

August 11, 2020

Dear Friends,

Since my installation as the fifth Bishop of Madison last year, I have been struck by the faith and love among the people across the diocese. The last five months have proven to be tumultuous times indeed. But our trials have only underscored our need to rely on the Hope who does not disappoint, Jesus Christ. We have had to be creative in scheduling, rescheduling, and rescheduling once again the many Confirmations in 2020. But, at the request of many faithful families and priests from various parishes around the diocese, I will continue the practice of my predecessor, Bishop Robert C. Morlino, and confer the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite. The Confirmation will take place on Thursday, August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at St. Maria Goretti Parish, Madison, Wisconsin at 6:00 PM (a Solemn High Mass will follow for which I will be “in choir”).

While a majority of those seeking the Sacrament of Confirmation on this occasion will be joined by pastors who are fully aware of and even involved in the requests themselves, there are some families who come from different parishes—even some from outside the Diocese of Madison. As such, with an eye on both the role and responsibility of parents as the primary educators of their children, and my own responsibility—and that of the pastors with me—to answer for the souls of each and every person in our care, it is necessary for me to set forward the following requirements for the parents of those seeking the Sacrament of Confirmation on this occasion:

- In the first place, the individual must be of the age of reason (usually 7 or older) and Baptized (but never Confirmed previously);
- The individual should be suitably instructed;
  - If you are uncertain as to what a reasonable degree of suitable instruction would be for one receiving Confirmation, your parish or the Diocesan Office of Evangelization and Catechesis may be able to help.
- The individual should be properly disposed;
  - Candidates should seek the sacrament of their own free will and be free from grave sin, having been to Confession in a reasonably recent time prior to Confirmation.
- The candidate should be able to renew his or her baptismal promises.

While it is my desire to offer the Sacrament of Confirmation to any who are prepared and disposed and who properly and reasonably seek it, it is vital that I remind families of the important role that their parish should play in their lives as Catholics. Ideally, the parish should

**O F F I C E   O F   T H E   B I S H O P**

Diocese of Madison · 702 S. High Point Road · Suite 225 · Madison, WI 53719  
Phone: 608-821-3002 · Fax: 608-821-4552 · Email: [Officeofbishop@madisondiocese.org](mailto:Officeofbishop@madisondiocese.org)

be a stable home for the expression of the Sacramental life for each family, and the pastor always respected as the one charged with the care of every individual and family within his territory.

As such, it remains important for families to maintain good communications with their pastors, not only for the sake of respecting their role as the one charged with the care of their souls, but even for more practical reasons having to do with governance in the Church (in this case, for instance, for the sake of maintaining sacramental records and the like).

For these reasons it is important for parents to send digital copies of the following:

1. A letter requesting the sacrament, attesting to the above bulleted points, and including the following information:
  - The full name, age, and home parish (including city) of the individual to be confirmed;
  - The name of the sponsor (In brief, sponsors themselves must be a practicing Catholic who has been confirmed, must be sixteen or older, and must not be the father or mother of the one to be confirmed.);
  - The complete address of the parish of Baptism of the perspective confirmand, for the sake of our sending notification for the updating of the baptismal registry.
2. A recently-issued, fully-annotated baptismal certificate (this can be easily requested from the parish of baptism)
  - **N.B. In addition to a digital copy, a hard copy of this must be sent to:**

Rev. Scott Emerson  
Attn.: Confirmation Request  
5313 Flad Ave  
Madison, WI 53711

3. A brief note from the pastor of any perspective confirmand, acknowledging the pastor's awareness of this matter and confirming that he knows of no serious impediments to the reception of the sacrament on the part of the individual in question. (If there is more than one candidate from a single parish, a single note containing all candidates will certainly suffice.)

My office has prepared a sample letter (attached) that may be of use to you. This letter, along with the letter from the pastor and baptismal certificate can be sent, no later than Monday, August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020, to the following email address:

[parish@stmariagoretti.org](mailto:parish@stmariagoretti.org)

Current restrictions permit our churches to operate at 50% capacity. As a result, this year's Confirmation is taking place at St. Maria Goretti Parish, where we have the largest seating capacity possible. However, as is happening with most every Confirmation in the Diocese of

Madison this year, we have to limit the numbers of individuals present for the celebration.  
**Therefore, attendance is limited to:**

**1) the confirmands**

**2) their sponsors**

- If sponsors cannot be present because of an underlying condition or for any other reason due to the pandemic, a proxy can be used in their place. A parent may serve as a proxy, if necessary. The original sponsor (not the proxy) is to be recorded in the parish records.

**3) their parents**

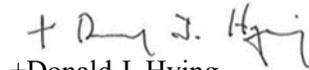
- It would naturally be acceptable for infants to accompany parents.

Further, due to the Governor Tony Evers' Executive Order 82 which led to Emergency Order 1, there is a statewide face covering requirement for those in enclosed spaces. As such, please follow applicable requirements, including social distancing. Additional information for St. Maria Goretti Parish's protocols can be found here: <https://stmariagoretti.org/worship/mass-liturgical-schedule/updates-safety/>. Livestream information will be available on the parish website as well.

At this point I wish to extend my gratitude to Father Scott Emerson, his staff, Father John Zuhlsdorf, and the Tridentine Mass Society of Madison for their work in collating this information and their help in making every preparation for this joyous occasion. Any questions can be addressed to my Executive Assistant, Mr. Nate Simmons [Nate.Simmons@madisondiocese.org](mailto:Nate.Simmons@madisondiocese.org).

Please be assured of my prayers for you and your families and I look very much forward to the prospect of seeing you at the conferral of the sacrament.

Sincerely in Christ,



+Donald J. Hying  
Bishop of Madison