



Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.

*A candidate for Confirmation who has attained the age of reason must profess the faith, be in the state of grace, have the intention of receiving the sacrament, and be prepared to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ, both within the ecclesial community and in temporal affairs.
(Catechism of the Catholic Church 1316, 1319)*

The Basilica of Saint Mary

Confirmation Handbook

2023-2024

The Basilica of Saint Mary

PARISH CLERGY

Very. Rev. Edward Hathaway, Rector
Rev. Joseph Townsend, Parochial Vicar
Rev. Peter Clem, Parochial Vicar

PARISH OFFICE

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Alexandria, VA 22314
admin@stmaryoldtown.org
(703)836-4100
www.stmaryoldtown.org

Parish Office Hours:

Monday- Friday 9:00am-5:00pm
Federal Holidays Closed

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (HOURS: variable, email preferred)

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Dear Sons and Daughters in Christ,

We are eagerly awaiting this year's Confirmation, scheduled for Saturday, April 27, 2024. With great joy, we've been accompanying your child to this point in their faith lives and hope that this day will be the launchpad for many future disciples and even disciple-makers. Confirmation is unique in that it is given only once (as is baptism). Like baptism, it increases the life of grace (God) within us. As St. Paul wrote, "[Christians] live by faith, not by sight." What a powerful summary of the Christian life!

To help you to accompany your child as they prepare to receive this sacrament, here are a few topics related to confirmation.

We encourage you to make plans within the next few months to talk with your son or daughter about the importance of faith in his/her life, so that we may become a parish community of joy-filled families who see the world in a more positive light than those without faith.

As you may know, Confirmation means strengthening. It is the sacrament at which God, through His instrument (the bishop), pours out anew His own life-giving Spirit into the hearts of the faithful. At baptism, your child was given God's life for the first time; in Confirmation, they will be sealed with the Holy Spirit – that is, God will bestow on them certain gifts by which they will be able to live lives of holiness. Specifically, through the Sacrament of Confirmation, your child's soul is further configured to God by being bestowed with the ability to better know, understand, and live God's truth. An additional component is the strengthening of faith that God will give each of the Confirmandi – strength to witness this truth in their own unique ways (based on God's vocation, or calling). As such, Confirmation is not an ending but just the opposite – a beginning to life as a witness to Christ. How precious this gift is! Our Lord told His disciples, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." This truth is made known by the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, who helps us make sense of our lives and grow our capacity to love. In a world as polarized as our own, now more than ever is the time for true disciples who will lead lives of virtue, joy, and love (and inspire others to do the same).

In closing, we look forward to accompanying you as you help your child become men and women of God. If you haven't already, please introduce yourselves to a parish staff member, and we will be sure to get you connected with Mrs. Mariane Staron, who hosts and leads many events for high school-aged students throughout the week. In this way, your child's faith, infused with new life via Confirmation, can blossom into a mature Christ-centered faith: full of joy, hope, and love.

If you have any questions about the specifics of the Confirmation, do not hesitate to reach out to Susan Gray, the Director of our Office of Religious Education, at sgray@stmaryoldtown.org or call her at (703) 836-4100. We'd love to hear about your experience at The Basilica of Saint Mary!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father Ed Hathaway

Father Edward C. Hathaway
Pastor and Rector

PREPARING YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER FOR CONFIRMATION *(from the Chosen: Your Journey Toward Confirmation handbook)*

Two of the most important things you can do to help your son or daughter prepare for the sacrament are:

- Be personally committed to prayer.
- Impress upon your child, by word and example, the importance of participating in the sacramental life of the Church. The principal way we participate in the Church's sacramental life is through regular reception of the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

1. How can I encourage my child to grow in faith at home?

- Regular family prayer time is important, as is grace before meals and weekly Rosary which may also be introduced regularly. Establish a family habit of discussing faith, morals, and spiritual growth.

2. Why do we need to attend Mass every week?

- Having a parent who is personally committed to prayer and is participating in the sacramental life of the Church can have a profound effect on a teenager and can provide an important example that will stay with him or her for life.
- A lack of commitment to Sunday Mass has many serious consequences. Failure to attend Sunday Mass disregards the third commandment to “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8) as well as Jesus’ command to “do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19).
- If you have not been attending regularly, make a fresh start by going to Confession and Mass together, followed by a special meal shared at home or in a restaurant.
- If you already attend Mass on a weekly basis, think about what you can do to help your family get more out of the experience. Encourage your child to share his or her thoughts about the homily or weekly Scripture readings.

3. Why is going to Confession important? What if I have not gone in a long time?

- In Confession, the priest lends his face, hands, and voice to Christ so that we may have the powerful sensory experience of seeing and hearing, in the words of absolution, that our sins have been forgiven, and that our relationship with Christ and the Church has been restored.
- Reassure your son or daughter that the seal of Confession is absolute. The Church binds the priest to absolute secrecy about any sins revealed to him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation even under the threat of imprisonment, physical injury, or death.
- If possible, make a regular habit of going to Confession as a family.
- The Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered at the Basilica of Saint Mary after the 12:10 p.m. Mass Monday through Friday, on Wednesdays from 7:00-8:00 p.m. (6:30-8 p.m. during Lent) on Fridays during Lent at 7:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 9-10 a.m. and 4-5 p.m. You can always call to make an appointment with a priest as well if you haven't been to Confession in a long time or if the times listed don't work for you.

