



SESSION TEN

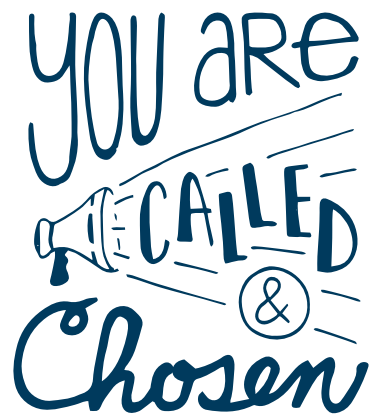
CONFIRMATION

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is error, truth; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

•————— *St. Francis of Assisi* —————•

10. CONFIRMATION



CONFIRMATION IS GOING TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE IN WONDERFUL WAYS.

START TAKING YOUR SPIRITUAL SELF SERIOUSLY.

Over and over throughout the Bible we read about God choosing people and calling them to a new life. God called Noah, Abraham, Moses, Gideon, Joshua, David, Jeremiah, Jonah, Mary, John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Matthew, Zechariah, the rich young man, and now God is calling you.

You are called and chosen.

God has a plan for you and your life. We read in Jeremiah 29:11, "I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."

God is deeply interested in every aspect of your life – and that's why he does everything he can to encourage you to develop a powerful spiritual life.

You are called and chosen. God has chosen you and now he is calling you to a new life.

10.1 WHAT IS CONFIRMATION?

Confirmation is a great opportunity to start taking your spiritual self seriously. So much is going to happen in your life that you will have little or no control over. We can plan and dream, and we should. But life is not easy and often delivers unwelcome experiences that test us in ways unexpected. Education can prepare you for a career, and exercise can prepare you to compete athletically, but developing your spiritual self is the real preparation for life, and Confirmation is part of that preparation.

What is Confirmation? Confirmation is a sacrament. What is a sacrament? Good question. A sacrament is an encounter with Jesus Christ. Jesus gave us the Sacraments to transform us spiritually. There are seven sacraments, and through them we receive the grace necessary to live the life God invites us to. And all seven are deeply rooted in the Scriptures and Tradition.

The seven sacraments are: Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Marriage, and Holy Orders.

Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation are all sacraments of initiation. At your baptism you became a new creation spiritually. The Eucharist

feeds you spiritually. In Confirmation you will be strengthened for your spiritual journey throughout the rest of life.

Confirmation will unleash the Holy Spirit in your life, just as it did in the lives of the disciples at Pentecost. In this way Confirmation perpetuates Pentecost in the Church, so that the work of Jesus can be continued in every age.

How long has Confirmation been a part of the Christian experience? From the beginning. In chapter 8 of Acts we read about Peter and John traveling to Samaria to confirm those who had only been baptized: "Now when the Apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. . . . Then Peter and John laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit." (Acts 8:14–17).

Just as Peter and John went to Samaria, their successor (your bishop) is coming to confirm you. He will do just as Peter and John did in Samaria: pray for you and lay his hands on you that you might receive the Holy Spirit.

God chose you from the beginning. At baptism your parents responded to God and stood up for you. Now you have to make a choice for yourself, and stand up for yourself.

Just as Jesus chose the first twelve disciples, he is choosing you today. Just as God chose Jeremiah and Joshua, Moses and Abraham, he is choosing you today.

Will you accept God's blessing on your life? Will you allow God to anoint you and become a disciple.



If Mary was your sponsor for Confirmation, what would you ask her to pray for as you prepare to be confirmed?



Acts 8:14-17

KNOW IT: Our Church leaders have been praying for us to receive the Holy Spirit from the beginning.

THINK ABOUT IT: There is a direct, unbroken connection between the bishop who will confirm you and the first Apostles.

LIVE IT: Study the history of our great faith.

THE LORD'S PRAYER,

ALSO COMMONLY

KNOWN AS THE

OUR FATHER, AND

AS PATER NOSTER

IN LATIN, IS A

CENTRAL PRAYER

OF CHRISTIANITY.

IT IS FOUND IN

THE GOSPEL OF

MATTHEW (6:9-13).



10.2 THE POWER OF PREPARATION

Our Lives
CHANGE
— WHEN OUR —
HABITS
CHANGE

“We are to love God for Himself, because of a twofold reason: nothing is more reasonable, nothing more profitable.”
SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX

For months now you have been preparing for Confirmation. Some of the preparation has probably been fun, and some of it has probably just been hard work. Winning an Olympic gold medal is fun; preparing to win it is mostly hard work.

