

*St. Thomas More Parish*

Sacramental Preparation

~ Confirmation ~

June 5, 2022

Parent Handbook

“... Confirmed by the gift of the Spirit, that they give witness to Christ by living lives built on faith and love ...”

Dear Parents,

Congratulations! You have been journeying with your son or daughter in this adventure of life and faith for quite a stretch. Preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation is an important part of the road you are travelling. It affords you the opportunity to stop and view where you have been, where you are at this moment and where you are going both in your own life of faith and together with your child. As a parish community, we strive to support you and your family as you share life and faith with your adolescent child.

This most precious gift of faith is what was asked of you when you presented your child for Baptism, when you promised that you would raise your child in the faith.

This handbook is intended as a guide for your continuing journey with your son or daughter. We offer an understanding of the Sacrament of Confirmation that is based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church. In addition, scripture reflections accompany the program and provide ways that you can share your faith with your teenager during the Confirmation preparation process. You will also find guidance in helping to select a sponsor for this important sacrament.

Blessings for the journey!

God, our Father,  
We ask you to bless our candidates who are now preparing to  
receive the Spirit of your love in the Sacrament of  
Confirmation. May the gifts within each one of these children  
be touched by your  
Holy Spirit and become a blessing for our parish family.

Bless the parents, the sponsors, the catechists,  
and all those who have reflected,  
through their words and actions,  
your Son's love for us. This we ask through Christ,  
our Lord.

Amen

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### General Information

**THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION** are *Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist* and they lay the foundation of every Christian life. They initiate (or incorporate) our ongoing relationship with God. God loves us, as we are, and invites us to share in the divine life: to be one with God; immersed in God; held by God; encircled by a love that knows no bounds. Those who choose to accept this invitation to live in relationship with God, within the Catholic faith, do so by participating in the process of Christian Initiation. *This is how we express our YES to God ... **yes** to God at Baptism, **yes** to God at the time of our Confirmation and our ongoing **yes** to God every time we receive the Eucharist.*

**In Baptism**, a person becomes a Christian and receives grace and life from the Holy Spirit. Baptism is the first sacrament where you become united with God and the Catholic Church – no other sacrament can be received without it. Baptism is received only once in our lifetime. In Baptism we are made one with Christ and become a member of the Church. We literally take a “plunge” from the ordinary to the extraordinary. *In Baptism we begin our journey of becoming a child of God.*





**VISIBLE SIGNS FOUND IN THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM:** We are claimed by Christ when we are marked with the **sign of the cross** and joined to Christ as we are baptised with **water** – in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We are **anointed with oil**, clothed in a **white baptismal garment**, being given a **lit baptismal candle**, and **the Creed (what we believe as Catholics) in question form**. All these are the visible signs of our faith and shows everyone that we have committed ourselves to the life-long journey of our Catholic faith.

Many of us receive the sacrament of Baptism when we are infants and we can not speak for ourselves, therefore, our parents, god-parents, family, friends and the faith community within the parish speak for us. However, when we reach the age of 12-13 years we are now able to speak for ourselves. As we mature, it is now important that we independently renew our Baptismal promises and this is done in the sacrament of Confirmation.

**In Confirmation**, the baptismal vows are renewed with the reciting of the Creed in question form. We are “sealed” (through the anointing of Chrism oil) which marks each individual forever as a Christian. This seal is a special mark, or character on the soul that can never be erased. The sacrament of Confirmation (like Baptism) is only received once. Through this sacrament we establish a more mature role in the Church’s mission of living the Christian faith in our daily living. The sacrament of Confirmation is not the end of your child’s religious education but actually begins a new and important chapter in their faith formation. Through ALL our words and ALL our actions we are called to be a living witness of Christ -- to be disciples of Christ in the here and now. Confirmation is a sacrament in which those who have been baptized receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit, whom the Lord sent upon his apostles at Pentecost. Wind, breath and fire are all images of the Holy Spirit. The fire of the Holy Spirit fuels us (sustains us) to continue Christ’s mission in our everyday lives.

**VISIBLE SIGNS:** During the Rite of Confirmation, the **laying on of hands** on a person's head and **anointing with chrism oil on the forehead**, and **responding to our Creed in question form**, our Baptismal commitment is confirmed. **Special prayers and blessings are recited.** Boys sometimes **wear white** shirts and girls often wear white dresses.

**In the Eucharist,** through the celebration of the Mass, we celebrate the source and summit of our Christian life and it is the central act of worship in the Roman Catholic Church. There are four major parts to the Mass:

-  Introductory Rites: the gathering of the faith community.
-  Liturgy of the Word: listening to and reflecting on God's WORD spoken to us in the scripture readings.
-  Liturgy of the Eucharist: a major part of the Eucharistic Prayer is the epiclesis. In the epiclesis, the priest asks God the Father to send the Holy Spirit on the gifts of bread and wine so that, through the power of the Spirit, they may become the Body and Blood of Christ. That same Spirit will transform those attending the liturgy that they may grow in their unity with each other, with the whole Catholic Church and with Christ. Eucharist means thanksgiving.
-  Concluding Rites: the term *Mass* is derived from the Latin dismissal of congregation: "Ite, missa est" which means, "Go, you are sent." At the end of each Mass we are sent out on our mission to live as disciples of Jesus continuing the mission of Jesus in the world. Therefore, the liturgy does not simply come to an end. Those who are assembled are sent forth to serve and love others.

