

*Ss. Cosmas and Damian wishes to share with you, the*

## **NEW INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONFIRMATION PREPARATION**

From our Diocesan Office of Catechetical Formation and Education

1. ALL Confirmation preparation programs are to be a two-year process, with 12 sessions of instruction over the two-year period. *Within our parish, we will have two segments of our program –each one running for one year: one to be called “The Year of Holy Fire” and the other to be called “The Year of Living Water.” These are NOT sequential and students will be able to enter the program either year. Confirmation will be conferred when students have completed both sections, and the additional requirements as given.*

PURPOSE: Formation takes time. It takes time to develop relationships, including our relationship with Jesus Christ. It takes time to digest and pray about what we are learning, to grow and to discover. We also acknowledge that students and families are very busy, and this allots more time to fulfill the requirements.

2. It is required (and has been) that all potential candidates for entering the Confirmation preparation program have been actively participating EITHER in the parish Faith Formation program OR attending a Catholic day school. (They MUST have been doing this the full year prior to applying for entry into the Confirmation preparation program.) *For those who have not been in Faith Formation over the years, we have been given permission to test a “bridge” program to help re-engage them in their faith and relationship with God. This will not substitute for the many years of steady faith formation that is expected, but it is a stepping stone in the right direction. This will be a number of sessions in a group situation, over the summer, prior to application for acceptance into the Confirmation program.*

PURPOSE: In order to be Confirmed in one’s faith, one must first know it and embrace it. It is not fair to ask students to commit to a faith that they do not know. Confirmation requires an attitude of discipleship and mission – a willingness to step up and take an active role in the life of the Church. The foundation and practice of the faith is essential.

3. Regular Sunday Mass participation is a requirement! It is expected that candidate hopefuls will have been regular participants in the Sunday Liturgy throughout their lives, and that their application to be Confirmed in the Church comes from growth in that practiced faith. *In our parish we use Mass Journals, which candidates will be expected to keep up each week. Content and reflections for each week will vary, and Mass Journals will be checked along the way. Mass Journals will help students to better understand what is happening in the Mass, and will help them to reflect personally on God’s work on their hearts and in their lives.*

PURPOSE: Those seeking the Sacrament of Confirmation must be practicing Catholics, meaning they are fulfilling their moral obligation to attend a weekend Mass at a Catholic church. The Holy Mass is considered the pinnacle expression of a community giving praise to God and preparing to serve God through knowledge of the Word of God and the graces of Holy Eucharist. The Mass Journals will motivate the students to attend and be focused during the Holy Mass. Catholics who miss the weekend Mass without a just cause (eg. Sickness), should confess their sins before receiving Holy Communion.

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4. A Confirmation retreat will be required once during the two-year Confirmation preparation process. *We will offer the retreat every year, but it is only required once. Many will choose to do the retreat their first year, and some may defer to the second year. Those who do the retreat the first year will be encouraged to step up into a role on the retreat team, to help conduct the retreat the second year.*

PURPOSE: Time away with our God to reflect and grow in relationship, and to ponder the Holy Spirit and its role in our lives is a necessary part of our formation during this time of preparation. For those who have already done the retreat on their first year, it is an opportunity to step up in leadership in our Church, which is where Confirmation should lead.

5. There is a service component, with reflection. Service projects must be within the diocesan guidelines for this and include service within the parish and service to the marginalized. *Service projects must be pre-approved in order to be sure the intended project lies within the given parameters. In our parish, there will be three service projects over the two-year period. Written reflections are required.*

PURPOSE: When we look at the beautiful gifts God has already given us, our joy and our love cannot be contained. Service to others is who we are at the heart, and is a natural continuation of the faith that we have encountered in the Living God. The Spirit cries out from within us to go forth and share God's love with others.

6. Celebration of the Sacrament of Penance is required near, but prior to the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. *We will make every attempt to offer opportunities during the retreats, but candidates may also choose to go at another time.*

PURPOSE: CCC (1310) states that candidates "must be in a state of grace" in order to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. To do this, one should receive the Sacrament of Penance, and continue to prepare through "more intense prayer."

7. A final interview with a pastoral staff person to ensure the readiness of each candidate and to offer continued encouragement and help on the way. *We are excited to celebrate your journey with you, and are eager to meet with you to hear about your prayer, your relationship with your Sponsor and parents throughout the process, as well as your service projects and your growth in your relationship with God.*

PURPOSE: The pastor is ultimately the one who must ensure that all candidates are well-prepared, and properly disposed to receive this Sacrament. He will stand before the Bishop at Confirmation and state this. We do no one any favors by just "giving" them the Sacrament if they do not comprehend what it is all about, and their mission and place in the Church community.

**We invite you to contact us with any questions, or if you wish to discuss further.**  
***See separate invite to special parent meetings, which will have more detail & opportunity for discussion.***

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