

## A LETTER TO THE BISHOP REQUESTING THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

To help the Bishop meet his responsibilities each Confirmation candidate must write a personal letter to the Bishop requesting the Sacrament of Confirmation. The purpose of this letter is to introduce yourself to the Bishop and to explain your Confirmation preparation experience as well as to assure him that you are asking for the sacrament freely. All of the letters are mailed together from the Parish to the confirming Bishop prior to the Confirmation ceremony; for this reason, **late letters will not be accepted**. The Bishop personally reads each letter he is sent and often refers to them during the Confirmation ceremony. **The Bishop may ask you a question or two during the ceremony about your letter and/or your saint name. The Letter is your personal acknowledgement to the Bishop that it is your desire to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.**

It is essential that each candidate express his or her desire to be confirmed in writing to the Bishop. In the letter you share who you are and a little about yourself, why you wish to be confirmed, perhaps even your struggles and doubts about the process, as well as whom your confirmation saint is and why you chose that particular saint. Before the celebration of Confirmation, the Bishop is required by Canon Law to know that candidates have been properly prepared. He should also know that each candidate has a desire for, and knowledge of, the sacrament. The Bishop is not looking for a theological statement. He quite simply wants to learn a little bit about you and why you wish to receive the sacrament.

Be assured that the Bishop will take these letters very seriously. They are a testament to your personal journey, and we want them to reflect positively on both you individually, and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish. *I have confidence that you will do your best on your letter.*

The questions below should **help you reflect on some of the things you may want to include in your letter** to the Bishop. Answer the questions below, and then write a first draft of your letter requesting the Sacrament of Confirmation. Then, after leaving it sit and praying on it for some time, write your final draft.

Also, if a letter is unacceptable in any way (e.g. not neat, incomplete, or something is inappropriate) it will be returned to you for revision.

- Your letter should be about one page in length using 1-inch margins and a business-style 12-point font. The letter should be 4 short paragraphs. Single space the paragraphs of the letter. Keep your letter to one side of a sheet of paper.
- The letter may be typed and must be at least 4 paragraphs long. If it is handwritten it must be on loose leaf paper ó no fringes! It must be your own work and signed by you. There is no right way to do it, since everyone's experience is different. Please try to avoid just going down the list below.
- Be sure to read your letter out loud to someone. If using a computer, use spell check and save the letter on your computer so you can revise or redo it if needed.

- **Use your own words and write what is in your heart. Parents please do not write these letters for your children.**
- The proper way to address the Bishop is Your Excellency, Archbishop Perry:
- **DO NOT FOLD YOUR LETTER.**

**Paragraph 1:** Introduce yourself. Include that you are from Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish and you wish to be confirmed. Say something about your family, your background, the name of the school you attend and your year in school, your activities, hobbies and/or interests. Introduce yourself.

**Paragraph 2:** Request the sacrament. Indicate that this is your decision. Tell your reasons for wanting the sacrament of Confirmation; what it will do for you; how it will bring you into closer relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit. How will it help you to be a better person? Don't just say "It will bring me closer to God." **DO NOT SAY "I will become an Adult in the church."** **Give some thought to your reason.**

**Paragraph 3:** 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 to others in the community and in the parish, etc. Tell the Bishop about your faith life. You might mention a particular class presentation or topic that particularly enlightened or touched you. You could describe your retreat experience or what have you learned about yourself during the preparation process? **Very important:** *tell the Bishop what type(s) of Service you have done, what you learned, and how it affected you.*

**Paragraph 4:** Tell about the Saint your name is associated with or the name you chose, and background information about the saint. Explain why you chose that Saint name. What does this Saint mean to you?

**Paragraph 5:** Tell how you will continue to carry out your life of service to God and others through the power of the Holy Spirit. Tell how you plan to make your Confirmation in the Faith real and alive in your life. Share what your MISSION will be. How will you be involved in the Church and other areas of service? You might list ministries you are, or will, participate in.

**Conclusion:** Thank him for taking the time to read your letter. You might include something like - I look forward to meeting you and celebrating this sacrament with you on March 19<sup>th</sup> at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish.

**Closing Salutation:** Use Sincerely, Yours Truly, Thank You, Respectfully, In Christ, etc. Make sure it is capitalized and has a comma at the end.

**Your Signature** - Sign your letter in INK

**SPECIAL NOTE:** Candidates are encouraged to write their letters from the heart, but the letter should demonstrate the candidate's understanding of the sacrament, your desire to receive the sacrament. **Again, this letter should not be written by parents.**