



St. Anthony's Parish
OFFICE OF FAITH FORMATION
167 East Falmouth Highway
East Falmouth, MA 02536
Phone: 508-548-3515 Fax: 508-457-1723
Email: stanthonyfaithformation@comcast.net

Dear parents,

I write to share some exciting news. Over the past few months, I have been working closely with our Director of Faith Formation, Jonathan Galo, as well as a few parents on a new and creative approach to preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. As your son or daughter is in the final year of preparation, I wish to share with you our approach this year.

The Church views the sacrament of Confirmation as a person's full initiation into the Catholic Church. This means that those who celebrate this sacrament are being asked to make a commitment to living as a disciple of Christ both within the parish community as well as in their daily lives. Unfortunately, some of our youth see Confirmation as simply graduation from Church. This is so contrary to the meaning of Confirmation and it says to me that we need to do a better job in communicating what is expected of someone who desires to be confirmed.

For your son/daughter, Confirmation will be the most important step that they will make in their lives of faith thus far. If they are to take this commitment seriously, we (you as parents and us as a Church community) need to work together to guide and support them in order to help them to make a true and lasting commitment to Christ, a relationship that will have lasting effects throughout their lives.

With this in mind, our focus for the year will be to develop and deepen their relationship with Christ and the Church through "Encountering Christ". Beginning in the fall, Confirmation sessions will be held twice a month on Sunday mornings (please note that this has changed since last year) beginning at 10:45am with check-in, 11am Parish Mass (with emphasis on reaching out to youth with contemporary music ministry and technology), followed by lunch (pizza) and a general or small group session in the church basement ending at 1:15pm. This change in scheduling is essential in developing a relationship between the youth with the faith life of the parish community that will hopefully be maintained after Confirmation. Rather than a classroom setting, adults serving as mentors will assist me in the general and small group sessions sharing not only their knowledge of the faith but, even more important, being an example of the faith which our youth so desperately need. Those who participate in the program will also be expected to attend Mass each week, as the Church prescribes. Throughout the course of the program, students will be encouraged to participate in one of the various ministries our parish has to offer in addition to living out the mission of the Church in their daily lives.

Enclosed with this letter, you will find the following: The schedule for the 2017-2018 Faith Formation year, as well as 2 applications to enter the program: one for the student and one for the parents. These few questions will help me to get to know you and your son/daughter better and help to learn how we can better serve you. Once you have completed both applications (student and parent) I am asking that each student meet with me along with their parents so that I may personally welcome all of you into the program, answer any questions you may have and give you further information about the year.

In order to set up a meeting with me, please contact Connie at the rectory (508-548-0108) who will have my schedule of available times. This meeting, which will take place in the rectory/parish office, should take

place between now and the end of August and will last no more than 20 minutes. It is important to note that *no student* will be admitted into the program without completing both applications and meeting with me. Please do not wait until the fall to set up this meeting! During our first session of the year on Sunday, September 17 students and parents will attend the 11am Mass together, and then will have an opportunity to meet with the student's mentor and to listen to an overview of the Confirmation: Encountering Christ program.

As in previous years, there will be a program registration fee. The fee for this upcoming program year will be \$30 per student with a \$60 family maximum. This registration fee will go to providing materials for our programs and supporting some of the various Faith Formation activities. No one will be denied participating in our program due to financial hardship. If you have any questions, please be sure to get in touch with Jonathan Galo.

It is our goal, through the Confirmation program, to guide the youth to "encounter Christ" so that they will make a lifelong commitment to their faith. I hope it will engage the youth and be of support to you as their parents. I look forward to hearing from you and meeting with you and your son/daughter sometime over the summer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Msgr. Stephen J. Avila". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'A'.

Rev. Msgr. Stephen J. Avila, V.F.