4. How should I respond if my child does not want to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation?

- Telling a child, “You do not have to be confirmed,” might lead him or her to have thoughts of rejecting Confirmation—or the Catholic faith—that were not previously there.
- It might also lead your teenager to think Confirmation is “the sacrament of me choosing God.” The reality is that every sacrament is about God's choice of us, because He loves us.
- Be open to your son or daughter's questions about the faith, as these can be instrumental in helping him or her develop a genuine and mature faith.

5. What if I do not know how to answer a question?

- If you feel inadequate in your own faith life, see your child's Confirmation as an opportunity for deeper conversion—to become who God has called you to be.
- No one is as equipped as you are to be the spiritual leader of your child, simply by virtue of the fact that you are his or her parent. If you are authentic, your son or daughter will see your efforts and the importance you place on living the Faith.
- It is relatively easy to discover what the Church teaches on any particular topic today. The internet is a wonderful tool. One particularly helpful source is the [Catechism of the Catholic Church](https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/catechism-of-the-catholic-church) (CCC) which is available online. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) provides an online searchable Catechism to answer any question you have about the Catholic Faith to go: <https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/catechism-of-the-catholic-church>
- Pray often for and with your children, and keep your own eyes fixed on Jesus.
- If you are unable to resolve an issue, consider making an appointment with your pastor, another priest, deacon, or your parish director of religious education (DRE) to discuss it.

6. How much should I push my teenager to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation if he or she does not want to?

- The Church advises that a Confirmation candidate be well-prepared, in a state of grace, and properly disposed to receive the sacrament.
- Confirmation must not be forced on a person who is rejecting it. That said, insisting that your child completes his or her sacramental formation is within your control.
- Arrange a meeting with the director of his or her sacramental preparation program, your pastor, another priest or deacon, or someone your child admires who is a Catholic role model.
- Pray for them consistently, offer support and encouragement, and have regular contact with your child's Confirmation sponsor and director of Confirmation preparation.

7. How do I pray with and for my child?

- Consider starting a family prayer time featuring a specific devotion, such as the Rosary, a novena to your child's chosen patron saint, or regular Eucharistic Adoration. Also, pray before/after meals and first thing in the morning and last thing at night.
- Another beautiful and simple way to pray is called 'Lectio Divina', which means, "divine reading." It is how we prayerfully read the Scriptures:

† Read just a few paragraphs from one of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John). What is Jesus saying to you through this reading? What images or phrases jump out at you? Give each family member a minute to share.

8. How can I communicate with my son or daughter about Jesus, faith, and moral issues?

- Listen. Whether your child has simple questions about the Faith or loud objections to it, you need to listen genuinely to his or her concerns before you can answer them effectively.
- Resolve to listen without interrupting and allow your son or daughter to ask questions openly.
- Share your own experiences in the life of faith. Be honest. Avoid presenting yourself as an expert, as a know-it-all, or as someone who never makes mistakes.
- The Catholic Faith is not your personal opinion, but the divinely revealed truth.
- We need to remember that God's ways are not our ways (see Isaiah 55:8-9), and that He answers every prayer in His time and in accord with His will.

Sacrament of Confirmation Important Dates

Confirmation Parent Meeting

Thursday, September 21, 2023

7:00-8:00 p.m.

The Basilica of Saint Mary (310 S. Royal Street)

Confirmation Retreat

Boys: Saturday, October 14, 2023

9:00 a.m.- 6:00 p.m.*

The Basilica of Saint Mary Lyceum (313 Duke Street), The Basilica of Saint Mary School (400 Green Street), and The Basilica of Saint Mary (310 S. Royal Street)

Girls: Saturday, October 21, 2023

9:00 a.m.- 6:00 p.m.*

The Basilica of Saint Mary Lyceum (313 Duke Street), The Basilica of Saint Mary School (400 Green Street) and The Basilica of Saint Mary (310 S. Royal Street)

**Families are welcome to join as we conclude the retreat after the 5pm Vigil Mass which meets the Sunday obligation to attend Mass. After Mass, please sign out your child with a staff member.*

Registration for students attending Catholic School only (not for CCD/homeschool)

Wednesday, November 1, 2023

Holy Hour with Confirmation Families

Wednesday, April 24, 2024

Early evening

The Basilica of Saint Mary (310 S. Royal Street)

Rehearsal for Confirmation

Friday, April 26, 2024

5:00 p.m. for student candidates and sponsors attending the 10:30 a.m. Mass

7:00 p.m. for student candidates and sponsors attending the 1:00 p.m. Mass

Holy Mass with Confirmation Rite

Saturday, April 27, 2024**

Group 1: 10:30 a.m.

Group 2: 1:00 p.m.

