



The Roman Catholic Diocese of
BATON ROUGE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

08 December 2024
The Second Sunday of Advent

To The Priests, Deacons, and Faithful of the Diocese of Baton Rouge:

*Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth.*

Together, we pray as a church this ancient prayer invoking the power of the Holy Spirit. This gift of the Spirit is given to all of us in a special way in the Sacrament of Confirmation that fully initiates us into the Church and fills us with these gifts and the enthusiasm to take on the mission of Christ to renew the world. Many older Catholics remember that the age of Confirmation was younger when we were confirmed. After the Second Vatican Council, in many places, the age was raised to High School since many leaders felt that the sacrament would be better understood at an older age. This practice has worked well, but times have changed.

Our children are experiencing a culture which, at times, is hostile to our faith. Through social media of all forms, young people are confronted at a surprisingly younger age with challenges to their Catholic faith and morals. Given this new reality, I believe it is time to lower the age of Confirmation to give our children the full grace of the sacrament of Confirmation at an earlier age to meet these challenges. After consultation with our pastors, catechists, and other evangelizers, **I have decided to begin a transition plan in our Confirmation programs that will eventually lower the age of Confirmation to the seventh grade.** Obviously, before we reach the seventh grade, we must create a formation plan for the present 8th – 10th graders in our parishes.

I make this announcement now so that each pastor can begin the plan for transition that best meets the needs of their parish. Support from the Diocesan Office of Evangelization and Catechesis will be offered to assist parish leaders in making this transition, which will be made as a parish with schools of religion and Catholic schools working together, under the leadership of their pastor.

This transition will be challenging but I also believe it will be a catalyst for foundational changes in how our parishes help our parents to form their children into missionary disciples on fire for Christ. There is so much more to be said, and you may have many questions. I simply ask your patience, for now. Early in the New Year, you will learn more of the specifics of how this change will be implemented in your parish. You can find a list of *Frequently Asked Questions* on the diocesan web site (diobr.org) or through resources provided by your pastor.

Come Holy Spirit!

Hope in the Lord,

Most Reverend Michael G. Duca
Bishop of Baton Rouge