

THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

The following pages present some directives and helpful information for those responsible for the planning of a parish celebration of the Rite of Confirmation. Thorough preparation for both the candidates and the rite itself is essential. Because the Rite of Confirmation is a celebration of the entire parish, responsibility for planning the Mass lies with the pastor, working with the Confirmation catechetical team and the parish liturgy/music director.

For further assistance with planning the Confirmation liturgy, these additional resources are available on the Diocesan website: www.rcdok.org/worship/confirmation

- Instructions for Assisting the Bishop at a Rite of Confirmation Within Mass
- Rite of Confirmation Within Mass (the ritual text with specific instructions for the Diocese of Owensboro)
- Juridical Guidelines

Table of Contents

I Preparing for the Rite of Confirmation

1. Participation
2. Choice of Mass Texts
3. Vestments
4. Chrism
5. Planning
6. Environment
7. Musical Selections
8. Liturgical Ministries
9. Worship Aid
10. Attire
11. Sacristy Preparation

II The Order of Mass

1. The Introductory Rites
2. The Liturgy of the Word
3. The Rite of Confirmation
4. Liturgy of the Eucharist
5. The Concluding Rite

III Frequently Asked Questions

Section I: Preparing for the Rite of Confirmation

Attention should be paid to the festive and solemn character of the liturgical service, and its significance for the local church . . . The whole people of God, represented by the families and friends of the candidates and the members of the local community, will be invited to take part in the celebration and will express its faith in the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Introduction to the Rite of Confirmation #4

1. Participation

As in every liturgy, the goal to be considered before all else is the full, conscious, and active participation of the entire assembly. The Rite of Confirmation is for those to be confirmed and for the entire assembly. It is a celebration of the local church. The Confirmation of some members of the parish should ideally affect the life of the entire parish. It is appropriate that the entire parish family be invited to join in the celebration of Confirmation.

2. Choice of Mass Texts

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 (Please note that every effort should be made to avoid confirming on Sundays of Lent.)
- 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. If you see **V1**, **V2**, **V3** next to **MASS**, a Ritual Mass is permitted.

3. Vestments

The vestments for the liturgy are red or white or some other festive color appropriate to the solemnity or season (*Ceremonial of Bishops, #459*) If the Ritual Mass for Confirmation has been chosen, the vestments should be red. On the Sundays of Advent and Lent, the vestments are violet.

4. Chrism

The Bishop will use the parish's Chrism. It may be carried in the entrance procession if you choose. It should be placed in liquid form in a worthy container. No cotton balls should be used. In order that the

fullness of the sacramental signs may be evident, the Chrism should not be wiped off the foreheads of the newly confirmed.

5. Planning

In planning the Confirmation Liturgy, the following procedure may be helpful:

1. Begin with the Rite of Confirmation itself. How is it structured? How will the various movements be coordinated so that the whole rite flows smoothly?
2. Pray with and study the readings selected and the prayers of the Roman Missal keeping in mind the following points:
 - a. The proper readings and prayers of the day must be used on all Sundays in Advent, Lent and Easter, and on Solemnities. (See “Choice of Mass Texts”, above.)
 - b. On other days, the ritual Mass of Confirmation is used. The readings are chosen from those options give in the Rite of Confirmation.

6. 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. Since Confirmation is an initiation liturgy, it is appropriate to highlight the Easter Candle, which should be positioned near the ambo or font.

7. Musical Selections

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.

8. Liturgical Ministries

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.

9. Worship Aid

A printed worship aid with congregational responses and hymns may be helpful to encourage full participation, although it is not required. If a worship aid is to be printed, permission for the use of copyrighted materials must be obtained and indicated in the worship aid. The worship aid should not contain the text for the readings since their proclamation is to be heard rather than read. The exception to this would be in the case of Masses which are celebrated in more than one language. In this case, the readings could be printed in the language not utilized in the proclamation.

10. Attire

The confirmandi should be in Sunday dress. Stoles should never be created and 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*)

11. Sacristy Preparation

A designated sacristan should attend to the following details:

1. Vestments: See paragraph 3 above concerning color of vestments. (Bishop Medley will provide his own vestments.)
2. Presider’s Chair: The Presidential chair is to be located in a place that is visible to the entire assembly. If there is a deacon, he is to be seated to the right of the Bishop. Altar Servers do not sit next to the Bishop.
3. Microphone: If the parish is equipped with wireless microphones, then one of these should be available for the Bishop.
4. Ritual Books: the following should be set up before the Liturgy begins:
 - Lectionary should be placed on the ambo.
 - If a Book of the Gospels is used, it is carried in procession (by the deacon if there is one) and placed upon the altar.
 - Roman Missal (Note: The Bishop will provide his own Rite of Confirmation ritual book.)
5. Credence table: the credence table should hold:
 - a large bowl of water and special branch or aspergil for the Sprinkling Rite at the beginning of Mass (if there is to be one – see Section II, paragraph #1 below)
 - corporal for the altar
 - chalice and purificator for the Bishop
 - extra chalices or cups with purificators for the assembly’s Communion.
 - thurible, charcoal and incense (if used)
 - cruet of water
 - bowl with warm soapy water and a towel for washing the Bishop’s hands after the anointing
 - water and towel for washing the Bishop’s hands during the offertory
6. Chrism: The Chrism should be placed in a worthy container (no cotton balls should be used). A place of prominence should be prepared for it in the sanctuary. (The parish will need to provide it’s own Chrism.)
7. Table for the Gifts: The table is located in the nave of the Church. One or two large ciboria with sufficient number of hosts, and a flagon or flagons of wine sufficient for all who will be receiving Communion.
8. Paschal Candle should be placed near the ambo or font.