**** A Signup Genius message will be sent to families to select which group is preferred. Please understand that The Basilica has limited seating and your first preference may not be available.**

Confirmandi, sponsors and their families are asked to arrive early. More details will be sent out from the Office of Divine Worship if the Bishop will meet with the candidates prior to Mass in the Lyceum (313 Duke Street) while the Master of Ceremonies meets with the sponsors in The Basilica. Further instructions will be provided closer to the date of Confirmation.

REGISTRATION FOR CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

Students at Catholic Schools in the area (to include The Basilica of Saint Mary School, St. Anselm Academy, Angelus, Oakcrest, The Heights, and others) who are parishioners of The Basilica of Saint Mary or enrolled at The Basilica School of Saint Mary are required to register for Confirmation Preparation by November 1, 2023. Registration will include collection of pertinent Sacramental Record information, a copy of the student's Baptismal Certificate and First Holy Communion Certificate. A Materials and Retreat fee of \$70.00 is collected upon registration (this fee covers the cost of the retreat, stipend for the Bishop and Master of Ceremonies, Confirmation Certificate, photography at the Rite of Confirmation and a reception or equivalent following the Confirmation).

Online Registration is available at: <https://stmaryoldtown.org/confirmation>

*All students enrolled in the CCD program (in-person or homeschool) for Year 8 are registered for Confirmation and paid the Confirmation Registration Fee with the CCD registration (all pertinent information and fees are collected with the CCD and Homeschool CCD Registration Forms).

CONFIRMATION LITURGY: HOLY MASS with CONFIRMATION RITE

This year's Confirmation will be held on Saturday, April 27, 2024 at 10:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. A few weeks after the Confirmation Parent Meeting, a Signup Genius message will be sent to families to indicate their preferred Confirmation Liturgy time. Please understand that the seating in the church is limited.

Rehearsals for the students and sponsors will be held on Friday, April 26, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. (for the 10:30 a.m. Mass) and 7:00 p.m. (for the 1:00 p.m. Mass) in The Basilica..

Further instructions will be provided closer to the date of Confirmation.

PICTURES

At the direction of the Bishop's office we ask that you do not take pictures/videos during the Confirmation liturgy. Our professional/staff photographer will take pictures at appropriate times. Pictures will be made available to all families at a later day. If we are able to hold a reception after the liturgy, limited picture opportunities may be available with the Bishop during the reception. In the event that we do not host a reception, picture opportunities may be made available in The Basilica or Lyceum Auditorium. Although we are providing pictures, you may bring your own device and take two pictures (one with the newly confirmed and sponsor; the other with the family), however, our photographers/staff is not available to take photos from your device. Any confirmandi who wish to take pictures with the Bishop must wear his/her robe. There will not be a group picture. Further instructions will be provided closer to the date of Confirmation.

CHURCH ETIQUETTE

A prayerful silence is observed in the church before the start of the liturgy. Please refrain from loud and unnecessary talking to maintain a prayerful atmosphere before the Mass begins. Please silence all cell phones while in the Basilica. Confirmation students are not to bring phones. Modest attire is expected of all who attend Mass at The Basilica of Saint Mary. Please refrain from bringing food/drink into the church. We would also like to remind you and ask you to share with family and friends to not come

forward to take pictures/video during the liturgy. Thank you in advance for helping maintain our sacred space!

CERTIFICATES

Certificates will be printed and available at a later date.

CONFIRMATION RETREAT

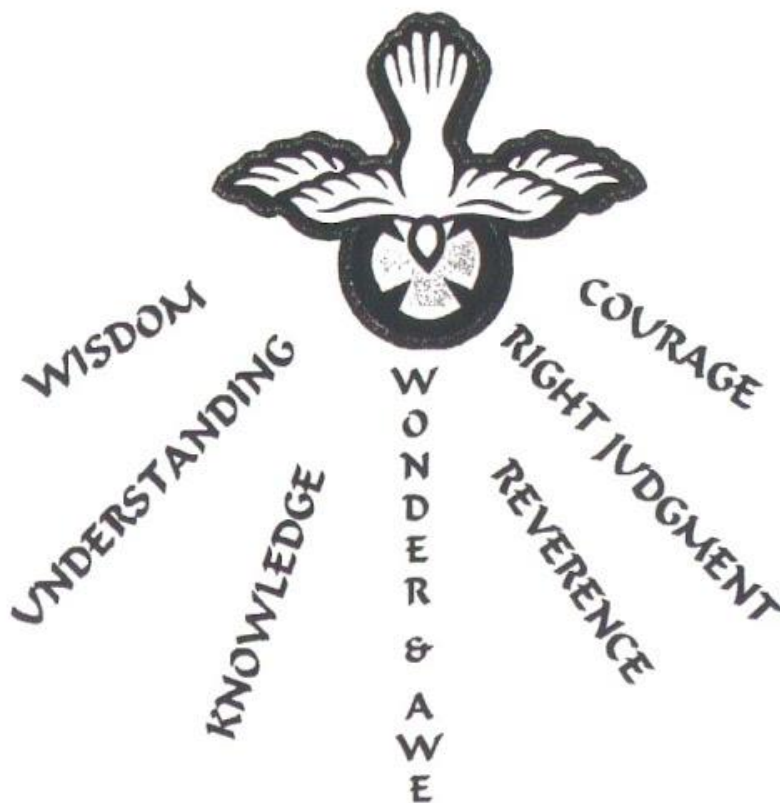
All candidates for Confirmation are required to attend a retreat in preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The purpose of this retreat is to lead the candidates towards “a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit - His actions, gifts and His biddings – in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life”. (CCC 1309)