We prepare for everything we consider important. You wouldn't show up to play a soccer game and expect to win if you hadn't been training. We don't expect to excel in exams if we haven't studied. And people in the business world wouldn't show up unprepared to give a presentation and expect to get the contract. Preparation is essential for any great experience.

This preparation for Confirmation has not been just to ready you for a single day, but to prepare you for life. Now, as we draw closer to the actual day, I want to encourage you to prepare yourself in these two ways:

1) Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We all need a fresh start from time to time, and Confirmation is a perfect opportunity to have a fresh start with God. I do things every day that are incongruent with the best version of myself. In doing so I betray my true self and God. These are things I have to work on. If I don't work on them they will become habits. And bad habits drag us down. I've got sins and you've got sins. And the thing about sins is they are heavy. Do you want to carry them around? I don't. The good news is God wants to lighten your load.

I love watching the Olympics. It's amazing how disciplined and dedicated the athletes are. Many of them spend four, eight, or even twelve years preparing for a single event—and sometimes that event only lasts ten seconds.

The one thing that really struck me during the most recent Olympics was that all the athletes had coaches. Some of them had three, four, or even five different coaches. These athletes are the best in the world at what they do and still they value coaching.

So here's my question for you. Whom are you getting your spiritual coaching from? You see, nobody achieves excellence at anything without coaching. So if we really want to cast off the mediocrity of the world and grow in spiritual excellence we need coaching.

My wife and I try to go to Reconciliation once a month. We realize we need the spiritual coaching. And no surprise, I am a better husband, a better father, a better son and brother, a better boss and colleague when I make a habit of going to Reconciliation regularly.

The other thing I notice about world-class athletes is that they want to know what their faults, defects, and weaknesses are. This is a sign of excellence.

Too often in the spiritual life we don't want to know our faults, defects, and weaknesses. This is a classic sign of mediocrity. And it's sad, because the truth is, it is by facing and wrestling with our weaknesses that we are transformed by God into the person he created us to be, and prepared for the mission he has designed just for us.

So before your Confirmation, get to Reconciliation. Allow God to unburden you of your sins and give you a fresh start. And more than that, think about making reconciliation a regular part of your life. Seek the spiritual coaching you need to thrive spiritually. Don't settle for mediocrity. Seek excellence in the spiritual life.

2) Pray every day. You need a few minutes each day to connect with yourself and to connect with God. Without this you won't work out who you are and what you are here for . . . and then you will just end up living a life of “quiet desperation.”

Have you been using The Prayer Process? How has it changed the way you look at yourself and the world?

The older I get, the more I value prayer. When I was young I used to pray for my will; as I have gotten older I have learned to pray for God's will. When I was young I saw getting what I wanted as the path to happiness, but as I have gotten older I see getting what God wants as the path to happiness. I want to encourage you and challenge you to make a place for prayer in your daily routine. Set a time for it. Build it into a habit. Lots of days you are not going to feel like doing it, just like Olympic athletes don't feel like getting up for training on lots of days. Develop the discipline of daily prayer and I promise you great things will come from it.

I know you are busy, and I know how hard it is to sit down for a few minutes in silence. I get it. But I'm not sure you understand how much this can change your life. So, I'll say it again. Take a few minutes each day to pray. Not just leading up to Confirmation, but every day for the rest of your life. This is the ultimate good habit.



What is IDOLATRY?

Idolatry is the worship of a physical object as a god, or a disordered attachment or devotion to something.

WHO ARE YOU GETTING YOUR SPIRITUAL COACHING FROM?





What does it mean to be **anointed**?

To be anointed is to be set apart for God, to be chosen by God for a special mission.

**GOD
CHOSE YOU
FROM THE
BEGINNING.**

**JUST AS GOD
CHOSE JEREMIAH
AND JOSHUA,
MOSES AND
ABRAHAM,
HE IS CHOOSING
YOU AGAIN
TODAY.**

Our lives change when our habits change. If you make daily prayer and regular Reconciliation habits in your life, I know you will grow in ways you never imagined, which in turn will open you up to opportunities you never dreamed about. Great spiritual habits connect you with the dreams God has for you, and God always has better dreams for us than we have for ourselves. I wonder what God is dreaming for you?

