



IMMEDIATE YEAR 2015-2016



CHOSEN

YOUR JOURNEY TOWARD CONFIRMATION

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WHAT IS CONFIRMATION?

Throughout Church history one of the primary tools for teaching and expressing the Christian belief has been liturgy and sacraments. Over the years liturgy has changed and developed based on new theological understandings and pastoral concerns. Arguably the most important sacraments in terms of teaching and expressing the Christian belief have been the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

From very early on in Church tradition there has been a strong emphasis on initiating potential members in the proper way. Different liturgical practices sprang up in various places, all with their own unique understanding of what Christian initiation meant. Very early on baptism, anointing (what happens at Confirmation), and Eucharist are seen within these practices. However, the method of doing these things varied, sometimes widely, in the ancient Christian world. Some of the rites of these areas seemed to baptize with oil instead of water, some intertwined baptism with a profession of faith, while others simply used the Trinitarian formula (in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) found in the Gospels. Some traditions accompanied their Eucharistic celebrations with entire meals, where others may have simply had the bread and wine. These early traditions eventually encountered one another, shared ideas, and slowly overlapped and became more and more similar. The overall initiation sacrament, which encompassed all baptism, anointing, and Eucharist slowly disintegrated into three distinct sacraments, Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. It was by liturgical accident that Confirmation was moved away from its rightful place between Baptism and Eucharist.

Even with the proper order of the sacraments being misplaced, Church teaching is very clear about the sacrament of Confirmation. It is the sacrament that bestows upon us the fullness of the Holy Spirit that was given to us at Baptism. This is the same Spirit that filled the Apostles with the zeal and courage needed by all who are to be public witnesses to Christ. Confirmation celebrates God's presence in our lives as the Holy Spirit continues to guide, strengthen, and empower us to live and witness the Good News of Jesus Christ. Christians, on the day of their Confirmation, become public witnesses to Christ and his saving works. Confirmation is not our first encounter with the Holy Spirit. The first encounter takes place at Baptism. The Trinity comes to dwell in the newly baptized as they are born again in water and the Spirit. Baptism brings people into a personal union with God. Thus introduced to the ways of God and the Spirit, the sacrament of Confirmation continues the process by having the Holy Spirit strengthened within us. Confirmation completes and perfects Baptism.

Sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, Christians more perfectly become the image of their Lord and are filled with the Holy Spirit. They bear witness to Him before the world and eagerly work for the building up of the body of Christ. Confirmed Christians bear witness of Christ through both their actions and their words. They get involved in community service, volunteering both their time and talent. They respond more deeply to the gift of the Spirit as an outward sign of desiring to live more aware of Christ and more committed to His mission of serving others. Confirmation is not an end to church involvement and faith development. On the contrary, Confirmation is part of the bigger picture of what it means to be Christian.

Cleansed in the waters of Baptism and strengthened with the Holy Spirit at Confirmation, we come to the "source and summit" of our Christian faith: the Eucharist. It is fitting that the last sacrament of initiation is the Eucharist, as it is the only repeatable sacrament of initiation. Every week we come to the table of Christ to be nourished and strengthened by the Eucharist in order to better live out our Confirmed Baptismal responsibilities. It is Eucharist that is the "end" of our initiation, an initiation that reminds us to keep growing in our faith.

CONFIRMATION REQUIREMENTS

The diocese requires 2 phases of Confirmation preparation, Remote Year or Year I and Immediate Year or Year II. At St. Thomas More the Remote Year, or first year at STM, is typically done in 9th grade. The Immediate Year, or second year at STM, is typically done in 10th grade. If any teens under the age of 18 have not yet received Confirmation, they are also in either Remote or Immediate Year. Each year has its own unique requirements.

THE REMOTE YEAR (YEAR I) focuses mainly on teaching the basic doctrines and dogmas of the Catholic faith. For that reason great emphasis is placed on Faith Development class. The Remote Year candidates must also complete service hours and parish ministry hours. The purpose of community and parish ministry service is to teach our youth the goodness of helping others in our community, and to provide concrete examples of how to live as Jesus taught us. The exact requirements are as follows:

Remote Year (Year 1):

- Attend roughly 80% of all TYM or home-catechesis sessions
(no more than 4 absences allowed)
- Complete 5 hours of community outreach service
- Complete 5 hours of parish ministry service
- Attend at least 2 social events
- Receive Reconciliation
- Begin thinking about who to choose as a sponsor