This year's Confirmation retreat will be held on Saturday, October 14, 2023 for the boys and October 21, 2023 for the girls. Doors open at 8:45 a.m. for the 9:00 a.m. start time on the campus of The Basilica of Saint Mary. We end the retreat with the 5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass at The Basilica of Saint Mary (310 S. Royal Street).

At the retreat, candidates will have the opportunity to go to Confession, listen to speakers, pray at Adoration, and participate in the Mass. We will include fun and engaging activities, testimonies and more. Lunch is provided and we will seek donations for snacks.

Registration for the retreat will be made available online following the Confirmation Parent Meeting.



Guidelines for Choosing a Confirmation Saint

As students desire and prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, he/she is asked to choose a Confirmation saint as a patron/patroness. Students may choose his/her Christian baptismal name, select a saint's name from the Bible, or a canonized saint or blessed of the Catholic Church. The Bishop or minister of Confirmation will proclaim this name during the Rite of Confirmation. The saint/blessed chosen should reflect a devotion your son/daughter has with the saint, virtues or gifts to which he/she aspires, or the patron saint of certain gifts that are dear to your child.

1. Read and learn about several saints and their lives before making a choice. Students can choose a male or female saint.
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide the decision on which saint to choose.
3. The teacher/catechist will approve the selection of a saint/blessed before the deadline of completing the report. Below is a list of recommended resources for researching saints/blessed.

Guidelines for the Saint Report

1. The typed and printed out report should be at least two pages long (MLA Format) and cite sources at the bottom of the second page or on an additional page. A sample saint report is provided for students to follow the format. We read all reports and appreciate good grammar in sentences/paragraphs, accuracy, original writing, naming sources, and honesty. The teacher/catechist may have further instructions on how you should write this required report.

2. The report should explain who the saint/blessed is and provide details about his/her life based these leading questions:

- When and where was your saint born? Did s/he live in one place?
- What did s/he do for a living?
- What drew him or her to Jesus Christ?
- Did your saint become a priest or sister/nun, or was he/she a layperson?
- Did your saint know other saints of the Catholic Church? Did they get along?
- What sort of obstacles did your saint have to overcome as they strove for holiness?
- Did your saint write any books, prayers, songs, poems? Has another saint written about your saint?
- When and how did your saint die?
- On what date is your saint celebrated by the Church? Is there a reason why it is this date?
- On what date was your saint canonized (declared a saint) by the Church?
- What is your saint the patron/patroness of?
- What miracles are attributed to the intercession of your saint?

3. The report is to explain why your son/daughter chose this saint. Here are some questions to consider:

- What virtues or qualities does this saint have that you admire?
- Do you and your saint have any similarities?
- Are there other saints who were devoted to your patron saint?
- Is your saint the patron/patroness of something that matters to you?
- How can this saint help you live your life as a confirmed Catholic?

4. Include pictures, maps, and quotes from the saint/blessed. Also include quotes about the saint made by important figures within the Church (including other saints).

5. Due dates and turn in instructions for students in CCD (in-person, homeschool, Confirmation-only) or The Basilica of Saint Mary School will be provided to you by the teacher/catechist.

Resources for Choosing a Confirmation Saint

Books:

Butler's Lives of the Saints
Saints for Young Readers (series)
Saint of the Day (series)
Our Sunday Visitor Encyclopedia of Saints

Websites:

www.ewtn.com
www.vatican.va
www.catholic.org
<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/source/saint-of-the-day/>
www.newadvent.org
www.catholicsaints.info
<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/saints>

**Wikipedia is not an acceptable primary source*



STUDENT LETTER TO THE BISHOP

When you receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, you will be fully initiated into the Catholic Church and into The Basilica of Saint Mary parish family. Your call to share and defend the faith will include a special commitment and dedication to your home parish both now and in the future.

As a part of this process, you are to write a letter to The Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio, J.C.D., Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, explaining why you wish to be Confirmed and how you intend to live your life as a Confirmed Catholic.

The letter should include a description of your personal faith journey so far. This letter is a reflection on both you and on The Basilica of Saint Mary, so please write what is in your heart and take this endeavor seriously. Please use the format below and proofread your letter (spelling, punctuation, grammar, etc.). Letters are to be typed (MLA format). Sample letters are included in this packet.

Further instructions will be provided by your teacher/catechist on the due date and how to submit your letter.

Outline of Letter:

Today's Date

Your Excellency,

Paragraph 1: Introduce yourself in at least 2-3 sentences. Things to mention may include which school you are attending, how long you've attended your current school, how long you've lived in the area (if you moved into it recently), etc. You should also include a sentence or two on why you wish to be confirmed.

