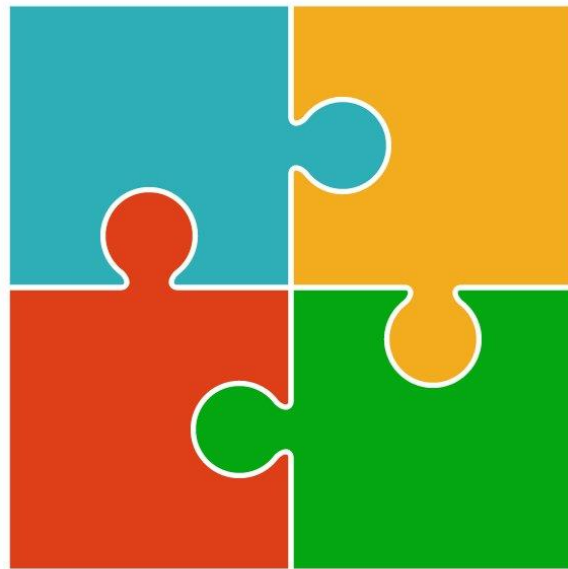


Putting the Pieces Together



An Individual Confirmation Retreat

For

(Name)

Table of Contents – Cornerstones of Your Life

It is important to do the sections in the order that they are given.

Session	Begins on Page
1. Putting the Pieces Together (Family)	4
2. Friends	11
3. My Inner Life	17
4. God’s Invitation to You	24

List of Links

There are links to different videos throughout the retreat. Here is a full list for easy reference. You can use this page on your device to get to the links, while working on the paper for your written responses.

Page	Link to Video Content
4	“Guided Meditation” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inpok4MKVLM&list=RDi50ZAs7v9es&index=10
11	“You’ve Got a Friend” (James Taylor) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xEklou3WFnM
12	Decision Making 101: Fr. Mike Schmitz https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ct494vm0IEc
17	Optional Music Video (Crowder) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r2zhf2mqEMI
19	“The Truth About You” (Chris Stefanick) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7oJmluL2_o
20	“Receiving God’s Unconditional Love & Healing” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdOzTaRW1y8
23	“The Lorica of St. Patrick” – Three versions Shaun Davey & Rita Connolly: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DONuyLwWPaY Dwight Beal: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBnCjDcDMKo
25	LifeTeen Summit – Reflection on Pentecost https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lc7kMVhl_ck
26	Optional Music Video (Hillsong) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UruRQwI8pRE
29	Holy Spirit Prayer https://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Lent/e-Come-Holy-Spirit.html “Living in the Spirit” (Fr. Sean Grismer) http://lotwem.org/awaken/stpatrick

Welcome to your private Confirmation Retreat

Over the next several weeks, these pages will invite you to

- reflect on the **experiences**, **relationships**, **ideas**, **beliefs**, and **hopes** that are important to you
- **honestly assess** how you connect life and faith
- explore how you might connect life and faith more effectively

This retreat has 4 parts, so you do not have to complete it all in one session. But please commit the time to complete one full section at a time. Allow a couple of hours for each section so you are not rushed.

No one is going to tell you what to think feel or believe. You are in charge. If you are honest you will clarify and confirm what you think and believe and perhaps discover some things about yourself, especially your faith.

Don't rush the process. This retreat is not meant to be an exercise you start and finish at one sitting. There will be a number of different activities you will be asked to do and then take time to think about them and respond in some way to the questions raised or experiences you have.



Retreat Basics – understanding the process

What is a retreat?

A retreat is an **intentional** time away to **experience** a new awareness of the presence of God. It is **an opportunity** to explore

- **where you are right now in your life**
- **where you have been**
- **where you want to go**

The value of taking time to **retreat** is that it provides you the chance

- **to see things with fresh eyes** and
- **put things into perspective.**

A Private Retreat is a **personal** time of **prayer** and **reflection**. Most often you will be doing your reflection by yourself or perhaps with another person such as your sponsor.

Purposeful Pauses - the most important part of this retreat is what we call purposeful pauses.

A Purposeful Pause

- lets you take a breath and listen
- lets you take a deliberate period of rest to let the Word and Whisper of God “sink in”
- lets you take time to give the Spirit “room to speak” in silent moments
- is the **“pause that refreshes.”**

How to participate in this retreat

1. **Find a quiet place** that is comfortable, provides you with some privacy and is conducive to reflection
2. **Build time into your schedule** to do these exercises. Remember don't rush the process.
3. **You will need access to wi-fi** to do some of the exercises
4. Download this packet so you can **record your responses**. You can use pen, colored pencils, markers, etc. to make it “your own.”

