

## DEAR CONFIRMATION CANDIDATES AND PARENTS,

As you prepare to receive the fullness of God's spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation here are some reminders of what the Church believes about this special sacrament.



- Sacraments are not "things" we get. They are celebrations and actions of the community and, most importantly, the actions of God giving himself to us. They empower us to live our life in a different way. "Getting confirmed" is very passive. Celebrating confirmation reminds us that we are participators and the sacrament is ongoing.

- In the Sacrament of Confirmation, God's love for us is renewed. God promises again to be always with us, and God pours out on us the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- Confirmation is often called the sacrament of the

Holy Spirit. That is true, but it is not the first time we are receiving the gift of the Spirit. Confirmation strengthens and continues the work of the Spirit in our lives that began at our baptism.

- "Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit ... and the door which gives access to the other sacraments" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1213*). It is the beginning of our initiation into the Church — an initiation that is sealed and nourished by two other sacraments: confirmation and Eucharist. For this reason these three sacraments are called the Sacraments of Initiation. In a very real way, baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist can be thought of as "one moment."

- Sacraments do not affect just the candidate; sacraments affect the entire community. That is why candidates and parents are invited/encouraged to be involved. That is why so many things happen within the parish community. In effect, the heart of the initiation process is located not in a religious education classroom or a Catholic school but in the life of the total faith community. We grow closer to God together.

There is no penalty for waiting to be confirmed if a young person is not ready — nobody should be forced to celebrate a sacrament. Our faith journey is about an intimate relationship with God. Candidates should pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to discern if this is the right time to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation. Know that many people are praying for you as well.

### PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit,  
fill the hearts of your faithful  
and kindle in them the fire of your love.  
Send forth your Spirit and  
they shall be created,  
and you will renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray.

Lord,  
by the light of the Holy Spirit  
you have taught the hearts of your faithful.  
In the same Spirit  
help us to relish what is right  
and always rejoice in your consolation.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## CONFIRMATION **N**AME

Since confirmation is the completion of our baptism, the Church encourages us once again to use our baptismal name. Talk about the name of each family member. Who are each of you named after?

If you decide to choose an additional name — a name that is traditionally Christian — it may be a saint's name, a biblical character, or a person whom you admire.

This would be an opportune time to do research on who you are named after (or if you are adding a name). On the web check: [saints.sqpn.com/indexsnt.htm](http://saints.sqpn.com/indexsnt.htm)

## CONFIRMATION **S** PONSOR

Sponsors are chosen because they care about you and live their faith. Often, these days, you probably feel that many people are asking you questions. Give your sponsor a call — or e-mail — and ask:

- When you have to make a difficult decision, what do you do?
- What's the hardest thing about being a Catholic?
- Why do you go to Mass every Sunday?
- If Jesus were here today, what do you think He would say to us?
- Why do you pray?
- How do you pray?
- Why are you glad you're a Catholic?

## **S**ERVICE

Service and outreach are really not "just part of confirmation." They are simply a part of being Catholic because of our baptism.

- What are family members doing in which your candidate(s) can now join you?
- As a family decide some new venture to do together.

You might be invited to join in the ministerial opportunities in the parish, in the service and outreach projects of the parish to the wider community. There may be specific opportunities planned or suggested for confirmation candidates and their families, such as:

- adopting a shut-in at a nursing home
- working at a soup kitchen
- volunteering at your local library
- visiting a homebound parishioner each week
- volunteering at a senior citizen center
- leaf raking, snow shoveling, etc., for the elderly in your parish or neighborhood

## FAMILY CONVERSATIONS...

Over the years there have been many studies done to identify the traits of a strong family, all of which agree that the parents who have the greatest impact on their children encourage healthy communication. Use this time of preparation for the celebration of confirmation to make a lasting impression.

Here are some discussion starters to use as a springboard for family discussions.

- If God gave me a compliment, I think it would be \_\_\_\_\_.
- Someone in my life who I think is a good Christian is \_\_\_\_\_, because \_\_\_\_\_.
- One thing I really like about being Catholic is \_\_\_\_\_.
- My favorite place to pray is \_\_\_\_\_.
- My favorite time of the day to pray is \_\_\_\_\_.
- My favorite way to pray is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Tell each family member which gift of the Holy Spirit you see most alive in him or her. Then invite family members to share which gift they would like to develop more deeply in their life in the year to come.
- If I could ask God three questions, they would be \_\_\_\_\_.
- Is there something you are worried about, something that is challenging you? Can the gifts of the Spirit help you? How?
- When and how have you sensed the Holy Spirit at work in the world? In your life?

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