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Confirmation Covenant

Congratulations, we are so excited that you are considering the sacrament of confirmation. Believe it or not, this journey actually started when you were baptized. In the cleansing waters of baptism we die to the power of original sin, are empowered by God's grace with an indelible mark, and take our place as a member of the Catholic Christian Church. More than likely, this all happened before you had even realized it. So now, it is your turn to answer God's call to complete the process.

"The reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace." (*Catechism* #1285)

"It is evident from its celebration that the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost." (*Catechism* #1302)

So, what is a sacrament? The Council of Trent defined a sacrament as "an outward sign of inward grace, instituted by Christ for our salvation." Jesus came to save us, and we can be saved *only* if we have a personal relationship with God, and God gave us the seven sacraments as help to our salvation. Every sacrament conveys that help, which we call grace, as a completely unmerited gift. There is nothing we can do to deserve God's grace.

What is Confirmation? Jesus extends to you a special invitation to share in his friendship, to know Him in an even more real and personal way. "Through the sacrament of Confirmation, those who have been born anew in Baptism receive the inexpressible Gift—the Holy Spirit by which you are endowed...with special strength within. Moreover, having received the character of this sacrament, you are bound more intimately to the Church, more strictly obliged to spread and defend in the Faith, both by word and deed, as true witnesses of Christ." (*Apostolic Constitution of the Sacrament of Confirmation*)

Even though we never merit the sacraments, they generally warrant a *preparatory process so that we can understand their effects*. In the Diocese of Richmond, the bishop has established extensive guidelines for the preparatory process for Confirmation. It is inappropriate and illogical to seek Confirmation without the firm intent to remain faithful to the Catholic Christian faith through regular celebration of the sacraments, particularly Reconciliation and the Eucharist, ongoing exploration and reflection on different aspects of our faith, growth and development of a prayer relationship with God, and some participation in the life of the Church through service in her ministries.

In seeking to be Confirmed, you make a covenant commitment with yourself, your Catholic faith community and with God. A covenant relationship is a sacred agreement between God and man that binds us together in a bond of love made with absolutely no conditions or reservations. You commit to humbly and eagerly seek the truth that the Church has to share with you. In turn, the Church teaches that the parish should assist the parents by providing a catechetical program that helps to educate and form their children in the Catholic Faith. In providing this formation program, the parish community, the priest, and catechists enter into a covenant relationship with the family and the teenager seeking Confirmation.

In this covenant relationship, the Church shall provide:

- Regular liturgy (Mass) with a homily that will provide insight and guidance of ways to live the Christian life
- An age-appropriate educational program of the Catholic faith
 - Wednesday evenings – see Faith Formation Calendar
- A specialized sacramental preparation program for the sacrament of Confirmation - see Confirmation calendar
- Opportunities to practice the faith through hands-on experiences such as learning about the church, learning how to use the Bible, how to participate in Mass, various prayer experiences, retreats, service projects, community building and other youth activities.

- A solemn sacramental celebration with sacramental notification to the church of baptism
- Adult faith formation opportunities to help enrich and deepen the faith of the parents, see Parish Calendar and visit www.Formed.org

As a parent, your role in this covenant relationship shall be to:

- Guarantee that you and your child attend Mass every Sunday and all Holy Days of Obligation; check-in at the parish office or during *dispensation* comment on the Facebook “live” stream.
- Provide a baptismal certificate to the parish office by December 5, 2020 (if the child was not baptized at Sacred Heart Church, Danville).
- A parent will encourage the child to help them memorize the basic prayers of the church (Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Hail Mary, Act of Contrition and Glory Be).
- A parent will attend the parent formation sessions scheduled for October 4, October 11, and January 10 – see Confirmation Schedule.
- Show support for your child’s preparation and assist when able by encouraging their participation in activities that help to grow their faith and relationship with Christ such as parish ministry (altar serving, usher, lector, etc.), community service, retreat and other faith building experiences.
- Provide opportunities for the child to regularly participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Holy Communion.
- Live your faith as an example to the child by regularly participating in the sacraments, and make every effort to be able to participate in the celebration of the Eucharist at Mass for Confirmation.
- A parent will help the child choose an appropriate sponsor for Confirmation and ensure that the sponsor will comply with the universal expectations for sponsors in the Catholic Church. This should include their ability to participate in reception of Holy Communion at the Mass for Confirmation with their Confirmation candidate. (If they are unable to receive the Eucharist for any reason, they may not be a suitable sponsor for Confirmation.) Documents affirming the good standing of the sponsor are to be received in the parish office by December 5, 2020. **Sponsor(s)** should also attend all parent meetings, workshop and Holy Hour – see Confirmation Calendar.

As a candidate, your role in the covenant relationship shall be to:

- Seek God with an open heart that He may allow the Holy Spirit to lead me to the Sacrament of Confirmation and to participate in all preparation, classes and activities with a sincere desire to grow closer to God through a deeper understanding of my faith
- Live my life as a Catholic Christian witness of virtue, service and morality
- Attend Mass every Sunday and all Holy Days of Obligation
- Participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, as needed, especially during the season of Lent and as the Sacrament of Confirmation approaches.
- Attend faith formation every Wednesday – see Faith Formation Calendar, all Confirmation classes and retreat – see Confirmation Calendar
- Discuss my Confirmation journey with my sponsor and/or parents throughout the process
- Participate in parish and diocese ministries (youth group, retreats), community outreach projects and service opportunities that enable me to live my faith more actively while sharing Jesus with others.
- Meet with the pastor for a formal 20-minute interview about my readiness for confirmation.

Signature of Candidate

Date

Signature of Parent

Date

Signature of Pastor

Date