When I started working on this Confirmation program I made a commitment to pray every day for the people who will experience it. So I want you to know that I am praying for you.

Confirmation is getting close. Whether you are aware of it or not, the Holy Spirit is going to change you through Confirmation. But the more you prepare yourself and cooperate with God throughout this experience, the more powerful it will be. Allow the Holy Spirit to unleash his power in your life and you will be amazed by what happens.



What advice do you think Mary would give you about preparing for Confirmation?



Jeremiah 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

KNOW IT: God has an incredible plan for you.

THINK ABOUT IT: How open are you to God's plan for you?

LIVE IT: Ask God during your prayer time today to start revealing to you his plan.

10.3 HOW WILL CONFIRMATION CHANGE YOU?



How will Confirmation change you? That depends a lot upon you. Open yourself up to the Holy Spirit. Respond to the grace God is pouring out upon you at this time in your life, and something wonderful will happen.

When the bishop traces the sign of the cross on your forehead and prays, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit," something very powerful is going to happen to you. At that moment an indelible and permanent mark will be placed on your soul. Throughout your life that moment will influence you in a thousand ways. Some of them you will be aware of and others you will be completely oblivious to.

My daughter, Isabel, has absolutely no fear of anything. This is a problem. She is two years old and she will stand up on the couch, start walking across it, and then walk straight off the edge of it. But I am there to catch her and put her safely on the floor. This is just one of a dozen ways my wife and I protect her every day from things that she is completely oblivious to.

God does the same thing for us. We are mostly oblivious to his workings in our lives. But one day, in this life or the next, we will look back and see that all along his hand has been guiding us.

Confirmation is going to change you in wonderful ways. Here are just a few examples of how it will profoundly influence you if you open yourself up to it:

- 1. Better relationships.** Confirmation is going to help you have better relationships by increasing your emotional intelligence, self-knowledge, and spiritual intelligence.
- 2. A sense of mission.** Confirmation is going to fill you with a sense of mission by revealing the true meaning of life.
- 3. The perfect career path.** Confirmation will help you choose a career that is perfectly suited to you by encouraging you to explore your God-given talents and abilities.
- 4. Inner peace.** Confirmation will fill you with a sense of inner peace, even when the world around you is crazy, by teaching you to make time for quiet prayer and reflection each day.
- 5. Great decision making.** And as we have been discussing all along, Confirmation will help you to make better decisions as you open yourself up to the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

WE PREPARE FOR **Everything** WE CONSIDER **IMPORTANT.**

6. Discipleship. Confirmation will affirm that you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, and send you out to bring the love of God to the world.



How will all this come about? As God releases the gifts of the Holy Spirit into your life and you cooperate with them.

This might be a good time to revisit the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. These gifts will change your life... —if you let them. God is a perfect gentleman, and so he will not force even these good things on you. He offers them to you freely for you to embrace or reject.

- 1. Wisdom:** The ability to discern what is true, right, and lasting. Wisdom enables you to see life from God's perspective. It helps you to establish the right priorities in your life, and leads you to think and act in mature ways.
- 2. Understanding:** Allows you to look beyond the shallowness of the world and see the lasting truth in every situation, by recognizing how God is working in your life.
- 3. Counsel:** The right judgment that allows you to see what is right and what is wrong, and the prudence to act accordingly.
- 4. Fortitude:** The courage and strength of will to do what you know you should do, even if that means personal loss or suffering.
- 5. Knowledge:** The ability to see things from a supernatural viewpoint. In particular, to know what God is asking of you.
- 6. Piety:** A loyalty to God that manifests as generous love and affectionate obedience. This is the gift that allows you to love and worship God as he deserves to be loved and worshipped.

7. Fear of the Lord (Reverence): Helps you to grasp God's greatness and your dependence on him. As a result, you are filled with enormous respect for God and you dread above all offending him or being separated from him. Our Jewish ancestors believed that fear of the Lord was the beginning of wisdom. Of course, it is not a fear like we usually think of fear today. It is more like an overwhelming reverence that we allow to direct our words and actions.

Confirmation is going to change your life in wonderful ways. I'm excited for you. You are so fortunate that someone loves you enough that they want you to have this experience. I'd like to encourage you to thank that person sometime this week. Whoever it is that loves you enough that they want you to be confirmed, take a moment to show your appreciation for all they do for you.

