

Suggested January Ritual Mass Confirmation

January is a good time to focus on the 'Confirmation Pledge' and the work of the 'Pioneer Total Abstinence Association (PTAA)'.

(Please note: the information contained herein may be used at any time in preparation for Confirmation.)

A number of topics may be discussed with the candidates:

(i) What is the 'Pledge'?

The pledge is a public commitment taken during the Confirmation ceremony whereby candidates promise to abstain from alcohol until 18 years of age.

As part of this commitment, they recite the following text:

Lord Jesus, on this my Confirmation Day, I make a special promise not to consume alcohol or any drug which might harm or destroy your gift of life to me. Grant me, O Lord, your grace to keep this promise and to consider renewing this pledge when I am 18 years of age.

In this context, consideration should be given to discussing healthy life-choices - sport, well-being, diet, toxins etc.

It may also be worthwhile discussing how the gifts of the Holy Spirit help the candidates realise their pledge. For example, self-control, understanding, right judgement etc.

(ii) What is the difference between taking the pledge and becoming a 'Pioneer'?

A 'Pioneer' is a member of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association of the Sacred Heart (PTAA). They choose to abstain from alcohol, to pray for those who are impacted by alcohol abuse and they wear an emblem which was struck in 1898 when the Association was founded.

While the PTAA does not advocate prohibition, it does require complete abstinence from alcoholic drink for its members. It also encourages a spirit of prayer and devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as a spiritual support in resisting the temptation of alcohol.

Resources: www.pioneers.ie/threepromises

(iii) The origin/establishment of the PTAA;

Resources: www.pioneers.ie/beginnings

Videos / podcasts available on <https://www.pioneers.ie/updates>

(iv) Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, its origins and the characteristics that make the Sacred Heart of Jesus a suitable patron of the 'Pioneers'.

The **cross** - symbol of Salvation, the sacrifice offered to save us. Our Christian identity.

The heart is on fire. Christ's **Sacred Heart** is burning with love for us. This love has the power to transform hearts and lives. It reminds us of the prayer: Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and **enkindle in them the fire of your love.**

The **crown of thorns and pierced heart of Jesus** reminds us of the human suffering endured by Christ.

It also reminds us of the burdens - physical, emotional, relationships, financial which are carried by the people from all walks of life who are impacted by alcohol addiction.

This emblem which is worn by the Pioneers on their lapel is profoundly 'Christo-centric'.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus for Kids
https://kids.kiddle.co/Sacred_Heart

(v) The meaning of 'sacrifice', prayer, and the choices we make.

Definition: 'Sacrifice is to give up something that is valuable to you to help another person'. (Cambridge Dictionary)

'You sacrifice something that is valuable or important, you give it up, usually to obtain something else for yourself or for other people.' (Collins Dictionary)

a. Jesus modelled to us the life of sacrifice.

Jesus sacrificed his life so that we could be saved. Our salvation is only possible because of the sacrifice of Jesus. We offer our abstinence from alcohol so others who have a dependency will benefit from our sacrifice. God takes our sacrifice and prayer and transforms it in such a way that it inspires, strengthens and heals those with an addiction. We are reminded that the sacrifice of cross ended in Resurrection - hope, new beginnings.

b. Sacrifice changes us.

- We become healthier.
- We become more aware of the struggles of others.

- We respond in a charitable way: prayer, support, encouragement etc. Jesus said, "I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly." (John 10:10)
- Sacrifice stretches us. It makes us go beyond ourselves. It requires trust. Therefore, it matures us.
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- c. **Sacrifice yields rewards.**
 - Our sacrifice and prayer offers an example of sobriety to others. Ref. Heroic offering to the Sacred Heart:

**"For Thy greater glory and consolation,
o Sacred of Jesus,
for Thy sake to give good example,
to practice self-denial,
to make reparation to Thee for the sins of
intemperance,
and for the conversion of excessive drinkers,
I promise to abstain for life from all intoxicating
drinks."**
 - Our sacrifice strengthens the resolve of others.
 - As Pioneers, when we offer our abstinence as a spiritual sacrifice, so Christ transforms the lives of others. We also accompany people who are trying on a daily basis to abstain from alcohol.

(vi) The aims of the PTAA:

- faith and prayer,
- self-denial leading to inner freedom;
- setting beneficial example to others;
- presenting alternatives to the drinking scene, particularly to young people;

- advocating the ideals and values of temperance and sobriety in society.

(vii) The Pioneer Emblem.



St. Margaret Mary, while she was in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament describes the Sacred Heart of Jesus with the following words: "The Divine Heart was presented to me in a throne of flames, more resplendent than a sun, transparent as crystal, with this adorable wound. And it was surrounded with a crown of thorns, signifying the punctures made in it by our sins, and a cross above signifying that from the first instant of His Incarnation, [...] the cross was implanted into it [...]."

