

September 19, 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to this year's Confirmation session. We, as the Catholic Parishes of Penticton, are committed to working in partnership with our families in the Religious Education of our children.

The celebration of the sacraments is of utmost importance in the life of the Church and each of its members. We know that Confirmation, with Baptism and Eucharist, is a Sacrament of Initiation. Both Baptism and Confirmation prepare the way for our full sharing in the Eucharist. Our full sharing in the Eucharist is the event that draws us into communion of life in God.

At this stage in your child's spiritual journey, he or she is expected to take the lead in the decision to be confirmed. We encourage each family to take an active role in the spiritual formation of their children and help them to decide if he or she is ready for this sacrament. If, during the course of the preparation, you become aware that your child is not ready to celebrate the sacrament, you are asked to contact the parish.

We need to really focus on Confirmation as a sacrament which empowers us to celebrate the Eucharist in a new and more dynamic way through the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are sent out from the Sunday Eucharist as people whose mission it is to witness to Christ in the world. The Spirit given us in Confirmation enables us to give a powerful and effective witness to Christ's presence.

As a family, the first thing you can do to help your daughter or son to prepare for Confirmation is to recommit to "full, active and conscious participation" in Sunday Eucharist. Participating in the Sunday Eucharist is not "an option" in our Christian way of life. "Going to Mass" is not one of the rules for Catholics. Rather, it is what defines us as Catholic Christians. It is the celebration which identifies us as followers of Christ. We gain our very identity as Catholic Christians from the weekly Sunday celebration.

Candidates for Confirmation are called to join with the fully initiated members, their parents and other parishioners at the Sunday celebration. As well, the Sunday assembly needs to worship with the candidates for Confirmation. The preparation for and celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation comes at a time when your son or daughter is facing many personal changes. **You are invited to see this time of preparation as a gift: a time to refocus your family, to gather together for a shared family meal and a time to renew your commitment to full participation in the Sunday Eucharist.**

As required by the Norms for Sacramental Preparation of the Diocese of Nelson, **the parish is providing the IMMEDIATE preparation for the sacraments**, in this case, Confirmation. In order to ensure that all candidates receive an equal understanding of what the Sacrament entails, the diocese has set standards which are followed by The Catholic Parishes of Penticton. Sacramental Preparation can be broken down into two phases; **INITIAL and IMMEDIATE.**

INITIAL preparation is something that as Catholics we experience at all times. INITIAL preparation includes Sunday worship, prayer in the family, religious education, and the daily living of a Catholic life style. IMMEDIATE preparation involves all the elements from the INITIAL phase; however it includes specific Sacramental catechesis on the Sacrament being anticipated. The IMMEDIATE preparation for the celebration of the Sacraments is the responsibility of the parents and the parish.

The candidates at Holy School School will receive their religious education classes at the school. But the other activities geared towards preparing for Confirmation are to be attended by both Holy Cross candidates and those who attend public school. We are integrating catechism and liturgy in this program. All candidates, attending both public and Catholic schools are required to participate in the Rite of Enrollment, retreat, volunteering a few hours of Christian service and other events as indicated in the program.

Classes for Confirmation Preparation will be held on Mondays in the Church hall. We have prepared a comprehensive program for you to take care home.

About the Program:

The Classes follow the *'Alive in Christ'* and *'Formed'*. The Catholic Parishes of Penticton has purchased a subscription to *'Formed'*; a Faith-based, on-line service that gives us access to educational and entertaining material of all kinds, for all ages. Educational Programs, Movies, Books, Audio Recordings, Sacramental Preparation and content prepared for families. We invite you to access this resource at no charge to you. We will send you information on how to access this subscription. The subscription is quite expensive and we hope you can avail yourself of the opportunity to access it. Last year, families asked if they can help in covering the cost. If you feel called to do so, you are welcomed to but we are offering access to our families at no cost.

What is expected / required of families and candidates?

Families are encouraged to lead by example. Families are expected to participate in the education of their children by encouraging prayers, fulfilling required readings and take home assignments, and attending all mandatory meetings. Families and candidates are expected to attend weekly Sunday Mass regularly at either St. Ann's or St. John Vianney Parish except when we are having a particular celebration that requires everyone to be in one parish. Candidates are expected to fully participate in all aspects of their Confirmation preparation including attending all preparation classes, completing all assignments in the time provided as well as volunteering a few hours of Christian service. Candidates are to keep Mass journal and write down something about their encounter with Jesus at Sunday Mass. The journal will be signed by Fr. Obi at the end of Mass. This gives me the opportunity to connect with the candidates and their families and answer any question you might have. Keeping of Sunday journal is something special as candidates will keep this journal with them for the rest of their lives and show to their children when they have their own families. It is journal of our walk with Jesus.

Please provide a copy of Baptismal Certificate. These certificates should have the name of the Church, and contact information for that church as we must be able to notify them of the candidates Confirmation.

There is never a "charge" for the sacraments. However, the parish does need to cover the cost of programming. We would appreciate it if families could help cover these costs through a fee of \$50 per child and \$75 for family.

We look forward to working with you over the next year, and we hope you find the program enjoyable. If you have any questions regarding Confirmation preparation, please feel free to contact Fr. Obi or Dianna Gin. Dianna Gin: 250 488 5550; Fr. Obi: 250 492 3169

Blessings,

Fr. Obi & Dianna Gin