THE IMMEDIATE YEAR (YEAR II) focuses primarily on the sacrament of Confirmation, its history, theology, and how it impacts our lives. Confirmation is a sacrament of initiation, for that reason great emphasis is placed on community building, and teaching about what it means to be initiated into our Catholic faith. Immediate Year candidates must continue with community and parish ministry service hours as well as a mandatory retreat. The bulk of sacramental preparation is done in the Immediate Year because of the immediacy of the sacrament. The exact requirements are as follows:

Immediate Year (Year II)

- Attend roughly 80% of all TYM or home-catechesis sessions
(no more than 4 absences allowed)
- Complete 5 hours of community outreach service
- Complete 5 hours of parish ministry service
- Must attend at least **2** two Social events each year (See Website)
- Receive Reconciliation
- Review and Study the 'Bishop's Confirmation Questions'.
- Immediate Year candidates must attend a Confirmation Retreat – **Sept. 24, 2016 at Camp New Hope**
- Immediate Year candidates must attend a pre-Confirmation Interview -August
- Must write a paragraph about the saint name they have adopted by August
- Sponsor and Candidate Retreat and Luncheon-**August 7, 2016 2:30-6:30**
- Must attend the Confirmation Rehearsal-**Sunday, October 2 at 6:30-STM**
- Choose a Sponsor to help with spiritual growth by **April 1, 2016**
- Attend the **Confirmation Liturgy-Thursdays, October 6 at 6:30**, St Thomas More

CONFIRMATION DONE THROUGH PARISH REGARDLESS OF SCHOOL

Confirmation is the second sacrament of initiation. It further brings us into our Catholic community, and it brings us closer to our local faith community, namely the St. Thomas More community. For this reason all Confirmation preparation is done through the parish to which one belongs. Religious education through parochial or diocesan schools does not include sacramental preparation for Confirmation and therefore does not fulfill the Confirmation requirements.

We are blessed here at St. Thomas More to have a thriving elementary and middle school and a nearby Catholic high school run by the diocese. This gives our parish a unique character with well educated youth. We are sensitive to the fact that many of our youth have a theological background, and have reviewed the curriculum of Cardinal Gibbons to better adapt our program to all of our youths' needs. The depth and character of our program is different than that of Cardinal Gibbons and is set up to provide a different atmosphere than that of a high school. With this in mind, it is important that everyone participate in TYM so that all of our youth have an opportunity to share their knowledge and talents with each other, and to become part of the community that they will be further initiated into.

Also keep in mind that there is much more to faith formation than religious education. There is no doubt that knowledge of our faith is an excellent thing to have, but in the St. Thomas More TYM program we intend to minister to our youth in more ways than doctrinal and dogmatic teaching. Only through the parish will they be able to attend the various social and spiritual events planned throughout the year. It is of utmost importance to feed our youths' spiritual lives as well as their hunger for knowledge.

It is for the reasons given above that all youth, regardless of school or theological background attend either the TYM sessions or the approved home-catechesis program here at St. Thomas More in order to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.



MINISTRY OF SERVICE - PART OF WHAT MEANS TO BE CATHOLIC

Jesus said, "Here I am among you as one who serves."(Luke 22:27)

Why do service?

As Catholic Christians, a ministry of service is one of the most important things we do. Throughout Scripture we are called to love our neighbor and to stand up for justice and peace. Micah 6:8 reminds us that the Lord only asks that we "act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with our God". Since justice and service are so important to who we are as Catholics, we ask that each Confirmation candidate do community service and parish ministry. Each candidate is expected to do five (5) hours of community service and five (5) hours of parish ministry service per year. This amounts to 20 hours of service altogether over 2 years.

How long should my service last?

Serving others is not just something we do to "get it over with;" it is a part of what it means for us to be Catholic. Therefore, it is recommended that Confirmation candidates become involved in a new service project that is ongoing, and that becomes a regular commitment. Doing "service" at home, where you are already expected to help out, does not count for a Confirmation service project. 10 hrs may seem like a lot but if you spread that over just 10 months, it is 1hr monthly of service. The same principle applies for Parish Ministry hours. Most service projects can also be used for school graduation requirements.

What is the difference between a parish ministry and community service?

