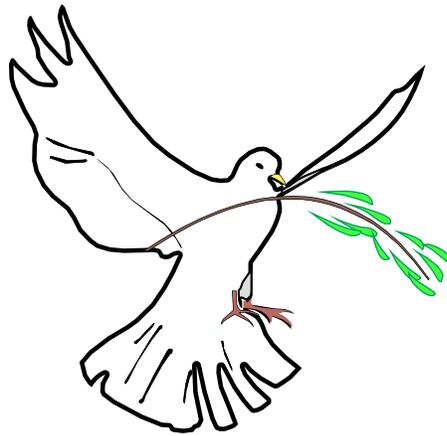


Confirmation Information Packet

2016-2017



St. Bartholomew Parish

Website: saintbartholomews.com

Facebook page: St. Bartholomew Roman Catholic Church

Fr. Matthew Strickenberger
Pastor
Rosemary Ferguson
Facilitator of Religious Education

Dear Confirmation Candidate,

The information included in this packet will help you in your preparation for Confirmation. In the following pages you will find all that you need to know to assist you in your preparation from now to your Confirmation day. You will find mandatory dates and requirements, how to choose a confirmation name, and how to choose a sponsor, information on service projects and an outline of a letter you will be required to write to the Bishop.

Please read this over carefully and make sure that you understand what is expected of you over the next few months. There will be a confirmation candidate and parent meeting Sunday, September 11 with Fr. Matt following the 9:30a.m. Mass, in the Church. This is a REQUIREMENT of ALL CANDIDATES AND PARENTS, if for some reason you are unable to attend arrangements to meet with Fr. Matt privately must be made prior to the meeting.

The St. Bartholomew Parish Community welcomes you as you begin your preparation for Confirmation and full initiation in our faith. Know that you will be remembered in the prayers of your family, sponsor, and entire parish community as you embark on this wonderful adventure in your faith journey.

The Responsibilities of Confirmation Candidates

All potential candidates:

- ❖ Have participated in religious instruction, either in a parish or school program ***continuously and actively*** since reception of First Eucharist. You **MUST** have actively participated in religious instruction, either in a parish Religious Education program or in a Catholic High School in both 9th and 10th grade (actively = at least an 85% attendance record).
- ❖ ***Freely choose*** to be confirmed and make their desire known
- ❖ Have adequate knowledge of the Catholic faith
- ❖ ***Practice their faith by attending Mass and receiving the Sacrament of Eucharist regularly, candidates will sign in, in the sacristy following Mass.***
- ❖ Should celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once before Confirmation
- ❖ Are aware of the initiation aspect of the sacrament of Confirmation and committed to continuing the practice and study of their religion
- ❖ Are willing to participate in the Confirmation program of prayer, retreat, service, liturgy, rites, etc.

Requirements for St. Bartholomew's Confirmation Program:

PLEASE BE AWARE ST. BARTHOLOMEW CHURCH PARTICIPATES IN THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION IN ERIE AT ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL. IF YOU ARE UNWILLING TO ATTEND CONFIRMATION AT THE CATHEDRAL FR. MATT WILL GIVE YOU PERMISSION TO ATTEND ANOTHER PARISH TO PREPARE FOR YOUR CONFIRMATION. NO PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED TO CELEBRATE THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION ELSEWHERE.

- a. **Attend all scheduled classes/sessions.** Missing a class session is not an option. This program has been designed to make it as simple as possible for you. Keep it simple by making arrangements with your employer ahead of time and letting coaches know you plan to be confirmed this year. They will understand if you let them know! With that said, **if an emergency arises or an unavoidable conflict (other than work!) arises –call Rosemary before class to make arrangements to make up the material.** (WARNING! Make-up work will be extensive!)
- b. **Take part in certain ceremonies/rites/liturgical experiences.**
 - ❖ Rite of Enrollment/Acceptance Ceremony (with sponsor), November 20th meet in the Church hall at 8:45 a.m. for a brief Sponsor meeting with Fr. Matt.
 - ❖ Rite of Confirmation Ceremony @ St. Peter's Cathedral in Erie (with sponsor)
- c. **Participate in Parish Life.** Attend Mass, volunteer at parish functions, train to be a lector, serve at Mass as an altar server.
- d. **Attend the retreat.**

Girls and their Mothers, Grandmother and/or Aunts or Sponsor will attend the **3rd Annual 1:38 Women's Conference, on Saturday, OCTOBER 1 at the Warner Theatre, 811 State Street, Erie, PA 16501. Registration deadline is September 18. Bus will depart our parking lot at 7:00 a.m.**

Boys and their Fathers, Grandfathers and/or Uncles or Sponsors will attend **Saturday, March 25, 2017 Annual Men's Conference, more information to come.**

Transportation is provided and the fee, if applicable, will be paid for by the parish for the Confirmation Candidate .

