

Dear Confirmation Candidate and Parents,

St. Mary's Parish welcomes you as you begin your preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation, and full initiation into the Catholic Church. This is a big step on your "Journey of Faith"! The information included in this packet will give you some basic information and guidelines to help you as you prepare for Confirmation. Please read this information over carefully along with a parent or guardian to make sure you understand what is expected of you over the next several months.

As you may already know, we are having Confirmation every other year. This means that we will prepare 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders for Confirmation that will happen in the fall of 2023. Please email or call if you have any questions about this change.

### **CHOOSING A CONFIRMATION SPONSOR**

Each Confirmation candidate, along with his or her parent or guardian, is responsible for choosing a sponsor. A suitable sponsor is someone you are close to and someone who can share his or her own Catholic faith with you. Your baptismal sponsor (godparent) is a good choice if you have maintained a trusting relationship and are comfortable in talking about matters of faith with them. This choice would express more clearly the relationship between Baptism and Confirmation and make the function of the sponsor more effective. There is no regulation determining that men must be sponsors for boys and women must be sponsors for girls.

#### **A sponsor should be:**

- ♣ Someone you trust
- ♣ Someone who's faith you admire
- ♣ Someone who is accessible to you

#### **Requirements for Being a Sponsor:**

- ♣ Sponsors must be at least 17 years of age and have received the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation.
- ♣ Sponsors must give witness to their faith in Jesus Christ by regularly participating in Sunday Mass and receiving the Eucharist.
- ♣ Sponsors should give support to the person they are sponsoring by their prayer and example.
- ♣ Sponsors should be someone other than the candidate's parents.

It is expected that you and your sponsor will have regular communication throughout the year as you prepare for Confirmation.

## GUIDELINES FOR CHOOSING CONFIRMATION NAME

- At Baptism, you may have been given a Christian name, that is, the name of one of the saints, who became your patron saint. You may use your baptismal name as your Confirmation name because it highlights the special connection between the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. The journey of faith you began at Baptism is strengthened with the gifts of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation.
- The saint you choose should be the name of a saint recognized by the Catholic Church. Choose a saint whose life serves as a model of virtuous living to imitate, or a saint's name that represents strength or an attribute that you feel you need.
- Generally speaking, you will want to choose a name that matches your gender.
- Pray to the Holy Spirit, and ask for help in finding a saint whose life you'd like to imitate.
- After you narrow down your choices, talk it over with a family member or friend who is a practicing Catholic, and whose opinion you trust. Talk about the saints' lives with that person, and discuss what attracts you spiritually to these holy people.
- As soon as you choose your confirmation name, pray to the saint whose name you will be using. Ask this saint to intercede for you, to help you make the right moral choices, and to be a powerful spiritual guide the rest of your life.
- The decision to take a new name reflects a commitment to renew the baptismal call, turn from sin, and be faithful to God. The Candidate is now a new person – an adult in the Church – assuming responsibilities to share the Gospel message and build up the Kingdom of God. This new name is presented to the Bishop at the Confirmation Mass. Choose your Confirmation name wisely.
- You must learn something about the person whose name you choose; you can't choose it because "it sounds cool" or it is the name of your favorite actor or sports figure. Look at the saint and decide what qualities that person has that you would hope to model your life on. A "report" on your saint is required.
- This new name, imposed by the bishop during Confirmation, becomes a part of your full name in the Church. It comes after your first and middle name and before the last name.
- You have many names to choose from. As you do your research, have fun and explore the many saints and names available to you. Look in the library for Catholic books on the lives of saints. The internet is an excellent resource.

After picking a saint name, candidates are to research their saint and write a saint report in their own words following the rubric below. Rough drafts of the saint report will be worked on during one class period. Bring your rough draft to class when asked.

*Rough drafts are due on or before April 28, 2023*

*Final drafts are due on or before May 14, 2023*

Rubric:

- Know about the life of your chosen saint.
- What attracted you to his or her life?
- What sort of life did they live?
- What is their conversion story?
- What lead them to follow Jesus?
- What virtues did your saint practice in his or her life?
- How is your saint a role model for you and Christians today?

Reports should be a page and a half, double spaced. Please place your name under your chosen saint's name. Fr. Louis will use this report on the day of your interview.

### **Service Hours**

To serve, is a true gift for both the recipient and the giver. It is important not only to listen and understand the Word of God, but also to apply the lessons learned. This is essential to living as a Christian and following Jesus' footsteps.

