

CONFIRMATION PROGRAM 2017-2018

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our Confirmation program!

This is an exciting time for you, the candidate, and your family. As your first “church” – the domestic church, your parents at your Baptism vowed to raise you in the Catholic faith. The Christian home is the first school of Christian life. Although Confirmation may mark the end of your formal religious education, it is a beginning for you to live your life as a disciple of Jesus Christ in the community of the Catholic Church. Your education in that faith must be a lifelong experience.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains the purpose of the Sacrament of Confirmation: “Baptism, the Eucharist, and the Sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the sacraments of Christian initiation, whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For by the sacrament of Confirmation, the baptized are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with the 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)

The Sacrament of Confirmation is never to be taken lightly, nor is it to be received without proper preparation and careful consideration on the part of both candidate and those who both prepare and support him or her. It is for this reason that we make every effort that each person Confirmed is properly formed in the faith of Jesus Christ, and has the knowledge and experience of the Church which is His body, living and present in our world.

Our program, outlined in this handbook, is designed to give you a historical and realistic approach to what it means to be a committed Catholic Christian in today’s world. It is the same Holy Spirit who bestows the same gifts today as He did to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. Our Catholic Tradition calls us to serious prayer and study to prepare for this outpouring of the Holy Spirit by the hands of our bishop. Our program will help you, the candidate receive this sacrament worthily so that it will enable you to live more fully as a disciple of Jesus Christ and a member of the Church.

In Brief

“Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply as children of God, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with its mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.” (CCC §1316)

Confirmation, like Baptism, imprints a spiritual mark or indelible character on the Christian’s soul; for this reason one can receive this sacrament only once in one’s life. The essential rite of Confirmation is anointing the forehead of the baptized with the sacred chrism together with the laying on of the minister’s hand and the words, “Be sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit”.

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. They belong in their fullness to Christ, Son of God. They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them. They make the faithful docile in readily obeying the divine inspirations.

Requirements

Confirmation at St. Francis of Assisi Parish is a one and a half year process of preparation (Confirmation One and Confirmation Two). All eligible students including those currently enrolled in a Catholic or other private high school must be a registered member of the parish and participate in the complete program. If you are transferring in from another parish, documentation is required from your previous religious education office acknowledging your participation in their program. This is required *prior* to being accepted into our program.

Baptismal Records

A copy of the candidate's baptismal record is needed for all candidates **NOT** baptized at St. Francis of Assisi parish. If we do not have your baptism certificate on file, it must be obtained from the parish where the candidate was baptized. Notification of missing baptismal records will be provided at the candidate/parent meeting. The certificate must be handed in by the end of November of Confirmation One.

Classes for both Confirmation One and Two will be held over two consecutive summers (after 8th & 9th grade).

This summer, the two weeks to choose from are either:

July 17-21, 2017 (Monday-Friday) from 9:00am – 12:30pm

Or

August 7-11, 2017 (Monday-Friday) from 9:00am – 12:30pm

Confirmation One and Two candidates will also have several dates over the fall, winter and spring months they **will be required** to attend:

Youth Nights

(Meets once a month generally on Sundays from 7-8:30pm from September through May)

Our Youth Nights are meant for all of us to stay connected during the school year, build community, as well as cover social issues that are best covered outside of a classroom environment. They will include nights of praise and worship, presentations by guest speakers as well as social and service type activities. These events are required for the teens currently preparing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation but are also open to all high school teens.

A complete schedule of the Youth Nights will be given to you at classes this summer. These are required gatherings so please make sure to post them on your calendar.

Confirmation Retreat (for 9th graders)

Saturday, February 10, 2018

Led by NET Ministries

Time: 10-5:30pm (we will end the retreat by attending the 4:30pm Mass)

Confirmation candidates, at the completion of the second year of summer classes, will be required to attend a morning gathering and a rehearsal with their Confirmation sponsor. For our Confirmation Two candidates the morning gathering with your sponsor will take place on **Saturday, September 16th from 10am-noon.**

The Confirmation ceremony for our Confirmation Two candidates will take place this fall on Saturday, November 11, 2017 at 10am

In addition to the summer curriculum, Confirmation candidates will need to:

1. Attend **all** monthly Youth Nights sessions (dates TBD)
2. Attend weekly Mass
3. Select a Confirmation Sponsor
4. Attend a Confirmation retreat
5. Choose a Confirmation Name and write a brief reflection on the saint you chose
6. Attend a Candidate/Sponsor retreat morning
7. Complete a parish based service project as well as a community based service project
8. Write a reflection on each service project completed
9. Attend an interview with the parish priest.