This is how we become a disciple of Christ, as we return each Sunday to be nourished by the Word of God and the Body of Christ. This is how we sustain ourselves in the life-long process of initiating ourselves into the life of God. The nourishment we receive in the Eucharist will give us the strength to live in the world. **The Sacrament of the Eucharist can be received daily!**

**VISIBLE SIGNS:** During the Last Supper, Christ broke the **bread**, gave thanks, ate it, gave it to his disciples and told them to eat it. Christ took the **wine**, filled the cup, gave thanks, drank it, gave it to his disciples and told them to drink it. Now the priest, through the prayers during the Consecration, blesses and administers the Holy Communion during every Mass to remind followers that they are one with Christ. Food and drink nourish our bodies – Christ's **body** and **blood** nourishes us spiritually. In the Eucharist Christ is hidden from our eye but HE IS HERE!

There is an intimate link between each of the Sacraments of Initiation and receiving the sacraments of Baptism, First Holy Eucharist and Confirmation completes our initiation into becoming full members of the Catholic Church. Now it is our mission to "go out to love and serve the Lord by loving and serving others."

### **The Critical Role of Parents and the Family**

**Parents are the primary educators for their children in the faith, and their role cannot be overstated.** *“Family catechesis, therefore, precedes, accompanies and enriches all other forms of catechesis.”* (Pope John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae* 68)

**Religious education in the family goes far beyond teaching and is modeled in daily life.**

*“The ministry of evangelization carried out by Christian parents is original and irreplaceable. It assumes the characteristics typical of family life itself, which should be interwoven with love, simplicity, practicality and daily witness.”* (The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World” 53) This daily living witness is demonstrated by our words and actions ... how we model our treatment of others.

As the primary religious educators of your children, you are a VITAL component for the preparation of Confirmation. It has been your faith and your witness that have laid the foundation for your child. You are the FIRST and most important MODEL OF FAITH for your child.

Your active participation, encouragement and enthusiasm for this Sacrament is one of the greatest gifts you can give. We ask parents of Confirmation candidates to:

- Help your child discern if he/she is ready to make the commitment to begin preparation for Confirmation. Discuss with your child that Confirmation activities and sessions must be a priority for the next few months.
- Mark your calendar NOW with all the Confirmation dates. Commit to all the dates.
- Work with your child/discuss/share ideas and insights with all homework assignments -- GROW TOGETHER IN YOUR FAITH.
- Assist your child in the selection of a suitable sponsor. You may want to read over the sponsor's responsibilities and help your child form a list of possible sponsors. Enter into a serious dialogue about who would make a good sponsor based on the meaning of their role and the particular needs of your child.
- Support your child and sponsor through prayer.
- Become involved in your child's service component/projects. (Options are provided).
- Be an attentive listener to the spiritual and religious needs of your child. Open, honest and on-going conversations are crucial. Challenge and respect their feelings.
- Share with your child how you use your own time and talents in service to the church and greater community.
- Encourage your child to continue to be of service to the parish and community. Guide and support them in using their gifts of time, talent and treasure within the parish community.
- Pray with your children before meals and before bed.
- Have a bible and use the YouCat Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church as a reference book in your home. Refer to these texts often.

- “Breaking open the Word” by reading and discussing scripture passages is also a great family activity. Sharing faith with children takes time and commitment.
- To regularly participate in the Mass by attending on a weekly basis and on Holy Days of obligation.
- Continually encourage your child to participate in the sacramental life of the church, **before**, as well as, **after** the reception of this sacrament.
- See that your child receives the Sacrament of Reconciliation one week prior to receiving this Sacrament. (Date is provided).

### **Responsibilities and Requirements of the Child**

As with all sacraments, it is necessary for participation to be voluntary. Preparation for the sacrament encompasses much more than receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation, it is crucial that you attend and participate in certain activities and accomplish certain tasks beyond what is studied in the sessions. These requirements will hopefully, lead you to a stronger commitment and a deeper understanding of your faith.

As candidates, we ask you to:

- Have a sincere desire to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- Listen attentively and actively participate in all preparation sessions.
- To respect other candidates, catechists and team leaders.
- Ask questions.
- Attend Mass weekly.
- Invite a practicing Catholic to be your Confirmation Sponsor.
- Participate fully in the service expectations of the program.
- Complete all homework that will be assigned at the end of each session.
- Return all necessary paperwork by the dates indicated on the calendar:
  - Letter to the Archbishop,
  - Saint report
  - Log book demonstrating hours of service.
- Remain an active part of the Catholic community by continuing to learn about and practice their faith.
- Become involved in parish ministry: choir, hospitality, Junior Servers.



# RITE OF CONFIRMATION

Renewal of Baptismal Promises (the Creed in question form) after the homily

Archbishop or parish priest:

**“Do you reject Satan, and all his works, and empty promises?”**

Candidates/parents/sponsors: **“I DO!”**

Archbishop or parish priest:

**“Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth?”**

Candidates/parents/sponsors: **“I DO!”**

Archbishop or parish priest:

**“Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His Only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died and was buried, rose again from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?”**

Candidates/parents/sponsors: **“I DO!”**

Archbishop or parish priest:

**“Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?”**

Candidates/parents/sponsors: **“I DO!”**

Archbishop or parish priest:

**“This is our faith. This is the faith of our Church. We are proud to profess it, in Jesus Christ our Lord.”**

Candidates/parents/sponsors: **“Amen!”**

## Laying on the Hands (invoking the Holy Spirit)

The Archbishop or Parish Priest will extend his hands over all the candidates and prays .... NOTE: during this time the sponsors place their **right hand on the shoulder** of their candidate.

Archbishop or Parish Priest:

*"All powerful God, Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit, you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their Helper and Guide. Give them the Spirit of **wisdom and understanding**, the spirit of **right judgement and courage**, the spirit of **knowledge and reverence**. Fill them with the spirit of **wonder and awe** in your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord."*

Candidates: **"AMEN!"**

## Anointing with the Chrism Oil

Each candidate and their sponsor goes forward to the Archbishop or Parish Priest. The **sponsor places their right hand on the candidate's shoulder**. The presider dips his right thumb into the chrism oil and makes the sign of the cross on the person to be confirmed and says ...