Priests visiting classrooms may also highlight 'Temperance Sunday' which takes place on the Sunday before Lent, the 19th February. Mass will be broadcast on RTE on Sunday 19th February at 11am with the participation of Pioneers, Cuan Mhuire, and Tabor House. (See www.pioneers.ie for details)

Images adapted from: www.Cool2bKids.com

www.TheCatholicKid.com

Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation Suggested January Ritual

(The proposed ritual takes place during the celebration of Sunday Mass.)

Having discussed the 'Confirmation Pledge' with the candidates, invite them to colour the attached image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus/the emblem of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association which they return to the church during the designated Confirmation Mass.

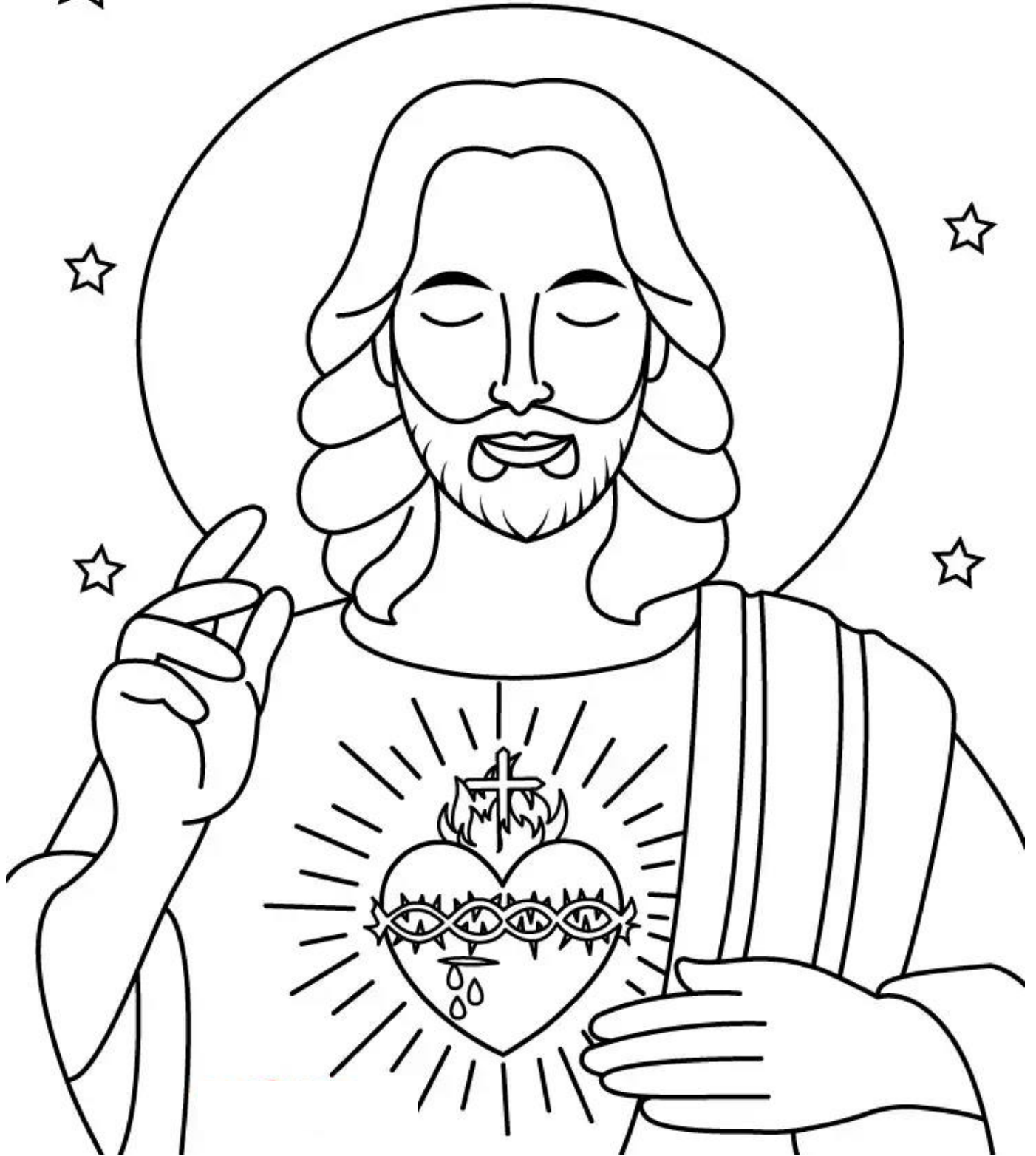
On the reverse of the image the candidates are invited to complete the attached pledge in advance of making a public declaration to abstain from alcohol and drugs during the Confirmation Ceremony.

