



St. Mark's Catholic Church

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****IMPORTANT CONFIRMATION PREPARATION REGISTRATION INFORMATION****

June 25, 2020

Re: Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation / Year 2020-2021

Dear Parent(s):

You are receiving this letter because you have a child who will be entering **Grade 7** in the fall of 2020, and therefore, I wanted to take this opportunity to provide you with some information about the Parish based, **Immediate Preparation Program** for the sacrament of Confirmation next year for those entering Grade 7 in 2020. This year planning can only be done tentatively due to the COVID-19 situation which is still very fluid. There are still many unknown variables regarding what things will be like in the fall and winter.

Please note that this Sacrament of Confirmation is to be celebrated and received in the family's home parish (i.e. the parish where the family attends Sunday Mass).

Young people learn their faith first and foremost from their parents. It is in the home that they first learn about God and are introduced to the Christian way of life. This is considered the **initial preparation** for receiving the sacrament of Confirmation. Those who attend Catholic schools participate in religious education which is also part of this initial preparation, as is coming to Church to worship God, to celebrate the memorial of His Passion and Death, and thereby, thank God our Father for all His blessings, especially for the gift of His only son, Jesus.

As the time for receiving the sacrament of Confirmation nears, the candidate may begin the process of **Immediate Preparation** for the sacrament which takes place in the parish.

Immediate Preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation will be accomplished through a combined effort of the candidates themselves, their parents, school and St. Mark's Parish:

Role of Parents: The first role of parents is to help their child understand what is required in making the important commitment to deepen their relationship with God and His only begotten Son and receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Parents should help their child by encouraging them to remember that in Confirmation we receive the fullness of God's Spirit so as to be His disciples and witnesses in this world and to be able to participate more fully in the blessings of Heaven.

Furthermore, parents are responsible for helping their child discern if this is something they can commit to this year. If your son or daughter has commitments for the fall/winter seasons, such as recreational activities, vacation trips, family functions, etc. and therefore, they will not be able to fully commit and dedicate the required time to the program, they can defer receiving this sacrament until Grade 8 or high school.

It is expected, of course, that the candidate and their families commit to attending mass each weekend or watching mass online if we are still under the current pandemic restrictions. It is the best opportunity for our

children to understand their faith, and to see you leading by example which is the most important lesson and gift you can give them.

Once they are registered, the candidates will be required to **complete a Journal after each weekend mass** for the duration of the Confirmation program. We will provide further information in the fall as to how these will be submitted.

We are still determining whether the Confirmation classes will be held at the church or take a virtual format. However, either way, attendance at all classes, whether in person or virtual, is absolutely mandatory. Should the Candidate miss more than one of the preparatory classes leading up to Confirmation, he or she will not be able to proceed. Prior notice of absence must be given in advance. If one class is missed, a makeup event must be attended.

Role of Schools: The Catholic schools will continue to teach the curriculum as it relates to religious instruction for grade 7 students.

Role of St. Mark's Parish – Program, Class and Confirmation Celebration Dates:

St. Mark's Parish will be providing the **Immediate Confirmation Preparation Program**. The team established to lead this program will consist of several members of our parish community including our Youth Minister, Camille Herrera, parent, parish and student volunteers, myself and our deacons.

Program, Ceremony and Retreat Dates

I have attached a **summary of proposed tentative dates** related to Confirmation next year. Please note that I will not be able to confirm these dates until after school begins in September – this letter is simply intended to give you as much **advance notice** as possible and to make you aware of the time commitments for both your child and your family in connection with receiving this Sacrament. If there are still restrictions in place, we may have to limit the number of guests per family at each ceremony. We will also have to proceed with the ceremonies, even if there are restrictions, given the impossibility of continually postponing the dates.

Volunteers

Volunteering is a wonderful opportunity for you to share more deeply in this grace filled journey to Confirmation with your child. We encourage parents to consider volunteering to co-lead a group of approximately 6-7 young people for the sessions that will take place either at St. Mark's Church or on a virtual platform like Zoom. Throughout the program, the candidates view DVD segments related to the faith and the sacrament of Confirmation. The volunteers then facilitate discussions in their small group about what was presented in the DVD. Many people who have volunteered with this program in the past have returned to assist in years when they don't have any children in the program because they found it to be such a rewarding experience.

You do not need to be an expert in Catechism to become a volunteer: you will be given a copy of the Leader's Guide, as well, our program coordinators are here to help and train you. You need only to be willing to engage with the youth and to do your best. You have a wealth of experiences that will benefit the youth in your group.