Archbishop or Parish Priest: **(name of child) ... "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit."**

Candidate: **"Amen!"**

Archbishop or Parish Priest: **"Peace be with you."**

Candidate: **"And with your spirit."** (shake hands)

## **SCHEDULE/HOMEWORK FOR CONFIRMATION PREPARATION PROGRAM**

***Name of Parish***

***Date***

**PARENT ORIENTATION SESSION:** **Sunday, April 3, 2022 at 1:30-3:00 pm** (at least ONE parent and child attends this session)

- GOALS:
  1. introduction and overview of program,
  2. the meaning of the Sacrament of Confirmation,
  3. review of the Rite of Confirmation,
  4. role of the parent, role of the sponsor,
  5. program expectations (homework, service model),
  6. introduce Confirmation team (team leaders, catechists)
- Resources that will be handed out:
  - Parent Handbook
  - Alive in the Spirit – Family Book
  - YouCat: Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church

**HOMEWORK for the next session:**

1. Read YOUCAT paragraphs: 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 11, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 271
2. Come prepared to answer the KEY Questions: How is water important in our lives?  
How do we use water in our everyday lives?
3. Begin thinking about what will be in your letter to the Archbishop. (See sample letter in appendix.)
4. Begin thinking about the types of service you will focus on over the next few weeks.
5. When doing any research, please use ones specific to the Catholic Faith! Not all reference material is equally good. View all resources with a critical eye.
6. Review (as a family) the following videos:
  - <https://bustedhalo.com/video/confirmation-why-were-confirmed> (Confirmation)
  - <https://caedm.ca/faith/sacraments/confirmation/> (parents)
  - [Bishop Barron on the Sacrament of Confirmation - Bing video](#) (Confirmation)
  - <https://bustedhalo.com/video/baptism> (Baptism)

**WE ASK EACH CHILD TO COME PREPARED FOR EACH SESSION BY DOING THE ASSIGNED HOMEWORK.**

**Before you leave today:**

- Check email addresses.
- Paperwork: doublecheck registration information

**LESSON ONE:** *Sunday, April 10 at 1:30-3:00 pm*

- THEME: **Baptized with Water**: revisiting our Baptism and baptismal promises, we are each Called by Name, introduce our Christian “Call to SERVICE” and reinforce at each session.

## HOMEWORK for the next session:

1. Complete pages 5 – 13 in the Family Book (parent and child working together).
2. Read YOUCAT 26, 27, 28, 29, 33, 193, 194, 195, 197, 200, 201, 202, 261, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208
3. Watch You Are Sent: Ep. 1 Jesus Sends the Holy Spirit
4. Come prepared to discuss the key questions ... **How is oil important in our lives? How do we use oil in our everyday lives?**
5. Begin to prepare your Saint Report. Choose a Saint and choose a person in your life who is an example of a saint-like person.

**LESSON TWO:** *Sunday, April 24 at 1:30-3:00 pm*

- THEME: **Anointed with Oil**: the meaning of being anointed by oil, called to be Priest, Prophet and King.

## HOMEWORK for the next session:

1. Read and do the work on pages 14 - 22 in the Family Book.
2. Read YOUCAT 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 469, 478, 479, 491, 496, 497, 498, 499, 514, 527
3. Watch Formed video: You Are Sent Ep. 3 Sacrament of Confirmation
4. Be prepared to discuss:
  - What are the traits and qualities that make that person a Saint.
  - What are the qualities of a good person. How would a good person act?
5. Your **“Saint Report”** is due for our next lesson. (Hand in your report to your Team Leader at the beginning of the session.)
6. Wear or bring a special piece of clothing to the next lesson.

**LESSON THREE:** *Sunday, May 1 at 1:30-3:00 pm* **SAINT REPORT IS DUE TODAY!**

- THEME: **Clothed in Christ**: what does it mean to be the eyes, lips, hands, feet and heart of Christ? called to be a saint, who are the Saints of the Church – who are the saints in our everyday lives? What does it mean to be holy men and women?

## HOMEWORK for next session:

1. Read and do the work on pages 23-31 in the Family Book.
2. Read YOUCAT with your parents: 360, 146, 342, 303, 310, 311, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95

3. Bring your baptismal candle or a simple 10" taper to the next lesson.
4. Continue filling in your Service log.
5. Look at the outline for the "Letter to the Archbishop" and begin discussing with your parents and sponsor what you will be writing to the Archbishop.

**LESSON FOUR:** *Sunday, May 8 at 1:30-3:00 pm*

- **THEME: Enlightened by Christ:** what does it mean for us to be the light of Christ at home, at school, at play ..., what is the Holy Spirit? What are the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit? How does the Holy Spirit help us be "light to others"?

**HOMEWORK** for next session:

1. Read and do the work on pages 32-38 in the Family Book.
2. Read YOUCAT: 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 60, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120
3. Continue filling in your Service log.
4. Your "Letter to the Archbishop" is due for next session.

**LESSON FIVE:** *Sunday, May 15 at 1:30-3:00 pm* **LETTER TO THE ARCHBISHOP IS DUE TODAY!**

- **THEME: Teaching Mass:** why do we go to Mass on a regular basis? What does it mean to be nourished? Why do we need nourishment? What does it mean to be "sent forth" at the end of Mass? What happens when we fall short of our calling to be priest, prophet, king and saint? What happens when we fail to be the best version of ourselves? When we fall short, the Church provides us the Sacrament of Reconciliation ... this gives us the opportunity to ask for forgiveness, reconcile and begin fresh!

**HOMEWORK** for next session:

1. Read and do the work on pages 45-48 in the Family Book.
2. Read YOUCAT with your parents: 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239
3. Ensure your Service requirements are met and the Service log is handed in next week.

