

GUIDELINE FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE CONFIRMATION LITURGY

Choice of Mass Texts

Confirmation is ideally celebrated in the Easter Season as a sacrament of initiation.

When Confirmation is celebrated on any of the following days in the liturgical year the Mass of the day and the readings of the day must be used.

- Sacred Triduum
- Christmas
- Epiphany
- Ascension
- Pentecost
- Sundays of Advent, Lent, and the Easter Season
- Ash Wednesday
- Weekdays of Holy Week from Monday to Wednesday inclusive
- Days within the Octave of Easter
- Solemnities of the Lord
- Solemnities of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Solemnities of the saints listed in the General Calendar
- All Souls Day
- Proper Solemnities

– *General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar (GNLYC) #59*

Please refer to the ordo. If **S** is used next to **MASS** it is a proper solemnity and the prayers and readings of the day must be used.

Ritual Mass for Confirmation

If you see **V1, V2, V3**, next to **MASS**, a Ritual Mass is permitted. (A “Ritual Mass” is one in which a “rite” occurs.) On days when Ritual Masses are permitted, the *Ritual Mass for Confirmation* with its proper readings may be celebrated (*Ceremonial for Bishops*, 459). Please see the *Lectionary* nos. 764-768 for the readings. See the *Sacramentary* under *Ritual Mass for Confirmation* for the proper prayers (pp.834-837 of the Catholic Book Publishing edition).

Mass scheduled after 4:00 on Saturday is an anticipated Mass for Sunday.

The vestments for the liturgy are red or white or some other festive color (*Ceremonial for Bishops*, 459). On the Sundays of Advent and Lent, the vestments are violet.

Theology of the Sacrament

Read the introduction to the *Rite of Confirmation* as a means to understanding the spirit and intent of the rite. Your pastor has a copy.

Liturgical Ministers

Confirmation is the sacramental celebration of the whole parish community. Therefore, as witness of the parish community's support of those being confirmed, it is recommended that the various liturgical ministries be exercised by those who already function in those ministries. Assigning the confirmandi to the ministries for this Mass is not recommended. The confirmandi fully function as members of the assembly who are receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Music Selection

Music should complement the readings, refer to the Holy Spirit, and/or speak of discipleship. It should be within the capabilities of those assembled. Since many friends and relatives are welcomed by the parish community for this liturgy, familiar hymns ought to be considered. Silence can also be important at various parts of the rite, especially during the anointings. The parish director of music should be an integral part of the planning.

Environment

The environment of the worship space should reflect the liturgical season primarily and the sacrament of Confirmation secondarily. The entire worship space should be considered, not just the sanctuary. Avoid banners with words. Flowers should not impede movement within the sanctuary or elsewhere in the worship space.

Attire

The confirmandi are to be in Sunday dress. Special robes are neither necessary nor desirable and their use is prohibited. Stoles should never be created nor worn. "The distinction between the universal priesthood of all the baptized and the ministerial priesthood of the ordained is blurred when the distinctive garb of ordained ministers is used at Confirmation. Therefore, the use of a stole for the confirmandi should be avoided" (*BCL Newsletter*, Vol. XX, December, 1984). There should be no nametags on the confirmands' shoulders.

Sponsors and Seating

Those to be confirmed may be seated in whatever pattern is most conducive to easy access to the Bishop. There is no need to separate the candidates according to sex, height, etc. The sponsors may be seated with them or behind them. Parishes are free to select a placement that best meets their needs.

The *Rite of Confirmation* states "even parents themselves may present their children for Confirmation." (*RC #5*) However, if parents do present their children it must be noted that the children have no Confirmation sponsor...No sponsor is listed in the Confirmation Register. Furthermore, parents only present the child, they do not place their hands on the shoulder during the anointing. This is a ritual gesture of the sponsors only (*Communicationes 15*, nos. 189, 1989).

THE ORDER OF THE LITURGY

CALL TO PRAYER

A few moments before the entrance procession a “Call to Prayer” may be given by the DRE or a representative of the confirmandi. The purpose is to welcome the gathered assembly and invite the assembly to silence and prayerful recollection in preparation for the liturgy. It is a way of reminding the assembly that we are gathered to lift up our hearts to God in praise and thanks.

