

Parents and Confirmation Candidates,

I hope your summer is starting off well and that you will have some time to rest and relax. I wanted to remind you all about the 2014 Confirmation Retreat.  The retreat will be held on **July 28-30, 2014 at Rosaryville Retreat Center in Ponchatoula, LA.**  The candidates are required to attend this retreat. If you are unable to attend, please contact the Christian Formation Office.

Young people are vital to our Church, and this retreat will be a great opportunity for continued growth of this generation. Citing the importance of retreat experience, *The National Study on Youth and Religion (NSYR)* recently noted:

“Youth who have participated in at least **one** retreat, rally, conference, or mission trip report:

 -Being significantly closer to God

 -That religion helps shape their daily lives

 -Reading the bible more often”

Having said that, I realize how busy and occupied our young people are these days. This retreat is not to be an “extra burden” or inconvenience; rather, it is an opportunity to continue a growing relationship with our God. We can all identify with being busy, but I believe this retreat is a great chance for our young people to be refreshed, especially before the start of another busy school year.

We are filled with gratitude and excitement to have Stephanie Clouatre Davis as our retreat leader this year. Stephanie lives in our Diocese and has been a part of local and national youth conferences as a speaker and minister. Stephanie is a valuable asset to our church, and I am excited to have her involved in the formation of our youth.

Please be aware that on the Confirmation Retreat, the Candidates will be asked to write a letter asking someone to be their sponsor, which we will mail out after retreat. Parents, please encourage your child to have someone in mind as they embark on retreat.

I have included a retreat registration and medical form, as well as a 2014-2015 Confirmation schedule.

Please note that this year Confirmation is significantly earlier, January 15th, than in years past. Thus, we will be meeting more frequently in the fall so as to fully complete our Confirmation preparations. Also, since Confirmation is not a graduation, but rather a sacrament of initiation into adulthood of the Church, we will continue to gather after Confirmation as well. The purpose of those gatherings will be to help form small faith communities among the group, as well as orient them to ways to be involved in parish life.

God is doing many great things in our parish and in particular with our youth. I firmly believe that this Confirmation retreat and preparation will provide our young people the opportunity to be renewed, to grow as a community, and to deepen their experience of God. I ask for your prayers and support as we continue to work together to form our young people.

Sincerely



*Julie Cilano*

 *Director of Christian Formation*