

Confirmation 2006

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

February, 2006

Confirmation services are an integral and important part of our Diocesan life together. The persons you present bring an exciting energy, faith, and love to our church. The service gathers family and friends from all generation to witness an individual's mature, adult commitment to their faith and to the promises made for them at baptism. The ceremony and presence of the bishop accentuates the gifts and importance of our Episcopal tradition and faith. It is in that spirit that we have established diocesan standards for confirmation and offer support and resource for your confirmation programs.

We try as much as possible to have all confirmations and receptions during the Easter season. The great fifty days of Easter are a wonderful time to be confirmed or received into the Episcopal Church. Not only is this true from an historical perspective, but it is also true from a theological and practical one. The themes of resurrection and of preparing ourselves for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost are especially fitting as preludes to Confirmation and Reception.

We wish to reinforce here that Confirmation is an adult rite of discipleship. To that end, to receive the sacrament of Confirmation in the Diocese of Maryland, **we do expect that each candidate will have received quality instruction in the parish** as described in the Customary, and that each person presented:

- **will have attended one of the four Bishops' Teaching Days OR the overnight confirmation lock-in.**
- **the age should be 15 or older**
- **is a regular participant in the life, worship, education, and outreach of the congregation presenting them.**
- **will gather to meet with the Bishop one hour before the service.**

We, your bishops, and the diocesan staff firmly believe these to be important ingredients for confirmation and have dedicated the time and energy to support these expectations.

Enclosed with this letter are the 2006 *Guidelines for Confirmation* which clarify the differences between Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation and identify specifics regarding the liturgy, scheduling, and general instructions. Also enclosed are the schedules for diocesan confirmations, and information on the four Bishops' Teaching Days and the new confirmation overnight lock-in at the Cathedral.

Please review ALL the information in the attached documents, and the *Customary* and supportive materials on the web site! See www.education.ang-md.org and click on “Confirmation.” The *Customary* establishes the theological and pedagogical context for confirmation, and expresses our hopes. Related web site resources support your programs of preparation. You may also call on our Missioner for Christian Education and Formation, and our Youth Missioner for assistance.

Our church is in the midst of an evolving understanding of Confirmation. We acknowledge the resulting tension this brings, while remaining committed to making the most of the sacrament as we celebrate it together in our diocese. May it be a memorable and transformational time for all involved. We look forward to working with you in planning and celebrating these special services this Easter season!

Faithfully Yours,

The Rt. Rev. Robert W. Ihloff

The Rt. Rev. John L. Rabb

Klara Tammany
Missioner for Education and Formation

The Rev. Wes Wubbenhorst
Youth Missioner

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