If for some reason you cannot make it to our retreat, **you** must call other parishes and try to join their retreat at your own expense.
- e. **Choose a Sponsor who is an example of Catholic Christian living.** (See "Choosing Your Sponsor")
- f. **Choose a Saint's/Biblical Character's name as a Confirmation name.** (See "Choosing Your Confirmation Name")
- g. **Write a letter to the Bishop expressing your desire to be confirmed. Letters are due at the end of the program.** (See "Letter to the Bishop")
- h. **Set up an interview with the Fr. Matt prior to Confirmation, a calendar will be available for you to sign up. If you miss your final interview because you just forgot, you need to contact Fr. Matt to reschedule.**
- i. **Enjoy the process of preparation!** It doesn't have to be agonizing. This is an important step in your faith journey – *Give it priority, make it special*, take time to get all you can out of it, and enjoy it. **What you walk away with at the end is completely up to you.**

Stick to the program, pay attention to the dates, and things will go smoothly. We promise!

Service

“Service opportunities are an important part of the formation of young Catholics. Parishes are to provide service opportunities for the confirmation candidates based on the needs of the community.” (Diocesan Policy 633.10)

The idea here is not to accumulate “brownie points” towards your trip to heaven! It is to have you experience what it means to be part of the Church. **The Church needs you, now.** Someday you will realize that you need the Church, too, if you haven’t already.

Your service consists of many parts:

1. **Participate in the service opportunities provided to you as part of class-time.**

Working the Thanksgiving dinner, Sunday, November 20 (we would like you to take this opportunity to work with your sponsor on this service project)

2. **Many other opportunities will also be available throughout the year:**

“Small things with great love” project – Helping a parishioner in need August 8, 9, 10 9:00- Noon.

Parish picnic – August 21

Women’s Guild 5K – October 29

Night at the Race – tentatively scheduled November 19

Caroling to our shut-ins and a local nursing home – December 10 5:30

Reverse Raffle – January 28

Shop for Mom craft show – April 29

Monthly parish dinners

Packing bags for the food pantry, Sundays before the 3rd Monday of the month only takes an hour beginning at Noon.

AND

- 3 **Participate in service opportunities on your own - at St. Bartholomew community at large. (Min. 30 hours total) 1/3 (10 hours) may be service to the community, prior approval from Fr. Matt is required.** A service form is at the back of this booklet. You will be responsible for recording YOUR own hours. WE WILL NOT KEEP TRACK OF YOUR HOURS, record them as you serve and return them to class, this is the candidates responsibility.

Choosing Your Confirmation Name

Your name gives you an identity. It tells others who you are. When you were born, your parents chose your name. (If you do not know why they chose your name – ask them about it.)

At your baptism, you were called by name, christened to become a child of God. Your name is your Christian name, and indicates your membership in the Catholic-Christian community.

Do you remember the stories of Abram and Saul? Maybe you remember them better as Abraham and Paul. Each man was given a new name by God to symbolize a new way of life. You are asked to choose a name for Confirmation for the same reason.

Your Confirmation name could be associated with someone in our Church community that you admire. Many candidates choose a name from a special aunt or uncle, grandparent, parent or family friend, and by doing so, they recognize a special connection or bond with that person. You may choose to do the same thing, **but keep the following guidelines in mind:**

- ❖ **Diocesan Policy 631.12 states:** *All Confirmation names must be that of a saint of the Church. (Only saints whose names can be found in Butler's Lives of the Saints may be used) This policy does permit the use of Scripture names of the holy persons/angels of both the Old and New Testaments.*
- ❖ You must learn something about the person whose name you choose (you can't choose it because "it sounds cool".) and decide what qualities that person has that you would hope to model your life.
- ❖ You must complete the Confirmation name sheet for approval.

