The Sacrament of Confirmation at St. Mary's Abbey

Although Delbarton students come from a variety of Roman Catholic dioceses in New Jersey, Delbarton School and St. Mary's Abbey are located in the Diocese of Paterson. Therefore, we must follow the Diocese of Paterson's policies and requirements for the valid celebration of the Sacraments. It is the policy of the Diocese of Paterson that the local parish is the ordinary place for sacramental preparation, not Catholic secondary schools. We encourage Delbarton students and their families to actively participate in their local parishes each and every Sunday!

The Abbey Church is not a territorial parish. However, the Abbey Church however, has been established as a public oratory (place of worship) in Church (canon) law (Canon 1223) and as such is open to all who wish to worship with the Benedictine monks of St. Mary's Abbey, daily and on Sundays and holy days of obligation. This is an essential part of the Benedictine charism of hospitality (RB 53) and the practice of Benedictine monasteries for centuries throughout the world.

Current Delbarton School families, alumni and parents of alumni are often among those who worship in the Abbey Church. As a public oratory, all sacred celebrations are permitted (canon 1225). Delbarton families and alumni often request to celebrate baptisms, marriages and funerals in the Abbey Church.

All records of sacramental celebrations celebrated in the Abbey Church are recorded in our local territorial parish, St. Margaret of Scotland, in Morristown. Please note that St. Mary's Abbey does not maintain official sacramental records. The following is the parish contact information if you need records of sacraments celebrated in the Abbey Church:

St. Margaret of Scotland Parish
12 Columba Street
Morristown, NJ 07960
(973) 538-0874

Candidates for Confirmation at the Abbey Church follow the requirements established by the Diocese of Paterson as articulated in the *National Catechetical Directory*. Current Delbarton families (Delbarton students and their sisters) may participate in the Abbey Church's sacramental preparation program for Confirmation. The requirements include:

1. Faith Formation: Two-year catechetical instruction is required by the Diocese. Theology classes at an area Catholic secondary school satisfy this requirement. In particular, candidates for Confirmation ideally must have completed a course in the Sacraments. For Delbarton students this is course is presently offered in the

junior year.

2. Service: All community service programs offered through the Mission and Ministry Office satisfy this requirement. Candidates for Confirmation are encouraged to participate in a wide variety of service projects, but are not required to do so as a prerequisite for receiving Confirmation.

3. Retreat: The annual retreats offered through an area Catholic school's campus ministry program satisfy this requirement, whether as retreat leaders or participants.

4. Worship: Candidates for Confirmation, like all baptized Catholics, are expected to participate in the Sunday Eucharist either in their local parishes or at the Abbey Church.

5. Reflection: Candidates for Confirmation are asked to reflect on their own readiness for the reception of the sacrament as their own sharing in the life and mission of the Church. This readiness is by writing a letter to the abbot requesting to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation and the reasons for that decision.

A validly baptized person who is appropriately prepared may receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, according to canon law. In the Diocese of Paterson, it is recommended that the celebration of Confirmation be in the years of high school, preferably sophomore or junior year. In determining a candidate's readiness for Confirmation, the following criteria should be used:

1. The candidate has met the requirements of canon law:
   - has been validly baptized and has not been confirmed (Canon 889 §1)
   - has the use of reason
   - has received First Penance and First Communion
   - has been suitably instructed
   - is properly disposed and freely chooses to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation
   - is able to renew his or her baptismal promises (Canon 889 §2)
   - The candidate shows evidence of willingness to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit to
     bear witness to Christ and build up the Body of Christ in faith and love (Introduction to the Rite, #2)

2. The candidate has met the legitimate requirements of the Diocese noted above (nos. 1-5):

3. The candidate for Confirmation is to choose a sponsor. The sponsor need not be of the same sex as the candidate. The sponsor should be at least 16 years of age and a fully initiated Catholic, that is, received Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation.

   The sponsor cannot be a parent or guardian of the candidate (Canons 874 §1, 893). The Confirmation sponsor may also have been the baptismal godparent of the candidate. In fact, given all other considerations, the baptismal godparent is the ideal choice for this role.

   Above all, the sponsor should be a person who is:

   - A mature, active member of the Catholic Church (at least 16 years of age [Canon 874 §1, 893]
   - Free to undertake the responsibilities of being a sponsor and accompany the candidate
   - Reasonably informed and up to date in Church teachings and practice
   - Chosen by the candidate in consultation with his or her parents
   - Willing to accept this ministry knowing full well what it involves

   The sponsor is expected to:

   - Journey with the candidate during the different aspects of the preparation program
   - Be a friend and companion to the candidate, helping the candidate integrate the teachings of Jesus into his/her daily living
   - Minister to the candidate even after the actual celebration of the sacrament
   - Model Christian living as a practicing and active Roman Catholic

4. The Candidate is encouraged to choose a Confirmation name, which is to be a name of a recognized saint of the Church whom the candidate aspires to imitate in living the Christian life as one's personal model and patron.

Confirmation in the Abbey Church is celebrated within Mass to express more clearly the fundamental connection of Confirmation with the entire process of Christian Initiation. The Confirmation Mass ordinarily takes place in early May.

The ordinary minister of Confirmation is a Bishop. Only for a serious reason may a Bishop delegate a priest to administer the sacrament (canon 884). Bishop Kevin Sweeney, of the diocese of Paterson, has delegated Abbot Jonathan Licari, O.S.B., Administrator of St. Mary's Abbey and Abbot President of the American Cassinese Congregation, to confirm in the Abbey Church. St. Mary's Abbey will issue a certificate to each candidate once confirmed.

Attached is the application for Confirmation. Please submit this completed application along with the candidate's annotated baptismal certificate to St. Mary's Abbey. A baptismal certificate with notations comes from the parish of Baptism and indicates the other sacraments received to date, such as First Penance and First Communion.

Donation: There are no fees for the reception of sacraments in the Church. Donations are accepted to defray the for the organist, cantor, sacristan and printing of the liturgy booklet. From these offerings, the Abbey also makes a donation to St. Margaret's Parish for their registration of the Sacrament of Confirmation celebrated in the Abbey Church. In the past, a typical donation has been about $100 per candidate. Some have given more; others cannot give at all. No one is denied a sacrament by the Abbey for the lack of such a donation.

For further questions or clarifications, contact:

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