

Column050419

Companions on the Journey

May 4, 2019

Dear Friends,

I was born on April 15 1947 and baptized on May 4, 1947. I made my first communion on Saturday May 1, 1954. I had just turned seven. I was still in the first grade at Saint David School in Willow Grove. But my family was one of the families designated for the new parish of Saint John of the Cross in Roslyn, PA. This new parish had been founded in 1953 and my sister who was in the seventh grade at Saint David's had been asked by the new pastor Father Mike McMahon if she would help to instruct a small group of parish children to prepare them for their first sacraments—Penance and Communion—at Saint John of the Cross parish.

Often while my sister was teaching those children after school she was also babysitting me so I was able to sit in on her teaching sessions with the other little kids most of whom were in second grade. Somewhere along the line it began to become clear that I had a sufficient grasp of what was being taught and the pastor asked my parents if they thought that I was ready to receive Holy Communion because he thought I was ready. My parents hadn't really thought about it but after some discussing among themselves and some questioning go me and my sister they agreed to allow me to receive my first holy communion that Saturday in May.

The time was 9AM because the midnight fast was still in effect and you could eat or drink nothing until after you made your first communion. With my addition to the class the number swelled from 6 kids to 7 kids. We had no church of our own. The new parish was gathering in a storefront on Easton Road. The store used to be a beer distributor. And so I made my first communion in an old beer distributor's store. The day before, I had made my first confession there as well. And as they say, the rest is history.

Last Saturday we celebrated First Communion for our parish children. There were 53 who received the Lord in the Eucharist for the first time. One more this month. There are another ten who have received or will receive their communions at their private Catholic school celebrations. That makes 64 little ones who draw just a little closer to the Lord at this point in their young lives. Will you remember to pray for them this weekend? And would you pray for their moms and dads so that they can be the best of teachers of their children in the ways of faith? And if there is anything you can do to assist even one of these little ones would you please step up and do it. If you see them in Church wearing their first Communion clothes will you be sure to tell them how proud you are of them. We need each other to help each other if the Lord is going to be able to feed and nourish us. Let us love one another as he has loved us.

Peace,

Msgr. McHenry