**St. Bernard Parish: 2023 Confirmation Preparation**

Dear Parents and High School Sophomores and Juniors,

We are excited for the opportunity to journey with you to the Sacrament of Confirmation! At times, the Sacrament of Confirmation can be viewed as a graduation from religious education or one’s “adult decision to enter the Church.” However, neither of these describe what Confirmation actually is. The Sacrament of Confirmation strengthens the gifts of the Holy Spirit given at Baptism and gives candidates a mission to go forth and live a life worthy to enter Heaven and be a soldier for Christ.

Last year the diocese made some changes to how Confirmation Masses were scheduled. Beginning this year, due to these changes, St. Bernard Parish will prepare both Sophomores and Juniors for Confirmation. Both grade levels will then receive the Sacrament together in the fall of 2023. After Confirmation, public school students are expected to continue with Faith Formation classes for the remainder of their Junior year.

Since this is an important time in a candidate’s faith life, Bishop Ricken and the Diocese of Green Bay ask parishes to dedicate a separate process and time-period, outside of Faith Formation or Theology classes, specifically for Confirmation preparation.

* **We will be offering this immediate Confirmation preparation process beginning this spring for 10th and 11th grade students in both public school and Catholic school. Candidates will go through the process with anticipation to receive the Sacrament in the fall of 2023.**
* **In addition to the immediate Confirmation prep., students attending public high school should be enrolled in Faith Formation classes. Classes began in September and will continue through April. If your student did not attend the classes in the fall they will need to be made up.**

**The requirements to receive Confirmation at St. Bernard Parish are as follows:**

1. **Sacraments of Initiation**: Candidates must have already been baptized and received their First Communion. If these sacraments were not received at St. Bernard Parish, copies of the sacramental certificates need to be submitted. Please have these in by the opening retreat. If students haven’t received these two Sacraments, we will help students towards this.
2. **Religious Education Background:**
   1. Public school students are asked to fulfill these hours by enrolling in religious education classes at St. Bernard Parish and, if necessary, making up for missed classes.
   2. Notre Dame Academy students receive religion classes through their school and are not required to fulfill this obligation.
3. **Mass Attendance:** Candidates are to attend Mass **\*every\* Sunday** (or Saturday evening). Mass is where we get the spiritual nourishment we need to have a relationship with God. If we are not living our Catholic faith, then Catholicism merely becomes another topic of study like history or social studies. God made us to be in a relationship with Him, not to simply know things about Him and His Church.

1. **Class Attendance**: Candidates will need to complete the entire preparation process. Attendance is mandatory and will be taken into consideration prior to the reception of the Sacrament. If there are scheduling conflicts, please contact Adam Horn prior to the start of classes to arrange for something different. If a student misses a class, they will be expected to make up the material.
2. **Sponsors**: Candidates will be asked to choose a Sponsor that will guide them in this journey. Sponsors, by Canon Law, cannot be parents. Sponsors must be practicing Confirmed Catholics, attend Mass every Sunday, and believe in the full teachings of the Catholic Church. Sponsors are asked to play a HUGE role in forming their candidate, particularly over the summer months. Candidates are asked to pick a sponsor they look up to in their faith.
3. **Saint Name**: The process of Confirmation allows candidates to be transformed by the Holy Spirit—to become a new creation. To signify this, candidates are asked to choose a Saint they admire. This Saint’s name will become their Confirmation name and will be presented to Bishop Ricken.
4. **Bishop’s Letter**: Before receiving the Sacrament, Bishop Ricken asks all students to submit a letter of intention to receive the Sacrament. More details will be provided as the Confirmation preparation process is completed.
5. **Confirmation Conversations**: Candidates will be asked to participate in a check-in with the pastor and/or a member of the parish staff both before and after the Confirmation preparation process. These meetings allow our staff to connect with the students and to assess and determine their readiness / seriousness of receiving the Sacrament. Schedules will be sent out soon.

The above guidelines are in place to assure that students receive the right formation to grow deeper as a disciple. There is an interesting back-and-forth in Catholicism… our relationship with God is most important, but in order to grow in our love for God, we need to better understand Who He Is and who He created us to be. The better we understand, the greater we love, and the cycle of learning more and growing in love continues again!

**Confirmation Preparation Schedule (Notre Dame & Public High School Students):**

Wednesday, May 3rd – Class 1 from 6:00 – 8:00. Location: Bishop Hall

Wednesday, May 10th – Class 2 from 6:00 – 8:00. Location: Bishop Hall

Wednesday, May 24th – Class 3 from 6:00 – 8:00. Location: Bishop Hall

Wednesday, May 31st – Class 4 from 6:00 – 8:00. Location: Bishop Hall

Saturday, June 10th – Closing Retreat from 10 AM to 5 PM. Location: Church and Bishop Hall

Once the diocese schedules our Confirmation Mass, we will schedule a practice for around that time and keep you informed.

**Registration:**

1. Public high school students who are currently enrolled in our Wednesday night faith formation program do not need to submit another registration. Your registration for faith formation class also serves as your registration for Confirmation.
2. Notre Dame Academy students should complete the enclosed Confirmation registration form. Tuition for Confirmation preparation is $40 per student.
3. If your child is not currently enrolled in our Wednesday night faith formation program and is attending public high school, please complete the enclosed Confirmation registration form. Tuition for Confirmation preparation is $40 per student. I will then follow up with you on how we can best prepare your student for Confirmation.

Please contact me with any questions or comments you may have. I am here to serve you and your Confirmation candidate. I am looking forward to seeing how the Holy Spirit moves in the upcoming year!

Sincerely in Christ,

Adam Horn

Director of Faith Formation

920-301-3282

adam@stbernardcong.org