Paragraph 2: Write at least 3-4 sentences telling how you have prepared for your Confirmation, stating specifically what this sacrament means to you in regards to your Catholic faith.

Paragraph 3: Write at least 4-5 sentences about your Confirmation saint. You should provide some historical information about your saint, what he/she is the patron/patroness of, and why you chose this saint.

Paragraph 4: Tell Bishop Burbidge what you intend to do to continue to grow in and live out your faith after your Confirmation.

Sincerely,
[signature here]

Your name

HOW TO CHOOSE A CONFIRMATION SPONSOR

When selecting a sponsor for Confirmation, he/she must meet the following requirements:

- Be at least sixteen years of age
- Is not your parent or stepparent
- Has received the Sacraments of Initiation in the Catholic Church (Baptism, Holy Eucharist, and Confirmation)
- Adheres to the teachings of the Catholic Church (this includes that if they are married, their marriage must be in harmony with Catholic teaching - please don't hesitate to reach out to us for more info!)
- Regularly attends Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation and receives the sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Reconciliation often
- Understands and accepts the role and responsibilities of being a Confirmation Sponsor

Role of the Sponsor:

- a model of how a person of faith lives in today's world
- a companion on the journey of faith
- a friend or relative who knows the candidate and can witness to the maturing faith of the candidate before the community
- a guide, a confidant, and a listener
- a learner who is interested in personal growth as she or he walks the faith journey with the candidate
- one who will continue after Confirmation to walk the faith journey with the candidate and invite him or her into fuller participation in parish life, ministries, service to the community, Mass attendance, and living the Sacramental life of the Church.

The Responsibility of the Sponsor:

- obtain and submit a certificate of eligibility to be a sponsor form from their home parish
- to present the candidate for the Sacrament
- to present the candidate to the minister for anointing
- to help the candidate to fulfill his or her Baptismal Promises faithfully under the influence of the Holy Spirit

Some common questions about sponsors:

1. **Can a parent be a sponsor?** No. Parents are already given the role of primary catechist and sponsor to their children. As in baptism with godparents, at Confirmation the sponsor serves as witness to the reception of the sacrament, but also is another person that can pray for and guide the candidate in their faith.

2. **Can a Baptismal godparent be the Confirmation sponsor?** Yes, in fact, the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Holy Eucharist, and Confirmation) used to be received all at once in the first centuries of the Church. Therefore, each candidate would have one godparent/sponsor that served to help prepare them to receive the sacraments and then live out their faith. As much as possible, a godparent is the ideal sponsor still today. However, given that the Sacraments of Initiation are spread out today, it is possible that one no longer has a standing relationship with their godparent or their godparent no longer practices their Catholic faith. Therefore, it is not uncommon to choose someone new as one may have developed a relationship with someone else since baptism who is better suited to be a sponsor at the time of Confirmation.

3. Can a lapsed Catholic (for example someone who is not attending Mass regularly, married outside of the Catholic Church or cohabiting) be the sponsor? Like the godparents who are no longer practicing Catholics mentioned above, he/she is not suitable because he/she does not bear witness to the Catholic Christian life. This may present a challenge if your friends and family no longer attend Mass regularly or perhaps were married outside of the church. If this is the case, we're happy to help your friends or family come back into full communion with the Catholic faith through adult education classes, encouraging them to go to confession (no matter how long ago this was) and if married outside the Catholic faith to contact a priest to seek guidance on what to do. Should you need help finding someone else, we are happy to help you find a sponsor from within the parish, perhaps one of the schoolteachers, a catechist, or a parishioner.

4. Can a priest or deacon be a sponsor? Yes! In fact, we welcome any visiting priests and deacons who are here to be a sponsor and to con-celebrate the Mass. They will need to submit a letter of good standing from their diocese, or religious order, directly to the parish office with contact information so we can contact them about details of the Mass.

5. What does the sponsor do at Confirmation? When the Bishop calls the candidates forward, the sponsor will come forward with their candidate and stand behind the candidate, the sponsor's right hand on the candidate's right shoulder, in the sponsor's left hand he/she will hold a note card that has the candidate's saint name over the candidate's left shoulder, visible to the Bishop. If the sponsor is a priest or deacon con-celebrating Mass, he will come down at the appropriate time. If the sponsor has physical needs that require special seating, we will work out the details beforehand.

6. What if the sponsor cannot be present at the Confirmation Mass? Sponsors accompany the candidate not only at the Confirmation Liturgy but also throughout the student's life. If a sponsor is unable to attend the Confirmation Mass, another person can stand as proxy at the Confirmation Mass. The proxy must meet all the same requirements listed above for a sponsor. We will need both a sponsor form for the sponsor and a proxy form for the proxy. Proxies should be an exception and chosen by the sponsor.



GUIDELINES FOR CONFIRMATION SERVICE HOURS and WORKS OF MERCY

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation includes participation in service projects that build up the Church community and be Christ's witnesses. As Catholics and as human beings we are called to live out the call of Confirmation to spread and proclaim the Catholic faith to all corners of the world. As Saint John Paul II said, we are called to be "salt and light for the world." This faith is shared with and expressed to others not only in our daily lives of prayer and virtue, but also in the way we love those around us through our actions, our service, our commitment to bringing the light of the Gospel to people through all we do.







