

Confirmation

Parents assist their sons and daughters in preparing for the sacrament of Confirmation by confirming their own faith. This is done by the conscientious practice of their faith in everyday life and by participating in the liturgical life of the church.

Young people are confirmed in their own faith by being incorporated into a community of believers. This is an on-going process in which the adult community plays a vital role. These young people must witness a community that learns, shares, worships and serves together. It is a responsibility of parents and other adult members of the community to help those who are newly confirmed to understand that Confirmation marks a beginning of their renewed commitment to the Church.

Confirmation Is Not Graduation

Confirmation is often viewed as completing the sacramental initiation, but that does not mean it should be the conclusion of an active interest in learning about the Catholic faith and Christian life. Attendance in catechetical programs after the reception of Confirmation takes a precipitous drop. This has become the concern of many parish communities and of special concern to parents.

Confirmation is not a graduation from religious education and formation. In fact, many parishes are working hard to eradicate this fallacy. Parishes are doing so by introducing more and more adult education opportunities. Emphasis is being placed on adult catechesis in parishes all over the country.



The catechesis of adults is not at the periphery of the Church's educational mission, but at its center.

To Teach As Jesus Did, art. 43

Call to Service

As a part of the preparation for Confirmation, many parishes are requiring a specified amount of community service from the candidate. The purpose of this service requirement is to help young Christians understand Christ's model of service to His followers.

Jesus said, "Here I am among you as one who serves." (Luke 22: 27)

The Christian is called to serve as Christ did. This experience of Christian service is meant to introduce Confirmation candidates to the life of a mature Christian. They are asked to follow in the footsteps of Jesus who came not to be served, but to serve.

The Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit

The Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit are the foundation of the Christian life. As children grow in the faith life of the Christian community, they share in these gifts.

Parents should help children understand not only the need for the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in their lives, but the absolute value they have in the life of a Christian.

What would this world be like without people of wisdom, understanding and knowledge? Could we survive as a Christian community without fortitude, courage, and perseverance?

