

## **First Communion-Paul Turner**

To share in communion for the first time children must have “sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so as to understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity” (*Code of Canon Law* 913). They must also be able to receive communion “with faith and devotion” (913).

**Our church expects a child to discern ordinary food from the Eucharistic bread.** That ability comes at the age “of the use of reason.” We generally place that at about age seven, but it has never been defined because children mature so independently. If children cannot make the distinction, they should not come to the Eucharistic table. Even in danger of death, an infant below the age of reason is not to receive communion. Infant communion is common among other Christian churches.

Children should understand the mystery of Christ “according to their capacity.” They need not comprehend the total mystery. (Who of us can?) They should come to the table with a spiritual disposition. Communion requires not just using reason but having faith as well.

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**We joyfully welcome all our First Communion children at our 5pm & 10:30am Masses this weekend and our 10:30am Mass next Sunday on Mother’s Day. Their excited anticipation give us the opportunity to remember this incredible gift of the Eucharist that we are privileged to receive every week. May this wonderful occasion be a time of deepening and renewing our own sense of the Body of Christ, who has come to dwell within us.**