**To: Leaders responsible for Confirmation Preparation and Celebrations**

As you are probably aware, Archbishop Listecki has directed that Confirmations are to be postponed until the health crisis has passed. At that time, instructions will be provided for scheduling. As of April 1, this applies to all Confirmations through May 31.

1) **Communication** – Please inform candidates and parents of this reality. A sample letter and helpful “talking points” are included in this communication.

2) **Continuing Preparation for Confirmation** – Given the timing of this announcement, parishes may be at various stages in their preparation programs. Under these circumstances, it may not be possible to recreate the preparation process you had planned for your candidates. It is perfectly acceptable to adjust the remainder of the preparation. If your program was interrupted by cancelation of classes, sponsor sessions, or a retreat, you can assess the situation and determine how to provide resources or activities for candidates to continue preparing at home.

It is NOT necessary to provide every lesson, chapter, or activity you had once planned. It may be more fruitful to offer ways for candidates to weave faith conversations, prayer, and learning with their parents or sponsors into their new routines. This may include a combination of video or online resources along with simple suggestions they can do together. For example:

* Suggest one thing each week for a candidate to pray, experience or discuss.
* Because the Sacrament of Confirmation is oriented towards mission, consider guiding your candidates in how they can bring the Gospel to their families, friends, and neighbors during this time. There are many practical resources at [Courageous Communion](https://www.archmil.org/Courageous-Communion).
* Recommend watching Mass together on TV or online. This is not a substitute for Mass, but when we cannot attend Mass in person, a televised or streamed liturgy offers an opportunity to pray and to talk about the Mass.
* Introduce the idea of Spiritual Communion (see below).
* Involve parishioners in praying for the candidates. They may feel a special urgency under these conditions.
* Check out these other resources for [ministry in a virtual setting](https://www.archmil.org/YouthEv/virtual)

3) **For canceled Confirmation retreats,** please be lenient. While a retreat is a very important aspect of preparation for Confirmation, no candidate should have their Confirmation delayed solely because they did not attend a retreat. The Office of Youth Evangelization is currently developing an “at-home” Confirmation retreat for candidates who either missed a previous Confirmation retreat or had theirs canceled.

4) **When it is time to reschedule Confirmation,** your parish will receive instructions from the Bishop’s Office. Once you reschedule, you should also schedule a rehearsal and a re-gathering of the candidates, preferably with their sponsors. Ideally, this re-gathering would be separate from rehearsal and serve as a final time of preparation for the candidates. This time could include content of what you had originally planned, as well as a review of the Rite of Confirmation, the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Below is a sample letter to candidates, parents, and sponsors which you can adapt for your situation, adding specific information or editing the message.

Please read future emails from the Office of Youth Evangelization for ongoing updates, or contact Doug Ulaszek if you have particular questions at (414) 758-2211 or ulaszekd@archmil.org. Again, resources that may be helpful at this time can be found on our [Virtual Youth Ministry](https://www.archmil.org/YouthEv/virtual) page.

**Sample Letter to Confirmation Candidates, Parents, and Sponsors**

Dear Confirmation Candidates, Parents, and Sponsors,

Due to the current coronavirus outbreak, our celebration of Confirmation will be postponed to a later date. Archbishop Listecki has determined that all First Communion and Confirmation celebrations in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee will be postponed until this health crisis has passed. We know what a disappointment it is to have your Confirmation delayed, but as a faith community, one of our highest priorities is on keeping ourselves and others safe.

Remember also that in Acts 2, our Blessed Mother and the Apostles gathered in prayer for ten days awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit. While you await the coming of Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation, here are a few ways you might imitate them:

1. Gather together every day for prayer as a family and as individuals. You can pray with the Daily Readings or other spiritual reading.
2. Continue to attend Mass spiritually. While watching a Mass on television or online is not the same as being physically present, it can still ground us in our Catholic faith. At the time of Communion, make an Act of Spiritual Communion like the one you will find below.
3. Draw close to the Holy Spirit. The Sacrament of Confirmation is a special sealing of the third Person of the Trinity – it would serve us well to be familiar with Him! Pray through the book of Acts, as well as the sections of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on the Holy Spirit and Confirmation (CCC 683-747; 1285-1321).

During this time when we cannot attend Mass, we can make a "spiritual communion." This is a practice of desiring union with Jesus in the Eucharist when one cannot receive holy Communion. Here is a short prayer, called an Act of Spiritual Communion, that you can pray with your child or your whole family, that expresses this desire for Jesus.

My Jesus,

I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,

come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You.

Amen.

When this health crisis has passed and we are able to reschedule Confirmation, we will inform you. We will plan a Candidate Gathering and Rehearsal for all candidates and their sponsors on a date before Confirmation.

Let us continue to pray for one another, and for all who are suffering because of the pandemic. Please contact us if you have any questions and prayer requests.

Our hope is in Christ,