

LETTER TO THE BISHOP

The Church teaches us that the unifying figure in each (arch)diocese is the bishop. St. Ignatius of Antioch, who was a student of St. John the Evangelist, and who was the 3rd Bishop of Antioch after Sts. Peter and John, wrote to his followers in the year 105AD that wherever the bishop is the Catholic Church is there. For this reason, the Bishop remains the principle celebrant of the Rite of Confirmation, as a sign of unity for all those being confirmed into the faith in his particular diocese. The bishop does however have the authority to allow assistant (known as auxiliary bishops) bishops, or even pastors to confirm with special permission if there is a difficulty in his being able to confirm all the candidates.

For this reason it is important that each candidate express his or her desire to be confirmed in writing to the bishop. In the letter we share who we are and a little about ourselves, why we wish to be confirmed, perhaps even our struggles and doubts about the process, as well as who our confirmation saint is and why we chose that particular saint.

The letter should be typed, in a business letter format and included in an envelope addressed to the bishop, or to the priest who is designated to preside over your confirmation. The envelope does not need to have a full address on it, nor does it require a stamp, as they will all be sent to the bishop together from the parish, but a proper return address should be included on the envelope for easy reference both for St. Peter's Parish staff, as well as for the bishop and his staff.

The following is some basic information to be sure you write your letter correctly:

1. The proper way to address the bishop is "Your Excellency, (Arch)Bishop X"

*****PLEASE NOTE THAT BISHOP RICHARD J. SKLBA IS THE
CONFIRMING BISHOP FOR EACH OF YOU*****

2. The proper way to address a priest who is presiding is "Reverend Father X"
 - a. If the priest is the dean of the district (like Fr. Rick is), a Monsignor (a special title given by the Vatican) or works for the central offices of the diocese, the proper addressing is: "Very Reverend, Father X"
3. In concluding your letter, you should close with reference to the faith we share with the bishop, which is of course one of the points in writing him in the first place. Any of the following, or something similar, would be appropriate:
 - a. "In Christ", "Sincerely Yours in Christ", "in the grace of the Spirit", "Your brother/sister in Christ", etc.

On the back of this letter, you will find a copy of an appropriate sample letter.

John Smith
1234 Pewaukee Rd.
Pewaukee, WI 53072

Archbishop Jerome Listecki
Archdiocese of Milwaukee
Archbishop Cousins Catholic Center
P.O. Box 070912
Milwaukee, WI 53207

January 1, 2014

Your Excellency Archbishop Listecki:

Greetings in Christ! My name is John Smith and I am a junior from Pewaukee, WI. I am also a member of Queen of Apostles Parish, and I am writing to request from you the Sacrament of Confirmation when you visit on May 30, 2014.

I have been involved in the Church my whole life, going to Queen of Apostles school up until fifth grade and then into the Pewaukee public school system where I play varsity basketball and am a member of several honor societies. I miss going to Catholic school, but I have enjoyed my time in religious education at Queen of Apostles. At Queen of Apostles I have had the opportunity to go to the Wisconsin Catholic Youth Rally which was really neat. I also hope to go to the Steubenville Youth Conference this summer.

Speaking of saints, I have chosen St. John Vianney as my confirmation saint. I remember hearing about him a lot during a thing my church did for "The Year of the Priest" and I thought he was really cool. I do not really think that God wants me to be a priest, but just to have the sort of faith he had to go into a tough little village where he was unwanted and to change the whole place by just loving and serving and offering Mass and hearing confessions is amazing. I think sometimes it's hard to not think of saints as doing amazing miracles all the time and that can be a little intimidating to me and a lot of other people, so I thought it was important to have someone with such a simple faith as my confirmation saint. Hopefully he can help me be just like him one day.

I want to thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I look forward to our Confirmation Mass. I really want to try and take my faith more seriously, even though I don't get it all sometimes, and I know that the Sacrament of Confirmation can help me do that for the rest of my life.

In Christ,

John Smith