



DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG • OFFICE FOR DIVINE WORSHIP

Liturgical Guidelines

The Sacrament of Confirmation Celebrated within Mass

August 2023 Revision

INTRODUCTION

1. The Sacrament of Confirmation will be conferred each year on a deanery or parish level. In cases where parish numbers permit, parishes may be grouped together or another appropriate arrangement will be made. *The Sacrament of Confirmation will be celebrated within Mass.*

THE CANDIDATES FOR CONFIRMATION

2. To be eligible for confirmation, candidates must be at least in the eighth grade, unless dispensed by the Bishop.

3. All candidates must be carefully instructed in the fundamental doctrines of the Faith. The policy defined by the Diocesan Secretariat for Education requires two years of preparation for the reception of the sacrament of confirmation.

4. Candidates may wish to assume an additional name at confirmation or they may prefer to use the name given them at baptism. If a new name is adopted, it is the responsibility of the pastor of each parish to see that only saints' names, or names of Christian significance, are presented by the candidates. Confirmandi may wear nametags visible to the Bishop (or other minister) that clearly identify their confirmation name. The Sponsors are asked to state the confirmation name of the candidate when they come forward.

5. Candidates are not to wear make-up during the ceremony. The Chrism must be able to be applied directly onto the skin of the candidate.

6. Candidates may wear white robes, provided all confirmandi are dressed in this manner. The practice of wearing a stole by the confirmands is prohibited, since the stole is the distinctive garb of ordained ministers.

7. A gift or confirmation certificate is never to be distributed to the candidates during the confirmation ceremony. The highlight of the ceremony is the gift of the Holy Spirit, sealed with the Chrism. Gifts may be distributed after the ceremony, in a location other than the church.

SPONSORS

8. Each candidate shall have a separate sponsor for confirmation. It is desirable that the godparent at baptism, if possible, also be the sponsor at confirmation (Canon 893.2). This role may be filled

by anyone else who is qualified for the office. The qualifications for a sponsor also hold for those who may be asked to serve as proxy to the sponsor:

To be admitted to the role of sponsor a person must have completed the sixteenth year, be a Catholic who has been confirmed and leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken (they must be a practicing Catholic, validly married, et cetera). The sponsor need not be the same sex as the one being confirmed. During the actual confirmation, the sponsor shall place his/her right hand on the candidate's right shoulder. The practice of parents presenting their children to the bishop at the time of confirmation is not encouraged. Parents are not permitted by Canon Law to act as sponsors (Canon 874.5).

THE CONFIRMATION LITURGY

9. The confirmands should be in their places within the church five minutes *before* the Liturgy begins. The C/DRE or pastor is responsible for making certain this takes place. The liturgical entrance procession will not begin until signaled to begin by the Master of Ceremonies

10. Candidates are to occupy the forward seats on both sides of the middle aisle as a group. No distinction is to be made between parochial and public school children. The boys and girls may be mixed. Sponsors are to occupy the section of pews either in the center aisle behind the candidates or, if more practical, on the side aisles. Sponsors and confirmands should not sit together.

11. The confirmation candidates from each parish are presented **not** by individual name but as a parish group by the pastor or, when required, the parochial vicar.

12. Confirmation will be conferred standing. Confirmandi should line up two-by-two in the center aisle for the reception of the anointing. They will approach the Bishop (or other minister) in a manner similar to the reception of Holy Communion one at a time. There is no need for any usher or catechist to guide the confirmands forward to the Bishop, although, they may help the confirmandi and sponsors come out of the pews.

13. The text of the Universal Prayer (General Intercessions) must be taken from the *Rite of Confirmation*. The text appears in the attached copy of the Rite and as its own attachment. It is not to be altered or augmented in any way. These may be bilingually proposed. Spanish intercessions are available upon request. A lay lector should not propose the intercessions when a deacon is present.

