

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends in Christ,

After consulting with my parish staff, I report to you all the major changes which must come about due to Bishop James Wall's decision to move Confirmation from the 11th Grade to the 3rd Grade. In columns in the last three weeks, I have explained the reasoning for this change and have run Bishop Wall's personal letter to us on his theological and historical reasons for making these changes to Confirmation.

Gleaning information from various staff members and listening to a wide variety of people, including present Confirmation students, I share with you what I shared with my parish staff. Following is what I put together from Anne Weigel, our director of religious education; along with input from Rosalia Beyhan, Sacred Heart Catholic School principal; Connie Schulz, parish music director; Kristi Lucero, present youth minister; Chris Shay, incoming youth director starting his position with his wife Karrah after this school year; Jayme Childers, parish secretary; and Daniel Burnham, who has overseen our Confirmation program for the past two decades and even wrote the book with his wife, Carly, which we use in our present Confirmation program:

I breakdown our plan into the coming years as we move through the transition to finally having Confirmation in the 3rd Grade:

2019-2020: CCD, Life Teen and Edge will continue as before: CCD Grades 1st through 6th meet from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. and 7th through 12th Grades meet from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Wednesdays with the present curriculum. Life Teen and Edge meet on alternating Sundays as the calendar allows.

Confirmation Meeting for all 8th through 12th Grade Candidates (approximately 162) and their parents will be held in the Church on Wednesday, October 2, 2019, at 7 p.m. CCD curriculum will be as is presently for all the grades with an integrated night or two on Confirmation. A Confirmation Reflection Evening with Father Tim Farrell and Daniel Burnham will be held with the Confirmandi and their sponsors and parents sometime during the CCD year still undetermined. Easter in 2020 will be on Sunday, April 12th. First Communion will be held on Saturday, April 18th, at 10 a.m. We are hoping Confirmation will then be held on Saturday, April 25, at 10 a.m. but this is totally up to Bishop James Wall. Tentatively, practice for confirmation for the 162 or so Confirmandi and their sponsors would be on Wednesday, April 22, 2020, at 7 p.m. With such a large group, three or four priests will be invited to hear confessions after the practice. Sponsors should go to confession at another time.

So with Confirmation tentatively scheduled on April 25, 2020 at 10 a.m., a reception with cake and punch and coffee will be held immediately afterwards.

2020-2021: CCD Grades 1 to 5 meet on Wednesday from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Confirmation candidates (approximately 129 Grades 6, 7 and 8 – and up) will meet in the Parish Center from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Life Teen for Grades 9 through 12 will meet in the Family Center from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Tentatively, the Family Center Social Hall will be where Life Teen meets for dinner and then speakers/activities under the direction of the incoming Youth Directors Chris and Karrah Shay. Chris and Karrah, in consultation with Father Tim Farrell and with their Core Team and advice from outgoing Youth Minister Kristi Lucero, will invite various speakers presently teaching in the upper grades of CCD and other speakers as well. Not every week will there be a speaker, of course, because Life Teen's program does not work that way. Life Teen and CCD are very different approaches, but we do wish to use the talent of some of our present teachers and other good speakers as well when the Core Team sees a need.

A reflection evening will be led by Father Tim Farrell as pastor and Daniel Burnham for candidates, parents and sponsors. That will be held on a CCD Wednesday. Rehearsal for candidates and their sponsors will be in the Spring following Easter, if possible, and the closest Wednesday we can get to Confirmation itself. Confessions for candidates will follow rehearsal. Confirmation Mass will be held the Second Saturday after Easter, if possible, and OK'd by Bishop James Wall, at 10 a.m. A reception as above will follow the Mass.

2021-2022: CCD Grades 1 to 5 will meet on Wednesdays from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Life Teen for 9th through 12th Grades and Edge for 6th through 8th Grades will meet in the Family Center for dinner and then disperse to areas for Life Teen gatherings and Edge gatherings separately (Life Teen most likely in the Social Hall, Edge in the Meeting Center).