Participation at Sunday Mass

Participating at Sunday Mass (or Saturday evening Mass) each and every week throughout the year is a privilege and a grave responsibility for every Catholic. We go to Mass to worship God with our parish family, in communion with all Catholics throughout the world, and to receive His infinite grace, strength and wisdom in the Eucharist.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: Participation in the communal celebration of the Sunday Eucharist is a testimony of belonging and of being faithful to Christ and to his Church. The faithful give witness by this to their communion in faith and charity. Together they testify to God's holiness and their hope of salvation. They strengthen one another under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. (CCC #2182)

To be in our program of preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation means to commit to the weekly celebration of the Holy Mass at St. Francis throughout the year.

Please read carefully and prayerfully the following protocol we will follow:

Candidates will be given a weekly budget envelope to use as a means of recording their presence during Mass. Their budget envelope must be placed in the offertory basket during Masses on a weekly basis to acknowledge their presence.

If you attend Mass at St. Francis or St. Romuald...

THEN please drop into the collection basket your budget:

- With a money offering enclosed for the support of the parish
- **OR** with a paper on which you write down a sacrifice you have made this past week
- **OR** with a good deed you have done this past week
- **OR** a prayer you are requesting from God
- **OR** a note of thanksgiving to God for a gift or blessing you have received from God this past week.

If you attend Mass at St. Francis or St. Romuald but you forgot to bring your budget

THEN submit a signed note by your parent inside your budget and drop it off (or mail it) to the religious education office as soon as possible during the week.

If you attend Mass at another Catholic Church

THEN take a parish bulletin from the Church you have attended, have your parent sign it and staple it to your budget and drop it off (or mail it) to the religious education office as soon as possible during the week.

If you do not attend Mass due to an illness

THEN drop off or mail your budget envelope with a notation for your absence due to illness to the religious education office as soon as possible.

Selecting a Confirmation Sponsor

The most important role of a Confirmation sponsor is to help you live a life befitting a Catholic Christian. Confirmation sponsors are like spiritual coaches or mentors. They affirm your strengths and point out ways you can grow and become better in your practice of the faith. A Confirmation sponsor

participates, together with your parents, in your preparation to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit in this Sacrament of Initiation and presents you to the bishop during the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Each candidate at the completion of the Confirmation One summer program will choose a sponsor. The sponsor will receive a "Sponsor Certificate" form from the Confirmation candidate at St. Francis and will be required to fill it out and **have it signed by the priest of the parish that they now belong to. This includes those sponsors from our own parish.**

Guidelines for selecting a Sponsor

Sponsorship implies that person has a real appreciation of the faith, a steadfast practice of it and a sense of responsibility toward the person being confirmed. Here are some suggestions to help you as you make your choice:

Sponsors should have already received the three sacraments of Christian initiation: namely Baptism, First Eucharist, and Confirmation and be at least 16 years of age and thereby be able to assume the responsibility which God and the church place before them in serving as guides and companions for those being confirmed.

Sponsors should also be practicing Catholics. They should participate at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation and they should receive the sacraments of Holy Communion and Reconciliation regularly. The whole purpose of the sacramental life of the Church is to nourish us on our journey of faith. If those who lead the way are not nourished properly, they will falter and eventually be unable to keep up with the pace of Christian living. When that happens how can they lead others?

Sponsors should be living the Christian vocation faithfully and conscientiously either as a single person or as persons validly married in the church. Religious and clergy can also serve as a Confirmation sponsor. Some married persons, unfortunately may not be eligible. Those married by a justice of the peace, those living together with the benefit of marriage and those who have been divorced and remarried without a declaration of annulment from the diocesan tribunal concerning the previous marriage are not eligible to fulfill the role of a sponsor for Confirmation. It is possible to rectify that situation, but unfortunately it takes time. They are not excluded from the church community but they have incurred some impediments which limit their participation in the full sacramental life of the church.

Parents of those to be confirmed are not eligible to serve as sponsors since they are already considered the "first and best teachers of the faith" for their children. Grandparents, baptismal godparents and siblings are eligible.

Last but not least, sponsors should promise to give their support to the Confirmation candidate by their prayers and the example of their Christian lives each and every day. The roles of the sponsor are serious and effective evangelizing resources for our church's mission and together with the candidate's parents and godparents are the principal mentors in the way of Christian living.

Retreat Requirement

Diocesan requirements stipulate that all Confirmation students must attend an annual retreat. The purpose of the Confirmation retreat is to be removed from everyday activities, to quiet the mind and the soul to be better disposed and more sensitive to the movement of the Holy Spirit. The retreat also allows the candidate to fully focus on the greatness of the sacrament he/she is preparing to receive.

