

St. Thomas Aquinas Confirmation Program 2019 - 2020

Welcome Junior student Families!

Christian Smith a Notre Dame sociologist has discovered that the largest factor that determines faithfulness in young adults is the faithfulness of their parents. With this discovery in mind, we have tried to create a Confirmation program that fosters family participation. We start our Confirmation class with Mass. We encourage families to join us at the Teen Mass. Come support your child as they lead our Mass as ushers, lectors and musicians. We also have some amazing faith filled speakers coming to talk to the students about their faith journey. We encourage you to attend the events with your child so you can grow your faith together.

This is a big year for the Juniors. They get to make one of their first adult decisions. Notice I didn't say it is the family or parents decision. Parents and families are definitely encouraged to be there for their child, to encourage and pray for them. However, this decision is for your child to make. They can chose whether they feel they are ready to be Confirmed in the Catholic faith. As I have read the students' Confirmation letters to the Archbishop, I have noticed there are many misconceptions about what it means to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation and students are making their decision based on misconceptions.

What are some of the misconceptions?

1. You do **Not** have to be Confirmed to be married in the Catholic Church. It is encouraged, but not required.
2. You **can** be a Godparent without being confirmed if the other chosen Godparent is confirmed.
3. It is **Not** a checklist to mark off to get to heaven. Only by God's grace do we enter God's kingdom.

What does receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation mean?

1. Your child would like to be an adult member of the Catholic Church. This means they would like to be part of the community. Members attend Mass on Sundays, participate in the sacraments, stewardship – give their gifts of time, talent and treasure to benefit the whole church community.
2. The Catechism section on Confirmation says that Confirmation is the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It effects are to:
 1. Root us more deeply in divine filiation (being children of God)
 2. Unite us more firmly to Christ
 3. Increase the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us
 4. Strengthen our bond with the Church
 5. Associate us more closely to the Church's mission of bearing witness to Christ
 6. Help us and more strictly oblige us to spread and defend the faith by word and deed

Below you will find the expectations of the Milwaukee Archdiocese and St. Thomas for your child to be confirmed. Please review them seriously. Prayerfully consider whether you and your child would like to continue in the Confirmation program.

Service Project: Students are required to do a minimum of 5 Service Hours. Examples include: mission trips, helping at Senior Center, working at Country Fair, helping at Fish Fries, serving Love Inc meal, and other various activities through their high school, clubs, sports, etc.... When your child has completed their 5 hours they can turn in the Service Reflection form included in this email.

Teen Mass: Students are expected to come to Teen Mass and participate. Each small group will be assigned to do the readings, usher, etc... If your child likes to sing or plays an instrument, we would love to have them join our Teen Worship band! Please let me know, I will make sure Christina includes them in her emails.

Classes: Students are expected to attend class on a consistent basis. I realize that High School students have busy lives. I will be having a Make Up class for most of the classes on Wednesdays in the gathering space from 6:30 p.m. – 7:45 p.m. if they can't make the regular scheduled class on Sunday.

Confirmation Retreat: March 7th and 8th

All the Juniors are required to attend the Confirmation Retreat. The Confirmation Retreat this year will be held at the Inspiration Center in Walworth. We will be leaving St. Thomas at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday and returning at noon on Sunday. If you have a conflict with the dates, please let me know ASAP. Thank you! More details about the retreat will be emailed to you, as the date gets closer.

Sponsor: Juniors are required to choose a Sponsor for Confirmation. A sponsor has to be at least 18 years old, an actively practicing Catholic, and someone other than the candidate's mother or father. We will be having a Sponsor Dinner January 19th after our 6:00 p.m. Teen Mass. The only other date the Sponsor is required to attend is the actual Confirmation Mass. I realize some Sponsors may be from out of town so exceptions can be made.

Letter to Bishop: The Students will be required to write a letter to the Bishop Schuerman who is confirming them asking them to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Details for this letter will be given to the students in December. The letter will be due February 1st.

Student Interviews with Fr. Ed: Fr. Ed will be conducting interviews with all of the students regarding their readiness to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The Junior class will also have the opportunity to help serve a Meal at Love Inc. on December 17th. I will email out a Sign Up Genius when it gets closer. Please mark your calendars. I will send out more information, as the date gets closer.

The cost of the program is \$180.00. I realize this could be a financial difficulty for some. Please let me know. We will NOT turn away any student for financial reasons.

I hope you and your child are ready to go on this journey with us! If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know. The St. Thomas church community is here for you and walks this journey with you.

Please fill out the registration form, photo release form and return a check (made to St. Thomas for \$180) to the Parish office by September 1st. Thank you!

God Bless,
Joy Hearden
514-3175 or hearden@tds.net

“God did not tell us to follow him because he needed our help, but because He knew that loving Him would make us whole.”

St. Irenaeus