

Dear St. Mary's Parishioners,

As was announced in the May 2 edition of our diocesan magazine, the *Catholic Times*, Bishop Paprocki will celebrate the Sacraments of Confirmation and the First Holy Communion at our Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception beginning July 1, 2021. Needless to say, there have been a wide variety of opinions concerning this change. That's a good thing as it indicates this is important! Regardless of one's opinions nonetheless, if not already, I would encourage you to go to the various videos and writings that our diocese has provided explaining this change - (dio.org/confirmation—the website for our Diocese of Springfield in Illinois - **Confirmation & Holy Communions to be at the Cathedral**). There one can click on various links such as "Bishop Paprocki explains the change" or "FAQ: Confirmation/First Holy Communion at Cathedral" or "Why is Confirmation in the third grade?" as well as the Bishop's original letter announcing this change. It is always good to go to the sources and be informed. In the end, however, we have a responsibility to prepare our children the best we can for these two sacraments of initiation and provide for the most meaningful celebration possible. In doing so, we as adults in the faith are also renewed and encouraged and somehow grow a bit as well. Such is God's grace at work!

We have requested a Saturday date in the spring of 2022 for this celebration at the Cathedral. When we receive this date, parents of those children will be notified immediately in order to make family travel arrangements. Sometime after the Cathedral celebration, we as a parish can have a celebratory Mass and reception for our children and families. More information will be forthcoming.

Do keep in prayer our children, families, teachers and catechists as they prepare for the reception of these holy Sacraments!

Blessings in the Lord,

~Fr. Bob