Retreat dates will be clearly defined at the beginning of each religious education year so that you are able to reserve that date on your family calendar. Extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the candidate will be taken into consideration and a make-up retreat will be scheduled with another parish or the diocesan office. Please contact the religious education office promptly if a conflict does arise.

Confirmation Name and Saint Reflection

As a candidate for the sacrament of Confirmation, you will take the name of a saint as your “Confirmation Name.” This will be recorded in the Catholic Church’s official records, and the saint you choose will take a special interest in you—yes, YOU! You can ask in prayer for your saint’s assistance, and trust that they will then pray for you to God.

You have two options when choosing a Confirmation name:

1. You may choose your present baptismal name if it is a saint’s name. This shows the sacramental connection between Baptism and Confirmation, which, along with the Eucharist, constitute the Sacraments of Initiation. To stay with your Baptismal name would demonstrate that you feel there is a continual growth in your faith and you wish to make this formal through Confirmation.
2. You may also choose the name of a saint who inspires you. Taking a new name at Confirmation is an expression of a desire to accept a new role in the Church. There are several Scripture stories of people whose names changed after they experienced a call from God: Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel, Simon to Peter, and Saul to Paul.

It is important and necessary to know something about the saint before you decide on the name. Conduct research (from valid Catholic websites only please) and then write a report (one page minimum) on your saint.

The report should include the following:

- The birth and death date and feast day (if they have one) of the saint.
- A brief summary of their life (1 paragraph maximum)
- What called the saint to a life of holiness?
- What did the saint do during their lifetime or death that was Christ-like?
- Why did you select this Catholic saint?
- How can the life of this saint be a model of faith and commitment to you in your life?

Do your best to write a genuine, reflective, original work – not a cut and paste job off the internet. Please type this reflection so that it is clearly readable.

Confirmation Service Project

Stewardship is the sharing of our time, talent and treasure out of gratitude to Almighty God for all the blessings that He has bestowed upon us. In preparation for Confirmation, it is important that we reflect on and identify those areas in our lives where we excel and find a way to share them with others, especially the marginalized. This is an opportunity for self-reflection to see what gifts God has given you. Stewardship is always for non-profit and need not be measured by hours.

With the help of your family, you are asked to:

1. Choose from **each** of the following areas:
 - a) One parish project
 - b) One community project
2. Write a reflection on your experiences in each area. Forms can be found online at www.stfranciswakefield.com or

This reflection should be at least one page in length (typed, double spaced paper) and address:

- a. Opening paragraph – What the nature of your service was and why you chose this service project.
- b. Second paragraph – How you encountered Christ through the person/people you served.
- c. Third paragraph – How you modeled Christ to the person/people you served.
- d. Closing paragraph – Summarize your experience, your thoughts and what you learned from this project.

When making your choices, remember:

1. Submit your reflection in a timely manner. All projects must be completed and the reflections handed in by the end of the summer of your Confirmation Two year.
2. Each project should benefit people.
3. Regular responsibilities such as babysitting or yard would not qualify.

Parish Projects: (Choose one)

See below

High School Leadership Team

As a member of the High School Leadership Team, you will commit to attending 1-2 meetings per month during which you will be an active member on planning and executing high youth events for the youth of St. Francis Parish. Those selected for the team exemplify the life of Jesus through their own actions and words. Members of the leadership team are active and committed to supporting youth ministry events. All high school students are eligible to apply for a spot on the leadership team, however, not all will be selected. Contact Person: Mrs. Castro at 792-8684.

Religious Education Teacher or Aid

Youth who volunteer to teach or assist teachers for Religious Education will commit to 25-30 meetings of religious Education classes for children in grades K-6. Contact Person: Mrs. Cullen at 792-8684.

First Communion Retreat Team

Youth volunteers participate as helpers during the First Reconciliation Retreat held at the beginning of December, assist with the first Reconciliation reception, assist at the First Communion rehearsals and on the day of First Communion (which is generally held at the beginning of May). Team members are expected to arrive early to help with setup and cleanup after the retreat and at the First Communion day. Contact Person: Mrs. Cullen at 792-8684.

Praise Music Ministry

Have you been given the gift of music through voice or instrument? Join the Praise Music ministry. You will be responsible for serving as worship leaders at Masses and Adoration that are scheduled during the year. Rehearsals occur on a weekly basis. Contact Person: Mark Castro at 783-3924.

High School Greeters Ministry

Youth volunteers for the Greeters at Mass in the main church and at the chapel. You will be scheduled as a greeter for one Mass twice per month. Your responsibilities includes arriving 20 minutes prior to the start of Mass to welcome parishioners to Mass and to hand out parish bulletins at the end of Mass. (This ministry requires parent volunteers.)