Requirements

- One Training Session in October most likely done online via Zoom
- Approximately a half an hour of preparation for each class to review material to be discussed
- One and a half hours on the day of each class

Conclusion

I look forward to sharing with you in this God-given mission of leading our children to the Father through His Son in the Holy Spirit.

Yours Sincerely,



Rev. Michael Hughes, Pastor

Schedule of PROPOSED Dates for Confirmation 2020/2021

PRE-PROGRAM REGISTRATION AND PARENTS MEETING

EVENT	PROPOSED DATE	EXPLANATION
Online Registration	Monday October 19 , 2020 at 9:00 am until Sunday November 1 , 2020 at 9:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class and Ceremony groups will be determined by the order in which we receive the registrations on a first-come, first-serve basis. Further details on how to complete the online registration will be provided to families in September
Completion of Registration Process <i>*Attendance of one parent or legal guardian is Mandatory (Candidates/children not to attend)</i>	Wednesday November 4, 2020 Timeslots will be assigned between 6 pm and 9 pm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring registration fee (\$120) to cover program administration and ancillary costs and a photocopy of your child's baptismal certificate. The workbook for Confirmation will be distributed on this date. <p><i>(Paperwork/payment collection and workbook distribution will take place in the foyer of the church. An email will be sent to parents, who will be divided up into 5 groups alphabetically according to their last name, with their timeslot to come to the church to complete the registration process)</i></p>

* **NOTE:** Sacrament dates will not be secured until all requirements are complete, including submission of documents and payment by parents, who must attend the registration night on Wednesday, November 4th.

ENROLMENT CEREMONY

EXPLANATION
Enrolment Ceremonies will not take place this year due to possible limited numbers allowed in the church. Instead, we will give out the Confirmation crosses during the registration process on November 4, 2020.

GROUP LEADER VOLUNTEER TRAINING SESSIONS

(for program volunteers only)

EVENT	DATE	EXPLANATION
Training Session	Monday, January 11 , 2021 6-9 pm (Training will likely take place using the Zoom platform)	Volunteer Training for Confirmation Preparation

CONFIRMATION IMMEDIATE PREPARATION PROGRAM DATES

EVENT	PROPOSED DATE	EXPLANATION
Session #1	Wednesday January 20	Confirmation preparation sessions for all candidates. (Classes to take place for all candidates either in the hall of St. Mark's Church or virtually from home using Zoom depending on the restrictions) The candidates will be divided into two groups. Group A - Class Time 6:00 pm to 7:15 pm Group B – Class Time 7:45 pm to 9 pm * Parents will be asked to indicate their preference of Group A or B for their child's weekly class time when filling in the online registration form. Groups will be assigned on a first come first serve basis based on the order in which we receive the online registrations.
Session #2	Wednesday January 27	
Session #3	Wednesday February 3	
Session #4	Wednesday February 10	
Session #5	Wednesday February 24	
Session #6	Wednesday March 3	
Session #7	Wednesday March 10	
Session #8	Wednesday March 31	
Session #9	Wednesday, April 7	
Snow Date #1	Wednesday April 14	Only needed if one of the other classes is cancelled due to inclement weather conditions.
Snow Date #2	Wednesday April 21	
Retreat	Possible dates: Saturday April 24 or Saturday May 1	Date and location to be confirmed in September. The retreat is mandatory for all candidates.

PROPOSED CONFESSION DATES IN PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

EXPLANATION
For candidates to effectively receive the sacrament of Confirmation, they must be in a State of Grace by going to Confession the week prior to the date of the chosen ceremony or on the Saturday evening the weekend before their ceremony.

PROPOSED DATES FOR CONFIRMATION REHEARSALS AND CEREMONIES

SCHOOL	CELEBRATION DATE AND TIME (Tentative – to be confirmed in September)	REHEARSAL DATE, TIME & LOCATION (Mandatory rehearsal to be attended by the Candidate only)
CEREMONY 1	Wednesday May 5, 2021 at 7 pm	Tuesday, May 4, 2021 at 4:00 pm
CEREMONY 2	Wednesday May 12, 2021 at 7 pm	Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 4:00 pm
CEREMONY 3	Wednesday May 19, 2021 at 7 pm	Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 4:00 pm
CEREMONY 4	Wednesday May 26, 2021 at 7 pm	Tuesday, May 25, 2021 at 4:00 pm

Note: Ceremonies may be added or removed depending on our numbers and if we have to limit each family to 1 pew or less due to current social distancing requirements. We will need to remain flexible as naturally it is impossible to have any degree of certainty at this time.