You need to complete this retreat no later than March 31, 2022



Session 1 – Putting the pieces together

How life & faith connect

Life and faith present us with puzzles. We collect the pieces from the important experiences, events and relationships in our lives. Each of us must figure out how the pieces of our puzzle fit together. Each person's life puzzle is unique so the way we put the pieces together makes a difference. Faith adds a special dimension to assembling the puzzle because believers also want to know, "How does my life puzzle connects to the larger picture of what God is doing in my life, in the life of my family, friends and faith community and in the world?"

Let's begin with a prayer

God, help me piece it all together. Help me to use my imagination to overcome obstacles and to look at old problems in new ways. Help me to remember that there are parts of life that I will have to piece together myself. Guide me as I develop my own method to put the puzzle together.

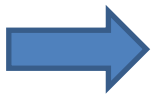
One of the great things about retreats is that we get to try new things. During this retreat you will have the opportunity to learn about and practice meditation.

Meditation is an ancient form of prayer used in many religious traditions. Catholics refer to this type of prayer as **contemplative**, **reflective** or **centering prayer**. When we meditate we deliberately spend time in quiet thought focusing on something so as to understand it deeply. Like all things, to meditate well takes practice.

Guided Meditation is one way to meditate. A **guided meditation** is a process by which one or more participants meditate in response to the guidance provided by a teacher, either in person or via a written text, sound recording, video, or audiovisual media comprising music or verbal instruction, or a combination of both.

MEDITATION

The practice of concentrating one's focus upon a sound, image, object, visualization, breathing, movement or attention itself in order to increase awareness of the present moment (also referred to as mindfulness), reduce stress, promote relaxation and enhance personal and spiritual growth.



You can access your first guided meditation at the following YouTube link
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inpok4MKVLM&list=RDi50ZAs7v9es&index=10>

You can close your eyes or watch the slides. Try it both ways and see what is most effective for you. Many people find doing this kind of guided meditation works best for them at the end of the day.

pause & reflect

We do not learn from
experience... we learn
from reflecting on
experience.

- John Dewey

Create a piece of word art by jotting down different words that describe your experience of this guided meditation (i.e.- hard, peaceful, calming, distracting, easy, odd, relaxing...)

guided meditation

I found it more helpful to

watch the slides

close my eyes and just listen to the voice

I feel most centered, focused, relaxed when:

What helps you to center, focus, relax?

One place I always find calming and peaceful is:

because,

One person who is a calming presence in my life is _____

What does that person do/say that calms you? _____

Which of the following statements best describes where you are on your life journey right now?

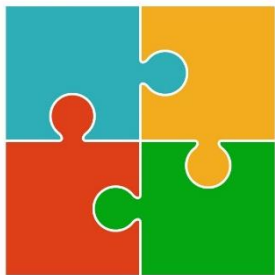
I am on the path heading in the right direction

I have taken a wrong turn

I'm lost

I am at a crossroad and don't know which way to turn

God is recalculating my spiritual GPS



Beginning on my Puzzle

How long has it been since you've worked on a jigsaw puzzle? The jigsaw puzzle is a wonderful metaphor to help us think about how our life and our faith connect. It's just a matter of figuring out how the pieces fit together.

The four most important pieces in any puzzle are the corner pieces. The corners anchor the puzzle. From the corners, we build borders and frame the image we are piecing together. They give us an idea of the limits of the image and what it will look like. Which stand out as the most important pieces in your life? What are the corner pieces?

Top right _____ Bottom right _____

Top left _____ Bottom left _____

In this retreat, you'll get the chance to focus on four major cornerstones in your life: your family, your friends, your inner life or spirituality, and God's invitation to be in a relationship (or in a deeper, more honest relationship) with you.

The Family Corner

This is a two-part meditation. You will need an open mind. For the first part you will also need a quiet place to work. The second part offers you two options: a free-write or a continued meditation. Try them both and see what works best for you.

Guided Meditation

Find quiet place where you will not be disturbed. Total silence might be uncomfortable at first, but it really helps the exercises in this section.

- Clear your mind of all thoughts. Some people find it easier to do this if they close their eyes.
- Focus on steadily taking slow, long breaths. Inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth.
- Once you've relaxed, open your mind to the people in your life. Pay attention to the first five names, faces, or images **of people you think of as family** that pop into your head. Write down the names of these first five people that come to mind. This may include your Sponsor.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

FREE WRITE exercise

1. Choose one of the five people you identified above. Write her or his name on the next page. Over the next five minutes do a free write about that person. Write down every thought that pops into your head. If you find yourself drifting away from that person, direct your focus back to him or her.
2. After five minutes, stop writing and look back over what you have written. What do your written thoughts tell you about your relationship?



Free Draw

Sometimes an image is more powerful than words.

Continuing Meditation

Direct your focus inward. Focus on another of the five people you identified above. Pay close attention to the thoughts and feelings that enter and exit your mind. Welcome all thoughts as they come, not holding on to any thought that wants to leave. Pay special attention to the overall feeling you have. What image comes to mind when you thought about this person (you can draw your image or download an image and place it here)? What does your meditation tell you about your relationship?



