

***St. Rita Catholic Parish
Our Lady of Fatima Parish
Confirmation Preparation***

Packet #4 - “Am I Ready?”



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Welcome to your FINAL Confirmation Packet! Included in this packet are the last few steps of your Sacramental Preparation.

Preparation

1. **Read** through the entire packet.
2. In several spots, you are asked to answer questions, share an experience, a story or an opinion. ***Prepare for these BEFORE the last meeting on Sunday, September 24th!***
3. Write a letter to the Bishop indicating your readiness and desire to be confirmed. See sample letter enclosed. **DO NOT COPY** this letter. Use your own words! The Bishop reads each letter!
4. Have your sponsor also write a letter to the Bishop, on your behalf, stating their belief in your preparedness to be confirmed in the Catholic Church. Make sure these are turned in **AT** the last meeting – for they need to be mailed as a group in time for him to read them **BEFORE** our Mass.
5. Schedule an appointment to meet with your Pastor, Fr. Tom Helfich or Fr. Sateesh Alfonso before September 24th to review your packets, 40 questions and readiness to be confirmed.
6. Check with Religious Education Office to make sure you have everything turned in that is needed. You do not want to wait until a week or two before the ceremony to find out you are still missing items!

Theme

The theme of this meeting is evaluating your readiness to receive the Sacrament and the steps that follow called "mystogogy". This is such an exciting time and hopefully you are anxiously awaiting to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit and put your faith into action. You will spend time talking with your sponsor, your parents, and the staff about your readiness to receive the Sacrament.

What does it mean to be Catholic?

You are about to be fully initiated into the Catholic Church. What does that mean?

Our Beliefs: The Catholic faith was the faith started by Jesus Christ. In that upper room, nearly 2000 years ago, he met with those twelve men (actually 11, since Judas was gone by then), and commissioned them to go forth and bring others into the faith – the faith that would offer them SALVATION. Did you get that? JESUS started the Catholic Church nearly 2000 years ago. This is the real thing, not some religion started by a prophet (although he is referred to as a prophet sometimes), or some mystic, or even by some highly-schooled man. Jesus is GOD, the second leg of our Trinity (God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit). You can't get any more authentic than that.

Our faith IS the truth. What God has taught us through Christ is what is real. When you recite the Nicene (or Apostles Creed) you are stating your beliefs as a Catholic. Read this prayer again and stop at the end of each line to discuss:

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

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Are there any beliefs here that you do not agree with? If so, discuss those with your sponsor and look for validation of them in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Bible, or through an accredited Catholic website. Still uncertain? Bring those questions to the meeting to discuss.

Our Practices: Read the section below, titled "Core Catholic Practices". Many of these have been discussed in the packets you have completed up to this point. Read these together with your mentor. Are any of these practices unfamiliar to you? Again, if so, seek to find the supportive material for these points in the Catechism, the Bible, and/or an accredited Catholic website.

Core Catholic Practices

- Catholics celebrate seven sacraments that form the basis of their worship, or communal prayer together. The seven sacraments were instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church to make the love of God real and present in world.
- The sacrament of the Eucharist is the heart of the Catholic Church's life, In the sacrament, Catholics literally receive the Body and Blood of Christ in the appearance of bread and Wine.
- Sunday, or the "Lord's Day," is principal day for the celebration of the Eucharist. Catholics keep the day holy by attending Mass and resting from work, in honor of Christ's Resurrection.
- Catholics follow a special calendar of feasts and holy days of the liturgical year. The special seasons of Advent and Lent prepare them to understand God's great love which is celebrated at Christmas and Easter.
- Catholics place a strong emphasis on living morally, because they are called to new life in the Holy Spirit. The moral code for this new life is based on the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes.
- Catholics define the dignity of human life, and the Catholic morality is described prolife opposed to anything that threatens sanctity of human life, including abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, and human cloning,
- Serving people in need and working to transform society are essential elements of Catholic life. The Church is called to be a sign of God's Perfect Kingdom yet to come, by working for justice and human rights in this life,
- Catholics honor the great people of faith that have preceded them; the saints, and in a special way, Mary, the mother of Jesus.

The last part to discuss is titled "**Core Catholic Attitudes**" which describes our basic attitude towards our faith, ourselves and others. Often people have a misconception of Catholics and our beliefs. It is just that, a misconception. These points should help validate our position as Catholics, on how we see the world and treat others. Read and discuss each bullet point with your mentor.

These beliefs, practices and attitudes are the premise of our Catholic faith. This is what you are about to embrace through your confirmation. You are "confirming" your commitment to following Jesus Christ.

