



DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

May 15, 2009

Dear Reverend Fathers,

After thoughtful and prayerful consideration as well as extensive consultation with many of our priests, I am writing to inform you of a decision I have made concerning the administration of Confirmation in the Diocese of Venice.

When I arrived here, I found a variety of approaches in parishes concerning the age for administration of the sacrament of Confirmation. While some adhered to the practice of restored order, introduced to the diocese in 1991, many did not.

After three years of doing Confirmations throughout the diocese, and with appropriate consultation it is my judgment that the practice of restored order, while theologically sound, has been pastorally problematic. It has not produced an enrichment of the sacramental life of the parishes, nor addressed pastoral concerns about effective catechesis. Therefore, after Easter 2011, restored order will be discontinued as a practice throughout the diocese. Preparation for reception of confirmation will be a two year process, beginning in grade 9, culminating in the reception of the sacrament at the end of grade 10. First Eucharist will continue to be received at the end of 2nd grade. This will be the policy for Confirmation and First Communion in all the Parishes, Chapels and Missions of the Diocese of Venice and is in keeping with the practices of the other six dioceses throughout the province.

My hope is that, through this policy and its consistent implementation, each sacrament will have its due preparation, understanding and appreciation; that catechetical efforts will have more opportunity for effectiveness; and that the people of the diocese will no longer be confused by conflicting practices across parishes. Be assured of the assistance of the Diocesan Office of Catechetical Ministry in assisting you and your catechists in making this transition. May the Risen Lord bless you as you continue to do His work in the Diocese of Venice.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

† Frank J. Dewane
Bishop of the Diocese of
Venice in Florida