FREE DRAW for _____

(Name of Person)

Taking It Further

Use extra pieces of paper.

Repeat this exercise for the one of the five you know the “least well,” or someone you might have mixed feelings about. You may be surprised where your mind and spirit take you. You can either do a free write or free draw or download an image.

Repeat for as many of the people you listed as you wish.

The concept of “Free Write/Draw” can be used in many different ways. For example:

- When you are trying to solve a problem, and don't know where to start
- When you need ideas for a project
- When something is bothering you and you are not sure why
- When you need help in making a decision, this can help surface things that you need to consider.



REFLECT: *What do all your meditations tell you about your family relationships?*

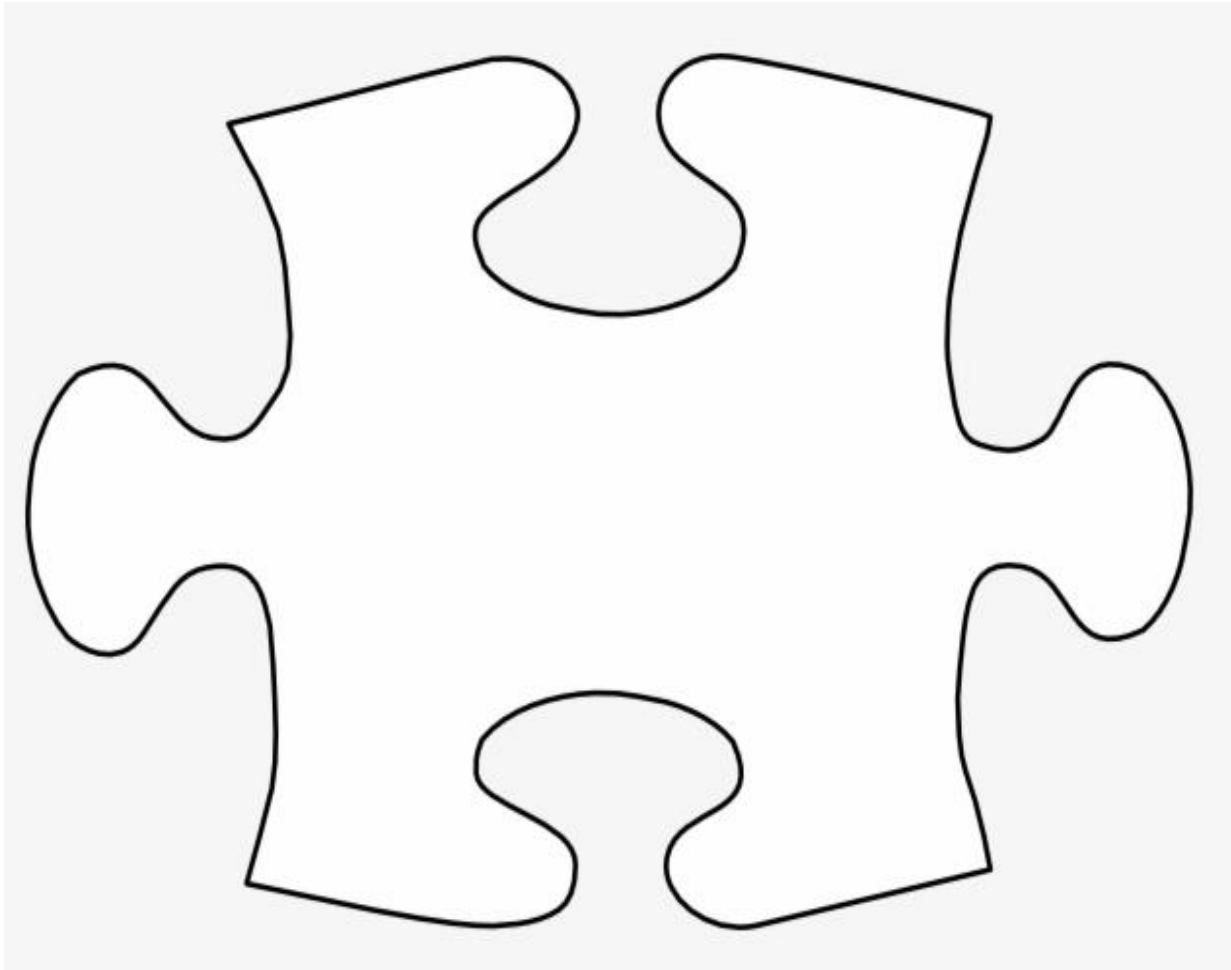
Putting it into Practice

The image in any puzzle may be predetermined, but it's up to you to put that image together. The meditation on your family may help you to see some of the picture more clearly. Your final step for this part of the retreat is off the screen and into your life.