Choosing a Confirmation Sponsor

No one journeys through life alone. We have many people in our lives that help us in different ways as we grow and mature. Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers and sisters, and friends all play some sort of role in our lives. They teach us, offer advice, point us in the right direction, and many times, they simply are there to listen.

A sponsor at Confirmation is someone who stands up for you before the church community, presents you to the Bishop, and witnesses the anointing with chrism. But, the sponsor is also so much more.

The sponsor you choose should be someone you can turn to for help and guidance as you continue your journey of faith. This person should be more than simply a good friend.

When choosing your sponsor, ask yourself:

- ❖ Is this person an excellent example of what it means to be a **Catholic Christian**? *Be sure to choose someone whom will be able to obtain a sponsor certificate from their parish. If the person you choose is not a member of a parish, then how are they living out their Catholic faith? You may have to choose someone else.*
- ❖ Can I relate to this person, talk freely with them about God and faith?
- ❖ Is this person free and willing to spend time with me in preparation for my Confirmation?
- ❖ Is this person geographically available to participate?

Requirements for a sponsor: (all must apply)

- ✚ they must be selected by you,
- ✚ they must have the ability and intention to carry out their responsibilities,
- ✚ **they must be a confirmed Catholic**
- ✚ If your sponsor is married, he or she must be in a marriage recognized by the church; if single, your sponsor should be living a chaste life in accordance with the Gospel.
- ✚ they must be able to obtain a sponsorship certificate from the parish they attend

Your sponsor may not be your parent. It is considered very fitting to choose one of your baptismal godparents to assume the role of your sponsor; but that choice is yours. It is perfectly acceptable to choose a sponsor of the same or opposite sex.

The Interview

All candidates must have a personal interview before being confirmed. These interviews are conducted by Fr. Matt.

No need to be nervous – the interview is a piece of cake. You will be asked basic questions on the Catholic faith, your beliefs, and your readiness for Confirmation. Most questions will come from the classes! You will also be asked which parish ministry you plan to pursue after Confirmation.

Bring with you a hardcopy of the first draft of your letter to the Bishop (we do read it) and your Service Form found in this packet. Save the letter to a USB drive and bring that as well. If we find there are some minor changes that can be made during the interview, then we can print another copy from the USB drive.

The Retreat

Hey, these can be fun, if you let them be! Attending a retreat for Confirmation is mandatory as per the Diocese. The Diocese suggests the diocesan women's and men's retreat to be attended with their mothers or fathers. If you are still not able to attend the retreat **YOU** must call other parishes and arrange to go to their retreat. You will be required to obtain verification of your attendance.

Letter to the Bishop

This is a serious letter, addressed to the Bishop, indicating your desire and intent to be confirmed in the Catholic faith. It should be typed and have a professional/formal appearance. It should exhibit your best effort to identify yourself as one ready to accept the challenges of being a member of the Catholic community of faith.

Your letter should be addressed to the Bishop who will be administering Confirmation at your celebration. Use the first paragraph to introduce yourself. Tell where you go to school, that you belong to St. Bartholomew (or the parish you belong to), and that you are a candidate for Confirmation.

The following issues should be addressed, in order of appearance here, in the body of your letter.

The final draft of this letter will be due at your Interview. We will review your first draft at a Confirmation Session prior to your interview.

1. Why do you feel you are ready to celebrate this Sacrament of Confirmation?
2. Please list the service projects in which you were involved, both inside and outside of your parish.
3. Please write a few words on how you felt about giving during your service projects. How will these experiences encourage you to further service in the future?
4. What saint/biblical character name have you chosen for your Confirmation name? Why?
5. What characteristics of the saint/biblical character whose name you are taking would you hope to model your life?
6. What was the theme of your Confirmation Retreat? Please write a few words on what was the most meaningful part of the retreat for you.
7. Who is your sponsor? Tell why you chose your sponsor. What in your sponsor's life tells you what it means to be a follower of Christ?
8. God calls each of us to be disciples in a particular way of life. This call is lived out through a variety of vocations such as marriage, the single life, the life of a deacon or priest or religious sister. Have you prayed to God asking that he reveal your vocation to you?
9. Have you ever thought God might be calling you to follow Him as a priest, deacon, or religious sister? (*hints: our bishop's name is **Bishop Lawrence Persico**, the sacrament is **Confirmation** (not conformation), Mass and God are always capitalized. It is St. Bartholomew, not St. Bart's, and religious education no longer referred to as CCD.)

