

# BISHOP MCKNIGHT'S MESSAGE

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## Change in age of Confirmation

For several months the priests of the Presbyteral Council have been evaluating the current practice of celebrating confirmation at 16 or 17 years of age. They have been in consultation with other priests, deacons, the Catholic Schools Office, the Office of Faith Formation, and parish catechetical leadership on the present pastoral needs of our young people. It is clear to me, as the pressures of family life have changed, our parents and catechists find the current policy, which calls for the celebration of the sacrament of confirmation during high school, not sufficient.

On Feb. 15, the Presbyteral Council formally proposed to me a plan of transition in which the sacrament of confirmation would eventually be celebrated in seventh grade. I have accepted their recommendation. Over a period of three years, we will transition to the new age for confirmation in the following way:

- The current 2019/2020 confirmation cycle will **NOT** have any changes. The preparation and celebration of confirmation will continue to take place as already planned in accordance with current practice (16 or 17 years of age).
- For the 2020/2021 confirmation cycle, all high school students not already confirmed will be prepared and confirmed.
- For the 2021/2022 confirmation cycle, all seventh, eighth and ninth grade students will be prepared and confirmed.
- For the 2022/2023 Confirmation cycle and following, the age of confirmation will be seventh grade.

Over the next three years, John DeLaporte, our director of Youth Ministry and Religious Education, will continue his work of gathering the needs and expectations of our parishes and schools and for a comprehensive catechetical, sacramental and spiritual program to be used in our parishes and schools. Please note that the catechetical formation of confirmandi will take place through the normal Catholic school and PSR curricula with additional resources for parents in the home. The parish will bring together all the confirmandi in a given year for spiritual and stewardship formation (retreats and service opportunities).

I believe this new policy and program will provide our young people with the assistance of sacramental graces at a more appropriate time in their life, and it will assist families and parishes with greater supports needed to imbue our children with a vibrant, deep faith in Jesus and a deeper commitment to the Church. Please join me in your prayers and in support for this endeavor.