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Cor Catholic Attitudes

- Catholics recognize that God is present to, in, and through all creation—including the natural world, persons, communities, and historical events_ For Catholics creation is sacred and has the potential to be a source of grace.
- Catholics place their trust in the essential goodness of the human person. who is made in the image of God. even though flawed by the effect of original sin.
- Catholics appreciate both faith and reason, both religion and science.
- Although the fullness of truth resides in the Catholic Church, Catholics seek to recognize the and affirm the aspects of God's revealed truth that is shared with other religions and all people of good will.
- Because the human person is saved by participating in the community of faith – that is, the Church – rather than by existing as an isolated individual, Catholics emphasize community life and communal worship.
- Catholicism respects the great diversity of cultures in the world and is committed to proclaiming the message of Jesus to all people in all cultures at all times.
- Catholics respect and embrace a wide variety of spiritualities and prayer forms

Let's be clear: Does commitment mean you are without some level of doubt? Or that you know everything? Or you are a Catholic Robot? **Absolutely NOT!** We are human! We have been given (by God) a brain, emotions, and **Free Will**. We are human, and therefore NOT perfect. He loves us so much that he wants us to discover things on our own for with it comes great joy and love (and sometimes sorrow and pain). There are times we all may experience doubt, struggle with following His instructions, and even fail. And that is okay! But that is where WE need to work at it.

Just as a great musician or athlete continues to **practice regularly, take care of their bodies and minds, continue to challenge** themselves, **learn and grow**, and **surround themselves** with people who support them in their quest for greatness, we too, *must do those things for our faith.*

What Does it Mean to Be Catholic?

PRACTICE: We must practice our Catholic faith regularly. We do this by going to Mass **weekly**, receiving the Sacraments, praying, fasting, and serving and loving others.

TAKE CARE: We must take care of our bodies and minds by staying healthy and away from dangerous drugs, excessive alcohol, pornography, hatred, and other things that damage our bodies and our minds. We need to feed our bodies and minds with GOOD things.

LEARN AND GROW: We must continue to study and form our faith each and every day. Having questions and seeking knowledge is an important part of continuing to mature and develop our faith. We are foolish if we think we know all there is to know about it at ANY age, especially as a young adult. We continue to learn and understand more as we mature with wisdom and experience. It doesn't stop!!! And you cannot get stagnate in your pursuit of knowledge and understanding of your faith.

SURROUND YOURSELF: Team work is so important in so many aspects of our life. Whether it is a team of 20 friends, 5 family members, or 1 spouse, we all need someone to help us, support us, and love us. Make sure the people you surround yourself with are good support for your faith and well-being. Do they challenge you to be a better person? Do you feel loved and respected? Your faith family, whether it is a blood relative or the person you sit next to at Mass each week, are the people who will help you when things are tough and share in the joy when things are wonderful. They will want you to be the best person you can be. They want YOU to get to heaven.

These four things are so very important for you as you embark on this journey as a fully initiated Catholic. Discuss and journal how you will fulfill these four needs on the worksheet.

Candidate Letter to the Bishop Example

Your Name and Address

Date

Your Excellency Bishop Boyea,

Use this paragraph to introduce yourself. Talk about the things you are involved with and what some of your interests are. Explain to the Bishop why you are writing (to request the Sacrament of Confirmation).

In this paragraph, mention your home parish and some of the things you have done specifically in preparation for Confirmation (look to your due date check list) Mention a way you grew closer in relationship to God through the Confirmation process and why you want to be confirmed in the Catholic Church.

Discuss who your sponsor is and why you chose them to be your sponsor. What qualities did you like about them?

Discuss your patron Saint and why you chose the name for your confirmation name. If you used your Baptism name, talk about why you chose that name.

Close your letter by thanking the Bishop for taking time to read your letter and let him know you are looking forward to Confirmation.

You could also offer and request prayers as well. Close your letter appropriately,

Sign your FULL Confirmation name in pen

Type your FULL Confirmation name here

Your Parish

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Letter to the Bishop Example - Sponsors

Your Name and Address

Date

Your Excellency,

Use this paragraph to introduce yourself and your candidate; How long you have known each other and if not family – how you were chosen for this honorable role.

Reflect on the Confirmation process at St. Rita and how being a sponsor has had an impact on your spiritual life and living in your daily life.

In this paragraph, you will want to tell the Bishop why you are writing (to recommend your candidate for Sacrament of Confirmation). Include how well the candidate has prepared for Confirmation; their willingness and readiness to be confirmed, and how you feel the candidate will continue to live and share their Catholic Faith.

If there is any significant experience or activity that really stuck out in your mind as being fruitful, please feel free to share.

Close your letter by thanking the Bishop for taking time to read your letter and let him know you are looking forward to sponsoring your candidate.

You could also offer and request prayers as well.

Close your letter appropriately,

Type your name Confirmation Sponsor for Candidate's full Confirmation name