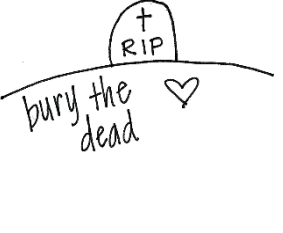
Requirements

1. We ask that all candidates for Confirmation complete three Corporal Works of Mercy and three Spiritual Works of Mercy (see attached document for ideas).
2. A Service Log must be kept. The Service log is to be signed by the supervisor of the project and by parents. Once your Service Log is complete, please turn it in to your religion teacher or catechist.
3. All service projects must be approved by your teacher, catechist, or Director of Religious Education. Please do not complete a project without having it approved, so you won't find out later that it cannot be applied as Confirmation Service. For further questions concerning the suitability of certain projects, please contact the Director of Religious Education directly.

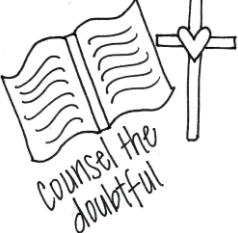
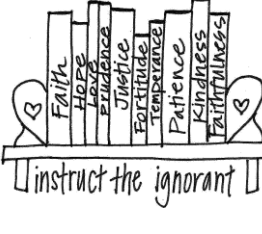



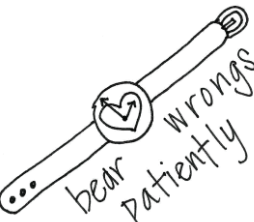
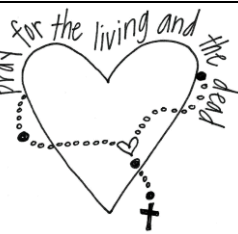
Suggestions for Selecting Service Projects

1. Pray about it! Examine your own talents and gifts. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. Do not just seek the easy way out or the fastest way to finish.
2. Challenge yourself and be creative! Besides ongoing established programs at school or in the local community, you might have some new ideas to explore or share with others. Your service project should lead you to a greater desire to serve further, draw out virtues in your life, and ultimately bring you closer to God.
3. Do not go at it alone! Discuss this with your parents, sponsor, teacher, and friends. They are all good resources and support. You may want to put together a group project with your friends such as raking leaves for an elderly neighbor or praying for one of the Diocesan seminarians for a year.
4. Seek out service ideas from the attached Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy handouts included in this packet!
5. Do not stop service at 6 works of mercy! It's okay to keep going. Part of the reason for the service requirement is that we are called to serve for the rest of our lives. You can continue your service project throughout the year. In addition, prayer and fasting is also a great spiritual work of mercy for others – a great service!

THE CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ help cook dinner and/or clean-up after dinner at home once (or more) a week □ offer to make breakfast/lunch for your siblings □ donate needed food pantry items to Christ House Food Pantry □ offer to grocery shop for a neighbor in need □ instead of buying comfort food/snacks, donate that money to a local shelter
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ coordinate with friends and family to raise money to purchase baby formula for the MaRiH Center (please call ahead to drop off donations at 703-370-4774) □ visit www.theh2oproject.org which includes educational resources, videos, and free materials to take the H2O challenge like CHS students did in 2008
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ instead of a birthday or Christmas gift for yourself, ask for a gift from this wish list for families in transition at "ALIVE! House" - learn more here; <i>in-person donations can be dropped off at 125 S. Payne St. in Alexandria Mon.-Fri. from 9am-2pm</i> □ help a neighbor with the upkeep of their home or yard (rake leaves, shovel their driveway/sidewalk, help them weed their garden, etc.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ go through your closet and donate coats and clothes to those in need through the Christ House Thrift Store □ instead of a birthday or Christmas gift for yourself, ask for a gift from this wish list for women in crisis pregnancies, newborn babies, adoptive families; learn more here □ make a baby blanket for the MaRiH Center □ offer to do the laundry for your family □ help a younger sibling get dressed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ write encouraging cards to the elderly at Sunrise of Alexandria (cards can be dropped off between 8am-8pm Mon.-Fri., call 703-212-9192 to schedule a drop-off) □ call a family member or friend who is struggling and spend time talking with them and praying for them
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ write encouraging cards to those who are imprisoned (cards can be dropped off at 309 S. Royal St. to Hilary Munger and she will deliver them to the Diocesan point of contact for prison ministry for final delivery) □ offer to babysit younger siblings or for family friends for free
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ check with a local cemetery to see if you can help clean up or plant flowers at some gravestones most in need of care/upkeep □ spend 30 minutes in church praying for your deceased relatives, the souls in purgatory, and those who will die and have no one to pray for them on earth □ pray at an abortion clinic for the lives lost to abortion and effected by abortion

