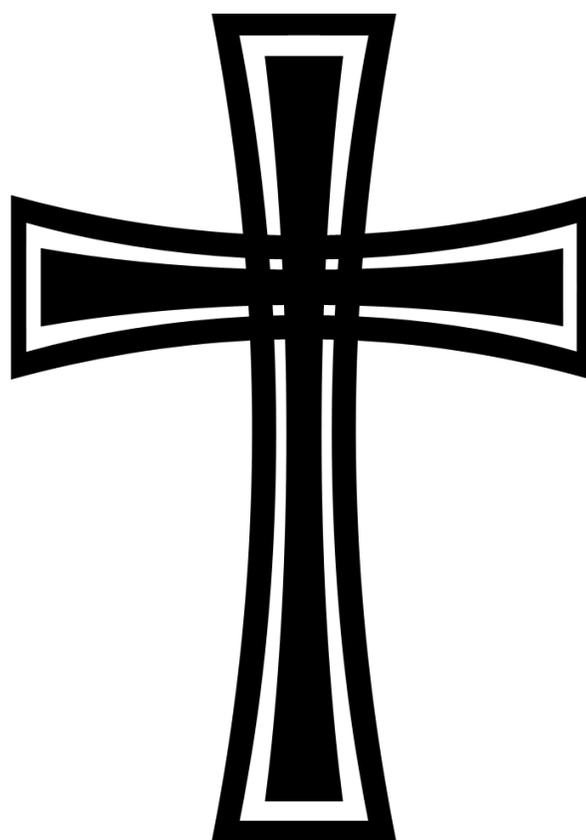


ST. ALPHONSUS PARISH

Confirmation Guidebook



THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

The Sacrament of Confirmation is one of the seven sacraments of our Catholic faith. Every sacrament is a special moment in our life with God and a deepening of our growth as God's people. God gives us his life in Baptism, shares His Son with us in Eucharist, forgives us in Reconciliation, strengthens us during the Anointing of the Sick, blesses our love in Marriage and ordains us to a special role in the church through Holy Orders.

The Sacrament of Confirmation is that moment when you, you yourself, promise God that you will be a faithful member of His Church. It is the public event during which you pronounce your "YES" to the process which was begun at your Baptism.

Confirmation gives you the gifts of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Counsel, Fortitude, Piety and Fear of the Lord. These gifts help you remain faithful to your promise.

It is the hope of the church that everyone will receive this sacrament and it should be received before Marriage or Holy Orders. **However, you – not anyone else – must freely choose to be confirmed.** It is a big decision and one you will want to think about seriously. Remember that not only do you bring your readiness and sincerity to the sacrament, God also blesses you and confirms you as one of His special people.

What is Confirmation?

The Sacrament of Confirmation...

- welcomes us and deepens our belonging to the faith community
- deepens our relationship to God, as Creator, Redeemer and Spirit
- strengthens us as disciples

A sacrament is part of the way that God loves us and calls us. A sacrament is God's love expressed as a free, undeserved gift.

- The Gift within Confirmation is that of strengthening us for discipleship and deepening our belonging to the faith community through the Trinity.

God uses visible signs to communicate invisible love. To communicate God's love, God uses our senses: eyes, ears, touch, smell and taste, as well as elements of our world.

- In Confirmation, the signs we will celebrate include being anointed with oil and the laying on of hands as we remember the water of Baptism and the nourishment of Eucharist.

God calls and invites; we respond. An attitude of openness communicates a "yes" to God's invitation to a deeper relationship. The "yes" does not mean we know that we will always be faithful or that we are worthy of the gift. "Yes" means we are open to be strengthened by God who calls and loves us.

- In Confirmation, we have the opportunity to say "yes" through the various responses in the prayer.

The community witnesses to and celebrates the sacraments. A sacrament is a powerful sign that God is alive and present in the world. As Church, we are called to the sacrament, that is to be God's hand and healing touch in the world. At the same time, we celebrate the sacraments as our most important prayer. This community that celebrates sacraments is global, reaching to other faith communities throughout the world and joined in a common bond. The community is also local as a diocese or archdiocese, as a parish and as a community of faith in families.

- In Confirmation, the community witnesses our celebration and provides a sponsor who represents the love of the community for us.

