

2017 CONFIRMATION GUIDELINES

PART I: GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

The Rite of Confirmation more properly takes place within the celebration of the Mass "in order to express more clearly the fundamental connection of this sacrament with the entirety of the Christian initiation" (CSL 71.) Attention should be paid to the festive and solemn character of the liturgical service. The people of God, represented by the families and friends of the candidates and by members of the local community, should be invited to take part in the celebration and express their faith in the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

The **catechetical and pastoral preparation should include the entire parish community and not merely be presented to the candidates.** Thus, as a parish celebration, it can be an occasion of prayer and grace for the entire parish family. This preparation could include preaching, bulletin announcements, and special requests for prayers for the candidates and their sponsors.

The responsibility for having the candidates prepared is placed with the pastor of the parish.

The following are *practical* items regarding the celebration of Confirmation:

1. **Age for Confirmation:** Candidates should be **9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th grade students.**
2. **Sponsors:** Pastors must ascertain the spiritual qualifications of sponsors. The sponsor for any candidate may be male or female, and is to be sufficiently mature, a **practicing Catholic**, who has him/herself been **confirmed** and meets requirements of Canon law to exercise the role of sponsor.
A baptismal sponsor is desired as the Confirmation sponsor, so as to emphasize the relationship between Baptism and Confirmation (Canon 893, #2.) A parent **may not act as a sponsor** for his or her child but may "present" the child for Confirmation with another qualified person being the sponsor (Canon 893 with reference to Canon 874, #5.)
3. **Names:** The use of the baptismal name on the occasion of Confirmation better expresses the relationship between Baptism and Confirmation. If a new name is taken it should be the name of a **recognized** saint. Candidates should be guided in choosing a name.
4. **Photographs:**
 - **No photographs may be taken during Mass; however, one designated photographer may take non-flash photos of each candidate during the rite.**
 - Group photos should be taken **20 minutes prior to the ceremony** in the Church. The Bishop will vest to join the candidates.

5. **Knights of Columbus:** The honor guard of the Knights of Columbus are welcome to participate in the procession and recession. The final pew in the church should be reserved for their seating. In the procession, they follow the cross-bearer and acolytes, and precede the concelebrants both in and out of the Church.
6. **Liturgical Points:**
- a) **Roman Missal Texts:** The Ritual Mass for Confirmation, pg. 977, (A-B-C) should be used except on Sundays of the Easter season, or the proper prayers and readings of the day are to be used.
 - b) **Sprinkling Rite:** During the Easter season the Sprinkling Rite should *replace* the Penitential Act. The **"Gloria" should be sung** during the **Sprinkling Rite**. Ideally, the pastor/priest from the parish or the deacon should do the sprinkling rite.
 - c) **Scripture Readings:** The readings of the day are **preferred**. Scripture or readings appropriate for Confirmation may be used for the Confirmation Mass. Please note which readings will be used on the ceremony planning form that is returned to the Bishop.
 - d) **Lectors:** This ministerial function may be assigned to one of the parish lectors or to one of the Confirmation candidates who can proclaim the scriptures with **dignity and clarity**.
 - e) **General Intercessions:** The General Intercessions should include petitions for the Church, civil authorities, those in need, the confirmandi, and the specific needs of the parish community. There is a model form presented in the Rite, which may be used. The proper minister to lead the petitions is the deacon. In his absence, **one** of the candidates or the lector may read the petitions.
 - f) **Communion:** It is permissible for the faithful to receive communion for a second time in one day if they are attending the Confirmation Mass. Communion under both species is recommended. There should be **two cups for every vessel of Eucharistic bread**.
 - g) **Concelebration:** On the occasion of Confirmation, it is especially recommended that those priests involved in the preparation of the candidates should concelebrate with the Bishop. It is entirely proper that all priests share in the celebration by concelebrating the Mass.
 - h) **Deacon of the Mass:** The participation of a deacon is highly desired in the Mass of Confirmation. The deacon walks in front of the concelebrants, carrying high the Book of Gospels. He proclaims the Gospel, presents the Sacred Chrism to the Bishop, and assists the Bishop as the rubrics specify.
 - i) **Procession of Candidates and Sponsors:** All candidates and their sponsors may be in their places prior to the procession of the ministers of the liturgy, but they may process in with the procession if that is preferred.
 - j) **Music:** Please refer to Part III dealing with pastoral planning of music for the Rite of Confirmation. It is preferred that the liturgy, including the music, reflect the youthful, vibrant nature of those to be confirmed.