Section II: The Order of Mass

All directives of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and the *Rite of Confirmation* are to be followed in planning the Mass in which the Sacrament of Confirmation will be celebrated. The following will serve to provide additional direction in planning the Mass.

1. The Introductory Rites

ENTRANCE PROCESSION

The order of procession for the entrance is as follows:

- Incense Bearer (thurifer) with burning incense (if used)
- Cross Bearer with the Processional Cross
- Candle-Bearers
- Chrism Bearer (optional)
- Candidates and Sponsors (optional)
- Lectors
- (Deacon with the Book of Gospels)
- Concelebrants
- Bishop with miter and crozier
- Master of Ceremony

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.

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 unless a solemnity falls within that season (e.g. the solemnity of St. Joseph). It should always be sung in its proper place and not as an entrance song or during the sprinkling rite.

2. The Liturgy of the Word

1. It is preferable that the readings be proclaimed by trained parish lectors and not by the confirmandi.
2. 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.
3. The responsorial psalm should always be sung.
4. There should be periods of silence after each reading.
5. The Gospel Acclamation should be one of a joyous nature.
6. The Gospel is proclaimed by the pastor (or a Deacon, if present).

3. The Rite of Confirmation

PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

Following the proclamation of the Gospel, the pastor or catechist will present the candidates to the Bishop. The assembly may respond with applause.

Ideally the ambo should not be used for this purpose. It is reserved for the Word of God. An additional microphone should be used for this presentation.

The pastor or catechist faces the Bishop. They may use these or similar words:

Bishop Medley, we present to you these baptized young men and women who have prepared for and are now ready to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The candidates may either be called by name or as a group if the number is great. They stand, then are seated once again for the homily.

HOMILY

The Bishop gives the homily.

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

The candidates for Confirmation stand alone and the Bishop leads them in the renewal of baptismal promises. The renewal of baptismal promises replaces the Creed.

It is highly recommended that those entrusted with the candidates' formation review with them the ritual questions (renewal of baptismal promises) that will be asked of them by the Bishop (*RC*, 23). Their response should be strong; it is a significant moment in the life of the faith community.

LAYING ON OF HANDS

The Bishop invites all to pray in silence. The Bishop and the priests who will minister the sacrament with him lay hands upon all the candidates.

1. Instrumental music may be played or an appropriate hymn sung during the laying on of hands.
2. The Bishop alone prays the prayer after the laying on of hands.

ANOINTING WITH CHRISM

1. The people remain seated during the anointing.
2. During the anointing, the sponsors place their right hand on the shoulder of their candidate.
3. The candidate clearly states his/her saint's name.
4. The Bishop anoints and says: N., be sealed with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.
5. The candidate responds: AMEN
6. The Bishop then says: Peace be with you.
7. The candidate responds: And with your spirit.

8. 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.
9. After all have been confirmed, the Bishop washes his hands. Warm water, soap and a towel are presented by the servers. Then, these items are removed.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

The profession of faith is always omitted because the renewal of baptismal promises has taken place.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

The General Intercessions are introduced by the Bishop. As a rule, “the deacon voices the needs of the people in the General Intercessions, needs with which he should have a particular and personal familiarity from the circumstances of his ministry of charity” (*National Directory for the Formation, Ministry, and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States*, 35). In his absence, the petitions are prayed by the cantor, lector, or one of the faithful (GIRM, 71).

It is desirable to have one reader, or if prayers are multilingual then it is desirable to have one reader for each language. Multiple readers for each petition tends to emphasize the readers rather than the petitions, and is to be discouraged.

The Prayers should include intercessions for the Church, civil authorities, those in need, and the needs of the local community related to the celebration. This is an especially opportune time to include petitions for religious and priestly vocations.

PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR AND THE GIFTS

1. The altar is prepared and the gifts are brought to the Bishop. Some of the newly confirmed should be included in the procession with the gifts.
2. Sufficient bread should be prepared for communion and enough wine so that the entire assembly may receive both the Body and Blood of Christ.
3. 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). No other items are to be included in the offertory procession.

4. 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, Preface nos. 54 or 55 may be used. If Eucharistic Prayer I is used, a special form of *Father, accept this offering* is said.

