

Faith on Fire
The Fourth Step
Commitment to a Sacramental Life

For the past month I have been writing a series of columns to prepare us for our Parish Mission, which will be held *Saturday through Wednesday, March 3—7, 2017*. Please save those dates! In the first three columns I wrote about the need to be committed (1) to renewal, (2) to personal prayer, and (3) to our community worship. This week, I am writing about a fourth step in the process of renewal: the need to be committed to a sacramental way of life.

The need to be committed to a sacramental way of life means that *our life and spirituality must be grounded in the sacraments we receive*: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Ordination.

Baptism: When we were baptized into Christ, we entered the great mystery of the Lord's death and resurrection. We were conformed to a way of life defined by dying to sin and rising to newness of life in Christ. *Those who live a sacramental life live in a way that expresses what they have become through baptism: a new creation in Christ.*

Confirmation: When we were confirmed we were sealed for Christ by the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit we received at confirmation empowered us to be witnesses for Christ and to live according to the Spirit of God rather than according to the spirit of the world. *Those who live a sacramental life, live in and by the Spirit of God. They allow the Spirit to lead and guide them in the way of Christ.*

Eucharist: At the center of the Christian life stands the Eucharist, the sacrament whereby we share in the Body and Blood of Christ, the very life of the risen Christ. Every time we receive the Eucharist we are conformed to Christ and enter more deeply into the fullness of his resurrection life. Every time we receive the Eucharist we receive the pledge of eternal life. *Those who live a sacramental life, live with the assurance that Christ lives in them and they live in Christ.*

Reconciliation: Our sins have been forgiven by the death and resurrection of Christ, and Christ continues to extend his gift of forgiveness to us through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We are a people who have been forgiven, and because we have been forgiven, we can forgive each other. *Those who live a sacramental life, live as a reconciled people who are at peace with God and each other.*

Healing: When we are sick, the risen Lord is present to strengthen and heal us through the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. The anointing we receive through the sacrament strengthens us in Christ and heals us in spirit and body. *Those who live a sacramental life live as people who have been healed, body and soul, in Christ.*

Matrimony: When man and woman are joined in Holy Matrimony, their marriage proclaims to the world the marriage covenant between Christ and Church. Husbands and wives love each other in the way that Christ and the Church love each other. *Those who live a*

sacramental life through the gift of matrimony proclaim to the world the love between Christ and the Church.

Ordination: When a man is ordained to priesthood, he is conformed to Christ so that he can serve the community of the Church. *A priest who lives a sacramental life conforms himself to Christ daily for the good of the community of the Church.*

The sacraments we receive provide us with a faith that is on fire for Christ and his Church. This week, think about the sacraments you have received and ask how you can live in a way that will more fully express the reality of these sacraments. If you live a sacramental life, your faith will be on fire. *Father Matera*