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION:** *Sunday, May 29 at 1:30-3:00*

- At 1:30-2:00 review of the sacrament of Reconciliation
- 2:00 – 3:00 individual confessions with visiting priests

**REHEARSAL AND REVIEW OF THE RITE:** *Saturday, June 4 at 2:30-4:00* (at least ONE parent attends with their child. The sponsor is also invited.)

- Review the Rite: the Creed in question form, the anointing, the blessing ... full and active participation
- Review the logistics for the Confirmation Masses: seating, clothing, pictures, ...

**CONFIRMATION MASSES**

Choose ONE Mass:

*Sunday, June 5 at 2:00 PM OR 5:00 PM*

**ASSIGNMENTS:****Writing a Saint Report (DUE ON SUNDAY, MAY 1) (see appendix for FACT SHEET)**

Each child is asked to select ONE Saint of the Church to research and write a short report (see last pages of appendix for an extensive list of saints). A canonized Christian Saint is a man or a woman who has displayed heroic virtue and has been recognized by the Church. This report must provide a very brief summary of the Saint's life. We ask that they list the qualities that made them a Saint of the Church. Find a Saint that you admire and tell us why.

On the reverse side of the sheet, we ask for each child to think of **ONE person in their everyday lives that has saint-like qualities**. This special person can be living or deceased. We ask that the child discuss the qualities of this special person who is meaningful to them and serves as an inspiration and model to them on their own path towards sainthood. **This assignment is to be handed into their Team Leader on SUNDAY, MAY 1, 2022.**

**Writing a Letter to the Archbishop (DUE ON SUNDAY, MAY 15) (see appendix for sample letter)**

Read over (with your child) the sample letter to the Archbishop that is found in the appendix of this document. It is important for your child to reflect, analyze and formulate thoughts as to why the sacrament of Confirmation is important to them and why they are asking the Archbishop to accept them as a candidate for the Sacrament of Confirmation. **This letter is to be handed into their Team Leader on SUNDAY, MAY 15, 2022.**

**Service ... Go Out and Make a Difference! (DUE BY MAY 29)**

Jesus came *"not to be served, but to serve."* (Matthew 20:28) The Church is a servant community and all those accepting complete and authentic membership in the Church are also accepting the responsibility to serve. *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."* (Luke 4:18-19)

Just like the disciples after the Pentecost, we are called to live out our lives as disciples of Christ. This requires taking to heart Christ's call to serve others. Christ showed us through his example and through his parables and teachings that our mission, as Christians, is to reach out with love and compassion to the poor, the disabled, the sick, the old, the lonely, those who mourn, all those who live on the margins of society.

Everyone who is baptized is called to holiness because, in Baptism, we become a part of the Body of Christ and share in his holiness. Holiness is not reserved for canonized Saints or for

those who do amazing things. Ordinary people who pray, who do good works, who strive to connect their faith with their lives at home, work, school and the larger community are also holy.

We are called to “give skin to Christ in the here and now.” He is counting on us ... in the Eucharist we receive the body and blood of Christ (in the form of bread and wine) so that we, in turn, can become the body and blood of Christ in our homes, in our parish, in our schools, at work, at play, when we go shopping ... everywhere!

The great Saint Teresa of Avila captured the essence of this mission in her beautiful prayer.

*Christ has no body, now, but yours.*

*No hands but yours.*

*No feet but yours.*

*Yours are the eyes through which*

*Christ's compassion must look out on the world.*

*Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good.*

*Yours are the hands with which he is to bless us now.*

Candidates for the reception of Confirmation are asked to select service projects that are geared to their own special talents and abilities. Service should be performed freely and willingly. These activities could help the parish, the neighborhood, the local community or family and friends. Service projects enable each candidate to identify their personal gifts and use them for the benefit of the others within the life of their faith community.

Some simple ideas:

FAMILY:

- Visiting a sick relative, sending flowers, writing letters.
- Putting together a special “care package” for a relative who may be ill, elderly or experiencing a loss.
- Preparing and serving a special meal for your family.
- Helping grandparents or siblings with jobs they have a difficult time doing.
- Research and educate yourself on social justice issues locally, nationally and internationally. Discuss as a family where your gifts may be needed!

PARISH:

- Assist at parish events.

- Check the parish website or parish bulletin for events where assistance is needed.
- Become involved in ministry in your parish: choir, Junior Server, hospitality.

#### COMMUNITY:

- Helping a neighbour mow their lawn, rake their leaves, shovel their sidewalks.
- Participate in an organized community league or city function: food bank, lunches for the Bissell Center or the Marian Center.

### **Christian Holiness: A Life Well Lived**

In the bible there are many ways that God reveals how ordinary people can find holiness in their day to day lives. These truths lay the foundation to which every good Christian aspires.

- **The Ten Commandments**, as handed down to Moses on Mount Sinai, laid the foundation for the nation of Israel, when they were leaving Egypt, as slaves, for freedom in the promised land. The Ten Commandments, recorded in the Books of Exodus and Deuteronomy, related a series of “Thou shalt not” phrases, temptations and evils one must avoid in daily life on earth.
  - 1) I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have any gods before me.
  - 2) Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
  - 3) Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.
  - 4) Honor thy father and mother.
  - 5) Thou shalt not kill.
  - 6) Thou shalt not commit adultery.
  - 7) Thou shalt not steal.
  - 8) Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
  - 9) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife.
  - 10) Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s goods.

- **The Greatest Commandment of All**

*“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?”* Matthew 22:36

This question was posed to Jesus by one of the scholars of the law, in an attempt to test him. In response to the question, Jesus silences this scholar by giving the perfect answer. Jesus says, *“You shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”* Matthew 22: 37-39

With this statement, Jesus gives a complete summary of the moral law found in the Ten Commandments. The first three Commandments reveal that we must love God above all and with all our might. The last six Commandments reveal that we must love our neighbour. The moral law of God is as simple as fulfilling these two more general commandments.