THE SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

 <p>Counsel the doubtful</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> point someone to a good decision <input type="checkbox"/> willingly explain things/help someone who is struggling <input type="checkbox"/> pray that people would have faith <input type="checkbox"/> pray for people with suicidal thoughts (a Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> learn more about a particular teaching of the Catholic Church
 <p>Instruct the ignorant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> invite someone to pray with you or go to Mass with you <input type="checkbox"/> read bible stories to younger siblings or cousins <input type="checkbox"/> teach a younger sibling or cousin prayers or the Ten Commandments <input type="checkbox"/> lend or gift a good book about the faith <input type="checkbox"/> help a sibling read a book or help them with their homework
 <p>admonish the sinner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> lead people towards the good choice in a situation <input type="checkbox"/> help someone understand why something is wrong/not good for them
 <p>comfort the sorrowful</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> pray for families that have lost loved ones or who are struggling <input type="checkbox"/> offer comfort to a friend or family by baking them a treat, making them a meal, or sending them a card or care package <input type="checkbox"/> spend time with someone who is struggling - pray with them and for them <input type="checkbox"/> cheer up a sibling who is feeling sad
 <p>forgive offenses willingly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> let go of grudges you may harbor against someone and pray for them <input type="checkbox"/> accept others' apologies with kindness <input type="checkbox"/> encourage others to forgive people who have offended them <input type="checkbox"/> reach out to a friend or family member you haven't spoken with in a long time
 <p>bear wrongs patiently</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> offer up a Holy Hour of Adoration or pray in the church for 30 minutes for people in your life that have wronged you (<i>the Basilica has Eucharistic Adoration on Wednesdays from 1pm-8:30pm</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> give up an item/toy to a sibling <input type="checkbox"/> refrain from gossiping about the wrongful behavior of others
 <p>pray for the living and the dead</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> ask a friend how you can pray for them <input type="checkbox"/> visit a cemetery and pray for those who have died and who will die today <input type="checkbox"/> pray for those who have died from Covid-19, for those who are suffering from its effects, and for those who are caring for the sick

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE BISHOP

November 19, 2023 (for students in CCD/homeschool/other Catholic School)

December 8, 2023 (for The Basilica of Saint Mary School students)

Your Excellency,

My name is Mary Magdalene and I am an 8th grade student at The Basilica School of Saint Mary in Alexandria, VA. I am preparing for Confirmation and wish to share a couple of my experiences.

This summer I volunteered as a crew leader for The Basilica of Saint Mary's Vacation Bible School. During the week I was responsible for five children taking them to different stations where they learned about how Jesus rescues us when we are lonely, worry, struggle, do wrong, or are powerless. We spent time in Adoration on the last day. I was so happy to be a part of helping these children grow in their faith and look forward to helping again next year.

For my Confirmation patron I have chosen Saint Thérèse of Lisieux. I admire her family and personal faith greatly. Like her, I hope to grow deeply in my faith at a young age. I am particularly drawn to her "little way" dedicated to seeking holiness in the ordinary and everyday life.

Confirmation means I am ready to live my faith every day and invite others to know the Lord. I look forward to being Confirmed and living my faith in the "little way" as Saint Thérèse did.

Sincerely,

---Handwritten Signature Here---

Mary Magdalene

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE BISHOP

November 19, 2023 (for students in CCD/homeschool/other Catholic School)
December 8, 2023 (for The Basilica of Saint Mary School students)

Your Excellency,

My name is Patrick Ireland and I am an eighth-grade student at George Washington Middle School in Alexandria, VA. I am enrolled in CCD at The Basilica of St. Mary and am preparing for my Confirmation. I look forward to being Confirmed because I have learned that I will receive the fullness of God's Holy Spirit through the bestowal of your anointing, and I trust that I will need His help to live out my faith in our current world.

To prepare for this sacrament, I have spent the past few months researching saints in order to pick one as my "patron" and Confirmation saint. I have really enjoyed reading about some awesome men and women who, through God's grace, transformed their lives and lived as radical witnesses to God's truth and love. I have come to see that what the world needs now is more men and women like these, people who have come to know and experience God's love, who know His saving truth as illuminated by Scripture, and who hold fast to the teachings of the Church, which Christ created for the benefit of men, not as an impediment as many today believe. I know that Confirmation is bestowed in order to strengthen one in their faith, and I hope that through this sacrament I become on fire for God and able to enter His Kingdom to live with Him forever.

In light of this, I have chosen Saint Ignatius Loyola as my Confirmation saint because, as I learned at last year's Camp Apostles, he was a soldier for Spain who then became a soldier for Christ and His Bride, the Church. I admire the fact that he sought to seek God's will in all things and that he wrote a book ("The Spiritual Exercises") that still helps men and women discern whether God is calling them to do something (or what He is communicating to them in general). I hope to learn more about Ignatius' "discernment of spirits" as I seek God's will for my adult life, whether this be which college to attend, which major(s) to pursue, or which vocation God has in mind for me. Confirmation means that I am ready to live my faith boldly and courageously. I look forward to being confirmed and living my faith like St. Ignatius, ready and willing to serve God.

