



## Office of the Auxiliary Bishop

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To: Youth Ministers and Pastoral Assistants for Faith Formation  
From: Most Rev. Daniel Mueggenborg  
RE: Confirmation age proposal  
Date: November 17, 2017

Dear Youth Ministers and Pastoral Assistants for Faith Formation,

As many of you know, earlier this year, Archbishop Sartain developed a proposal that considers lowering the age of Confirmation. That proposal, as well as a brief exploration of the theology of Confirmation appears within the attached letter to you as Catechists. I, and all of our Chancery staff, truly respect and value your experience and wisdom regarding the best practices in sacramental preparation. I am hoping you will review these materials and give them careful consideration. As you read them, I would like to emphasize a few things.

The first is that our consideration of the age of Confirmation is based upon our belief in what the Church teaches about this sacrament. Jesus gave the Holy Spirit to the Apostles at Pentecost for a reason – so they share in that Divine Grace that would help them to be courageous witnesses of the Gospel and active members of the Body of Christ in the Church. That same gift of the Holy Spirit continues to be shared with us today through the Sacrament of Confirmation and is a necessary help in our ability to avoid sin and live a life of faith and virtue. From time to time, we need to reconsider the original intention of our sacramental practices to become more deeply aware of how we can better live the grace being offered to us in each of those mysteries of faith.

Secondly, it is important that you know this proposal is not a criticism of the practices used in recent years. Literally thousands of youth have benefitted from existing sacramental preparation programs and all of us are grateful for that. This proposal is being made for the Archdiocese of Seattle just as it is, or has been, for many other dioceses throughout the United States as part of an ongoing discussion on the theology and practice of Confirmation.

Thirdly, I want you to know that should a decision be made to change the age of Confirmation, implementation would take time, care and planning. Before implementing a change, we would need to think through the transition, provide a phased transition process and offer effective communication for both parents and children.

Finally, I want to affirm how important strong Youth Ministry remains to our Archdiocese. Whatever changes may occur with the age of Confirmation, we are committed to strengthening Parish Youth Ministry in our communities. To assist us in more effective outreach to parish youth ministers, our new

Director of Parish Youth Ministry Services, Daria Lobato, is an expression of that commitment. She has a strong background in both parish and international youth ministry, and alongside Daria, our entire Evangelization, Formation and Discipleship core area will make supporting parish youth ministry a top priority.

Please take some time to read and pray over this letter. It includes an invitation to contact us with your insights and I am hoping you will do so. We truly value your insights and look forward to continued dialogue.

Yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Daniel H. Mueggenborg  
Auxiliary Bishop of Seattle