The connection between Confirmation and service is this: That each Confirmed Christian has a calling and a responsibility to serve as a living example of Jesus' teachings – God calls us to serve and we respond. This is also an opportunity for the candidates to explore different ways in which they can be of service to their parish community.

Requirements:

- Completion of 25 Service Hours- 10 Parish Hours, 5 Community Hours, and 10 Family Hours
- The form is due on or *before October 22, 2023*
- It is the Candidate's responsibility to fulfill the requirements of this project.
- Service should not have any financial compensation.
- Service should be done with a willing heart and carried out in a generous spirit.

An awareness of the service dimension of the Gospel and the Church is critical for adequate preparation of the candidate for Confirmation. It is precisely this missionary aspect of Christianity that is our focus in Confirmation, the 'Living out of one's Faith.' Therefore, in-parish service work is required in an effort to avoid the notion that once Confirmation is complete, Christian service responsibilities and obligations are also complete. Thought-filled Christian service is the primary goal.

In order for the Service hours to be registered, students will need to complete a reflection essay of 1-2 pages in length. Candidates should use the following questions to guide their essay. When completed, the essay, should be turned in to Marianna Merkatoris. The essays will then be passed on to Fr. Louis to be used during the interview.

Here are some questions to help guide your 'Service Reflection' essay:

- Why do you need to serve others?
- What did you do to serve?
- Describe your experience(s).
- What parish ministry did you volunteer for?
- What were your responsibilities and what did you actually do?
- Was it a new experience?
- Was it difficult/easy?
- How did your actions make you feel?
- Do you think your help made a difference? How?
- What did you learn about yourself in doing these projects?
- Which Corporal and/or Spiritual Works of Mercy were reflected in this project?
- When/where did you see the face of Christ?
- Would you select this service project(s) again?
- How did service enhance your experience of Confirmation?

*Due October 15, 2023*

### **Service Hour Opportunities**

- Fall/Spring Rummage Sale
- Thrift Cellar: Tuesday evenings and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday mornings
- Soup Kitchen: Tuesday Evenings
- Farmer's Breakfast
- Liturgical Roles: greeter, altar server
- Parish Festival
- Family Mass: greeter, altar server, reader, choir

### **Confirmation Retreat**

Throughout the preparation process, most of the activities and gatherings have been done in a group setting. This event allows the candidates to be one on one with themselves and their peers to look back and reflect on their faith and preparation journey. The candidates will be taking an in-depth look at the gifts of the Holy Spirit and

our retreat master will be asking the candidates questions such as how is the Holy Spirit working within them, and why do they want to be confirmed at this time? Small group activities & discussions, reflections, and faith sharing will be done during this retreat.

*Fall of 2023*

### **Confirmation Interview**

Candidates will be interviewed before they receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. The point of the interview is to allow the students to express, in a more personal way, their desire to be confirmed as Roman Catholics and to clearly understand their own motivation for wanting to do so. Also, the students should be ready to demonstrate that they understand the meaning of the sacrament as well as the basic prayers and elements of Faith and Christian living. The interview will also help to ensure candidates have met all requirements and are ready to be confirmed. Each student will be interviewed by Marianna Merkatoris, Faith Formation Director and Fr. Louis, Pastor.

### **Letter to the Bishop**

Candidates are asked to write a formal letter to the confirming Bishop requesting to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. In this letter, you will tell the Bishop:

- A little about yourself
- Where you go to school
- A little about your family
- What you have done to prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation
- Why you want to be fully initiated in the Catholic faith.
- Share something about our confirmation retreat experience; perhaps something that stood out to you or moved you in a new direction.
- Share something that you learned from doing community service
- Your saint name and why you chose it.
- Close your letter with a request to receive the sacrament.
- Sign your letter.

Be sure to proof read your letter before submitting it to Marianna Merkatoris. I will review your letter for final corrections before forwarding them to Fr. Louis. He will be referring to your letter to the Bishop at your interview time. The letters will then be mailed to the Bishop five weeks before Confirmation. These letters will be due on or before *September 3, 2023*.

## **Confirmation Mass and Seating**

Confirmandi and their sponsors will sit in the reserved seats in church. Each family will have a pew. Once Mass begins, there will be no pictures or video equipment allowed in use. We will take pictures of the group following Mass.

### **Blessing!**

Marianna Merkatoris, DRE

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