



**Catholic Parish of Bishop's Stortford**  
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Monday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020

**Re: Confirmations 2020**

Dear Candidates and Parents,

I trust this letter finds you well? It has certainly been a very strange year, with all of the Covid 19 restrictions that have disrupted our usual routines. I want to particularly thank you for your patience - amidst the uncertainty - whilst we find a timely moment to celebrate your Confirmation, for which you started preparation last year! I was very sad at having to postpone the Confirmation Mass with the Bishop and this second lockdown has delayed a reinstatement of it until a little further down the line than we would wish. We have also had the change of priest here at the parish and First Holy Communion to celebrate as well, but you were never forgotten and I very much look forward to being able to bring to completion what we started!

There are still a few variables that we have to take into consideration, but I am hopeful that we will be able to celebrate your Confirmation Mass over the Christmas break or just after, in the New Year. The bishops are the usual ministers of this sacrament, but - under the current circumstances - parish priests have been given special dispensation to confer the Sacrament.

If restrictions ease adequately for us to be able to resume public acts of worship, then we would be able to go ahead with the Mass – or possibly two consecutive ones - following the pre-lockdown “rule of 6” conditions: Each candidate would be able to have a maximum of 6 people, including themselves, in a pew exclusively reserved for their bubble (unless your family bubble is a group of more than 6 people). And facemasks would be required to be worn by all those aged 12 or over, except for those who are exempt. The usual hand sanitisation and registering of details for track and trace purposes would be done upon entering the church.

Assuming restrictions have lifted sufficiently, I would like an indication of what dates would most suit you. Please let me know of *all* the dates that you could manage, as this will help us find the most suitable option:

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2020  
Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2021  
Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2021

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Saturdays seem like a good option, but a confirmation ceremony could equally take place mid-week, assuming it were the holidays and it suited all of you. I am open to suggestions!

At this point, I would like to introduce to you our new parish Catechetical Co-ordinator, Mrs Sophie Sullivan, who will now be taking on our parish Confirmation provision as we move into 2021. Please email her directly, at [bstortfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:bstortfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk) in order to give your preferred date(s) for celebrating Confirmation, as she will be assisting me with the preparations.

In this same email to Sophie, please include the name, address, telephone number and email address of the person you have chosen to be your confirmation sponsor. Please do remember that the confirmation sponsor chosen should be a baptised and confirmed Catholic, over the age of 18. I would encourage you to choose someone who you would be able to talk freely with about questions of faith. Part of their responsibility as sponsor, as well as to pray for you, will be to journey with you as you grow in faith.

I enclose a confirmation prayer, for you to read and pray over regularly in the coming weeks, as you prepare to receive the grace of the Holy Spirit in a new way. I am also aware that you may not have had a think about which Confirmation name to choose. I am enclosing a brief explanation of why we take on a Confirmation name and links that might help you when you are making your choice.

On Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> November – the feast of Christ the King – we also celebrate National Youth Sunday. Do look out for resources, on the parish website, which will help you celebrate this as a family in the days leading up to it: <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/bishopsstortford/>

May I take this opportunity to let you know that you are in my prayers and I look forward to celebrating with you all soon,

With prayers and blessings to you and your families,

With best wishes,



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## Resources to prepare for your Confirmation day

### *Responsibilities of a Confirmation Sponsor:*

**Question:** What are the responsibilities of a Confirmation sponsor?

**Answer:** The primary responsibility of the sponsor is to provide the candidate with prayerful support and guidance in his or her Christian walk and to “take care that the confirmed person behaves as a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations inherent in this sacrament” (*Canon 892*).

Being a sponsor is a lifelong commitment. A sponsor takes on the role of a spiritual parent who “brings the candidate to receive the sacrament, presents them to the Minister for the anointing, and will later help them to fulfill their baptismal promises faithfully under the influence of the Holy Spirit” (*Rite of Confirmation 5*).

Some of the responsibilities of a sponsor to the confirmed after Confirmation:

- Maintain regular contact with the confirmed by phone, email. Also, sending a card on the anniversary of his/her confirmation.
- Pray regularly for the confirmed and when possible pray with him/her.
- Help the confirmed to learn how to experience a deeper prayer life (e.g. eucharistic adoration).
- Encourage participation in the life of the Church, especially through his/her parish.
- Continue ongoing catechesis (e.g., sharing good books) and be available for questions.
- Help the confirmed to understand how to bear witness to Christ in the world and to fulfill his/her baptismal promises faithfully through the Holy Spirit.