- **The Beatitudes**

At the beginning of his public life, Jesus preached from the **Sermon on the Mount** (see Matthew 5-7). In this sermon he gave us the blueprint for our lives as disciples. In it, Jesus teaches many things about what it means to be holy. The message of Jesus is one of humility, charity and brotherly love. He teaches transformation of the inner person.

One of the best-known parts of this sermon passage is the **Beatitudes**. Here Jesus identifies different behaviors or groups of people and calls them “blessed.” He presents the Beatitudes in a positive sense, virtues in life which will ultimately lead to reward. LOVE BECOMES THE MOTIVATION FOR THE CHRISTIAN. Scripture scholars who study the original words of the bible tell us that the word used for “blessed” also means “happy”. The Beatitudes are Jesus’ eight teachings about the meaning and the path to true happiness; they depict the attitudes and actions that followers of Christ should have, and they reveal the way to live in God’s Kingdom today. They describe the way to attain the eternal holiness or blessedness to which God calls all his people.

- 1) Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- 2) Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
- 3) Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
- 4) Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
- 5) Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of the righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.
- 6) Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

**CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY**

Feed the hungry.  
Give drink to the thirsty.  
Clothe the naked.  
Shelter the homeless.  
Comfort the imprisoned.  
Visit the sick.  
Bury the dead.

**SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY**

Instruct the uninformed.  
Counsel the doubtful.  
Comfort the sorrowful.  
Be patient with those in error.  
Forgive offences.  
Pray for the living and the dead.

- 7) Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.
- 8) Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

- **The Gifts of the Holy Spirit** are given in Baptism and **again in Confirmation**. During the Confirmation Mass these gifts are named and bestowed upon each child. These gifts give us power to choose and act as living witnesses and holy men and women. The fruits (the products) are the result of the Holy Spirit's action in our lives.

#### **Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

Wisdom	Understanding	Right Judgement	Courage	Knowledge
Reverence	Wonder and Awe			

#### **Fruits of the Holy Spirit**

Love	Joy	Peace	Patience	Kindness	Goodness
Generosity		Gentleness	Faithfulness	Self Control	

### **Choosing a Sponsor**

Every candidate is asked to have a Confirmation sponsor. If possible, the baptismal god-parents, as extensions of the spiritual family, can continue this role at Confirmation. However, this is often not possible. Sponsors should be actively involved in the child's life of faith – before, during and after Confirmation. We ask for only ONE sponsor for each child.

#### **Sponsor Qualifications:**

- At least 16 years old.
- They may not be the natural or adoptive parents of the candidate.
- They must be fully initiated into the Catholic faith (have already received the sacraments of Baptism, Holy Eucharist and Confirmation).

#### **Sponsor Requirements:**

- The Church requires that the sponsor be an active, practicing Catholic. The Church acknowledges that **a person cannot transmit/nurture in another what they do not have within themselves.**
- It is important that the sponsor be more mature, more informed and more experienced in the ways of the faith than the candidate is.
- The sponsor needs to be willing to meet with the child on a regular basis prior to the celebration of Confirmation and to make a commitment to continue the faith journey after the celebration.
- The sponsor is one who is willing to share his or her faith with the candidate.
- Therefore, the sponsor should be a person of strong and committed personal faith.
- **To attend the Confirmation Mass and the Rehearsal.**

NOTE: if a sponsor is unable to attend the Confirmation Mass, a proxy may stand in. If necessary, a parent may serve as proxy.

### Confirmation Day Information

Your son/daughter will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation on **Sunday, June 5 at either 2:00 or at 5:00.** The Rite of Confirmation occurs within a regular, full mass and takes place immediately following the homily. It is a powerful liturgical celebration of young adults choosing to live as a Roman Catholic Christian. Confirmation apparel should be your “Sunday best.” Modesty is a must. We ask that there is no chewing of gum and no coffee is allowed into the church. More information will be shared at the rehearsal on **Saturday, June 4 at 2:30.**

## Appendix:

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**ONE****Brief overview of the Sacraments**

The word “sacrament” is derived from the Latin word *sacramentum* which means  
**“sign of the sacred”**

The traditional definition: “A sacrament is a **visible sign, instituted by Christ, to give grace.**”

Within this definition there are three important statements:

- ❖ **A visible sign:** visible signs of our faith are ordinary objects and actions used by priests during extraordinary celebrations in our lives (when celebrating the sacraments). Some visible signs of our faith are: pouring water, anointing with oil, drinking of the wine, breaking and eating of the bread, lighting candles, wearing white, reciting special prayers, burning incense, doing the sign of the cross, bowing before the altar, kissing the altar, kneeling, extending hands in a blessing, celebrating as a community (surrounded by family, friends and members of the faith community in our parishes).
- ❖ **Instituted by Christ:** each sacrament was instituted by Jesus Christ and given to the Church, for priests, to administer in our lives. Throughout the New Testament, Christ gives his followers clear instructions on how to administer and receive each of the sacraments. This is seen through his work with the Apostles, healing the sick, reaching out to the poor and those living on the margins of society, the messages found in the parables, and ultimately the giving of his body and blood to nourish our souls and forgiving sinners.
- ❖ **To give grace:** grace is God’s gift of Himself to us. This grace (the gifts received from each of the sacraments) strengthens our faith and forges a stronger and deeper relationship with God. God’s gift of grace to us lifts us beyond what we are capable of on our own and by our own powers. With God’s grace a human being is lifted up beyond our natural limitations and given a share in divine life. In each of the sacraments God is there for us (to rescue us and sustain us) and we are not left to our own devices. We are never left alone.

