> Century - Infant Baptism and Confirmation or Confirmation when Bishop was available
- Middle Ages: Confirmation at age of reason, Communion at 11 or 12



# History...

- 1700's: French Bishop pushes back Confirmation in order to allow for better preparation
- 1897: Pope Leo XIII rebukes this practice and reinforces that Confirmation should be celebrated at age of reason
- 1910: St. Pope Pius X declares that First Communion should be received at the age of reason

# June 30, 1932: Congregation on the Sacraments

"It is truly opportune and more conformable to the nature and effects of the sacrament of confirmation, that children should only approach the sacred table for the first time after the reception of the sacrament of confirmation, which is, as it were, the complement of baptism and in which is given the fullness of the Holy Spirit (St Thomas, III, q.72, art. 2). However, these same should not be considered prohibited from the same table before they are admitted, if they had attained the years of discretion, even though they were not able to receive the sacrament of confirmation previously."

# *Sacramentum Caritatis, 18*

- Concretely, it needs to be seen which practice better enables the faithful to put the sacrament of the Eucharist at the centre, as the goal of the whole process of initiation. In close collaboration with the competent offices of the Roman Curia, Bishops' Conferences should examine the effectiveness of current approaches to Christian initiation, so that the faithful can be helped both to mature through the formation received in our communities and to give their lives an authentically eucharistic direction, so that they can offer a reason for the hope within them in a way suited to our times (cf. 1 Pet3:15).



# The Transition in Denver...

# Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendations

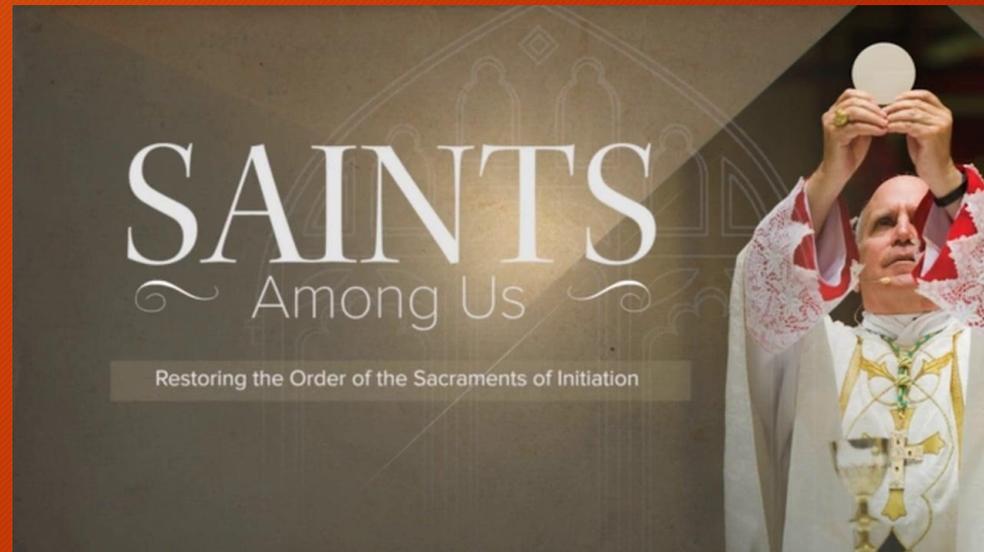
1. Normative age for receiving Reconciliation is 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and Confirmation and Eucharist at the same Mass in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.
2. Allow five year transition period (2015-2020)
3. Step 1: Solicit Prayers of Contemplative Religious Orders
4. Step 2: Write and release Pastoral Letter (*Saints Among Us*, May 14, 2015)
5. Step 3: Engage in ongoing communication and education plan about Restored Order to the pastors and parishioners.

# Ad-Hoc Committee Recommendations

6. Step 4: Review and/or develop catechetical materials and formation tools for parish use (*Saints Among Us* Sacrament Prep Curriculum)
7. Step 5: Provide parishes at least three years to step down
8. Step 6: Provide and share process and resources with other bishops interested in making this transition in their own dioceses