Commit to doing **one** of the following:

1. Fill the puzzle piece below with thoughts and feelings that came to you during your meditation. Use this piece to remember how these people add to and complete the puzzle of your life.
2. Choose one of the people you meditated on today—what can you do for them to show how much they mean to you? Draw from your meditation for inspiration.
3. Think of a family member who has hurt you and you have not forgiven. Decide what it would take for you to forgive them and try to do it.



Closing Prayer - Family

Loving God, my first corner is my family, and for them I am thankful. They are my immovable anchor. When I look for them, I will find them. They will be there for me whenever I need them. They forgive me when I have done wrong and give me strength when I feel weak or am afraid. In them I trust. Help me to be for them all that they are to me. Let me be a beacon of trust, compassion, and love for the people who are most important to me. AMEN.

Session 2 – With Friends Like These...

In this part of the retreat you will pray with a modified version of Carole King's song, "You've Got a Friend" (performed by James Taylor). Use each section of the prayer as a reminder of the many people who care about you enough to call you "friend."

Download a version of, "You've Got a Friend" (performed by James Taylor) for this part of the retreat. Here is one from YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xEkLou3WFnM>

Listen to the song often while working on this section of the retreat.

Opening Prayer

When I'm down
And troubled
And I need a helping hand



I close my eyes
And think of you
And soon you will be there
To brighten up
Even my darkest nights.

LIST THE FRIENDS THAT COME TO MIND
WHEN YOU HEAR THIS SONG

**A FAITHFUL FRIEND IS
A STRONG DEFENSE:**

**AND HE THAT HATH
FOUND SUCH A ONE
HATH FOUND
A TREASURE.**

ECCLESIASTICUS 6:14

Quality Friends What makes a good friend?
Quickly—what are the qualities? Write down the first
three things that pop into your head and write them
down below.



1

2

3

Next, who are your friends? In the box, write down the first three names that pop into your head.

Sometimes we can think of our friends in a certain way. You see one friend as dependable, another as the funny one.

Read the first name you wrote down. Then read each of the three qualities you listed on the previous page.

- How does this person show these qualities?
- What makes her or him the kind of friend you want to have?
- Write your answers next to where you have written your friend's name.

Pray

I just call out your name
And I know wherever you are
You'll come running to see me again.
Winter, spring, summer fall
All I have to do is call
And you'll be there
I've got a friend

Other friends. . .

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____



Check this out!

Decision Making 101 –

Listen to Fr. Mike Schmitz talk about making wise decisions:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ct494vm0iEc>

List one or two ideas from Fr. Mike that you feel are worth remembering.

Which of these statements best describes you (check all that apply)

- I believe in God, but wish I had a better relationship with God
- I feel I know about God but I have never had a real relationship with God
- I have a strong relationship with God
- I am not sure I believe in God
- I feel I had a better relationship with God when I was younger
- I believe there is a God but I do not feel connected to God
- I want my relationship with God to be better...stronger
- I want a better relationship with God, but I don't know how to go about it

I would describe my relationship with God as...

Under the Influence: Positive Pressure

Think about your own personal values – the things you believe in no matter what. Many factors can shape, affect, and change your values. Write down three of your values. Look back on your list of three friends. How does each friend affect, influence, or reinforce these values? Write down your answers.

Three of my personal values

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

1. How do my friends affect, influence or reinforce the first value I listed above?

2. How do my friends affect, influence or reinforce the second value I listed above?

3. How do my friends affect, influence or reinforce the third value I listed above?

Pray

It's good to know that I've got a friend
People can be so cold
They'll hurt me and desert me
Well, they'll take my soul if I let them

There are moments that remind us that our friends will always be there for us. Think of a time when each of the friends you've chosen has been there for you when you need them. In the space below, draw or download a symbol that would describe that time by the friend's name.

1 _____
(friend's name)

2 _____
(friend's name)

3 _____
(friend's name)

All I have to do is call... and you'll be there...

Drawing Conclusions

Look over what you have written about your friends. What you have written may reveal some new elements of your friendships you might have overlooked before.

- What surprises you?

- How has this exercise changed the way you look at your friends?

Whether this activity has radically changed the way you look at them, or simply reaffirmed what you've known all along, remember that in these three people, you've got a friend.

Praying with Scripture



In the letters St. Paul wrote to the Christian communities he founded and nurtured, he tried again and again to make the teachings of Jesus apply to daily life in very practical ways. Prayerfully read the passage below from Paul's letter to the Christians living in Rome 10-15 years after Christ's death and resurrection. Highlight, underline or circle the words and phrases you find meaningful or helpful.

⁹ Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good.

¹⁰ Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. ¹¹ Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically, ¹² Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. ¹³ When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. ¹⁵ Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!

¹⁷ Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. ¹⁸ Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone. (Continued.....)



¹⁹ Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say,

“I will take revenge; I will pay them back,” says the LORD.

²⁰ Instead, “If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads.”

²¹ Don't let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

Lord, this week help me to:

Closing Prayer - Friends

Loving God,

My second corner is my friends, and for them I am thankful.