➡️ **"LOVE,** ⚡️
AND DO WHAT YOU WILL.
IF YOU KEEP SILENCE,
do it out of love.
IF YOU CRY OUT,
do it out of love.
—————IF YOU—————
REFRAIN FROM PUNISHING,
do it out of love."

AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

WHEN I WAS YOUNG I USED TO PRAY FOR MY WILL; AS I HAVE GOTTEN OLDER I HAVE LEARNED TO PRAY FOR GOD'S WILL.

WHEN I WAS YOUNG I SAW GETTING WHAT I WANTED AS THE PATH TO HAPPINESS. BUT AS I HAVE GOTTEN OLDER I SEE GETTING WHAT GOD WANTS AS THE PATH TO HAPPINESS.



“CHARITY IS CERTAINLY GREATER THAN ANY RULE. MOREOVER, ALL RULES MUST LEAD TO CHARITY.”

—SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL

10.4 On the DAY

With many of the most important events in our lives, we don't realize their importance until they are over, and sometimes not until many years later. And even when we know an event is important and we really try to be present and absorb it for all it is, it still passes us by so quickly.

Before I got married, so many people told me that their wedding day was a blur because there was so much happening. So on my wedding day I really tried to be present, to fully grasp the moment, but still I found it slipping away so quickly.

Sometimes I will hold my boy, Walter, or my daughter, Isabel, or baby Harry, and it will be a perfect moment . . . and I will try to completely absorb that moment. But as hard as I try, the moment slips through my fingers.

The day of your Confirmation will pass very quickly. Try to be present. On of the day of your Confirmation, find ten minutes before the ceremony to reflect on what is about to happen.

It also helps to understand what will happen on that day so that when it is happening you can be present to it. Let's go step by step through the Confirmation experience.

The Rite of Confirmation has five parts, which will take place at different times during the Mass:

- the presentation of candidates
- homily
- renewal of baptismal promises
- laying on of hands and anointing with chrism
- general intercessions

The Mass will begin, as always, with the **Sign of the Cross**, which is itself one of the shortest and most powerful prayers of all time.

The bishop will then lead us in the **Opening Prayer**. Here is an example:

“Lord, fulfill the promise given by your Son and send the Holy Spirit to enlighten our minds and lead us to all truth.”

The 7 SACRAMENTS ARE...

Baptism

EUCCHARIST

CONFIRMATION

Reconciliation

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

MARRIAGE

Holy Orders

We will then listen to the **Word of God** in the readings. The Holy Spirit helps us to understand the readings and teaches us to discern what God is saying to us through them.

You will then be **presented to the bishop for Confirmation**. You will be called as a group or by name. By standing before the bishop you are expressing your desire to be Christian and to live the life God invites us to.

This is followed by the **homily**. Now the bishop will speak to you about the Scripture readings, the Sacrament of Confirmation, and the incredible life God is inviting you to.

You will then be invited to **renew your baptismal promises**. Each question is an invitation to which you respond, “I do.”

V: Do you reject Satan?

R: I do.

V: And all his works?

R: I do.

V: And all his empty promises?

R: I do.

V: Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

R: I do.

V: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

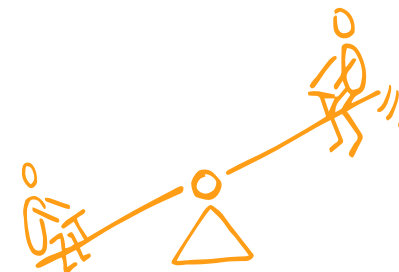
R: I do.

V: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

R: I do.

V: God, the all-powerful Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, has given us a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and forgiven all our sins. May he also keep us faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ forever and ever.

R: Amen.



VIRTUE IN FOCUS

Mod·es·ty

[mod-uh-stee]

behavior, speech, manner, and appearance that avoids impropriety or indecency

In what ways is modesty counter cultural?

In what ways do you practice modesty?

How is God inviting you to be more modest?

WHAT IS emotional INTELLIGENCE?

Emotional intelligence is the ability to observe, assess, control, and express our own emotions; the ability to identify, understand, and respond to the emotions of others; and the self-awareness to know how what we are doing or saying is affecting the people around us.

