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## **CONFIRMATION NEWSLETTER – No 1**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this newsletter is to help parents/guardians carry out their part in the preparation of their child for Confirmation. The Confirmation programme is a partnership between the School, the Parish and the Home. Teachers will help the children to try and understand what confirmation is about. Priests and deacons will assist the teachers and talk about the ceremony itself. But it is the parents/guardians in the home who are the primary agents in their children's faith life and journey. The role of the Parish and the School is to provide support to the parents/guardians in carrying out their primary role. Reflections and suggestions are offered, which hopefully will prove helpful in assisting you and your child prepare for, and participate meaningfully in, the Confirmation programme.

### **CONFIRMATION – NOT JUST A GREAT OCCASION**

There is no doubt about the fact that Confirmation is a very special occasion in the life of any Christian. It is a great day for the child, their family and for the faith community in the parish. Confirmation, however, is much more than just a special day. The special day only makes sense in the context of an ongoing faith journey. It involves a lot of time in the preparation for the day itself and it stretches forward in that it can affect the whole future life of the child who is being confirmed.

A person is not confirmed in isolation from others. In a real sense the first step on the road to confirmation was taken at baptism. For this reason, parents/guardians, as the ones who presented the children for baptism, have an essential role to play in the preparation for confirmation. Teachers, priests, deacons, and confirmation team members will help support the children and their parents/guardians. Their sponsor, who stands beside them at the ceremony, represents the entire believing community who rejoice that they have taken this step. As such then, preparing children for confirmation is a work of large partnership.

### **DEFINITION OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION**

Confirmation is the Sacrament in which we receive the Holy Spirit in order to make us strong and perfect Christians and workers for the Kingdom of Christ. It is not the faith that is confirmed but the person.

## **What is the Holy Spirit?**

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Blessed Trinity. It is the loving presence of God the Father, or God the Son, in our lives. It may be easier to think of Father and Son rather than the Holy Spirit. In the beginning of the story of creation, the Bible tells us that order was created by the breath of God blowing over the chaos. We know that wind is one of the symbols or ways in which we speak about the Holy Spirit. As Christians, we come to know the Holy Spirit when we see and appreciate the power or energy or creativity that is at work in all areas of our existence; in the natural world, in the worlds of science, mathematics, art, in family life, in the life of the Church and in all our relations with others. This is really the Holy Spirit, active in the universe since the very beginning. It is the presence, action, energy, creativity and love of the Holy Spirit which, day after day, renews the face of the earth. In every act of kindness or goodness we do, or have done to us, in every moment of joy, in every attempt to make peace or show love or patience, in every expression of gentleness or self-control, and every time we give or receive trust, we see the Holy Spirit at work in people's lives; the same Holy Spirit that is at work in the beauty, wonder and order of the natural world.

## **Strong and Perfect**

We know what strong means. But the word 'perfect' may be a 'turn off'. Who is perfect? Who likes perfect people? In terms of the definition 'perfect', it has a religious meaning. Jesus said to his followers "Be ye perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (St. Matthew - Ch 5 verse 48)

We are invited in our life's journey to become perfect as 'God is Perfect' because we are made 'in God's image and likeness' "Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness" (Genesis - Ch 1 verse 26) So that's the WHY? But what does it mean to be 'perfect'? – It means that our lives reveal the fruits of the Holy Spirit in how we live: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.

## **Workers for the Kingdom of Christ**

This is best explained by identifying the link between Baptism and Confirmation  
In **Baptism** the Spirit is given to establish a person in relationship with God. Through Baptism we become members of God's family able to call God 'Father' and Jesus 'Brother'.  
In **Confirmation**, the Holy Spirit is given to enable the person to strengthen their relationship with others and that is working for the Kingdom of Christ.  
Jesus sends us his Holy Spirit to make us his witnesses in the world.  
Our Baptism enables us to worship and Confirmation enables us to witness.

## **PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT**

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.  
Enkindle in us the fire of your love.  
Send forth your Spirit, and we shall be created,  
and you shall renew the face of the earth. **Amen**