They are my spirit mirrors. When I look within myself, I will find them. When I look to them, I will find myself.

They will be there for me whenever I need them. They forgive me when I have done wrong and give me strength when I feel weak or am afraid. In them, I trust.

Help me to be for them all that they are to me. Let me be a beacon of trust, compassion, and love for the people who are most important to me.

Session 3 - My Inner Life

The third corner of your puzzle is spirituality.

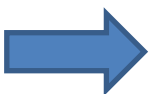
Spirituality is learning how the Holy Spirit stirs in each of us—in our prayers, in our hopes, in our fears, in the peaks and the pits of our lives. We are not always aware of our spirituality, though it is always there. It is a unique piece in your puzzle in that it is both within you and outside of you.



Identifying Your Spirit

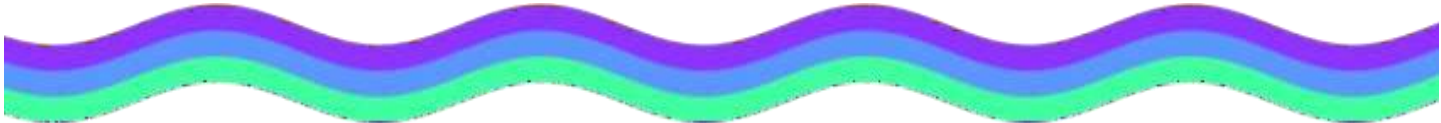
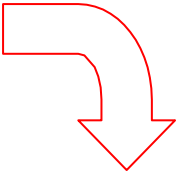
Your spirit is what is unique about you. Close your eyes for a few moments and try to imagine your spirit. Try to think of your spirit by stepping outside yourself and looking inward.

Create a Spirit doodle Pay attention to colors, shapes, images and sounds that enter your mind when you think about yourself. Let your mind's eye seek out the personality of your spirit. Maybe incorporate a favorite quote or scripture verse. Below are some examples



Optional music video for inspiration (Crowder) :
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r2zhf2mqEMI>

My Spirit doodle



Describe your spirit - Use the following questionnaire to identify the character of your spirit.

Favorite Food _____

Favorite Color _____

Favorite Sport _____

Favorite Music/Song _____

Favorite Book _____

Favorite Subject _____

Clothing Style _____

Pets _____

Hobbies _____

Favorite Animal _____

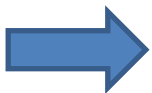
Dream Job _____

Biggest Hope _____

Worst Fear _____

Happiest Sound _____

Saddest Moment _____



Watch this very short video “The Truth About You” by Chris Stefanick

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7oJmluL2_o

Then complete these sentences....

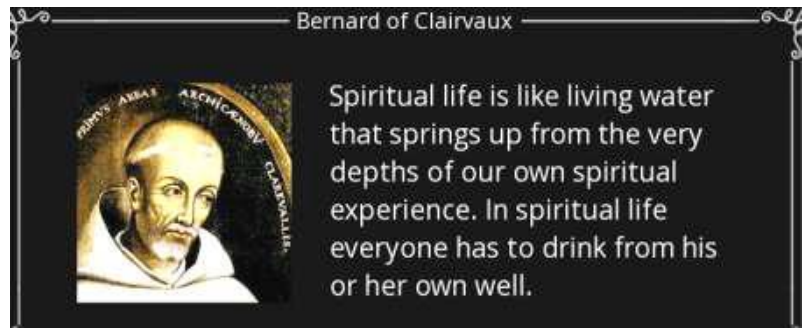
• My spirit is like _____

• I used to be _____
but now I'm _____

• My spirit brings me closer to God when _____

Spiritual Experiences

Think of an experience that you often remember and reflect on, or an experience that you know changed you—a move, an accomplishment, a death, a challenge, an injury/illness, a success, a friendship...



What was your life like before that experience?

What was your life like after that experience?

GOD IS MAKING THINGS HAPPEN FOR YOU. EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T SEE IT, EVEN WHEN YOU CAN'T FEEL IT, EVEN IF IT'S NOT EVIDENT . . . GOD IS WORKING ON YOUR PRAYERS.

What did you lose?

What did you gain?

How did the experience affect your direction in life?

Do you like the direction in which you're going? If yes, why? If no, why not?

God Sightings

A God sighting is a time when you see God working; when you see God doing really cool things. Remember as Catholics we believe in the **principle of Sacramentality** which says all people, things, feeling, experiences, places and events are potentially or in fact the bearer of God's presence and the instrument of God's saving activity on our behalf. This means that God is always working for us.

Guided Meditation

Receiving God's unconditional LOVE & HEALING!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdOzTaRW1y8>

Remember to find a quiet place to do your meditation. You can close your eyes and listen or listen while watching the slides. This meditation is about 22 minutes long so make sure you have the time.



What *thoughts* came to your mind during the meditation?