**WHAT ARE THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS?**

The great sacraments of the Church – Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, the Anointing the Sick, Matrimony and Holy Orders – have endured for thousands of years and structured countless lives. In the sacraments, Jesus is present, ministering to his people – nourishing, healing and anointing them. They are not only symbols of Christ they are encounters with Christ. The sacraments are the source and summit of Christian life.

These seven sacraments are divided into three categories: The Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist), the Sacraments of Healing (Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick) and the Sacraments of Service (Matrimony and Holy Orders).

**THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION** are *Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist*. They lay the foundation of every Christian life. They initiate (or incorporate) our ongoing relationship with God. God loves us, as we are, and invites us to share in the divine life: to be one with God; immersed in God; held by God; encircled by a love that knows no bounds. Those who choose to accept this invitation to live in relationship with God, within the Catholic faith, do so by participating in the process of Christian

Initiation. This is how we express our YES to God ... **yes** to God at Baptism, **yes** to God at the time of our Confirmation and our ongoing **yes** to God every time we receive the Eucharist.

1. **BAPTISM** is the first sacrament where you become united with God and the Catholic Church – no other sacrament can be received without it. Baptism is received only once in our lifetime. In Baptism we are made one with Christ and become a member of the Church. We literally take a “plunge” from the ordinary to the extraordinary. *In Baptism we begin our journey of becoming a child of God.*

**VISIBLE SIGNS:** We are claimed by Christ when we are marked with the **sign of the cross** and joined to Christ as we are baptised with **water** – in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We are **anointed with oil**, clothed in a **white baptismal garment**, being given a **lit baptismal candle**, and the **Creed (what we believe as Catholics) in question form**. All these are the visible signs of our faith and shows everyone that we have committed ourselves to the life-long journey of our Catholic faith.

Many of us receive the sacrament of Baptism when we are babies and we can not speak for ourselves, therefore, our parents, god parents, family, friends and the faith community within the parish speak for us. However, when we reach the age of 12-13 years we are now able to speak for ourselves. As we mature, it is now important that we renew our Baptismal promises and this is done in the sacrament of Confirmation.

2. **CONFIRMATION** is the second Sacrament of Christian Initiation. The Bishop, as leader of the diocesan Church community (or his designate) administers Confirmation. Like Baptism, Confirmation is received only once.

*“Pour out the Holy Spirit upon them to confirm them with his abundant gifts and through his anointing conform them more fully to Christ, the Son of God. Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Peace be with you. Amen.” (from the Rite of Confirmation)*

*“All powerful God, Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their Helper and Guide. Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgement and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the wonder and awe in your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord.” Amen  
(from the Rite of Confirmation)*

**VISIBLE SIGNS:** During the Rite of Confirmation, the **laying on of hands** on a person’s head and **anointing with chrism oil on the forehead**, and **responding to our Creed in question form**, our Baptismal commitment is confirmed.

**Special prayers and blessings are recited.** Boys sometimes **wear white** shirts and girls often wear white dresses.

3. **EUCCHARIST** means thanksgiving. The Liturgy of the Eucharist is a key part of the Mass. The Mass, in its’ entirety is the source and summit of our Christian life and the central act of worship in the Roman Catholic Church. There are four major parts to the Mass:
  - ✓ Introductory Rites: the gathering of the community at each Mass.
  - ✓ Liturgy of the Word: listening to and reflecting on God’s WORD spoken to us in the scripture readings.

- ✓ Liturgy of the Eucharist: a major part of the Eucharistic Prayer is the epiclesis. In the epiclesis, the priest asks God the Father to send the Holy Spirit on the gifts of bread and wine so that, through the power of the Spirit, they may become the Body and Blood of Christ. That same Spirit will transform those attending the liturgy that they may grow in their unity with each other, with the whole Catholic Church and with Christ.
- ✓ Concluding Rites: the term *Mass* is derived from the Latin dismissal of congregation: “Ite, missa est” which means, “Go, you are sent.” At the end of each Mass we are sent out on our mission to live as disciples of Jesus continuing the mission of Jesus in the world. Therefore, the liturgy does not simply come to an end. Those who are assembled are sent forth to serve and love others.

This is how we become a disciple, as we return each Sunday to be nourished by the Word of God and the Body of Christ. This is how we sustain ourselves in the life-long process of initiating ourselves into the life of God. **The Sacrament of the Eucharist can be received daily!**

**VISIBLE SIGNS:** During the Last Supper, Christ broke the **bread**, gave thanks, ate it, gave it to his disciples and told them to eat it. Christ took the **wine**, filled the cup, gave thanks, drank it, gave it to his disciples and told them to drink it. Now the priest, through the prayers during the Consecration, blesses and administers the Holy Communion during every Mass to remind followers that they are one with Christ. Food and drink nourishes our bodies – Christ’s **body** and **blood** nourishes us spiritually. In the Eucharist Christ is hidden from our eye but HE IS HERE!

**THE SACRAMENTS OF HEALING** are *Reconciliation* and *Anointing the Sick* and celebrate the healing power of Jesus. Penance allows for spiritual healing for people who have distanced themselves from God through sin. Anointing the Sick allows for both physical and spiritual healing. When one falls seriously ill, a priest anoints them with oil and prays over them, calling on Christ to strengthen and heal.

4. **RECONCILIATION** the Sacrament of Reconciliation (often called Penance or confession) is one of the most unique and beautiful aspects of Catholicism. The sacrament “washes us clean” as we receive God’s forgiveness. Forgiveness requires being sorry for our sins. In Penance we receive Jesus’ healing grace through the absolution by the priest. The visible signs of this sacrament are our personal confession of sins, our Act of Contrition and the words of absolution received from the priest. We are not perfect people, even if we try to be ... we fall short. It feels so much better to confess some of those things we have done wrong and know that God forgives us and loves us. This sacrament is for mending and healing our relationships with God and with others when that relationship is broken or under stress.