PARENT'S/GUARDIAN'S AGREEMENT OF EXPECTATION

I acknowledge, in faith, that the Sacrament of Confirmation is a gift from God entrusted to the Church. I further acknowledge that the Sacrament of Confirmation bestows the fullness of God's Spirit initially given at Baptism, fully initiating one into the Catholic Church.

At my child's baptism, I agreed, with faith in God's assistance, "to bring him/her up in the practice of the faith" (from *The Rite of Baptism for Children*). As my child begins preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation, I recognize my continued "responsibility of training him/her in the practice of the faith" (from *The Rite of Baptism of Children*). With the help of the parish community at St. Bartholomew, it is my desire to remain faithful to my responsibilities by being intimately involved in my child's process of sacramental preparation offered by St. Bartholomew Church.

I have been informed of the requirements expected of me as a parent/guardian of a Confirmation candidate. I have agreed to these requirements and will commit myself, my time, and my energy, to the fulfillment of these expectations. I further agree to pray for my child, for the other candidates, and for the success of the program. Moreover, I will encourage my child to freely and willingly engage in this process of sacramental preparation offered through St. Bartholomew Church. I agree to do all in my power to assist my child in fulfilling the requirements and expectations set forth by the Diocesan Bishop, the Diocese of Erie, and St. Bartholomew Church.

I recognize that my child must freely and willingly choose to accept for himself/herself the grace that comes from the Sacrament of Confirmation, and such a decision must be made prayerfully and without force. I recognize that, at any time, my child may remove himself/herself from the process of preparation if he/she does not feel ready or willing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. I further recognize that the agreement made by my son/daughter, if broken, may result in his/her removal from the Confirmation Class of 2015-2016. Failure to complete the Confirmation program will render him/her unwilling to receive the Sacrament at the parish's spring celebration.

Signature of Parent/Guardian (required)

Signature of Parent/Guardian (optional)

CANDIDATE'S AGREEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS

I acknowledge, with faith, that the Sacrament of Confirmation is a gift from God entrusted to the Church. I further acknowledge that the Sacrament of Confirmation bestows the fullness of God's Spirit initially given at Baptism, fully initiating me into the Catholic Church. I recognize that, to fully appreciate, integrate, and receive the grace that comes with the reception of Confirmation, adequate catechesis and sacramental preparation is necessary. I further acknowledge that the Sacrament of "Confirmation will be administered only to those who have been properly instructed, actively involved in the parish program, and who freely choose to be confirmed" (Diocesan Policy, §631.10).

I have been informed of the requirements expected of me as a candidate for Confirmation. I have agreed to these requirements and will commit myself, my time, and my energy, to the fulfillment of these expectations. With the same degree of Christian maturity that this sacrament celebrates, I freely and willingly engage in this process of sacramental preparation offered through St. Bartholomew Church. I will fulfill each of the requirements set forth by my Diocesan Bishop, the Diocese of Erie, and St. Bartholomew Church. I will actively engage in this process of sacramental preparation with a prayerful spirit, complete honesty, an open mind and heart, a respectful attitude, and a spirit of reverence toward other peer-candidates, adult supervisors, and the program itself.

I know that I am free, at any time, to remove myself from this process if I do not feel ready and willing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. I further agree that any breach of this agreement, failure to fulfill the program's requirement, blatant disrespect for another, or disregard for the process, will result in my removal from the Confirmation Class of 2015-2016. Failure to complete the Confirmation program will render me unwilling to receive the Sacrament at our Spring Ceremony.

Signature of Candidate

Service Record

(Due at your interview)

NAME: _____

Service projects completed with the Confirmation class, you are to a total of at least 30 hours and work 1 fish fry. (You may copy this form if you complete service at different places/times.)

Place where you did service: _____

Name of Contact person: _____ phone: _____

Date of service: _____ Number of hours of service: _____

Service performed: _____

Why did you choose this service? _____

What did you learn from this service/ or how have you grown from doing this service? ____

Verified by: (please print): _____

Signature: _____