The Call should be brief and should be followed by a few moments of silence before the Entrance Hymn begins.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

ENTRANCE PROCESSION

The Order of Procession for the entrance is as follows:

- Incense Bearer (Thurifer) with burning incense
- Cross Bearer with the Processional Cross
- Two Acolytes with lighted candles
- [Candidates and Sponsors]
- Lectors
- [Deacon with the Book of Gospels]
- Concelebrants (two by two)
- Bishop (alone) with miter and crozier
[a Master of Ceremony]

If the parish has a deacon, it is expected that he minister in the liturgy. If there is no deacon, the priest who will proclaim the gospel carries the Book of Gospels.

If there is a master of ceremony, he walks behind and to the right of the bishop. This is usually a priest, deacon, or master altar server.

If the confirmandi and sponsors process, they follow the two acolytes with lighted candles. Otherwise, they are seated in advance.

[] = optional to the procession

RITE OF BLESSING AND SPRINKLING HOLY WATER OR PENITENTIAL RITE

During the Easter Season and on all Sundays of the year, the Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling Holy Water is used. It replaces the Penitential Rite (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, 133). Moreover, it relates the sacrament of Confirmation to the sacrament of Baptism.

If Form C of the Penitential Rite is used with a text prepared for the occasion, the pattern to be used is a Litany of Praise directed to Christ for his saving deeds and **not** a litany of our failings. The focus is on Christ, not the assembly.

GLORIA

When Confirmation is celebrated on a day which is a solemnity (see above), the Gloria is always sung. When Confirmation is celebrated in a Ritual Mass, the Gloria is not obligatory. If used, however, it should be sung. The Gloria is never used in Advent or Lent.

OPENING PRAYER

The Opening Prayer, proper to the day or to the Ritual Mass, is recited.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

If the Ritual Mass for Confirmation is not used because the Mass of the day has precedence, then the first or second reading from the Lectionary (nos.764-768) for the Confirmation Mass may be substituted.

However, especially on Sundays during the Easter Season, when the readings are initiatory in nature, one should not interrupt the unity of the readings by a substitution.

Great emphasis should be placed on the celebration of the word of God that introduces the Rite of Confirmation. It is from the hearing of the word of God that the many-sided work of the Holy Spirit flows out upon the Church and upon each one of the baptized and confirmed. Through this hearing of his word, God's will is made known in the life of Christians (*Rite of Confirmation*, 13).

The Responsorial Psalm is the sung proclamation of the Word. As part of the Liturgy of the Word ... "The psalmist... sings the verses of the psalm from the ambo or other suitable place" (*GIRM*, 61). If the choir will be singing the verses, the cantor is present at the ambo to lead the response of the assembly.

THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

The pastor or pastoral coordinator briefly presents the candidates to the Bishop. The assembly may respond with applause.

HOMILY

The Bishop will give the homily.

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

It is the responsibility of any/all entrusted with the candidates' formation to review with them the ritual questions (renewal of baptismal promises) that will be asked of them by the Bishop (*RC*, 23). Their response is to be strong; it is a significant moment in the life of the faith community. The proper form follows:

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.

All: Amen.

For “This is our faith...” some other formula may be substituted or the community may express its faith in a suitable song (RC, 23).

THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

The Bishop alone extends hands over the candidates and says the prayer. No one else in the assembly extends hands, nor do any concelebrating priests extend hands.

ANOINTING WITH CHRISM

The sacrament of Confirmation is conferred through the anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of the hand and through the words “Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

The laying of hands with the prayer, “All powerful God...” does not pertain to the valid giving of the sacrament. But it is still to be regarded as very important: it contributes to the complete perfection of the rite and to a more thorough understanding of the sacrament.

... The whole rite presents a two-fold symbolism. The laying of hands on the candidates by the bishop...represents the biblical gesture by which the gift of the Holy Spirit is invoked and in a manner well-suited to the understanding of Christian people. The anointing with chrism and the accompanying words express clearly the effect of the giving of the Holy Spirit. Signed with the perfumed oil, the baptized receive the indelible character, the seal of the Lord, together with the gift of the Holy Spirit that conforms them more closely to Christ and gives them the grace of spreading “the sweet odor of Christ.”