Finally, as Confirmation approaches, I would like to assure you that this is something I take seriously. My faith has guided my family through some rough times and I know that through it we can continue "soldiering on" as St. Ignatius would, discerning God's will in all things, ordinary and extraordinary.

Sincerely,

---Handwritten Signature Here---

Patrick Ireland

SAMPLE SAINT REPORT

First Name Last Name

Confirmation Saint Report

CCD/SMS/Homeschool/Other

December 10, 2023 (for students in CCD/homeschool/other Catholic School)

November 17, 2023 (for The Basilica of Saint Mary School students)

Saint Joseph

I have chosen St. Joseph as my Confirmation saint. I like Joseph because of his role as foster-father of Jesus. Despite the fact that Joseph planned to have his own children, God had other plans for him. He sent the archangel Gabriel to Joseph and told him not to be afraid to take Mary into his home. Despite Joseph's confusion as to what others would think of him doing this, or what it would mean for his future, he did what the angel requested and was a devoted husband to Mary for the rest of his life.

Joseph resonates with me due to my desire to be a father. The fact that he was a carpenter also attracts me to him, as I have a desire to use my skill for making things that are useful to others, which I'm sure Joseph did. This undoubtedly influenced Jesus, who mentioned a builder many times in His parables.

Joseph also appeals to me because he is the patron saint of workers. He is the only saint (other than our Blessed Mother) who has more than one feast day (March 19th and May 1st). I'm sure this was due to his fidelity to God in leading the Holy Family with bravery, humility, and integrity. I can only imagine how scared he was when he was told to flee Bethlehem for Egypt, a land that he never knew. But he showed his fidelity to God in shepherding Mary and the infant Jesus to this land in order to save Jesus's life. In a sense, humanity's salvation rested on this choice. Joseph could have refused or thought that he would be able to protect Jesus when Herod's soldiers

SAMPLE SAINT REPORT

inevitably arrived. However, he trusted that God, who had commanded him to go, would protect him and his family throughout the journey.

All told, I chose St. Joseph because I hope to emulate his aforementioned virtues in my life, and rely on his intercession for help in discerning how God is calling me to be a father to His people. I hope to get a portrait of St. Joseph and hang it in whatever room I find myself living for the rest of my life. The world suffers from a crisis of fatherhood, and I hope that with St. Joseph's help I can be a faithful and selfless father to others, whether this be with my own children or to any spiritual children if God is calling me to life as a priest, monk, or religious. Joseph is also the patron saint of the Church, and so I will pray to him to build up the Catholic Church so that the world may continue to come to know her bridegroom, our Lord Jesus Christ, and his saving Word.



St. Joseph, pray for us!

SAMPLE SAINT REPORT

Works Cited

The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version, 2nd ed.; Ignatius Press, 2006.

Alban Butler-Herbert Thurston-Donald Attwater, *Butler's Lives Of the Saints*, Christian Classics, 1996

St. Joseph - Saints & Angel, Catholic Online 2018,

https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=4. Accessed 17 July 2018

SERVICE LOG/WORKS OF MERCY

Due:

January 28, 2024 for students in CCD/homeschool/other Catholic School)

February 23, 2024 for The Basilica of Saint Mary School students

Directions:

Please fill out one page for ALL service projects completed. You can write on the back if needed. You are asked to complete at least 6 works of mercy (we suggest 3 spiritual and 3 corporal works of mercy) – spread out in each of the following categories:

- C: Corporal Works of Mercy
- S: Spiritual Works of Mercy

Student Candidate's Name: (LAST) _____ (FIRST) _____

Service Project Hours:

Date	Category (C, S)	Project description & student's particular role	Signature of project supervisor/Parent

Supervisors, please feel free to note any virtues exemplified, or commendations for this Confirmation candidate:

Parent/Guardian Signature, attesting your child has completed these service projects: _____

Deadlines for Confirmation Forms/Projects

For Students in CCD/Homeschool/Other Catholic School

Letter to the Bishop *Due November 19, 2023*

- Saint Report *Due December 10, 2023*
- Sponsor Form *Due January 7, 2024*
- Service Log *Due January 28, 2024*

For Students in The Basilica School of Saint Mary:

- Sacrament of Confirmation Registration *Due Nov. 1, 2023*
- Saint Report *Due November 17, 2023*
- Letter to the Bishop *Due December 8, 2023*
- Sponsor Form *Due January 9, 2024*
- Service Log *Due February 23, 2024*

For All Confirmation Candidates:

- Robe Order (*online submission only*) *Due January 8, 2024*

How to turn in documents:

- **The Basilica School of Saint Mary** students will be given guidance by their teacher, Mrs. St. Pierre, on how to submit documents.
- **CCD students** in Year 8 will be given guidance by their catechists on how to submit documents.
- **CCD Homeschool/Other Catholic School** students are to submit all documents directly to the Office of Religious Education to the attention of the Director of Religious Education: sgray@stmaryoldtown.org.

A hard copy of the Letter to the Bishop (with signature, please see examples provided) and sponsor form (which must be the original copy with a seal if signed at a different parish) needs to be turned in physically. All other documents may be submitted digitally unless otherwise directed by your catechist or teacher.