Taken from the Catholic Answers website: [www.catholic.com](http://www.catholic.com)

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## ***In preparation for your Confirmation:***

<https://catholic-link.org/7-things-to-do-before-you-receive-the-sacrament-of-confirmation/>

## ***Choosing a Confirmation Name:***

Choosing a saint's name is a matter of custom and is not, therefore, regulated strictly by Church law. Candidates for confirmation may choose a name of a Christian saint by which to be called, but they are not required to do so. They may also choose to be confirmed using their baptismal name. "If a confirmation name is to be picked from among the saints, the surest answer is to pick from among those who are fully canonized. If one is to use the name of an individual not yet fully canonized it would seem that their status should be announced.

In general, candidates for confirmation who choose a special name should pick a saint or blessed who provides a role model for living the Christian life. They should also consider that choosing such a name will place them under the patronage of the saint. Thus in determining a certain saint they may wish to consider a saint who gives them special inspiration or a saint who can intercede for them in a special matter based on their own needs."

*Rev. Msgr. Charles E. Pope is a priest of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.*

If you need some inspiration in choosing an appropriate confirmation name for you, this is a good website:

<https://lifeteen.com/blog/biggest-best-list-confirmation-saints-guys-girls/>

you could also watch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqIVcGO2qnY>

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## ***Confirmation prayers for Parents and Candidates:***

You are invited to print these out and use them during your prayer time, as you, and your family, prepare for Confirmation

### **Prayer for Parents –**

*Lord, You send out Your Spirit to touch the hearts of all people, so that they may believe in You and in Jesus whom You sent. Look kindly on all candidates for Confirmation, especially my son/daughter, as they listen to Your voice. Open their hearts to Your Spirit and bring to fulfilment the good work that You have begun in them. As I support my child in their preparation for Confirmation, make each of us an instrument of Your love. Teach us to appreciate what is holy in others, and to be patient with what we do not understand. Deepen our faith in the Gospel and help us to pass it on by our example. We pray that You will continue to guide us and sustain us as a family. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.*



### **Prayer for Candidates –**

(See next page)

This prayer does not need to be said all at once. You may want to read it all through and then just pick a few lines at a time, as part of your prayer time – in the morning, just before bed or whilst walking to school! If you have a phone, maybe take a picture of the prayer with it, so you can read it anytime. You may find it help just to stay with a line and take some time to reflect on it and ask God to come and be part of that aspect of your life.

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### ***HOLY SPIRIT, CONFIRM IN ME...***

God's acceptance and love for me just as I am ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The new life of my Baptism when I became a child of God ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The words my parents and godparents said on my behalf at Baptism ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

My closeness to Jesus each time I receive Communion... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

My desire to follow Christ more closely as his disciple ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

My acts of service and love to my family and friends ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The knowledge that God created me for greatness and to be a saint ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

My desire to pray even when I am not sure how ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

My desire to turn to God in difficult times ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

My searching faith, and the strength to stay with my questions ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The softening of my hard heart ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The assurance that God helps me find second chances ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

Your peace when I am in conflict ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The humility to give and to ask for forgiveness ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The courage to face challenges ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The desire to care for God's creation ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

The generosity of heart to stand in justice with the poor ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

Your help to remember, as Jesus promised, "everything I have taught you" ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

*The gift of Wisdom* to recognize the importance of keeping God central in my life ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

*The gift of Understanding* to hear and know God's voice speaking to me ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

*The gift of Knowledge* to explore God's revelation and the mysteries of our faith ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

*The gift of Counsel* to make good choices and to see the best way to follow Jesus ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

*The gift of Fortitude* giving me the courage to do what I know is right ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

*The gift of Piety* helping me pray to God with a true heart ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

*The gift of Awe and Wonder* to be amazed by God's presence, in small ways and in big way ... *Holy Spirit, confirm in me.*

*Holy Spirit, you are the giver of many gifts which God wants to give me very personally. Open my heart and my mind as I prepare for Confirmation. Help me to know that you are confirming all the goodness that I am, and all the goodness that I will become. Increase my desire to know and follow Jesus as his disciple with a grateful and courageous heart. Amen.*