What *feelings* arose in you during this meditation?

Where in your life do you need God's love?

Tell God what He can do for you right now, in this moment.

Your Spiritual House – Exercise with your Sponsor

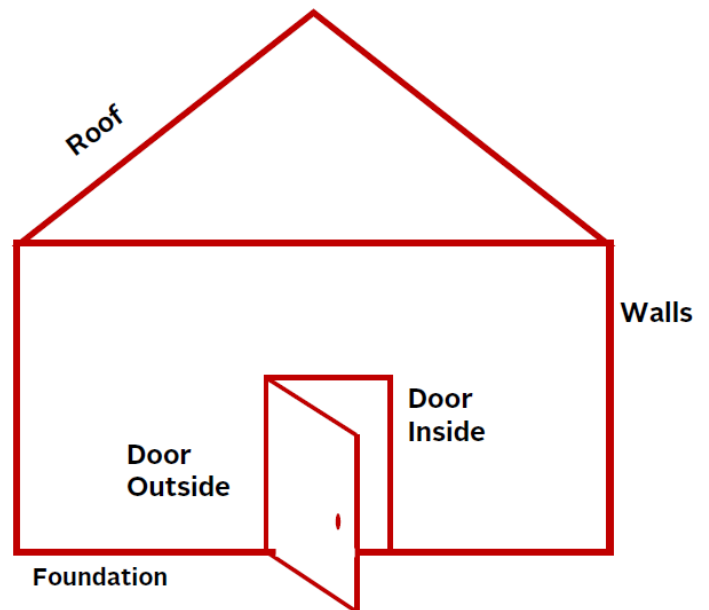
At the **Holy Fire** virtual retreat in November, you reflected on the current elements of your spiritual house. This time, consider doing the exercise with your Confirmation Sponsor. Make a copy of this page, and send it to them if they are not near you. Then you could discuss it over the phone if necessary. Each one of you should share your thoughts.

Even if you did this exercise before, take this time to reflect again on your thoughts about these different elements.

Foundation: What do you know is most true?
What do you hold as the most important part of your faith?

Walls: Who and/or what supports you in your faith?

Roof: Where do you find protection when troubles or hard times come?



Door Inside: What is a part your life that you hide from God? How can you work on bringing this to Him?

Door Outside: How do you continue to invite God into your life?

Prayer – The Lorica of St. Patrick

Lorica, in Latin, means breastplate and refers to ancient armor worn to protect the chest. In the Celtic Christian tradition, a **lorica** is a prayer recited for protection in which the petitioner invokes all the power of God as a safeguard against evil in its many forms.



The Deer's Cry (or *Faed Fiada* in Irish) is the most famous of the loricas, but there are others. You might even consider writing your own lorica – it need not be long.

Read the prayer below slowly, two or three times. This is just one of many translations of this famous and ancient prayer. It has been put to music by many artists. Everyone has their own style preferences. Here are a couple of versions that you can watch to find your favorite. Listen for and hear the strength and confidence of Patrick's prayer.

Shaun Davey & Rita Connolly: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DONuyLwWPaY>
Dwight Beal: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBnCjDcDMKo>

Think about downloading the MP3 file on your phone for those times when you are in need of God's help.

<i>As I arise today,</i>	
<i>May the strength of God pilot me,</i>	<i>Christ with me, Christ before me,</i>
<i>The power of God uphold me,</i>	<i>Christ behind me,</i>
<i>The wisdom of God guide me.</i>	<i>Christ in me, Christ beneath me,</i>
<i>May the eye of God look before me,</i>	<i>Christ above me,</i>
<i>The ear of God hear me,</i>	<i>Christ on my right, Christ on my left,</i>
<i>The word of God speak for me.</i>	<i>Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit,</i>
<i>May the hand of God protect me,</i>	<i>Christ when I stand,</i>
<i>The way of God lie before me,</i>	<i>Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of</i>
<i>me, the Shield of God defend me,</i>	<i>Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of</i>
<i>me the Host of God save me.</i>	<i>Christ in every eye that sees me,</i>
<i>May Christ shield me today.</i>	<i>Christ in every ear that hears me.</i>

Amen

Session 4 – God’s Invitation to you



To choose to be confirmed means to say to God and his Church

“I’m all in! You can count on me to be there for the long haul.”

OR

“The Mass never ends. We go forth in peace to love and serve the Lord and each other.

Thanks be to God.”

It sounds great ‘til you face the facts:

- 80% of those who are confirmed leave the Church within seven years of receiving the sacrament
- The largest Christian denomination in the U.S. is Roman Catholic. The second largest group, if we counted them as a denomination, would be those who “used to be” practicing Catholics.

That tells us a few things

- Lots of people who receive the sacrament of Confirmation don’t get it
- Going forth in peace to love and serve the Lord and each other is incredibly hard
- Discipleship is a marathon not a sprint

So what does that mean to me....??? Let’s go back to the source of the Sacrament of Confirmation...the Feast of Pentecost with the Apostles:

Confirmation is a Pentecost Event!

