August 21, 2019

Dear Confirmation Candidates,

Welcome to the beginning of your journey towards the Sacrament of Confirmation! Really, this is a journey that began at Baptism, and these next few months are to help you prepare for this final Sacrament of Initiation. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church says, “The reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace” (CCC 1285). Being Confirmed in your Catholic faith is a big step in your journey as a disciple of Christ, and an intentional choice that I applaud you for making. In this sacrament, you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit and be fully initiated into the Church. This year, Bishop Adam Parker will be celebrating our Confirmation Masses on Friday, April 17th and Sunday, April 19th.

In order to be Confirmed this spring, there are a few basic requirements you must meet:

1. **You must complete the Confirmation prep classes**, which take place over twelve sessions between September and March (see calendar inside folder), and complete the assignments given to you by your catechist (this includes a report on your Confirmation saint and a letter to the bishop).

2. **You must attend the Confirmation retreat from Friday, March 27th to Sunday, March 29th.** The plan is for this retreat to start Friday evening and end Sunday morning, and it will be off-campus, although the exact location is TBD.

3. **You must complete 25 hours of service**, as the Christian life is necessarily one of service to others. These hours may be completed either within the parish or elsewhere (or both!), as long as they are completed outside of your immediate family and you are not being paid for the service. **At least 15** of these hours must be completed in the same ministry/doing the same activity, with the goal of building community and fostering a sense of responsibility. If you would like to complete all 25 hours doing the same activity, that is perfectly acceptable and even encouraged. The service hour sheet must be completed and turned in by the last class. If you need ideas for service projects, check the sheet inside your folder, or feel free to reach out to me and ask! Consider inviting your sponsor to serve alongside you.

4. You must choose a date/time to be **interviewed** about your decision to be Confirmed and the things you learned in class (either Tuesday, March 31st, or Thursday, April 2nd). Don’t worry – it’s not as scary as it seems! It’s pretty low-key and is more of a conversation than an “interview.”

5. **You must attend** the Confirmation rehearsal, which will be the night before the Mass.
It is an ancient tradition of the Church that candidates for Confirmation select a sponsor, another Catholic person who will help you persevere in your faith and will present you to the bishop at the time of your Confirmation. This sponsor is a representation of the Christian community and should help the newly Confirmed act as a true witness of Christ. Contained in your folder is a sheet to fill out with information about your sponsor. This sheet is due the first class in December. When choosing a sponsor, **ask yourself the following questions**: Why am I choosing this person? Does he/she live out his/her Catholic faith? Does this person have knowledge of the faith? Do I look up to this person as a model of faith? etc. The relationship with your sponsor is not meant to end after you are Confirmed. You can/should pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance in choosing your sponsor! Your sponsor does not have to be a relative, but he/she does have to be at least sixteen years old and have been Confirmed. Because Confirmation is a completion of what was begun at your Baptism, if you have a good relationship with your baptismal godparents, choosing one of them would be perfect!

Remember, your journey of faith doesn’t end with this sacrament! Those who are Confirmed "are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed" (CCC 1285). Basically, being sealed with the Holy Spirit is a gift that will strengthen you to continue growing in and deepening your relationship with Jesus throughout your entire life.

As you are journeying towards Confirmation (and afterwards!), there are many ways to become involved in our parish community and to build relationships with your fellow young Catholics. One of those ways is to attend LifeTeen, our high school youth group. LifeTeen meets on Sundays from 6:30 – 8:30 PM at Ascension. You can find a calendar of LifeTeen events on our website: [www.ccasta.org/yya](http://www.ccasta.org/yya).

And please, never hesitate to reach out to me if you have any concerns, hesitations, or questions about anything! You can email me, call me, or say hi to me if you see me around the church. Be assured of my prayers for you!

Peace and All Good,

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