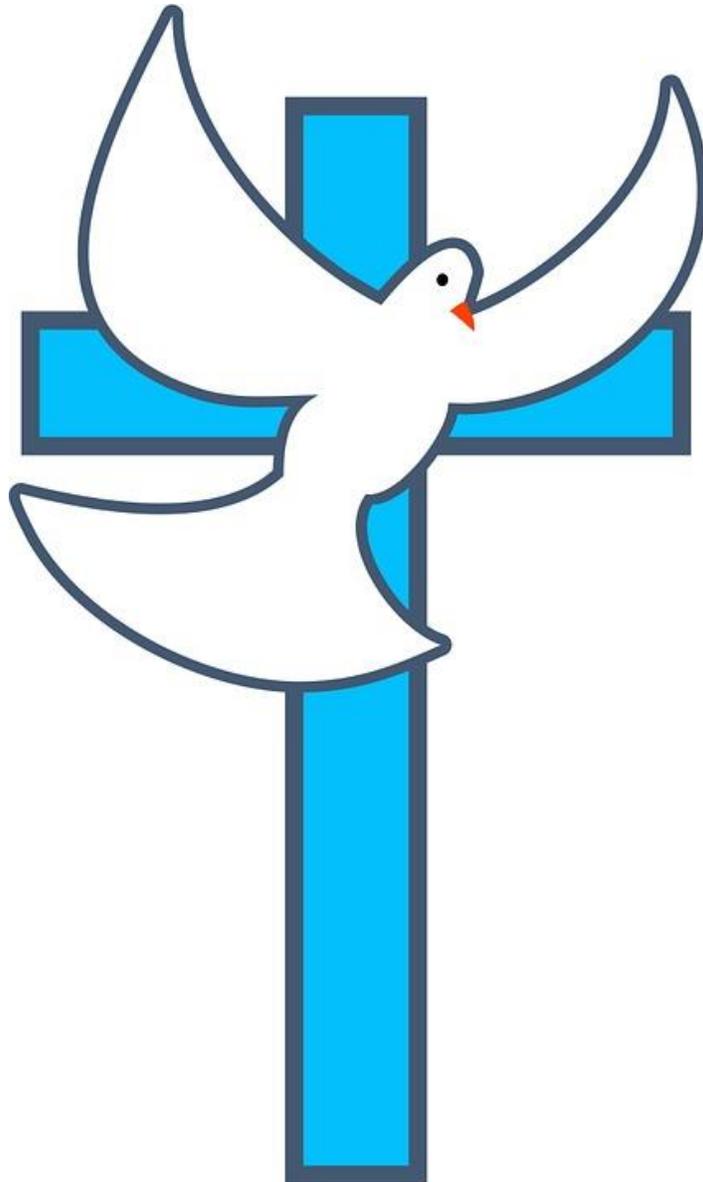


**ST. ALPHONSUS PARISH**  
**Confirmation Sponsor**  
**Guidebook**



## INTRODUCTION

You have accepted a responsibility that is an honor in our Church – the role of Confirmation Sponsor. Your role is to spiritually walk with the candidate during the preparation for this sacrament. You will be assisting the young person in being a true witness and disciple of Jesus, and representing the community when you present your candidate to the celebrant at the Confirmation ceremony. Your role does not end at the Confirmation liturgy; you will help the young person fulfill his or her baptismal promises after Confirmation with the help of the Holy Spirit.

This booklet includes information for you to use as you help guide the Confirmation Candidate in their journey into full faith membership in the Church. The booklet also contains all the paperwork that you, the Sponsor need to complete.

## SPONSOR'S PRAYER

*God of all ages,*

*You sent out your spirit to touch the hearts of people so that they may believe in you and in Jesus whom you sent.*

*Look kindly on all the Confirmation Candidates as they listen to our voice. Open their hearts to your spirit. And bring to fulfillment the good work you have begun in them.*

*As I reach out to guide them into full membership in the church make me an instrument of your love. Teach me to revere what is holy in others, and help me to pass it on by good example. With those who are hesitant or afraid, let me be a source of encouragement. And with those who are weak, let me be a pillar of strength.*

*I humbly accept the ministry of sponsor and pray that you will continue to guide me and sustain me in this important role.*

*We praise you through Christ our Lord.*

*Amen.*

“...Confirmed by the gift of the Spirit, that they give witness to Christ by lives built on faith and love...”

## 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.

## SPONSOR QUALIFICATIONS

To be admitted to the role of sponsor, a person must:

- Be designated by the one to be confirmed
- Be at least 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. 894). “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:

1. 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.
2. The sponsor represents the larger Church – the entire community of believers.

“Parents may present their son/daughter to the bishop for confirmation.” (Confirmation and Canon Law, p 4)

“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)

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT SPONSORS

### **May a candidate have more than one sponsor?**

Yes; however, only one should be designated as the liturgical sponsor who will present the candidate for confirmation.

### **May someone who cannot be present be a sponsor and someone else fill in as proxy?**

Yes; however, it is recommended that someone nearby be chosen as the sponsor so that she or he can become more intimately involved in the candidate’s preparation.

### **May a priest or professed religious be a sponsor?**

The former prohibition against priests or religious acting as sponsors has been eliminated from the 1983 code. Therefore, a priest may act as either a baptismal or confirmation sponsor. Religious are also free to undertake this role unless there is a specific restriction in their own Constitution.

## 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 an 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 Palm Sunday. 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 a Reconciliation service
- 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 write their letter to the Archbishop. A sample letter is included in this booklet.
4. You must attend the Confirmation rehearsal with your candidate.

## **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.

Here is a guideline to writing your letter to the Archbishop, Bishop or president of Confirmation:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

In the body of the letter, please include:

- Why you wish to be confirmed
- What you have done or are doing to prepare for Confirmation
- What commitments you understand that you are taking on by being confirmed
- Any other pertinent information, personal details, etc.

Sincerely,

*Jane Doe*

Jane Doe

\*\* The letter must be typed, not handwritten. See the example on the next page.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Being confirmed is a big step and a very important step in my life. Now, as a senior in high school and as an adult, I feel I am ready to be confirmed.

In the past, I used to dislike going to Mass, but now I look forward to it. I have learned a lot, especially in the past couple of months, about who I am and why I am here. God and Christ have shown me what I am to do with my life on earth, and that is to help and teach others. This is why I wish to be confirmed.

Being confirmed will be for me, a step closer to knowing and fulfilling God's Commandments. It will also be something I have fulfilled on my own without any coaxing or pushing from family or friends. It is my "gift" from God and Christ for fulfilling my life, and the opening of the door to my "gift" for others.

Just recently I had the chance to use my gift, the gift to work with children. Here at St. Alphonsus, I have become a catechist. I am helping a special little girl to prepare for her First Holy Communion. This commitment and several others have and still are preparing me for my Confirmation.

Having learned and done these things in these past months has really helped to get my life going in the direction it should be, but I could not have done it without the special people and catechists who have been preparing me for my Confirmation. I could never show them enough of my love and thanks.

"Some people brought children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples scolded the people. When Jesus noticed this, he was angry and said to his disciples, 'Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I assure you that whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.' Then he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on each of them, and blessed them." (Mark 10.13-16)

Confirmation is my being brought to Jesus, and being taken in His arms and being blessed.

Sincerely,

*Jane Doe*

Jane Doe

## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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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: \_\_\_\_\_

## 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. There is also a page at the end of the journal called "Reflections on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit". The Confirmation candidate completes this page after completing the pages on each of the gifts of the Holy Spirit with their sponsor. The candidate turns this page 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?















## ***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?

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