

## *From the Deacon's Wife . . . .*

**W**OW! It is finally Spring! And actually feels like Spring! The Easter glow is still very apparent at church as our thoughts turn to the special days of spring and early summer – first communions, confirmations, and weddings.

Baptism, of course, is the foundation for all of these, though most of us don't remember our own baptism. That is why parents and godparents make promises for us at infant baptisms. Parents take on the serious responsibility of teaching their child about God and indoctrinating him or her in the Catholic faith. This is such a serious responsibility, that godparents are selected and they also promise to train the child in the Catholic faith if the parents are unable to fulfill this duty.

We cannot rely on schools to teach our children about God – especially not if they attend a public school – or even our excellent PRE (parish religious education) teachers. Parents are always the first of teachers, and hopefully, the best of teachers. **No matter what you say to your children, they learn by watching your actions.** Do you show them that God is important in your life? Is the church an integral part of your life? Do they learn to say prayers of grace before and after meals by your example? Do they see you pray at all? Do you pray with them? Do you attend Mass every Sunday? We cannot expect that the Catholic faith will be important to our children, if we never show them how important it is to us. I have often heard it said that **faith cannot be taught, it must be caught.** Does your faith so permeate your home that it becomes contagious? I know most of you are doing a great job of teaching by example. It is apparent by how excited our 2<sup>nd</sup> graders are about their first holy communion! They know it is very special, because they see it is a priority for you to be at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of obligation. We should all congratulate our first communicants on having completed the preparation for this big step in their faith life!

Other ways to involve our children in the life of the church is by encouraging them to serve at Mass. **Help them to understand what a privilege it is to serve,** and that when they are in the sanctuary, they also are an example (good or bad) to everyone in church. I am very proud of some of our youth who serve faithfully on a regular basis and will always step forward if a scheduled server does not show up. They are models of proper conduct and reverent posture. There are also some who fidget and seem to not pay any attention during Mass. This is a great distraction for others. As parents, coach your young servers to be reverent and attentive to the Mass while serving. If they are new servers, they may be a little unsure about what to do, and when to do it. Teach them to pay close attention to the experienced servers when they are sitting with you in the pew. They should notice the words that are their cue to bring the book or the water. When they are serving, they should watch Father and the Deacon closely. They will get a nod or other signal for when they should approach the altar. At all other times they should fold their hands the way Father and the Deacon do.

I'll talk more about Confirmation and Marriage in future columns. In the meantime, may the Eucharist nourish and sustain you in faith and fill you with peace and joy – especially those who are making their first communion this spring!