– *Rite of Confirmation, 9*

It is preferable that there be silence during the entire anointing since we are invoking the Holy Spirit. However, soft instrumental music may be played to accompany a lengthy procession of candidates. *Veni Sancte Spiritus* or *Veni Creator Spiritus* or other suitable songs may be played.

The procession of the candidates and sponsors to the Bishop for anointing will depend on the size and configuration of the parish worship space. To enhance the processional aspect, a rehearsal should take place.

The parish will need to consider the needs of the physically disabled as well and decide the best placement of such persons in the procession.

Even though the rite allows for the option of standing or kneeling for the anointing, it is preferable to stand in order to facilitate a smooth flow of the procession. The Bishop stands.

Either a deacon or a server should hold the chrism oil for the Bishop. Bishop will bring his own vessel of oil.

The sponsor is to stand directly behind the candidate and place his/her right hand on the right shoulder of the one being confirmed (*RC*, 26). The sponsor presents the candidate to the bishop in a clear voice, saying, "Bishop, may I present _____. Only the first name should be used. If the candidate has chosen a confirmation name which differs from his/her baptismal name, the confirmation name is used – for example, "Bishop, may I present Richard," even though the candidate's first name is John. Neither name tags nor index cards are to be used.

After all have been confirmed, the Bishop washes his hands. Lemon, a pitcher of water, a basin, and a towel are presented by the servers. Then, these items are removed.

A few parishes had inserted here a word of "welcome." This practice is inappropriate. Prayers for the newly confirmed immediately follow.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

The General Intercessions are introduced by the Bishop. The petitions are prayed by the deacon, cantor, or another minister (*GIRM*, 71). Since it is the responsibility of the deacon to keep alert to the needs of the people, it is most appropriate for the deacon to lead the petitions. (*Study Text IV: The Deacon*, BCL).

There is value in having these prayers sung. In this case, a cantor (or two cantors) would be the appropriate minister(s). It is not appropriate that these prayers be given by a number of persons. Only one person announces the petitions. The appropriate participation by candidates and assembly at this time is prayer and the response to each petition.

PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR AND THE GIFTS

The altar is prepared and the gifts are brought to the Bishop. Some of the newly-confirmed dress the altar with a rich tablecloth and bring forth the gifts. A collection occurs if this is a parish's regular Sunday liturgy. Only the gifts of bread, wine, the money, or other gifts that have been collected for the church or the poor are brought up (*GIRM*, 73).

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

The Liturgy of the Eucharist proceeds as usual.

Unless the Mass of the Day or the Eucharistic Prayer has a proper preface, Prefaces nos. 54 or 55 may be used. If Eucharistic Prayer I is used, a special form of *Father, accept this offering...* is found in the *Ritual Mass for Confirmation* (Sacramentary) .

COMMUNION RITE

Communion should be offered under both kinds. Plan a sufficient amount of the Body and Blood of Christ. Abundance is a gracious sign of hospitality. Always avoid offering hosts reserved in the tabernacle (*GIRM*, 85).

Communion proceeds smoothly and with dignity when there are two cups of the Blood of Christ for each ciborium of the Body of Christ. Choose the appropriate number of ordinary, then extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. A deacon always serves as a minister of the cup.

Following Communion, a time of silent prayer is observed. If desired, a hymn, psalm, or other song of thanksgiving/praise may be sung by the entire congregation (*GIRM*, 88). Note: this song is not performed by a choir or soloist, but is the assembly's hymn of praise.

Vessels should be purified after the liturgy so that all may partake in the silence/song.

CONCLUDING RITE

Following the Prayer After Communion, the pastor may make some remarks and/or announcements.

The Bishop gives a special blessing contained in the *Ritual Mass for Confirmation*. (Please see the *Sacramentary*.)

After the dismissal by the deacon, the recessional follows in the usual manner.