WHO WAS John the Baptist?

John the Baptist was an itinerant preacher and one of the great religious figures of all time. Jesus and John the Baptist were cousins, through their mothers, Mary and Elizabeth. John was the child who danced for joy in Elizabeth's womb when Mary visited, which we remember in the Second Joyful Mystery of the Rosary (Luke 1:39-56). John challenged people to repent, to turn away from their sinful and selfish ways and turn back to God (Matthew 3:1-17). John's mission was to prepare the way for Jesus. What's your mission? We celebrate John the Baptist with two feast days: June 24 (birth) and August 29 (death).

After a short prayer the bishop will invite you and your sponsor to come before him for the **Laying on of hands and Anointing with chrism**. Your sponsor will place his or her hand on your right shoulder, you or your sponsor will tell the bishop your Confirmation name, then the bishop will trace the sign of the cross on your forehead with the sacred oil chrism and say, "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." You respond, "Amen." Then the bishop will extend to you a sign of peace, saying, "Peace be with you." You respond, "And with your spirit."

After all the candidates have stood before the bishop, the Mass continues with the **General Intercessions**. This is that time in the Mass when we pray for all the needs of every member of the community, and for the whole world.

You will experience a special unity as we pray together the **Lord's Prayer**, offer each other a **Sign of Peace**, and receive **Holy Communion**.

The bishop will then bring the Mass to a close with a **Solemn Blessing** and send you into the world to witness to God's love by living out the mission he has entrusted to you.

I want to encourage you in a special way to be mindful of that moment when the bishop lays his hands on you and anoints you with the chrism. That is going to be one of the most powerful moments of your life. Focus in that moment and ask God to open your heart, mind, and soul to every good thing he wants to bestow upon you.



How would you act differently if Mary was sitting next to you in class this week?



OPEN yourself UP TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.

10.5 DECISION point

Once the actual day has come and gone, this is the first decision you will be faced with: Is Confirmation a beginning or an end? Clearly God intends it to be an incredible new beginning for you, but will you accept his invitation to that new beginning?

After Moses confronted Pharaoh and led the Israelites out of Egypt, but before they reached the Promised Land, he died. Joshua (who is the central figure of the book of Joshua) then became the leader of the Israelites and led them into the Promised Land.

Like Moses, Joshua had to confront the people about their lives. Their priorities had become all mixed up again, and they were once again serving false gods. In chapter 24 Joshua calls together the twelve tribes of Israel and gives them a short history lesson. He reminds them how good God has been to them, that they were slaves in Egypt but God liberated them, protected them, guided them, and gave them the Promised Land. Then he confronts them for abandoning the one true God and worshipping other gods just like their ancestors did. Finally, he invites them to renew their covenant with God.

In Joshua 24:15 there are two great lines. In the first Joshua says to the people, "If you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve." What is he saying? He is saying, don't be cowards. If you are not going to serve the one true God, at least declare yourself in your wickedness and deceit. Don't pretend. We all serve something or someone with our lives. Choose.

Joshua then goes on to say, "But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." That's the second great line. He is saying to the people: You have to decide for yourself, but my decision is made—my family and I will serve the Lord.

You probably won't be tempted to worship golden calves like the ancient Israelites, but it would be a mistake to think that idolatry is a thing of the past. There is a lot more idolatry today than there was back then. You will be tempted to worship at altars of individualism, hedonism, minimalism, egotism, materialism, careerism, and many others.



On the day of your Confirmation the bishop is going to confront you just as Joshua confronted the people of his time. The bishop is going to invite you to turn away from everything that is false in your life and renew your covenant with God, just as Joshua did for the Israelites. What will you choose?

You get to decide for yourself, but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. I have worshiped at these other altars. They left me empty and unfulfilled, but serving God fills me with joy and purpose.

Congratulations on making this journey toward Confirmation. I know it can be the beginning of incredible things for you.

**WHO OR
WHAT ARE
YOU GOING
TO SERVE?**

**CHILD
OF GOD
-OR-
SLAVE
TO THE
WORLD?**



Joshua 24:15
KNOW IT: We all serve something or someone with our lives.
THINK ABOUT IT: Are you serving God with your life? If not, whom or what are you serving?
LIVE IT: Look for one way to serve God better today than you did yesterday.



What would you like Mary to teach you?

