



St. Mark's Catholic Church

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

June 23, 2023

Re: Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation / Year 2023-2024

Dear Parent(s):

You are receiving this letter because you have a child who will be entering **Grade 7** in the fall of 2023, 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.

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 each Sunday 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 the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass each weekend. 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 and classes begin, the candidates will be required to **complete a Journal at 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.

Attendance at all classes 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 package will have to be completed at home.

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, 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 the Confirmation program. 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.

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 7-8 young people for the sessions that will take place in the parish hall at St. Mark's Church. 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 January
- 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,



Fr. Tad Walczyk
Pastor
St. Mark's Church

Schedule of PROPOSED Dates for Confirmation 2023/2024

PRE-PROGRAM REGISTRATION AND PARENTS MEETING

EVENT	PROPOSED DATE	EXPLANATION
Online Registration	Tuesday, October 17, 2023 to Tuesday, October 31, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class and retreat 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 October.
Completion of Registration Process	Wednesday November 8, 2023 <i>(St. Mark's Church)</i> <i>Attendance by at least one parent or legal guardian is <u>mandatory</u>. Candidates/children not to attend.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring registration fee (\$130) 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.

* **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 8th.

ENROLMENT CEREMONY

EXPLANATION
<p>The Candidates are to attend an Enrolment Ceremony at <u>one</u> of the Masses on <u>either</u> of the following weekends: November 18th or 19th and November 25th or 26th. The Candidates will receive their blessed crosses and they will hand in their completed enrolment letter sharing why they want to be confirmed. (Parents will receive further instructions regarding this letter at the Parent Registration Night on November 8th).</p>

GROUP LEADER VOLUNTEER TRAINING SESSIONS

(for program volunteers only)

EVENT	PROPOSED DATE	EXPLANATION
Training Session	Thursday, January 11, 2024 6 pm in the Parish Hall	Volunteer Training for Confirmation Preparation

CONFIRMATION IMMEDIATE PREPARATION PROGRAM DATES

EVENT	PROPOSED DATE	EXPLANATION
Session #1	Wednesday January 17	Confirmation preparation sessions for all candidates.
Session #2	Wednesday January 24	Classes to take place in-person in the parish hall.
Session #3	Wednesday January 31	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 according to the order in which we receive the online registrations.
Session #4	Wednesday February 7	
Session #5	Wednesday February 21	
Session #6	Wednesday February 28	
Session #7	Wednesday March 6	
Session #8	Wednesday April 3	
Session #9	Wednesday, April 10	
Snow Date #1	Wednesday March 20	Only needed if one of the other classes is cancelled due to inclement weather conditions.
Snow Date #2	Wednesday April 17	
Retreat	<u>Group A</u> – 9 am to 12 pm <u>Group B</u> – 1 pm to 4 pm	The retreat is <u>mandatory</u> for all candidates. Date to be determined. Most likely to be held on Saturday, April 20 th or Saturday, April 27 th . Location: Parish Hall

PROPOSED CONFESSION DATES IN PREPARTION 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 before their ceremony. During each of the rehearsals listed below, each candidate will go to confession to either Fr. Tad or a visiting priest to ensure they are prepared to be Confirmed.

PROPOSED DATES FOR CONFIRMATION REHEARSALS AND CEREMONIES

CEREMONY	CELEBRATION DATE AND TIME (Tentative – to be confirmed in October)	REHEARSAL/CONFESSION DATE & TIME (Mandatory rehearsal to be attended by the Candidate only)
CEREMONY 1	Wednesday, May 8, 2024 at 7 pm	Tuesday, May 7, 2024 at 5 pm
CEREMONY 2	Wednesday, May 15, 2024 at 7 pm	Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at 5 pm
CEREMONY 3	Wednesday, May 22, 2024 at 7 pm	Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 5 pm
CEREMONY 4	Wednesday, May 29, 2024 at 7 pm	Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at 5 pm

Note:

In September, we will consult with the staff of St. Katharine Drexel School to determine how the children will be divided into the four ceremony dates listed above.

Parents of children who attend public or private schools will be contacted by email with the dates of their child’s celebrations and class group after they have attended the in-person registration night on November 8th.