REQUIREMENTS FOR CONFIRMATION

- Fulfillment of ALL SUNDAY and Holy Day obligations (**5 Mass Reflection sheets**)
- Participation in **ALL** classes
- Participation in A Confirmation retreat: **October 30th-31st or November 20th – 21st**
- Participation in Reconciliation or Communion retreat with younger buddies, sign-up for **Saturday morning 9AM-12PM: December 11th, January 8th, February 26th, or March 5th**
- Completion of **30 hours** of community service starting in 10th grade
- Regularly scheduled meetings with sponsor
- **Interview** with Confirmation staff member on **March 6th**, which is the final turn-in date for the Bishop's questionnaire, any missing Mass reflection sheets (5 total), Gifts of the Holy Spirit Journal, sponsor recommendation (half sheet in the guidebook), and documentation of service hours

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CONFIRMATION

- Pray for guidance to make an informed choice
- Choose a sponsor that can truly help you in your Christian growth
- Take your journey of Confirmation with classmates, parents & sponsor
- Receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before receiving Confirmation
- Set your goals for the future of your faith journey

SPONSOR RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CONFIRMATION

- Pray for your candidate
- Share your faith with your candidate
- Attend the Sponsor/Candidate activities including the rehearsal date
- Complete all 7 “Gifts of the Holy Spirit” sections in the guidebook together
- Take the journey of Confirmation with your candidate

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CONFIRMATION

- Pray for your child
- Share your faith with your child
- Attend Information meeting
- Encourage your child to choose a sponsor
- Help your child choose Confirmation for themselves and not just to please others
- Become part of the preparation for Confirmation
- Take the journey of Confirmation with your child

SPECIFIC DUTIES AND OBLIGATIONS OF CATHOLICS

1. Keep holy the day of the Lord’s Resurrection: to worship God by participating in Mass every Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation; to avoid those activities that would hinder renewal of soul and body, e.g., needless work and business activities, unnecessary shopping, etc.
2. To lead a sacramental life. In part this means to receive Holy Communion frequently and the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly: minimally, to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year (annual confession is obligatory only if serious sin is involved); minimally, to receive Holy Communion at least once a year, between the First Sunday of Lent and Trinity Sunday. Most importantly, to live a sacramental life is to live a life that is itself a sign of God’s presence on earth, and helps others to experience this presence.
3. To study Catholic teaching in preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, to be confirmed, and then to continue to study and advance the cause of Christ.
4. To observe the marriage laws of the Church: to give religious training (by example and word) to one’s children; to use parish schools and religious education programs.
5. To strengthen and support the Church: one’s own parish community and parish priests; the worldwide Church and the Holy Father.
6. To do penance, including abstaining from meat and fasting from food on the appointed days.
7. To join the in missionary spirit and apostolate of the Church, always reaching out to the needy and oppressed in every way that is possible for you.

CHOOSING A SPONSOR

Sponsors must:

- be designated by the one to be confirmed
- be 16 years old
- be a Catholic who has been confirmed and who has already received the sacrament of Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken
- not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared
- **not be the father or mother of the one to be confirmed (c. 874)**
“While parents are not to serve as sponsors, their role in the faith development of their children is not to be underplayed or minimized.”

The Revised Code has altered the practice of permitting parent sponsors for two reasons:

- The sponsor is seen as someone who assists parents in their obligation to bring up their child in the faith – especially in the event the parents are unable to perform this function.
- The sponsor represents the larger Church – the entire community of believers.

“As far as possible a sponsor for the one to be confirmed should be present; it is for the sponsor to see that the confirmed person acts as a true witness to Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations connected with this sacrament.” (c.893)

Candidates may have more than one sponsor, however, only one should be designated as the liturgical sponsor who will present the candidate for Confirmation (CGU, p. 10)

It is recommended that someone who lives nearby be chosen as the sponsor so she or he can become more intimately involved in the candidate’s preparation. Someone from a long distance away may be a sponsor, though this is not ideal. A proxy may fill in for a sponsor who is unable to attend confirmation (CGU, p. 10).

Priests, religious sisters and brothers may be sponsors. Religious sisters and brothers need permission from their immediate supervisor to act as sponsor (CGU, p. 10).

WHAT DO SPONSORS DO?