Confirmation Candidates 4th and up (approximately 113) and their parents will meet the first Wednesday in October during CCD. A reflection evening led by Father Tim Farrell as pastor and Daniel Burnham for candidates, parents and sponsors, will be on a Wednesday evening during CCD, 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Rehearsal for candidates and their sponsors will be on a Wednesday during CCD (5:30 to 6:30 p.m.) on the Wednesday closest to Confirmation if possible. Confessions for candidates will follow with several priests available. Confirmation will take place tentatively on the second Saturday after Easter at 10 a.m. with reception following.

2022-2023: CCD Grades 1 to 5 will meet on Wednesdays from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Life Teen for 9th to 12th Graders and Edge for 6th to 8th Graders will meet in the Family Center for dinner and then go to their respective meeting areas after eating.

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Confirmation and First Holy Communion candidates (approximately 40) for 3rd Grade and up and their parents will meet on a Wednesday in October during CCD. A reflection evening with Father Tim Farrell and Daniel Burnham for candidates, parents and sponsors will be on a Wednesday during CCD. Rehearsal for candidates and their sponsors will be in the Spring on a Wednesday closest to Confirmation/Communion during CCD and Confirmation/First Communion will be held on the First Saturday after Easter. This date will depend on how Bishop Wall decides to handle Confirmation/First Communion. He can come or he can designate one of his vicar generals or he can designate the pastor. If he designates the pastor, it will be on the First Saturday after Easter. A reception will follow.

This format will then continue from then on. The ***Saints Among Us*** curriculum for First Reconciliation for 2nd Grade and Confirmation/First Communion for 3rd Grade from the Denver Archdiocese looks acceptable and good to both Rosalia Beyhan, principal of Sacred Heart Catholic School and Anne Weigel, DRE of Sacred Heart Parish. Father Tim Farrell, in consultation with his staff, will make the final determination. RCIC will be held on Monday nights when RCIA is held once we move exclusively to youth activities for 6th through 12th Graders on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. This will enable youth to attend Life Teen or Edge on Wednesday nights if they wish.

I understand that we will be going through massive changes in our program. I thank all the teachers, teachers' aides, administration and other personnel presently in our CCD programs. As we make the change over as directed by our bishop, I know we will patiently and gently move towards this new program. I thank my wonderful staff for their amazing input, suggestions and support. I think with their intelligent and gracious input, we will have a smooth transition.

Blessings,
Father Tim Farrell
Pastor

Safety Reminders

A few reminders: Only those who are ill or a parent with a child should stand in the lobby during Mass. Simply inform the usher of why you feel you must sit or stand in the lobby. This is for the safety of all our people at Mass.

NO ONE is to stand at any time near the bathrooms nor hang out in the bathrooms. You will be kindly informed by the ushers at the rear of the Church to be seated in the main body of the Church.

Parents MUST take their children 12 and under to the restrooms. Children will be stopped by the ushers in the lobby and returned to their pew if they are heading to the restrooms alone.

No backpacks are allowed in the main body of the Church. You may leave them with the lobby usher and he/she will see to its safety during Mass. Parents, if you carry a diaper bag for your little ones, please advise the usher and he will give it a quick search.

Safety is a hallmark of our parish and there are police officers present and watching the Church at each Mass. Some are in uniform, most are in civilian clothes. We ask police officers to identify themselves to the head usher in the lobby before Mass. I thank our officers who commit themselves to all four Masses each weekend. On more than a few occasions these officers have intervened when an inebriated or potentially troubling individual has entered the Church. Please note that New Mexico is a conceal and carry state and so I am aware that more than a few parishioners at each Mass are carrying their weapons legally during Mass for safety.

The front side doors nearest the altar are locked five minutes before each Mass for the safety of our people, so if you come after this time, please use the lobby entrances. The east side lobby entrance is fully handicapped-accessible.