k) **Sacristy Details:** The following items should be prepared prior to the celebration of the sacrament:

1. Mass vestments (Chasuble and stole – usually red in color). Bishop brings his own alb, mitre and crozier
2. Lectionary and Book of Gospels (if one is present)
3. Roman Missal (latest edition) marked to the Mass of Confirmation or to the appropriate Mass for the day, as well as the Preface of the Holy Spirit I or II (found under "Votive Masses," #9).
4. Chrism oil for the rite, plus a small bowl with cotton or gauze in the bottom, to hold the oil.
5. Pitcher of water and large basin with one lemon, sliced, or soap.
6. One large towel
7. Purificators and corporal
8. Ciboria, wine and water prepared for consecration.

i) **Altar Servers:** There are to be five altar servers to assist at the Confirmation Mass. They are:

1. Cross-bearer (book bearer during the Liturgy)
2. Two candle-bearers (ministers of wine and water/wash hands of Bishop after anointing)
3. Miter and Staff bearer (walk behind the Bishop in the procession and hold the miter and staff for Bishop.)

A place should be reserved on one side of the sanctuary area for the servers to sit and the vessels to be placed. The servers should be at the Church thirty minutes prior to the beginning of Mass.

PART II: RITE OF CONFIRMATION WITHIN MASS

PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

After the Gospel, read by the deacon or, in his absence, by one of the concelebrants, the Bishop and the priests take their seats. The pastor or person delegated by him presents the candidates for Confirmation in these **or similar words**:

FORM A: *Only the youth minister of the host parish will read the following introduction for the presentation of the candidates. Following the introduction, youth ministers from each parish will read **only** the names of their candidates. It is not necessary for each youth minister to repeat the introduction.*

Bishop Peter, the parish community/ies of _____ wish/es to present to you its young men and women who have prepared and are ready to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Each candidate has been well instructed and is accompanied by a sponsor. It is my privilege to present them to you at this time; I invite the candidates for Confirmation to **please stand and remain standing** as I call your names.

Following the presentation, the **Bishop will invite the candidates to be seated for the Bishop's homily.**

HOMILY

The Bishop gives the homily. After the Homily **the Bishop will invite only the candidates to stand** and profess their faith in the presence of the Church assembled. The following form is used:

Bishop: Do you reject Satan, and all his works, and all his empty promises?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was Crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who came upon the apostles at Pentecost and today is given to you sacramentally in Confirmation?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Candidates & Assembly: Amen.

IMPOSITION OF HANDS

During the Imposition of Hands, *concelebrating priests come and stand near the bishop*. The candidates **remain standing**. The Bishop with hands joined, says:

My dear friends: In baptism God our Father gave the new birth of eternal life to His chosen sons and daughters. Let us pray to our Father that he will pour out the Holy Spirit to strengthen His sons and daughters with his gifts and anoint them to be more like Christ the Son of God.

All pray in silence for a short time.

The Bishop *and concelebrating priests* extend their hands over the candidates. The Bishop alone says:

All powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their Helper and Guide. Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence, the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Candidates & Assembly: Amen.

THE ANOINTING WITH CHRISM: The deacon or priest brings the chrism container.