We may agree that as adults in today’s world, we are used to being defined by what we do. In fact, this is a common first question we ask one another on first meeting. It is a comfortable way to initiate the small talk that at some point might evolve into deeper conversation. Yes, as a Confirmation sponsor, you will have particular things “to do.” These may include attending rehearsal, buying a gift, walking with the candidate to the bishop, going to dinner after the liturgy. But you are about to embark on a journey with a young person. *What you do* is not the primary concern. This is a journey concerned less with what you will do as a sponsor and more with who you are as a person of the Gospel. This journey will take you and a young person to new and exciting places in the life of faith. Faith penetrates the heart of the matter – how has faith penetrated who you are; can a young person read the Good News in the actions of your life?

- **Called to a Relationship with Youth**

In your role as a sponsor you are a minister with youth. You are a part of an exercise in building relationships. These relationships allow young people to know adults who care about them and who are willing to walk as fellow pilgrims on a life-long journey of faith. A special young person has called you into deeper relationship. At the center of this relationship is our faith. And in a particular way, your unique ability to share your faith with this person is more important than the Confirmation program itself. This guidebook strives to help you walk with your young person.

- **Nurturer and Supporter of Faith Growth**

You are one of the nurturers and supporters of faith growth for the Confirmation candidate. The integrity with which you live your faith and take care of its growth is as important as the walk in faith you are a part of with the young person. You have been chosen to share that faith is a gift freely given by God, and that our response to that gift is the challenge of us all as members of the Body of Christ. Communicating with interest and excitement the challenge of living as Catholics in today's world is a wonderful gift to share with youth. We hope that this guidebook inspires you in your own spiritual journey.

- **Being Present**

Your presence in the life of the young person who has chosen you as sponsor is essential. You can be present in many ways; look further in this book for some practical ideas. Your relationship has the potential for creating very sacred space between the two of you – holy ground. To walk on holy ground with a young person is indeed a blessing! This guidebook will give you some practical tools for helping a young person grow in faith and at the same time challenge your own faith through the mutuality of the relationship.

SPONSOR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. You are asked to meet at least once each month with your candidate from now until Interview Night. Please record the meeting times and dates on the "Record of Your Meeting with the Candidate" form. Meetings can be:

- Attending mass together
- Discussing Confirmation classes
- Praying
- Going to Reconciliation
- Reading Scripture together

The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit need to be discussed during some of these meetings. As you discuss the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, you need to record your conversation in the provided "Gifts of the Spirit Journal".

2. You must complete the "Letter of Recommendation" and give it to your candidate to bring to their interview. An example letter is included in this booklet.
3. You must help your candidate complete the Bishop's questionnaire.
4. You must attend Sponsor Day/Night
5. You must attend the Confirmation rehearsal with your candidate.

CONFIRMATION NAMES

Guidelines from our Bishops

- Candidates may use their baptismal name or another Christian name when receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- A Christian name would be the name of a saint or blessed.
- Derivatives of names (Kelly for Catherine; Jenna for Genevieve) or Old Testament names are also appropriate.
- Candidates may use their first or second names if they are Christian names, or they may select a new Christian name.
- The candidate should know the relationship of the name to the religious Christian tradition.
- Exceptions can be made if a particular non-Christian or family name has significant meaning for a candidate that can be articulated to the bishop.
- Most importantly, candidates should be encouraged to learn about their patron as part of their preparation for the sacrament and should particularly focus on the virtues of their patron they wish to emulate.
- For more information: <https://www.archmil.org/YouthEv/Confirmation-Names.htm>

THE INTERVIEW

Each candidate will have a private interview with a St. Alphonsus staff member or Catechist.

Interview discussion may include: the candidate's expectations, a description of their faith journey, personal goals, sponsor choice, prayer and faith life and community service experiences.

1. Since the Bishop does not have direct contact with each candidate prior to Confirmation day, he requests that each candidate complete the questionnaire on the next page expressing the desire to celebrate the sacrament.
2. We will check your involvement in community service activities and your class participation. Inconsistent attendance in class constitutes a serious enough reason for us to question your readiness for the Sacrament and we may ask you to postpone your Confirmation for another year or later.
3. Final date of bringing all required items is on interview night:
 - Completed questionnaire for the Bishop
 - "Letter of Recommendation" sheet from your sponsor (signed)
 - "Record of Meetings" sheet with your sponsor (completed & signed)
 - Documentation of service hours completed
 - Gifts of the Holy Spirit Journal
 - Any outstanding Mass reflection sheets (5 total)

Candidate Questionnaire for the Reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation

Student's Name (PLEASE PRINT): _____

Parish: _____ Date of Confirmation: _____

Confirmation Name: _____

Why I chose this name as my Confirmation Name: _____

Who I chose for my sponsor and why: _____

Volunteer service projects that I have done in preparing for Confirmation and what I have learned from them:

I wish to receive the sacrament of Confirmation because: _____

How have you grown in your faith life? How do you plan to live it in the future? _____

List one thing from your personal life that you would like the Bishop to know about you.