One of the most common questions asked by Catholics is, “How often should a Catholic go to confession?” Basically, we are “required” to go to confession once per year if you intend on receiving Holy Communion once per year. On the other hand, if you desire to receive Holy Communion on a weekly or daily basis, then you are asked to go to confession every time you are “conscious of grave sin.” Many Catholics go to confession several times per year ... or anytime they feel the need to repair their relationship with God, with the Church, with family or friends. We should confess because we love God, not because we “have to”. Pope Francis has made it very clear that confession is not a punishment (to be afraid of or ashamed of) but in fact it is a great spiritual gift, a real form of medicine for the soul.

5. **ANOINTING THE SICK** this sacrament unites a seriously ill person's suffering with that of Jesus and brings forgiveness of sins. The priest, anointing the forehead and hands of the person with chrism oil, while reciting a special blessing is how this sacrament is received. This is one way to help those who are very sick to feel strengthened and more connected with God in both mind and body. This Sacrament can be requested as required.

**SACRAMENTS OF SERVICE** through Matrimony and Holy Orders, couples and the clergy promise to serve and build up the church community.

6. **MATRIMONY** is not just a union between a baptized man and woman. The devotion husband and wife have to each other, and to Christ, mirrors Christ's love and service to the Church. Through marriage, a couple promises to help build each other up in faith, serve each other and the Church and be faithful to each other until death. Matrimony requires the consent of the couple, as expressed in the marriage vows. In marriage, people take care of each other and their children ... that is their job. That is how they serve the church. The couple and their wedding rings are the signs of this sacrament.
7. **HOLY ORDERS** is a special Sacrament reserved for those men who choose to become a priest, Bishop or deacon. Through ordination, they are able to perform sacred duties and serve the Church community. Every time a priest celebrates Mass or any of the sacraments, he acts in the name of Jesus. This is not a Sacrament that everyone is involved in, rather it is one that some people feel "called to" by God. The signs of this sacrament are the laying on of hands and anointing with oil by the Bishop.

**TWO**

**SAMPLE LETTER TO THE ARCHBISHOP**

***Due May 15***

DATE:

Your Grace, Archbishop Richard Smith  
Archdiocese of Edmonton  
Pastoral Center  
Edmonton

Begin your letter with the greeting: Dear Archbishop Smith,

BODY OF THE LETTER:

PARAGRAPH ONE: Introduce yourself. Tell something about your family, your age, grade and name of your school.

PARAGRAPH TWO: Request the Archbishop to accept you as a candidate for the Sacrament of Confirmation at St. Thomas More Parish. Give three reasons why you would like to be confirmed.

PARAGRAPH THREE: Explain how you have prepared for the sacrament. It is important that you tell about specific parts of your preparation, your prayer life, your celebration of the other sacraments, your service for others exercised at home, within the parish and within the community.

PARAGRAPH FOUR: Tell how you will continue to carry out your life of service to God and to others through the powers of the Holy Spirit. Tell how you plan to make your Confirmation in the faith real and alive in the future.

CONCLUSION: Conclude your letter and write your complete signature.



**THREE**

## **Images of the Holy Spirit**

To help us understand the Holy Spirit, the Catechism of the Catholic Church presents a number of images to represent him. Reflecting on some of these images helps us think about the Holy Spirit in different ways and consider what the Spirit means, to our lives. The Holy Spirit guides us and gives us strength throughout the day, inspiring all the good that we do. Strengthened by the Holy Spirit we are called to proclaim the Word of the Lord through our words and in our actions.

### **WATER**

Water signified regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit in Baptism. In the Holy Spirit, we are baptized (through the act of pouring water) into new life in Christ and become children of God the Father. Water cleanses and gives new life.

### **ANOINTING**

Anointing with oil has become so identified with the Holy Spirit that it is almost a synonym for the coming of the Spirit. Messiah is the Hebrew word for “anointed one.” Christ is from the Greek and also means “anointed one.” Jesus is the Messiah, the one uniquely “anointed” by the Spirit. It is a symbol of the Holy Spirit’s uniting us with Jesus, the Messiah the Anointed One. Jesus pours out this same Spirit upon us, calling us to be more than we can ever hope to be through our efforts alone. We are anointed with the Holy Chrism Oil at Baptism and again at Confirmation.

### **FIRE**

Fire symbolizes the transforming energy of the Holy Spirit, John the Baptist proclaimed that Jesus was the one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. We also remember the dramatic events of Pentecost in which tongues “as of fire” rested on the disciples before they left the safety of the room to “go out and spread the good news of the Lord” with the energy of that fire (that spirit) in their hearts and souls.

### **DOVE**

Think of a dove, a gentle bird, flying to your hand and gently resting on it. In a similar way, the Holy Spirit rested on Jesus when he emerged from the waters of his baptism by John. He also gently rests on us and remains with us as we journey forward as disciples of Christ.

### **WIND**

The Holy Spirit is also represented by wind. We cannot see the wind, but we can feel it. Much like God, we can see how the wind affects everyone and everything it touches. The “strong driving wind” that appeared on Pentecost was reminiscent of the wind that blew over the waters at the beginning of creation. The wind calls attention to the Holy Spirit breathing life into the

Church. As Jesus, in his dying breath said, “into your hands I commend my spirit,” that Spirit (that breath) is released into the world and breathes life into each of us!