12. **CREDENCE TABLE:** In the sanctuary the following should be prepared:

- a) the parish supply of Sacred Chrism to add to the chrismatorium (container holding the Sacred Chrism)
- b) a dish containing two quarters of lemon and two half-slices of fresh bread
- c) a pitcher, bowl, and hand towel for the Bishop distinct from the lavabo dish & towel used during Mass
- d) a sufficient number of seats for priests, deacons, Master of Ceremonies and seven altar servers
- e) all that is needed for the Celebration of Holy Mass.

13. **DECORATIONS:** The choice of decorations (in keeping with the respective liturgical season) is left to the discretion of the host pastor.

14. **ALTAR SERVERS:** Seven altar servers should be assigned to fill the roles of cross bearer, two candle bearers, book bearer, miter and crozier bearers, and incense. When the Bishop is not the celebrant, only five altar servers are needed. They should be properly prepared and vested, reporting to the sacristy one-half hour before the Liturgy to receive final instructions from the Master of Ceremonies. Initial preparation for the altar servers should be done by the pastor or his delegate following the enclosed guidelines.

15. **VESTING ROOM FOR THE BISHOP:** The Bishop will vest in the sacristy or where the concelebrants are vesting. Please make sure that, if the bishop is to wear a wireless microphone, it is placed in his vesting area. Each Bishop will bring his own chasuble and stole. It is also appropriate to conspicuously reserve a convenient parking place for the Bishop and one for the Master of Ceremonies.

16. **CONCELEBRANT VESTING:** Concelebrants are to bring an alb with them. All concelebrants should be vested in stole *and* chasuble. The white Diocesan chasuble is an appropriate option in most circumstances, even when the main celebrant is wearing red.

16. **DEACONS:** If Deacons are assigned to the ceremony, they should carry out the duties proper to their diaconal role in the liturgy including the proclamation of the Gospel and the reading of the Prayer of the Faithful. One or two deacons may participate in the Confirmation Ritual. Any other deacons present may be seated with the Assembly and may assist with the distribution of Holy Communion vested in alb and stole. No more than two deacons should be used to divide up the principal diaconal roles at the celebration.

PRINTED PROGRAM

17. *If a program is to be printed it must be sent to the Office of the Bishop at least two weeks before going to print.* Please be sure that you have secured proper reprint permissions if words and/or music that are being reprinted. If you are reprinting anything from the ritual text, you must obtain reprint permission. This text is copyrighted by ICEL: the International Committee on English in the Liturgy. All requests for permission to reprint the ritual text should be directed to the ICEL Secretariat, 1522 K Street, N.W., Suite 1000, Washington, D.C., 20005 • Fax: 202-347-1839 • permission@eliturgy.org.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEO TAPING

18. **PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEO TAPING:** In order to ensure the solemnity and dignity of the occasion, photographs may be taken only during the procession into the Church and during the recessional out of the Church. Use of camcorders should be restricted to designated areas unobtrusive to the ceremony. They should never be positioned in the front of the church near the sanctuary, so as to distract from the sacredness of the rite. Photographers with either cameras or camcorders may never roam throughout the church during the ceremony.

CELLULAR PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

19. Please instruct the assembly that during the ceremony, cell phones and electronic devices must be turned off or set to vibrate mode.

PHOTOGRAPHS • RECEPTION AFTER THE CEREMONY

20. After the ceremony, the Bishop will go to some designated place (i.e., the church, social hall, cafeteria, gymnasium, or even outside weather permitting) to meet and take pictures with the newly confirmed, their parents, and sponsors. This *may* take place in the church sanctuary or nave, if there is no other space is fitting. A photographer charging a fee for these photos **may not** be used. A proper place should be designated. An orderly system (line) should be planned and coordinated for the photos. At least one representative from the catechetical staff should be stationed at the beginning of the line to ensure the orderly and timely flow. Typically, only one photo with the Confirmand and one with the Confirmand and sponsor should be offered.

Any questions regarding these guidelines should be directed to

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