Sample Prayers of the Faithful

(Some of the Prayers of the Faithful may be included in the Intercessions of the Mass.)

1. For children preparing for Confirmation, their parents who support them, their Sponsors who witness to them, their teachers who instruct them, and our community who prays for them. **Lord, hear us.**
2. We give you thanks for the presence and power of your Spirit in the Church and our lives: - give us the will to deepen our faith and inspire the way we care for one another. **Lord, hear us.**
3. For temperance in all our lives - help us not abuse the gift of life within and to realise our deepest hungers are satisfied by you alone. **Lord, hear us.**
4. For those considering the Confirmation Pledge. Bless them with a spirit of right-judgement and self-control. May the Holy Spirit deepen their resolve to fulfil their pledge. **Lord, hear us.**

Sacred Heart of Jesus



Sacrament of Confirmation



Confirmation Pledge



My Pledge

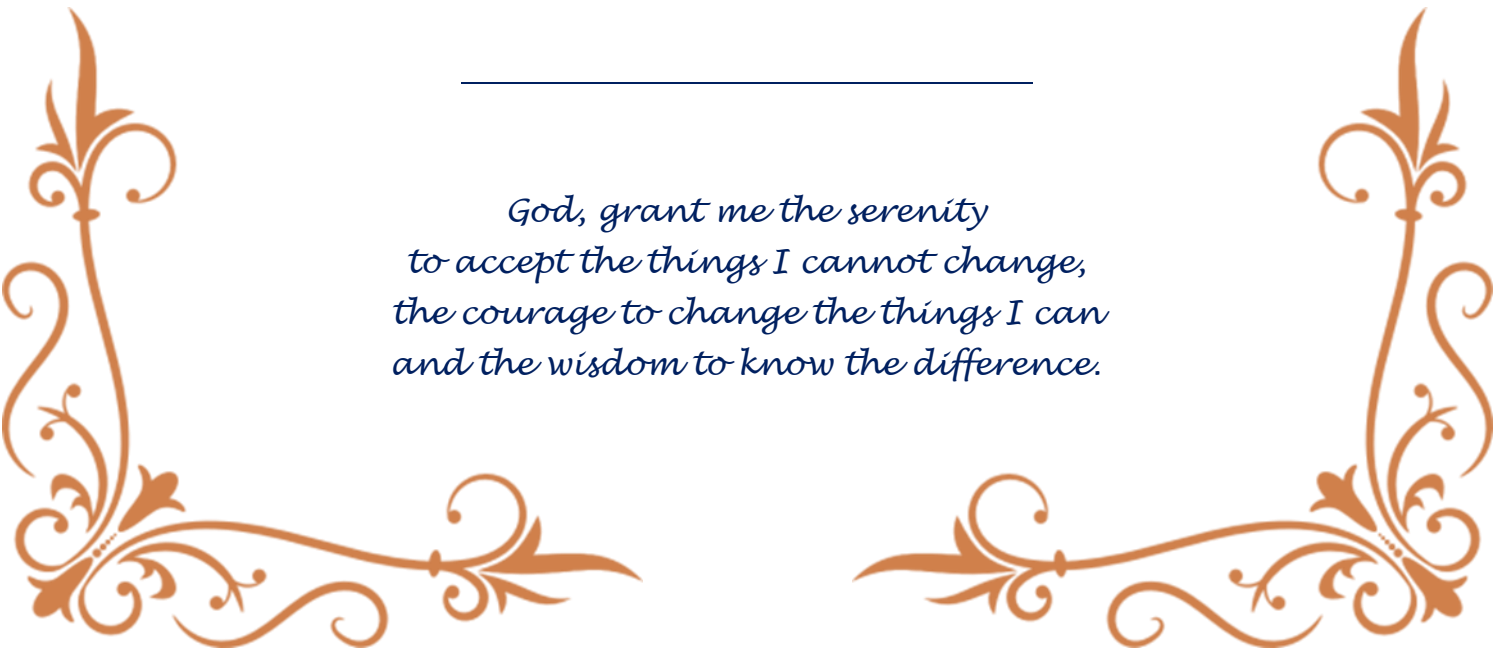
Having considered the addictive nature and the potential dangers of alcohol,

*I _____
promise not to consume alcoholic drink
until the age of _____ years.*

*I also promise to avoid illegal drugs
and to pray for those whose lives
have been impacted by addiction.*

Signature: _____

Signatures of parent/guardians



*God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can
and the wisdom to know the difference.*