The anointing is performed by the Bishop, **standing** in front of the altar, to whom the candidates will approach with their sponsors. The sponsors place their right hand on the **right** shoulder of the candidate. As soon as the candidate is confirmed, he/she leaves at once and his/her place is **immediately** taken by the next candidate in line to avoid any delay. (**The candidates should approach the Bishop in a continuous line, as in the Communion rite.**) This will prevent long pauses/gaps in the line.

The candidate, in a loud clear voice, tells the Bishop his/her **Confirmation name only.** The Bishop dips his right thumb in the Chrism and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed as he says:

Bishop: N_____, be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Newly Confirmed: Amen.

Bishop: Peace be with you.

Newly Confirmed: And with your spirit.

During the anointing, instrumental music, played very quietly, is appropriate. After the anointing the Bishop washes his hands. Servers should pour water over Bishop's hands after he has used the lemon. Mitre and crozier bearer should come to the Bishop to take them back to their place.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

The General Intercessions follow, in this or a similar form:

Bishop: My dear friends, let us be one in prayer to God our Father as we are one in the faith, hope, and love His Spirit gives.

Deacon: For these sons and daughters of God, confirmed by the gift of the Spirit, that they give witness to Christ by lives built on faith and love, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord , hear our prayer.

For their parents and godparents who led them in faith, that by word and example they may always encourage them to follow the way of Jesus Christ, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the holy church of God, in union with Benedict, our Pope, Michael our Bishop, and all the Bishops, that God, Who gathers us together by the Holy Spirit, may help us grow in unity of faith and love until his Son returns in glory, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

For all the people of every race and nation, that they may acknowledge the one God as Father, and in the bond of common charity seek His kingdom, which is peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

(Other petitions may be added.)

Bishop: God our Father, you sent your Holy Spirit upon the apostles, and through them and their successors, you give the Spirit to your people. May his work begun at Pentecost continue to work in the hearts of all who believe. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

After the general intercessions the liturgy of the Eucharist is celebrated according to the **Order of Mass**, with these exceptions:

1. the profession of faith is omitted, since it has already been made;
2. some of the newly confirmed may join those who bring the gifts to the altar; (n.b. "It is a praiseworthy practice for the bread and wine to be presented by the faithful..." GIRM 73.)

The deacon (or pastor) will receive the gifts and prepare the gifts at the altar.

COMMUNION

Communion should be distributed under the forms of bread and wine. If communion will be distributed in this manner it is important that those who minister both the Body and Blood of the Lord be thoroughly familiar with where they will stand so that the Eucharist may be distributed in an orderly and reverent manner. The common rule is that there be **two ministers of the cup to every one minister of the Body of Christ.**

PART III: MUSIC FOR THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

Confirmation is a celebration of faith within the midst of the community of the Church. Music carefully selected and well rendered can heighten the celebration and strengthen the faith of the assembled believers. The selection of music should be based on the principles set forth in **Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship; BCDW: USCCB, Washington, DC (2007)**. The music selected should be artistically good, liturgically appropriate and pastorally suitable.

ARTISTICALLY GOOD – Aesthetically and technically good music is found in a variety of styles. Hence, the music selected may include contemporary and traditional, choral and congregational, etc.

LITURGICALLY APPROPRIATE – songs that speak of our baptismal dignity, the paschal mystery, the Lordship of Jesus, our call to Christian Witness, and empowerment in the Holy Spirit are appropriate for the Confirmation liturgy. While there has traditionally been a preoccupation with “Spirit” songs, it should be kept in mind that Confirmation “seals” the baptismal experience and hence should be seen intimately tied on an overall theology of initiation in which the Spirit is at work both in Baptism and Confirmation. Music should be carefully selected to highlight those parts of the liturgical rite that are more significant: i.e., Word, Eucharist and the Rite of Confirmation. The following pastoral comments relative to the place of music within the Confirmation liturgy might prove helpful in your planning:

Gathering Music: Prior to the liturgy and while the candidates are being seated, instrumental or choral music may be played to accompany this action and to create a festive atmosphere. There should be a definite break between this gathering music and the entrance song.