I am freely choosing to be confirmed into the Catholic faith. (Circle one) YES NO

Signature: _____

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT JOURNAL

As you begin this time of sharing in preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation, you may be wondering what the gifts of the Spirit are and why you are working with them. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says:

The moral life of Christians is sustained by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are permanent dispositions which make [us] docile in following the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence, and wonder and awe. They belong in their fullness to Christ, Son of David. They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them.

We receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit first at our baptism. Confirmation strengthens those gifts. Because we were too young to reflect on these gifts when we were baptized, preparation for Confirmation helps us to focus on those gifts we know we have and those we wish to discover or develop further. By being aware of these gifts, we can more easily discover how to live a good Christian life.

As part of the Confirmation process, the candidate and sponsor need to discuss the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. The discussions are guided by the worksheets provided in the Gifts of the Spirit Journal. The sponsor is responsible for recording the answers to the discussion questions in the journal and the candidate is responsible for turning the completed Gifts of the Spirit Journal in at their interview.

As you begin each time together, it may be helpful to pray this prayer to the Holy Spirit, one that has been in our tradition for a long time:

*Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your spirit and they shall be recreated, and you shall renew the face of the earth.*

By discussing and exploring these gifts together, hopefully you will discover new things about yourself and each other.

Wisdom

Wisdom helps us make right decisions and guides us from doing wrong. Wisdom is a gift people build up through experience. A wise person knows what to do in many situations. A wise believer sees the people and events of human history fitting together in the large plan of God's love.

1. Think of a person you consider wise. How do you think they received wisdom? How does wisdom influence their lives?
2. Talk about a book or movie you have read or seen in which the main character seems to be very wise. Tell why you think this person acted wisely.
3. Write some words of wisdom that are yours. Make them words you would like to live by.
4. Do you tend to live for the moment or do you try to look ahead and consider the future? How could the gift of wisdom help you in everyday decisions?

"The Lord gives wisdom." (Proverbs 2:6)

Record of Your Meetings with the Candidate

Candidate Name: _____ Sponsor Name: _____

Please keep a record of the times you meet with your candidate to discuss Confirmation. We will ask the candidate to bring this record to class toward the end of the Confirmation sessions.

Meeting One:

DATE: _____ TIME: _____ PLACE: _____

WHAT DID YOU DO?

IS THERE ANYTHING NOTEWORTHY ABOUT THE CANDIDATE'S PROGRESS TOWARD CONFIRMATION?

Meeting Two:

DATE: _____ TIME: _____ PLACE: _____

WHAT DID YOU DO?

IS THERE ANYTHING NOTEWORTHY ABOUT THE CANDIDATE'S PROGRESS TOWARD CONFIRMATION?

Meeting Three:

DATE: _____ TIME: _____ PLACE: _____

WHAT DID YOU DO?

IS THERE ANYTHING NOTEWORTHY ABOUT THE CANDIDATE'S PROGRESS TOWARD CONFIRMATION?

Meeting Four:

DATE: _____ TIME: _____ PLACE: _____

WHAT DID YOU DO?

IS THERE ANYTHING NOTEWORTHY ABOUT THE CANDIDATE'S PROGRESS TOWARD CONFIRMATION?

Meeting Five:

DATE:

TIME:

PLACE:

WHAT DID YOU DO?

ANYTHING NOTEWORTHY?

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Instructions: Please complete and give one of the following letters to your candidate to turn in at their interview.

Dear Members of St. Alphonsus Parish,

As sponsor of _____, I attest to the individual's sincerity and effort in striving to develop the qualities we have a right to expect of members of our faith community. I therefore personally recommend the candidate be confirmed in membership in the Holy Catholic Church.

Respectfully,

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Dear Members of St. Alphonsus Parish,

After discussion with _____, a candidate for Confirmation as a member of the Holy Catholic Church, we have decided that it is best the Confirmation be postponed until a later date.

Respectfully,

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____