Vacation Bible School

Youth volunteers for Vacation Bible School will be responsible for set-up, implementation of, and cleanup of VBS. They will need to be available days leading up to VBS for preparing the decorations and during the VBS week (usually held the first week after school finishes in June. Contact Person: Religious Education Office 792-8684.

Altar Serving

Youth who participate in the ministry of serving at the Altar during Mass will serve as part of their regular schedule. Servers are expected to exhibit upmost reverence during the Mass. Contact Person: Jacey Northrup. Call the rectory at 783-4411.

Advent Wreath Workshop

Youth who participate in this ministry will help advertise, cut greens, plan the workshop, as well as participate in the setup, operation and cleanup on the day of the event. Contact Person: Mrs. Castro at 792-8684.

Christmas Giving Tree

Youth who participate in this ministry will help advertise, prepare the tags, collect the gifts after Mass for two weekends at St. Romuald and St. Francis and prepare them for distribution.

St. Francis Cemetery Gate Keeper

Our parish cemetery is maintained by parishioners. Each day the gates to the cemetery are unlocked so family members can visit their loved ones. Youth who participate in this ministry would be required to lock the gates at the end of each day. The gates are closed at 7pm from Memorial Day – Columbus Day and at 4pm the rest of the year. This is a yearlong commitment. If you are interested in helping please contact Carol McDole at 782-2711.

St. Romuald Breakfast

Youth volunteers participate as helpers during the Matunuck breakfast which will be held on Sunday, August 16, 2015 from 8am-noon. Teens will assist with the setup for the breakfast which is held on Saturday morning of the same weekend. They are also expected to arrive early on Sunday to serve at the breakfast and cleanup at the end of the day. If you are interested in helping please contact Fran Fitzpatrick at 783-4343.

Community Service Project Suggestions:

- Organizing a coat drive and working at the Coat Exchange over Thanksgiving weekend
- Nursing homes
- Helping elderly neighbors or parishioners rake leaves, shovel snow etc...
- Helping at the Johnny Cake Center
- Special Olympics
- Habitat for Humanity
- Charity Walks or runs

RICAN

Pumpkin glow

Good Friday Walk in Providence

General Conduct

Prior Catechesis and Assessment

Candidates for Confirmation One must have attended at least three consecutive years of religious education (grades 6, 7, 8) prior to admission. Those who do not meet this requirement must demonstrate a basic knowledge of the doctrines of our Catholic faith. The Confirmation program builds on what was passed on during the elementary and middle school years, and therefore requires a foundational knowledge of Catholic doctrine. Candidates will complete an assessment to demonstrate their familiarity with Catholic teaching. Additional classes may be required to bring the candidate up to these minimum requirements.

Respect and Courtesy

All candidates are to be respectful toward the coordinator, their fellow classmates, and especially their classroom catechists. All of our teachers are volunteers and are offering their time and talent to our youth. Disrespect, discourtesy and class disruption will not be tolerated. The program coordinator, the parish priest, or a catechist may issue two “warnings” to a student who exhibits discourtesy, disrespect or is a disruption. On the third offense, the student will be removed for the remainder of class and sent to the coordinator. The parents will be notified by phone and the student will be placed on probation. Disrespect and discourtesy are clear indications that a student is not ready to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Cell Phones, Texting and Internet

The use of cell phones for texting and web-browsing is strictly forbidden. (The only exception to web-browsing is if their catechist asks them in class to look up some Catholic based website.) Students may need cell phones to contact parents after class, but as a rule, cell phones should be turned off during class time. Emergencies should be reported to the coordinator of the program, who will contact parents if necessary. Catechists and the St. Francis staff reserve the right to confiscate cell phones. Cell phones confiscated during class time will be given to Mrs. Castro for the remainder of the class session or event.

Class Attendance

Attendance at all classes is mandatory. In the case of illness or another serious cause, notice of absence must be given in advance of the scheduled meeting to the coordinator of the Confirmation program, Mrs. Diane Castro. Missing class may result in a delay of your Confirmation and require you to repeat that year.

Class Tardiness

Unexcused tardiness will not be tolerated. Students are required to arrive a minimum of 5 minutes before the scheduled class time or meeting. Classes will promptly begin at the specified time given.

Dress Code

Students are expected to dress appropriately so as not to distract those around them. Hats are not to be worn inside the parish buildings. No tank tops for boys or girls. Skirts or shorts should be appropriate length.

Staff and Contact Information

Rev. Henry Bodah
Pastor

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Parish Website:
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Mrs. Barbette Cullen
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Mrs. Diane Castro
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