Father, accept this offering
 from your whole family
 and from those reborn in baptism
 and confirmed by the coming of the Holy Spirit.
 Protect them with your love and keep them close to you.
 [Though Christ our Lord. Amen.]

COMMUNION RITE

Communion should be offered under both kinds. Plan a sufficient amount of the Body and Blood of Christ. Always try to avoid offering hosts reserved in the tabernacle (GIRM, 85).

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).

5. The Concluding Rite

ANNOUNCEMENTS

If there are any announcements they should be brief and follow the Prayer after Communion.

BLESSING

The Bishop imparts the solemn blessing from the eucharistic celebration of the Rite of Confirmation. All respond “Amen” to both the prayer and blessing.

RECESSIONAL HYMN

A familiar hymn known to the entire assembly is most appropriate. Bishop will process out with the other ministers ahead of the confirmandi and sponsors.

The Bishop will be happy to remain for photos. For larger groups, someone should be appointed to coordinate the picture-taking so that the newly confirmed and the Bishop may attend the reception in a timely manner.

Section III: Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What Mass should be used for the celebration? What readings may we choose?**
Please refer to page 2 of “The Rite of Confirmation: Liturgical Guidelines”.
2. **What color vestments should the presider wear?**
Red or white or some other festive color (*Ceremonial of Bishops* #459). If the Ritual Mass for Confirmation is chosen, the vestments will be red. On Sundays of Advent or Lent the color is violet.
3. **Does Bishop Medley bring his own vestments?**
Yes, Bishop Medley will bring his own vestments.
4. **Does the Bishop bring his own oils?**
No, Bishop Medley assumes that the parish will be providing the oil. You’ll need to make sure to obtain enough oil at Chrism Mass each year. For the Rite of Confirmation, the oil should be placed in a worthy container (e.g. a small glass or metal bowl). No cotton balls should be used.
5. **Does the Bishop bring his own Rite of Confirmation ritual book?**
Yes, the Bishop will bring the book with him.
6. **Should a deacon be included among the ministers for the celebration?**
If a deacon is assigned to the parish, it is expected that he assume his role in the liturgy.
7. **May the Confirmation candidates proclaim the readings?**
This is a celebration of the entire parish and the parish’s trained lectors should be scheduled to proclaim the readings.
8. **What materials should we have available for Bishop Medley to wash the oil off his hands?**
A bowl of warm, soapy water and a towel.
9. **May the Confirmation candidates wear stoles?**
No. The stole is a liturgical vestment worn over the left shoulder by the deacon and over both shoulders by a priest or bishop. It is not appropriate for a non-ordained member of the assembly to wear this garment. The Confirmation candidates should be dressed in proper church attire.
10. **May the Confirmation candidates have their photograph made individually with the Bishop after the celebration?**
The Bishop will be happy to remain for photos. For larger groups, someone should be appointed to coordinate the picture-taking so that the newly confirmed and the Bishop may attend the reception in a timely manner.
11. **Do we need to request a baptismal certificate for each candidate at the beginning of the preparation process?**
Yes, this is a written verification that the candidate is indeed already baptized. Baptismal certificates should be carefully reviewed.

12. **Should Confirmation be recorded?**

The full name of the newly-confirmed, their date and place of baptism, the minister of the sacrament, name of Confirmation sponsor(s), and date/place of Confirmation must be recorded in the parish confirmation registry.

Notification of this Confirmation should be sent to the confirmand's parish of baptism. They will add it to his/her baptismal record. So, too, a notation should be added to the parish registry if the child was both baptized and confirmed at your parish.

13. **What are the Confirmation policies regarding the Christian initiation of children of catechetical age?**

1. Unbaptized children of catechetical age, after suitable formation and catechesis, will receive the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist), preferably at the Easter Vigil or during the Easter Season as stated in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, nos. 304-307.

2. Children of catechetical age who have been validly baptized in a separated Christian community will first make a profession of faith and be admitted to Confirmation and Eucharist (*National Statutes*, 30-37). The confirmation of such candidates for reception should not be deferred, nor should they be admitted to Eucharist until they are confirmed. They may be received into full communion on almost any Sunday of the Church year.

3. Children of catechetical age who have been baptized Catholic, but never catechized, should be encouraged to participate in catechesis and formation, always recognizing their baptismal status. They may be admitted to Confirmation and Eucharist at the same liturgy. A presbyter has the faculty to confirm.

The "Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church" respects the traditional sequence of confirmation before Eucharist. When the bishop, whose office it is to receive adult Christians into the full communion of the Catholic Church entrusts the celebration to a presbyter, the priest receives from the law itself (canon 883.2) the faculty to confirm the candidate for reception and is obliged to use it (canon 885.2); he may not be prohibited from exercising the faculty. The confirmation of such candidates for reception should not be deferred, nor should they be admitted to the Eucharist until they are confirmed... (*National Statutes for the Catechumenate*, 35).