

Office of Faith Formation

Confirmation Ministry
St. Christopher Church
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Confirmation Year One Discernment Questions 2020

*“When they had gathered together they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel? He answered them, “It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has established by his own authority. **But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”***

– Acts 1:6-8

Please read carefully before you begin to complete the discernment questions.
The completed “Discernment Questions” are DUE: MAY 31, 2020.

Dear Confirmation Candidate:

You are at the conclusion of the first year of preparation to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. During the first year of preparation, you were introduced or perhaps re-introduced to basic teachings, not only of Jesus, but of our faith practices and core beliefs. Your Confirmation preparation formally begun at your baptism, had merely continued in a structured way when you started attending sessions last September. Although unprecedented world events have interrupted your formal sessions, your faith journey has not stopped, whether you recognize it or not.

It is time to consider and **discern** where you are at this moment in your process. To discern means *“the ability to judge well.”* Within a Christian context, the process of discernment is the *“perception...with a view to obtaining spiritual guidance and understanding.”* As you answer the following questions which are taken from the Year One session topics and discussions, do not be so concerned with presenting a “factually correct” answer. Answer with a view towards what or who is spiritually guiding you as you consider the question. There are some questions which ask what you know specifically about something. If you don’t know the specific answer, think about why you don’t know. What is behind that? Not in a judgmental way, to make you feel badly about yourself, but to have you look a bit more deeply into yourself with a view to what you want from this process, this sacrament, the Catholic faith. I challenge you to do some research in order to fully answer the questions. Again, not just for the sake of a “correct” answer, but for the sake of increasing the value of your time and understanding, your proper discernment.

You may even wish to discuss some of these questions or your answers with your parents or a prospective Confirmation Sponsor. Give yourself the gift of discovery as you progress through these questions. You are on a journey which is the same journey as the original disciples of Jesus. It remains the journey of all who claim Jesus as Lord. It is the shared journey of all Catholic Christians who desire full union with the Church that Jesus created and left to His disciples, including you and me. It is a journey that only ends with our eternal union with our Lord, in heaven.

With continued prayers for you and your faith journey,

Mrs. Judí Peña

Director of Faith Formation

To help you on this path of discernment, the Candidate will answer all of the following questions:

- 1) Confirmation is described as one of the sacraments of Initiation. Please answer the following:
 - a. What is a sacrament?
 - b. How many sacraments are there? Please list them according to the following categories and describe what each of the sacraments do:
 - i. Sacraments of Healing:
 - ii. Sacraments of Initiation:
 - iii. Sacraments of Service:
 - c. Explain why the sacraments are categorized as above?
 - d. Why do you think God gave us the sacraments? Why do we need them?
 - e. What is grace and how is grace related to the sacraments?
- 2) Why do you think it might be important to take advantage of the grace Jesus offers in the sacraments? What can happen if we do not?
- 3) What is prayer? Describe its purpose and what is available to you through a healthy prayer life.
- 4) According to our teachings, faith is defined as *“the power by which we assent to God, acknowledge his truth, and commit ourselves personally to him.”* (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1814-1816, 1842). In the Gospel according to John, it is written, *“He who says I know him (Jesus/God) but disobeys his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”* (1 John 2:4). Define *“faith”* in your own understanding of this definition and where you stand with the verse from John.
- 5) Take some time to consider how you are actively living your faith at this time. Consider and share your prayer life, daily actions, Mass attendance (online, livestreamed or television), level of faith knowledge/belief and general outlook. What do they reveal to you about your true relationship with God and the Catholic Faith? Remember, your response to these questions are not a judgment on you or your process, merely a tool to use and guide your ongoing faith formation. It might reveal to you where you might want to focus more deeply, or not.
- 6) According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, God created everything *for* us; but he created us to *“know, love and serve God, to offer all of creation in this world in thanksgiving back to Him and to be raised up to life with him in heaven.”* How can you use your answers to all of the questions above to help you fulfill God’s purpose for you, as his own creation?
- 7) Considering your answer to question #7, what will you need in Year 2 so that you have a fuller understanding and ability to use the gifts of all the sacraments, Confirmation in particular, to live a life of faith?
- 8) In your second year of Confirmation preparation, you will choose a Sponsor who will pray, support and spiritually walk with you. Sponsors must have and live the following qualifications:
 - a. Be fully initiated Catholics, that is they have been baptized, confirmed and receive the Eucharist
 - b. If they are a married person, they must be married in a Catholic Church (received the sacrament of Matrimony)
 - c. They must be practicing their faith; regularly attending Mass, receiving the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist.
 - d. They must be willing to share their faith experience, the challenges and the graces with you.
 - e. They are not expected to be *“perfect”* people or Catholics. Your Sponsor should be someone who authentically does their best to live our faith and model that life to you, someone that is available to you, and will be in relationship with you throughout your Confirmation process.

Is there anyone you are currently considering as your sponsor? It is not uncommon for Confirmation candidates to struggle finding a *“qualified”* sponsor. If this becomes a challenge for you, please reach out to your parents, and to your catechist or the Faith Formation Office to assist you. It is recommended, if you haven’t already done so, to begin the search for your sponsor now. **You will be asked to name your sponsor by October 31, 2020.**

Thank you for your thoughtful answers to the above questions.