

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Pastors
All Parish Liturgical Coordinators
All Directors/Coordinators of Religious Education

FROM: Reverend Joshua R. Brommer
Office for Divine Worship, *Director*

DATE: August 30, 2023

RE: 2023-24 Confirmation Ceremony Planning Instructions

Please note that these instructions have been revised significantly and you are asked to read them carefully.

The 2023-2024 Confirmation Ceremony Schedule will begin soon. Bishop Senior will be joined by Bishop Gainer to celebrate the parish confirmations. Please use the attached liturgical guidelines as you plan and execute this sacramental celebration.

Bishop Senior will arrive 45 minutes prior to the start of Confirmation. He will proceed immediately to the vesting room and vest for the liturgy. Bishop Senior will **meet with the confirmation class a half hour** prior to the scheduled confirmation liturgy. (*Please note:* the time on the published Confirmation Schedule is the start time of the liturgical celebration.) His meeting will last approximately fifteen minutes. Following his meeting with the candidates, Bishop Senior will meet with the altar servers prior to the start of Mass.

Bishop Gainer will **meet with the confirmation class one hour** prior to the scheduled confirmation liturgy. (*Please note:* the time on the published Confirmation Schedule is the start time of the liturgical celebration.)

These meetings should happen in an appropriate setting apart from the liturgical space and apart from other distractions and without sponsors. The students should be seated and prepared to greet the Bishop when he arrives in that meeting space. It is fitting to instruct the students how to address Bishop Senior and Bishop Gainer; such proper greetings are “Bishop Senior”, “Bishop Gainer”, or “Your Excellency.” Either the Pastor or his delegate should accompany the Bishop during this meeting.

Additionally, Bishop Gainer **continues to request personal correspondence from the students who will be confirmed.** These communications should be personal, not part of a form letter provided for the students. In their own words and style the young people are encouraged to introduce themselves to their Bishop, speak of the importance the Catholic Christian Faith in their lives, and explain their preparedness for the reception of this final Sacrament of Initiation. They may speak of their patron saint or their time of service. The letters should be gathered together in one envelope and consigned to the Bishop's Office two weeks prior to the celebration of the sacrament. Please do not place letters into individual envelopes or in any binder to facilitate ease of opening and reading.

Bishop Senior is **not** requesting personal correspondence.

Attached you will find the following important items for the upcoming confirmation ceremonies.

- 2023-2024 Confirmation Schedule
- Liturgical Guidelines for the Sacrament of Confirmation
- The Rite of Confirmation (revised)
- The Universal Prayer for Confirmation
- Confirmation Liturgical Planning Sheet ▪ *to be returned completed to the Office of the Bishop at least two weeks prior to the confirmation ceremony*
- Eucharistic Prayer III Concelebration Card for Ritual Mass of Confirmation
- Notes for Altar Servers
- Notes for Deacons
- Notes on Liturgical Music
- Suggested Musical Repertoire
- Recommendations and Examples for selection of Readings
- Diocesan Policy for the Recording of Confirmation Names
- Diocesan Policy for the Participation of Confirmed Youth in the Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation

N. B. Diocesan vestments are no longer available for borrowing due to lack of staffing in the Office for Divine Worship. While the liturgical color of the celebrant may be red concelebrants are always permitted to be vested in their diocesan chasuble and stole.

Kindly make sure this information is shared with those involved in the preparation and execution of the ceremony. ***You are responsible to print those elements needed for your liturgical celebration, such as the Universal Prayer and the Eucharistic Prayer card.***

Please take note of the following liturgical concerns. Further liturgical instructions are provided in an attachment to this memo.

1. The Sacrament of Confirmation will take place during the Celebration of the Holy Mass “in order to express more clearly the fundamental connection of this sacrament with the entirety of Christian initiation. The latter reaches its culmination in the communion of the body and blood of Christ. The newly confirmed should therefore participate in the Eucharist which completes their Christian initiation (*Rite of Confirmation*, 13).”
2. The readings for Mass may be selected by those planning each ceremony based on the following directives.

A. CEREMONIES ON FERIAL DAYS

For ceremonies that occur on ferial days, the texts must be chosen from the Lectionary for Mass: *Volume IV Ritual Masses and Masses for Various Need and Occasions* – “For the Conferral of Christian Initiation: Confirmation” #764-#768. A First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, Second Reading and Gospel will need to be selected. During the Easter Season, following the Church’s traditional practice, the First Reading is to be chosen from the Acts of the Apostles (#765:1-5). Outside of the Easter Season, when the ritual mass is used, the First Reading may come from either the Old Testament or the Acts of the Apostles. *This is to be strictly followed.* Please see attachment #12 for recommendations of readings to assist you.

B. CEREMONIES ON SUNDAYS, DURING THE OCTAVE OF EASTER, AND SOLEMNITIES/FEASTS

On Sundays of the Lenten and Easter Seasons, during the Octave of Easter, and on the Solemnities/Feasts, the proper readings of the day must be used. However, the liturgical law allows for one of the readings to be replaced by one from the Ritual Mass for Confirmation in the Lectionary noted above. As a rule, the reading replaced will be the

Second Reading. Questions about text choices should be directed to Father Brommer.

3. Likewise, the orations for Mass are affected by the day on which the Sacrament will be celebrated. This is noted on the Confirmation Schedule. On ferial days (weekdays without a feast or solemnity) the Ritual Mass for Confirmation will be used. The Confirmation Ritual Mass texts are used on all ferial days, whether or not there is an optional or obligatory memorial. Please note the Gloria will be **sung** in all Ritual Masses for Confirmation. On Sundays, the Octave of Easter, and Solemnities/Feasts, the proper Mass for these days is celebrated. The Creed is replaced on such days with Renewal of the Baptismal Promises, which form part of the Rite of Confirmation. On Sundays of Advent and Lent, the Gloria is not sung according to the norms of the *Roman Missal*.
4. For each Confirmation a Master of Ceremonies will be assigned by the Office of the Bishop. This name is noted parenthetically on the schedule. Each parish is asked to give the Master of Ceremonies a stipend. Those appointed are priests, deacons, and laymen who have been trained to assist in the celebration of Confirmation. A parish may not substitute another Master of Ceremonies for the one assigned by the Office of the Bishop. Pastors and Parochial Vicars have a distinct role as concelebrants in the celebration and should not serve as Master of Ceremonies.

Any requests for Bishop Senior or Bishop Gainer to share a meal before or after confirmation should be directed to Mrs. Hilary Smith in the Bishop's Office.

A final reminder: the Worship Aid (if there is a program to be printed) **must** be sent to the Office of the Bishop at least two weeks before going to print along with the Confirmation Liturgy Planning Sheet. Please ensure that all texts coordinate with the revised *Order of Confirmation*. All necessary copyrights must be obtained by the parish.

Thank you for all that you will do to make the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation a prayerful and noble liturgy in your parish. Please feel free to call the Office for Divine Worship if you have any questions whatsoever at 717-657-4804, ext. 354 or email at worship@hbgdiocese.org.

Enclosures