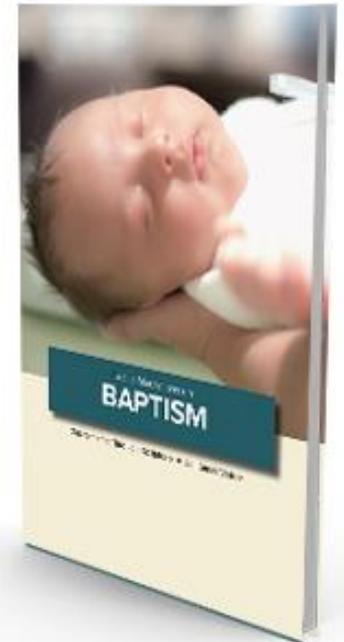
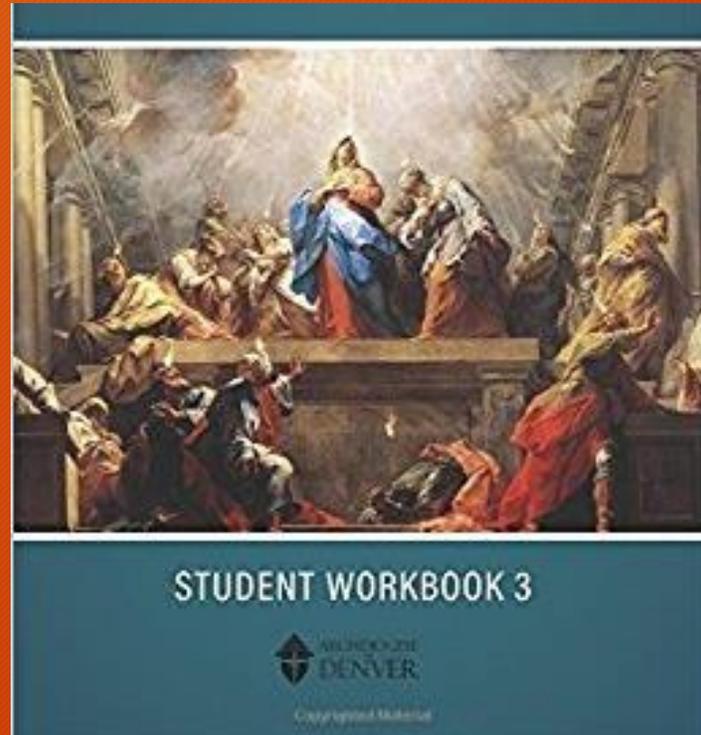
# Create Resources for Parishes and Public

- Pastoral letter
- Landing page
- FAQ's to address main concerns
- Bulletin inserts
- homily outlines for three straight weeks



# Sacrament Prep Resources on [www.saintsdenver.com](http://www.saintsdenver.com)

- Sacrament Prep curriculum
- Teacher and Student Books
  - Salvation History
  - Reconciliation
  - Confirmation
  - Eucharist
- Lectio resources for parents
  - Baptism
  - Reconciliation
  - Confirmation
  - Eucharist



# Stepdown 1: 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and 6<sup>th</sup> grade simultaneously

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Confirm	Confirm	Confirm	Confirm	Initiated
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	RE	RE	RE	Initiated	Initiated
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	RE	RE	Initiated	Initiated	Initiated
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	RE	Confirm + Euch	Confirm + Euch	Confirm +Euch	Confirm + Euch

# Stepdown 2: All at Once

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Confirm	Confirm	Initiated	Initiated	Initiated
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	RE	Confirm	Initiated	Initiated	Initiated
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	RE	Confirm	Initiated	Initiated	Initiated
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	RE	Confirm + Euch	Confirm + Euch	Confirm + Euch	Confirm + Euch

# Stepdown 3: Gradual from 6<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup>

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Confirm	Confirm	Initiated	Initiated	Initiated
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade	RE	Confirm	Confirm	Initiated	Initiated
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	RE	RE	Confirm	Confirm	Initiated
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	RE	RE	RE	Confirm + Euch	Confirm + Euch

# Logistical Help



# Re-envision Faith Formation...

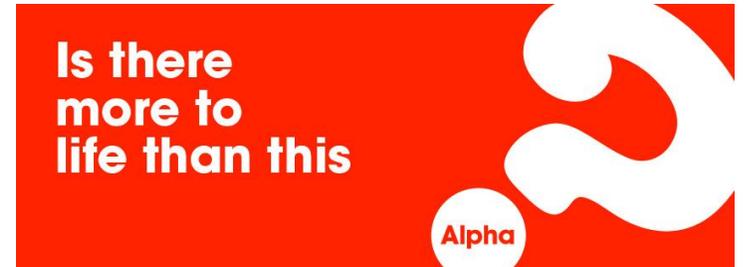


# Key Principles

# “God has no Grandchildren..”



- Initial Proclamation cannot be assumed or skipped over
- Bolster Initial Proclamation and calls for conversion



# Preferred Resources

# Intentional and Missionary Discipleship

- Disciple: Those who accepted Jesus' message to follow him. He associated his disciples with his own life, revealed the mystery of the kingdom, and gave them a share in his mission, his joy, and his sufferings. - Catechism definition
- Pre-discipleship → Intentional Discipleship → Missionary Discipleship

# Parent/family Focused Ministry

- All parishes are mandated to offer something for parents
- Family of Faith - Sophia Press
- Families of Character