## **FOUR**

### **THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

In the Book of Isaiah 11:2-3, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are described. In the passage the gifts are considered ones that Jesus would have possessed. Through Jesus, we also receive the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation. The gifts of the Holy Spirit help Christians live their lives more fully committed to Christ. The Sacrament of Confirmation completes the grace we receive in Baptism. It seals, or CONFIRMS, this grace through the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts are:

#### ***WISDOM:***

Wisdom is the gift of learning from situations and life experiences. It is the ability to stand in other people’s shoes (empathy). It is the gift to look at life with a different perspective, the gospel perspective. It is about listening to the voice of the Spirit in our hearts and acting accordingly. A wise person is someone who knows who they are and what they believe to be right and wrong. A wise person is a balanced person.

#### ***UNDERSTANDING:***

The ability to see both sides of the story, listen and understand the feelings of the other and not be influenced by prejudice. Understanding is the ability to give meaning to what we experience and learn.

#### ***RIGHT JUDGEMENT:***

This gift is about making the right choice, according to our Christian values. This may mean going against the flow: friends (peer group), the culture of the day (the secular world), etc. A person with right judgment is someone people turn to for advice, whose opinion is valued and considered.

#### ***COURAGE:***

The gift of courage is the ability to stand on your own feet, to trust your own wisdom and values. It means having the ability to handle the right choices and accept the consequences. Courage is not often easy when you are under pressure ... especially from friends.

#### ***KNOWLEDGE:***

The gift of knowledge is the ability to reflect and act prudently. It is a person who studies and learns about all types of things in life. When they form an opinion, it is based on a foundation of good, sound knowledge. It is the ability to think critically about subjects and respect both sides of an argument.

**REVERENCE:**

Reverence is the gift of having respect for all life, for creation, the environment and all people, no matter their colour, creed or religion. It also includes showing reverence for all things holy.

**WONDER AND AWE:**

The gift of wonder and awe is the ability to appreciate and celebrate all that is good in oneself, others and creation. It is the gift that helps us see the work of God in all the ordinary, everyday things. It is an acknowledgement of the power of God working through our lives, the lives of others around us and through creation.

**FIVE****FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

From the gifts of the Holy Spirit people can develop a certain nature or personality with extraordinary qualities and traits. These are called the Fruits of the Holy Spirit. These are the qualities and traits we admire in others and seek to replicate in our own lives. Jesus Christ was the living embodiment of these traits. Through his words and actions Jesus taught us how to be Holy Men and Women. “Spirit-filled people” live like Jesus and can become saints. The Spirit gives us the strength to help our neighbours, to reach out to the poor and the sick, to forgive those who have hurt us, to reach out to those people living on the margins of society. As you “seal your Baptism in the Sacrament of Confirmation” you too can become a holy man or woman and model your life after the saints. The Fruits of the Holy Spirit are:

**LOVE:** It is self-giving love, as opposed to a self-seeking love. Caring for someone and not counting the personal cost. It is a love given unconditionally – it is given freely with no expectation that it will be returned.

**JOY:** A sense of well-being based on the belief that I am loved by God. That I am his “beloved son/daughter” and God’s love is steadfast and everlasting. “You are precious to me and I love you.”

**PEACE:** Living in harmony with self, others and nature. The ability to make peace with others, to forgive and let go of grudges.

**PATIENCE:** Patience is an acceptance of self and others and the limitations of both. It is when our feelings do not dominate our actions.

**KINDNESS:** Kindness is the awareness of the presence of God in others. It is allowing the goodness within to reach out to the needs of the other person. Kindness is the manifestation of care and compassion and empathy.

**GOODNESS:** Goodness is seeing everything as a gift from God and an extension of God’s love. It is allowing the goodness within you to reach out to the goodness in the other.

**FAITHFULNESS:** Faithfulness serves others without thinking of what is in it for me in return. It is a commitment and a loyalty to another. It is the ability to honour and respect vows and promises.

**GENTELNESS:** Being kind to oneself and to others. Being strong and firm without being loud, aggressive and bossy. Leading with love and compassion not seeking power and attention. Knowing how and when to listen to others.

**SELF CONTROL:** The awareness of God's abiding presence within us. "In Him I live and move and have my being" therefore, there is NO need to compulsively reach out for esteem, power, control, revenge with anger, jealousy, pettiness and bitterness.

### **PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*All powerful God, Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit, you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their helper and guide. Give them the Spirit of **wisdom** and **understanding**, the Spirit of **right judgement** and **courage**, the Spirit of **knowledge** and **reverence**. Fill them with the Spirit of **wonder** and **awe** in your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen*

(taken from the Rite of Confirmation)

**SIX****Saint Fact Sheet due May 1**

Choose a Saint of the Church (see attached list of possible Saints) and complete this fact sheet.

**Introduce Saint – General Information**

1. Name of Saint: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Year of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Place of Birth/Where he or she lived: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Feast Day: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Is this saint considered a Patron Saint? YES/NO
6. If YES, over what area of life is this Saint a patron: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Date of death: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Date of Canonization: \_\_\_\_\_

**History of Saint**

1. Tell about the life of your Saint (family background, education, skills, training, interests).
2. What is your Saint best known for?
3. Was your Saint a martyr? If so, what does that mean?
4. List 2 additional facts about your Saint. For example: what miracles are attributed to your Saint?
5. Explain why your Saint was named a Saint by the Church.

## SAINT FACT SHEET PAGE 2

### **Why YOU chose this Saint**

1. What gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit can you identify with this Saint?
2. How can you imitate him/her in your life or be more like your Saint?
3. What message did he/she leave for the world?

### **A Saint-Like Person You Know in Your Everyday Life** **“A life well lived!”**

Think about your family or your very dearest friends. Do you know of someone who is (or was – if the person is deceased) very special, whom everyone admired and loved? This person might be described as a saint-like person.

1. Name this person and who are they?
2. Why is or was this person so admired? Name three good things about this person.
3. What gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit would best describe this person?