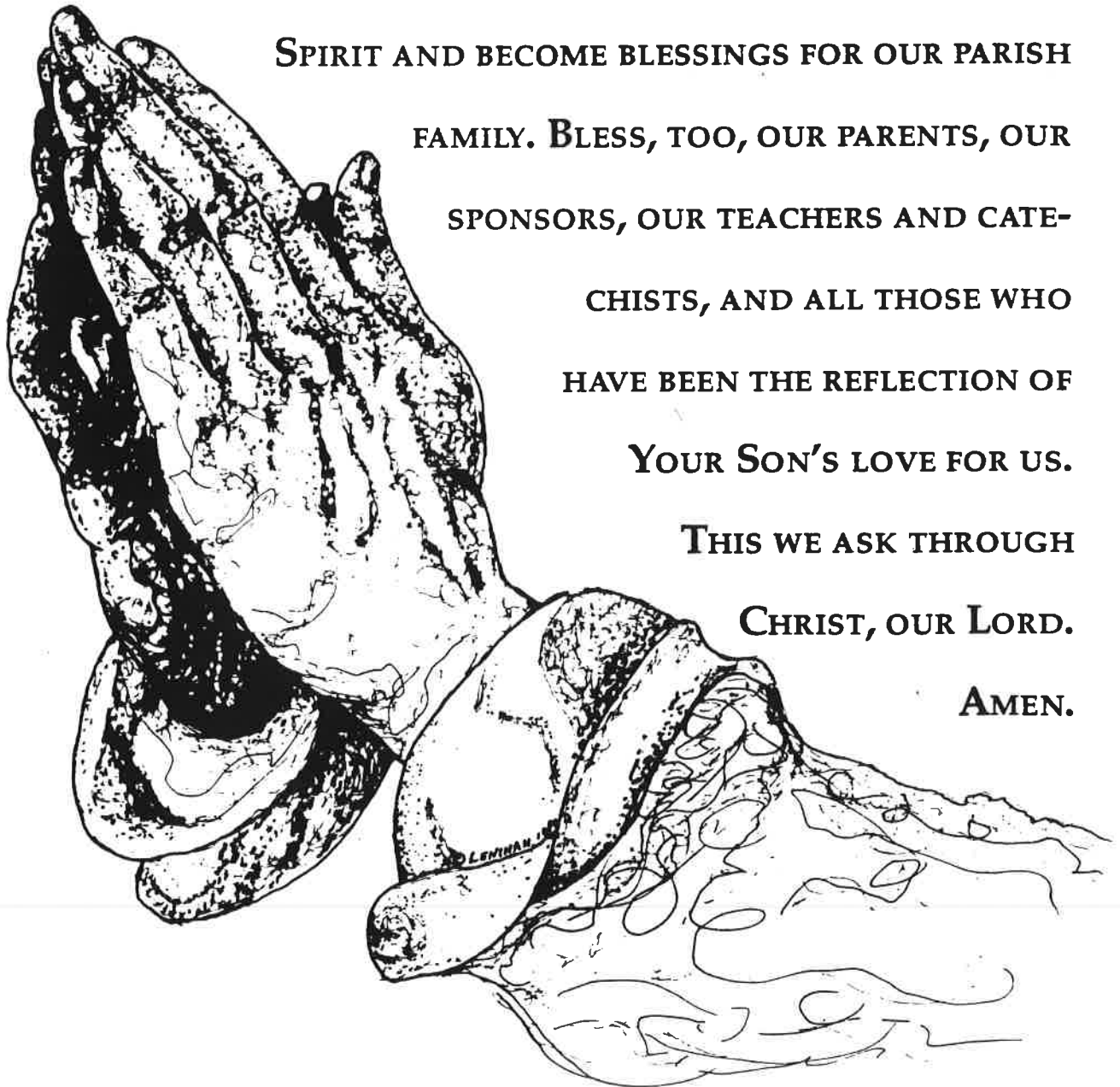
CONFIRMATION PRAYER

GOD, OUR FATHER, WE ASK YOU TO BLESS ALL CANDIDATES WHO ARE NOW PREPARING TO RECEIVE THE SPIRIT OF YOUR LOVE IN THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION. MAY THE GIFTS WITHIN EACH ONE BE TOUCHED BY YOUR HOLY SPIRIT AND BECOME BLESSINGS FOR OUR PARISH

FAMILY. BLESS, TOO, OUR PARENTS, OUR SPONSORS, OUR TEACHERS AND CATECHISTS, AND ALL THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN THE REFLECTION OF YOUR SON'S LOVE FOR US.

THIS WE ASK THROUGH CHRIST, OUR LORD.

AMEN.



The Sacrament of Eucharist

Holy Eucharist is a life-long, on-going sacrament. This sacrament, the most frequent and common public experience in the church, demands our attention from its first reception through each stage of our lives.

Parents usually focus on the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist more intensely when their child is preparing to receive First Communion. In fact, many parents and even grandparents, see their child's First Communion as a sign of continuity with their own lives.

First Communion is not only the introduction of a child into fuller community participation; it is also a reminder to adults of their own faith commitment. When someone in the family

cial holiday dinners, birthdays and everyday family meals.

These experiences at family gatherings are not only helpful to the First Communicant, but the whole family benefits as they grow in the understanding of Christian family life.

Family Rituals

Family rituals and celebrations promote a sense of *us* among family members. Many psychologists stress that if there is one predictor of good mental health, it is the feeling of being connected. Family rituals and celebrations help members of the family connect with each other and their pasts. A ritual can be anything from a family joke to an annual picnic on the first day of spring.

Doing something together is an opportunity for a child to bond with his/her family. And since bonding feels so good, the child will naturally look for ways and opportunities to repeat the experience. Family rituals and traditions give a child a feeling of safety and control as he/she masters the predictable.

Christian families have many traditions which can be helpful to the process of becoming family. Catholic families worshiping together at Sunday Mass, celebrating the liturgical seasons and feasts, and sharing stories of Jesus and His life are all examples of ways to build family rituals and traditions. These are the best ways to instill and reinforce spiritual values.

How mealtime is used— to argue or converse, to discipline or praise— is a good barometer of whether a family is drifting apart or drawing closer.

M. Abraham

is preparing to receive Eucharist for the first time, it should become a family affair. Eucharist is the heart of Christian life and it should become the heart of the Christian family.

Family Meals

Families sharing meals together help children understand many concepts that are important to understanding Eucharist. Children grasp concepts like unity and belonging from experiences of sharing, listening, eating, conversing, thanking and celebrating. This is done at spe-