A parish ministry is a service specifically helping the St. Thomas More Community. Our teens will never really know what it means to belong to a community unless they become involved in a concrete way. Confirmation is about getting off the side-lines and getting involved. There are a lot of ways for our youth to serve, whether it is helping with Elementary Faith Development, decorating the Church, keeping the Youth House clean, or helping on Parish Pride Day. Parish ministry helps our youth make a connection to their parish family and it helps them to witness the dynamic life of the parish. They will meet people from all different walks of life and they will come away enriched by this experience of the Church and parish life. The parish ministry service should be something that our youth enjoy doing, so that they will continue to be involved in it after their Confirmation.

Jesus challenges us to love our neighbor in a radical new way. By serving the "least of these" among us, we become the hands and feet of Christ. In fact, this is how we will mostly be judged - by what we did to help our brothers and sisters, or more importantly, what we didn't do. Our youth can only fulfill their service requirements by serving those in need directly. Service done through the school is acceptable so long as it is helping the disadvantaged, the elderly, or those most in need. Service opportunities will be advertised and encouraged at youth group sessions so that everyone can be informed of the opportunities available.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What if my teen really doesn't want to go through the preparation process?

Confirmation can be a frustrating process for some parents and youth. Our catechists offer up their valuable time and gifts to help our youth prepare for Confirmation and we want to respect that. However, some of our candidates make it really apparent that they don't want to be there. All candidates will have a three strike policy when it comes to classroom discipline. On the third strike, they will have to postpone their confirmation and begin the program again the following year. We encourage our youth to at least commit to it for a year and if they don't want to proceed to the final stage of preparation, then they can make a decision to delay their confirmation. Confirmation will also take a big commitment from parents, friends and family. We know that dealing with teenagers is tough, especially when it comes to faith. If it keeps on being a major battle in your household, step back for a bit and re-evaluate. If your teen isn't ready, then they aren't ready. Ultimately it should be their decision. There are other opportunities to be confirmed in the future but your involvement in this process will make a big difference.

How should I choose a Sponsor?

Remember, this sacrament should be the youth's choice, and should be an opportunity for them to exercise some responsibility for their Catholic faith. The youth's sponsor should not be chosen by the parents, but in fact by the youth. This will give the youth a sense of ownership, and let them see for themselves other adults that take their faith seriously.

Can a proxy for the sponsors stand in for the candidates for the Confirmation rehearsal and the Confirmation liturgy?

A proxy can stand in for both the rehearsal and liturgy so long as they meet the same canonical requirements as the actual sponsor.

What is the penalty for not completing requirements?

A process of mutual discernment will take place between the Director of Confirmation, the candidate, parents, and the catechists to decide whether a candidate should continue with the process or drop out. We expect a serious commitment from all involved, especially from the candidate. Candidates must demonstrate a desire to participate in this process.

Does my teen choose a Confirmation Name?

Because of the intrinsic relationship between Baptism and Confirmation, candidates usually retain their baptismal name for the celebration of the Sacrament. If the candidate's name is of Christian origin, the candidate is asked to become familiar with the life and witness of this saint. If the candidate's name is not of Christian origin, the candidate may desire to choose a saint's named for Confirmation and be confirmed by that name.

Can my teen choose an additional name for Confirmation?

A custom exists wherein a candidate with a Christian baptismal name chooses an additional name for Confirmation. ***The Bishop of Raleigh encourages this custom.*** Candidates desiring to practice this custom are asked to become familiar with the life and witness of this saint.

REQUIREMENTS FOR HOME CATECHESIS

As parents, you are called to be the primary educators of your children. Knowing this, the Church allows, and encourages the family to go through catechesis in the home, if desired. Home Catechesis is offered at St. Thomas More, and any Confirmation preparation will be monitored by the Director of Youth Ministry. Each parent that is providing Home Catechesis will be considered a catechist for the purposes of TYM and each youth will be held to the same requirements as the youth within the Sunday TYM program. The exact requirements are as follows:

Youth Requirements:

- Must attend at least **2** two Social events each year
- Must perform minimum **5** hours of service to the community each year
- Must perform minimum **5** hours of parish ministry each year
- Immediate Year candidates must attend a Confirmation Retreat
- Immediate Year candidates must attend a pre-Confirmation Interview
- Must attend TYM Large Groups, and Speakers Series events
- Must write a paragraph about the life of their saint
- Sponsor and Candidate Retreat and Luncheon
- Must attend the Confirmation Rehearsal and Liturgy
- Receive Reconciliation

Parent Requirements:

- Must attend catechist training, including the Catechist Workshop
- Must participate in all Catechist support meetings
- Must participate in Confirmation Retreat
- Must keep with set curriculum, including the Bishop's 20 questions