ADDENDA

Classmates Already Confirmed

There may be classmates who have already been confirmed, e.g., they were confirmed as infants or they received all three sacraments of initiation when they entered the Church on Easter Vigil several years prior. These people should not come forward during the Rite of Confirmation. They should not come in procession with their arms crossed nor hand raised as some signal to receive a blessing. You should always avoid any appearance of conferring the sacrament twice.

Instead, these persons might be assigned some special role, e.g., hospitality minister. They might come forward at the final blessing to receive a special blessing. Please alert the Bishop to their presence both in your advance memo to him and before Mass.

Knights of Columbus

It is customary, though not required, in some parishes for the pastor to invite the local chapter of the Knights of Columbus (Fourth Degree) to serve as an honor guard to the Bishop. It is the practice of the Knights of Columbus to escort the Bishop in and out of a major liturgical celebrations and nothing more. Therefore, the following are the proper actions for the Knights of Columbus:

- lead the entrance procession, walking in front of the thurifer
- process down the center aisle
- form an honor guard on either side of the front pew. Swords may not be drawn.
- when the Bishop has kissed the altar, turn and process to designated seats in the assembly and participate in the liturgical celebration. Knights should not be seated in the front pew.
- Drawn swords at any time or any movement from the pews during the Eucharistic Prayer is not permitted.
- when the concluding hymn begins the Knights come forward and form an honor guard in front of the first pew on either side.
- when given a signal by the Master of Ceremony, the Knights turn and lead the procession out of the church.

RITE OF CONFIRMATION WITHIN MASS

Parish _____ City _____

Pastor/Pastoral Coordinator _____

Date of Confirmation _____ Time _____

Coordinator of Celebration _____ Telephone _____

Number of Confirmandi _____ Grade(s) _____

Formation Director _____

LITURGICAL MINISTERS

Thurifer

Acolyte

Cross Bearer

Acolyte

Lector (1)

Lector (2)

Deacon

Master of Ceremony

Concelebrant(s)

Director of Liturgy/Music

Cantor(s)

Organist/Pianist

Ministers of the Body of Christ

Ministers of the Blood of Christ

Ministers of Hospitality

Gift Bearers

Other

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Mass Texts to be Used: _____ Mass of the Day
_____ Ritual Mass of Confirmation

Prelude: _____

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Opening Hymn: _____

Incense used _____ Yes _____ No

Rite of Blessing and
Sprinkling Holy Water
or
Penitential Rite _____

_____ Deacon
_____ Cantor

Glory to God _____ Sung _____ Omitted

Opening Prayer page _____

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading _____
Lectionary # _____

Responsorial Psalm _____
(*Always sung. Setting: _____*)

Second Reading _____
Lectionary # _____

Gospel Acclamation
or Verse before the Gospel _____
(*Always sung*)

Gospel _____
Lectionary # _____

Incense used at Gospel _____ Yes _____ No

Gospel procession _____ Yes _____ No

Proclaimed by: _____

RITE OF CONFIRMATION

Presentation of the Candidates _____ Pastor _____ Pastoral Coordinator

Homily

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

The Laying on of Hands

Anointing with Chrism

Music During Anointing _____ light instrumental _____ none

General Intercessions _____ sung _____ spoken

Please attach a copy of the text.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Collection _____ Yes _____ No

Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts

Presentation Hymn

Incense used _____ Yes _____ No

Eucharistic Prayer _____ I *(with special insert)* _____ II _____ III _____ IV

Preface

Holy, holy, holy

_____ *(always sung)*

Memorial Acclamation

_____ *(always sung)*

Great Amen

_____ *(always sung)*

Communion Rite

Lord's Prayer

_____ Sung _____ Spoken

Sign of Peace

Breaking of the Bread

Lamb of God

_____ Sung _____ Spoken

Communion Hymn(s) _____

Silence or Hymn of Praise _____

Prayer After Communion

CONCLUDING RITE

Concluding Remarks _____ Bishop _____ Pastor _____ none

Greeting

Blessing _____

Dismissal

Closing Hymn _____

Classmates already confirmed? _____ Yes _____ None

Knights of Columbus: _____ Yes _____ No

**Please submit this LITURGICAL PLAN to the Bishop's Office
no later than two weeks before Confirmation.**

Retain a copy for the parish.

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