Adapted from <https://thecatholicspirit.com/faith/focus-on-faith/faith-fundamentals/confirmation-is-a-pentecost-event/>

The same Holy Spirit that descended upon the Apostles on the first Pentecost descends upon those who are confirmed, and the dramatic changes that took place in the followers of Christ from that moment on can and will take place in those who are confirmed — if they cooperate with the powerful graces that they receive.

The Apostles were changed forever for the better.

The Apostles had been unfaithful. They had abandoned and denied Jesus. With the Holy Spirit, they never wavered and were totally loyal, committed and trustworthy for the rest of their lives.

(Continued....)



An artist’s depiction of a scene from the Pentecost appears in the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis. CNS photo / Crosiers

The Apostles were sinners, broken and ashamed. With the Holy Spirit, they were forgiven, healed, granted peace, reconciled to Jesus and restored to grace.

The Apostles were sad and dejected over their master's death and their uncertain future. With the Holy Spirit, they were filled with joy and given a sense of purpose as they moved ahead.

The Apostles had been men of little faith. With the Holy Spirit, their faith was roused, animated, strengthened and solidified.


The Apostles had been doubtful, worried and afraid. With the Holy Spirit, they were reassured, confident and courageous.

The Apostles had been shy, timid, reserved and silent. With the Holy Spirit, they were bold, assertive and outspoken. They gave excellent example and bore powerful witness to their faith.

The Apostles had hidden behind barred doors in the safety and privacy of the Upper Room. With the Holy Spirit, they went outdoors and publicly took the message of Jesus to the streets and the rooftops.

The Apostles had been followers. With the Holy Spirit they became leaders.

Some of the passage you just read might sound a little like some of the things that you are feeling at this stage of your life. Especially during these pandemic times, there is so much uncertainty in our lives.


	<p>Here is a short six minute video where Joel Stepanek of LifeTeen talks about the Feast of Pentecost during this pandemic. As you listen, remember, Confirmation is a Pentecost event.</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lc7kMVhl_ck</p>
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How have the uncertainties of the pandemic and the last couple of years affected you and your life? What would you like to say to God right now? Write what is deep in your heart.

..... Take a stretch break for a few minutes.

Guided Meditation –

Make yourself comfortable in a quiet place, and really pray these words below:



*Lord Jesus Christ,
You give hope to those in despair.
Just as you appeared to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, make your presence known to me.
Make your presence known to me in your Sacred Scripture; set my heart on fire
when I read or listen to your Word.
Make your presence known to me in the Mass; open my eyes that I might see your face in the
breaking of the bread.
Make your presence known to me in my interactions with others, help me to
recognize your face in all people.
Give me the courage to share my days with you, so that I may enter more fully
relationship with you.
Give me the courage to share my faith with others, so that others might come to
know, love, and serve you as well.
I ask all this in your name, Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen*

Catherine of Sienna said, **“Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire.”**

What do you think God is asking of you at this point in your life? Are you willing to accept the mission God has planned for you, to do good in the world? That is one way of bringing people into relationship with Jesus.

Who do you know/see who you believe are in a living relationship with God? Who can you look to as an example for your own life? _____

How have these individuals influenced you? _____



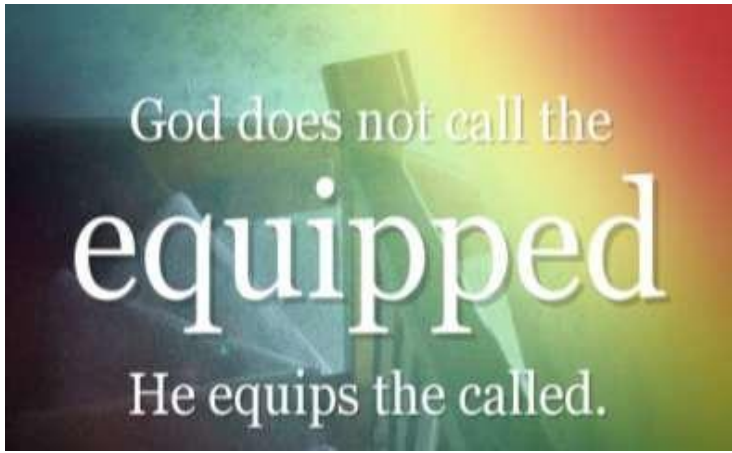
Optional Music Video (Hillsong)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UruRQwl8pRE>

**When we think of Baptism we think of water;
When we think of Confirmation we think of fire**

"As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Matthew 3:11

Write whatever words or draw whatever images come to your mind



The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1. Knowledge
2. Understanding
3. Wisdom
4. Courage/Fortitude
5. Right Judgment/Counsel
6. Reverence/Piety
7. Wonder & Awe in God's presence/ Fear of the Lord