Entrance: The Entrance song should create an atmosphere of celebration. It serves the function of putting the assembly in the proper frame of mind for listening to the Word of God. Its style can vary from hymnody to an antiphonal psalm setting. If a well-known hymn is selected it can be enriched through the use of choral descants and added instrumentation. It is particularly appropriate during the Easter Season to select anthems that reflect the nature of this liturgical season.

Introductory Rites: The “Lord have mercy” and “Glory to God” may be sung. However, their setting should be brief and simple so as not to give undue emphasis to the Introductory Rites. It is best to select a musical setting for one and not both in the same liturgy; e.g., sung “Lord have mercy” during Advent and Lent; sung “Glory to God” during the Easter Season.

Responsorial Psalm: This unique and very important song is the response to the first lesson. Ideally, the text should be that of the psalm appointed for the day in the Lectionary. It should always be sung. The style of singing can vary between cantor and assembly; choir and assembly; small vocal ensemble and assembly.

Gospel Acclamation: This acclamation of paschal joy is both a reflection upon the Word of God proclaimed in the liturgy and a preparation for the Gospel lesson. By its very nature, it should always be sung. The ICEL Lectionary Music: Psalms and Alleluia and Gospel Acclamations for the Liturgy of the Word (GIA Publications, Inc. 7404 South Mason Avenue, Chicago, IL 60638) provides suitable musical resources for this chant. During the Lenten Season, the Alleluia is replaced by the Verse before the Gospel. The Alleluia is never sung during Lent, neither at this point in the liturgy nor in any hymn text which might be selected.

THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

Instrumental music may be played while the confirmandi are processing up and being confirmed.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

The liturgy calls for music at several points:

Preparation of the Gifts: Instrumental music is appropriate during the presentation and preparation of the gifts. This gives the choir and assembly a rest after the activity of the Liturgy of the Word and Confirmation Rite and helps to prepare them for the Eucharistic Prayer.

Holy, Holy, Holy: This is the people’s acclamation of praise concluding the preface of the Eucharistic Prayer and should always be sung by the entire assembly. It should never be sung by the choir alone. Settings with harmony or descants are appropriate, but since this chant belongs to the priest and people, the choir parts must facilitate and make effective the people’s part.

Memorial Acclamation: As one of the primary acclamations within the Eucharistic Liturgy, it should always be sung by all.

Amen: The assembly gives its assent to the Eucharistic Prayer and makes it their own in the "Amen" that concludes this prayer. To be most effective, the "Amen" may be repeated or augmented. Choirs may harmonize and expand upon the people's parts.

Lord's Prayer: This prayer need not always be sung. However, when sung, the melody should be familiar to all. The doxology to the Lord's Prayer, "For the kingdom..." is fittingly sung by all, especially when the Lord's Prayer is sung. Here, too, the choir may enhance the acclamation with harmony.

Lamb of God: The "Lamb of God" is a litany song to accompany the breaking of the bread, in preparation for Communion. The invocation and response may be repeated as the action demands. The final response is always "grant us peace." Unlike the "Holy, Holy", the "Lamb of God" is not necessarily a song of the people. Hence, it may be sung by the choir alone or choir and people.

Communion Song: The Communion song should foster a sense of unity. It should be simple and not demand great effort. It gives expression to the joy of the unity in the body of Christ and the fulfillment of the mystery being celebrated. Most benediction hymns, by reason of their concentration on adoration rather than on Communion, are not acceptable. The singing of a psalm or hymn of praise after the distribution of Communion or a congregational song may well provide a fitting expression of oneness in the Eucharistic Lord. Since no particular text is specified, there is room for creativity.

Recessional Song: The exit song should begin following the Bishop's final blessing and the Deacon's invitation to "Go, the Mass is ended," and the people's response, "Thanks be to God."