One of the ways God equips us to be disciples is by sending to us, in the sacrament of Confirmation, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Helps us distinguish between truth & falsehood, fact & fiction, the real & imagined

Seeing with the eyes of faith – wanting to see things as God does

Also called **piety** – a deep sense of love that leads us to deliberately seek out ways to please God

Also called **fear of the Lord** – the ability to perceive just how holy, powerful, wise, beautiful and almighty God is

Seeing reality and knowing with the heart; its focus is on seeing the relationship between things

Also called **fortitude** - combines bravery & endurance, helps us face danger, stand up for what is right & act accordingly

Also called **counsel** – the ability to look at a situation, discern what is the correct thing to do & have the courage to do it

As you reflect on the meaning of the gifts of the Spirit, which one or two are you most in need of at this point in your life? Write down one example from your own life and show how any of the gifts of the Spirit might have made a difference in that experience.

HOLY SPIRIT PRAYER– You may have heard this traditional prayer to the Holy Spirit many times during your preparation for Confirmation.



Check out this link to see what the words really mean:

<https://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Lent/e-Come-Holy-Spirit.html>

Continue to pray this prayer in these final weeks before Confirmation, with a deeper understanding.



Final Prayer - LIVING in the SPIRIT

Are you ready to receive more fully the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the power to be truly free?



Watch this final reflection “Living in the Spirit” led by Fr. Sean Grismer:

<http://lotwem.org/awaken/stpatrick>

If possible, watch this with your sponsor or parent(s), or send them the link. Afterwards, discuss with them one or two thoughts from the video that really caught your attention and you want to remember.

1. _____

2. _____



You have taken **intentional** time away to **experience** a new awareness of the presence of God. You have reached out and taken **an opportunity** to explore

- **Where you are right now in your life**
- **Where you have been**
- **Where you want to go as you continue your journey towards Confirmation**

We hope that doing so has allowed you

- **to see things with fresh eyes**
- **to put things into perspective**
- **to be brought closer to God, who loves you unconditionally**

We hope the time you have spent in retreat has allowed you to see **how life & faith connect for you**, in this moment of your life.

The last step

All retreats include meeting with someone to help the retreatant recap the retreat experience, reviewing the important insights they are taking away from the retreat. For our Confirmation Candidates, this will be part of your conversation with your “parish partner” in April. There are no right or wrong answers. It is simply a time to become more aware of your own thoughts and feelings, to share the insights you have gained, the questions that might have surfaced, and how you now view the journey you are on towards Confirmation.

This retreat journal is yours to keep, and no one else will need to read it. But you DO need to have it with you when you meet with your parish partner. If you completed it electronically, be sure print off a copy that has all your entries.

May God's blessings be with you always!!

Acknowledgements

We give special thanks for the work of many who have graciously shared the fruit of their labors with the larger Catholic community via the internet.

- The online retreat **Life is a Puzzle: A Pieceful Retreat for Teens** (*Good Ground Press*) the work of The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet which provided the template and some very helpful content for designing this retreat.
- The work of Fr. Mike Schmitz, in particular the video **Decision Making 101**. For more information see the *Ascension Presents* YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVdGX3N-WIJ5nUvkIBTNhAw>
- The work of Christ Stefanick, in particular the video **The Truth About You**. For more information see the *Real Life Catholic* YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9Gin8zVjjzywF_sW9fkODA
- The work of Emma Noelle, in particular her Guided Meditation: Receiving God's unconditional LOVE & HEALING! For more information on Emma Noelle's YouTube channel see <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7tDECHPppyMtaYzkgjD2qQ>
- Janice Marturano's concept of Purposeful Pauses – The Institute for Mindful Leadership <https://instituteformindfulleadership.org/about-the-institute>
- Carole King and James Taylor composer and performer of *You've Got A Friend*
- Angelina, and Shaun Davey & Rita Connolly's renditions of **The Deer's Cry**
- Dwight Beal's rendition of **The Hymn of St. Patrick**
- The Archdiocese of St. Paul & Minneapolis for <https://thecatholicspirit.com/faith/focus-on-faith/faith-fundamentals/confirmation-is-a-pentecost-event/>
- Creighton University for their explanation of the Prayer to the Holy Spirit <https://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/online.html>
- Joel Stepanek of Lifeteen for a Pentecost reflection on the pandemic <https://summit.lifeteen.com/>
- Light of the World Evangelization Ministries <https://www.lotwem.org/awaken> for access to the **Life in the Spirit** video from the recently launched **AWAKEN** series.
- The images used throughout made available on the World Wide Web
- The vast treasury of the words and prayers of the saints available in many formats
- The support and encouragement of Fr. James Merold, Pastor, and all of the Church of St. Patrick for their prayers.

**To be confirmed or not to be confirmed
- is just one of the choices before you**