



OFFICE OF DIVINE WORSHIP

Guidelines for 2021 Celebrations of Confirmation

April 20, 2021

Then Peter and John laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

-Acts 8:17

Every celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation must comply with all directives for liturgy during the pandemic. These include limited capacity seating social distancing, proper mask wearing and church sanitizing. The confirming Bishop or Priest is not to touch the candidate, especially on the head or face. There is no handshake when the minister says “Peace be with you” to the candidates.

See www.rcan.org/covid19 for the latest directives.

CONFIRMATION OF CHILDREN

Cardinal Tobin hereby grants delegation to all pastors/administrators to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation for children baptized in infancy. This delegation extends through December 31, 2021.

The following apply:

1. Whenever possible, even during the pandemic, pastors should continue to invite Bishops to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation of Children. However, if this is not possible, the pastor/administrator has been granted delegation to confirm those baptized Catholic as infants or children (see above).
2. To preserve the integrity of the Sacraments of Initiation, the Sacrament of Confirmation must be celebrated within Mass according to “The Order of Conferral of Confirmation within Mass” (*The Order of Confirmation*, 20 ff). Pastors/administrators do not have the option to use “The Order for the Conferral of Confirmation without Mass” (*The Order of Confirmation*, 34 ff).
3. The celebration of Confirmation on Sunday continues to be encouraged, but it may be necessary to schedule Confirmation at other times due to limits on capacity. Multiple celebrations of Confirmation are permitted when needed.
4. The Ritual Mass “For the Conferral of Confirmation” (see *Roman Missal*) is to be used when permitted (see *Ordo*). The Ritual Mass is not permitted on the Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter and on Solemnities (e.g. The Most Holy Trinity or The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ). When Confirmation is celebrated on the Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter and on Solemnities, the Mass and readings of the day are used. The Ritual Mass is permitted on the Sundays of Ordinary Time.
5. Ministers of Confirmation **must** use the 2016 edition of *The Order of Confirmation* approved and published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. It is available in a bilingual edition. The minister of Confirmation must read the “Introduction” to *The Order of Confirmation* as well as “The Order for the Conferral of Confirmation within Mass” before celebrating the Sacrament.
6. Please contact the Worship Office (973-497-4345) with questions regarding the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.
7. Attached please find a copy of the “Presentation of the Candidates” and “The Order of Conferral of Confirmation within Mass.”

CONFIRMATION OF ADULT (18+) BAPTIZED CATHOLICS

Cardinal Tobin has delegated pastors, administrators and chaplains to confirm adult (18+) baptized Catholics on any Sunday (Saturday evening) other than the Easter Vigil. This faculty applies through December 31, 2021.

No further delegation (i.e. from the regional Bishop as heretofore) is necessary in 2021.

Numbers 4-7 above also apply for the Confirmation of adults (18+) baptized Catholics.

RECEPTION INTO FULL COMMUNION

Any priest may celebrate the “Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church” (RCIA, 487 ff). It is preferred that this be celebrated within Mass on a Sunday (Saturday evening) of Easter, but not at the Easter Vigil.

“Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church” includes the following, which are always done together in one celebration:

- The one to be received joins the community in reciting the Nicene Creed, which is always said at this Mass. The candidate adds to the Profession of Faith (“I believe and profess all that...”) (RCIA, 491).
- The Act of Reception follows. (RCIA, 492)
- Then, the Conferral of the Sacrament of Confirmation follows immediately according to the 2016 edition of *The Order of Confirmation* (nos. 25-26).
- Following Confirmation of the candidates, the Liturgy of the Eucharist is celebrated, and the candidates complete their reception by receiving first Holy Communion.

The presiding priest receives the candidate, confirms the candidate and gives the candidate first Communion. It is expressly forbidden to separate the sacraments into different ceremonies.

Delegation for the priest to confirm those being received is automatically granted by the *Code of Canon Law*. The priest is not required to seek any further delegation.

Those validly confirmed outside the Catholic Church (Orthodox Christians) are not to be confirmed again.

FORMULA AND METHOD OF CONFIRMING

“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:

N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.” (*Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation*)

The anointing should be done with the use of a cotton swab or cotton ball so that the presider does not touch the candidate. On June 2, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments responded to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops stating, “the use by the minister of an instrument (gloves, cotton swab...), does not affect the validity of the Sacrament [of Confirmation].”

SPONSORS

Sponsors are chosen in the usual way according to the criteria of *The Order of Confirmation*, Introduction, 6.

The candidate and family must be comfortable with the close proximity of the sponsor to the candidate. If the sponsor is unable to attend, a proxy may take their place. A parent may serve as proxy.

THE ORDER FOR THE CONFERRAL OF CONFIRMATION

PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

After the Gospel, a priest, deacon or parish minister addresses the candidates.

Will the candidates for Confirmation please stand.

He/she then addresses the Bishop.

Most Reverend Father,
(for a priest: Reverend Father,)
the parish of (name)
presents these candidates
for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Those who know them judge them to be sincere in their desire.

They have heard the word of Christ
in the assembly of the Church
and have attempted to shape their conduct accordingly.

They have shared in the fellowship and prayer
of their brothers and sisters.

Now I wish to inform you and all here present
of our community's decision to call them to Confirmation.

Each candidate is accompanied by a sponsor
and it is my privilege to present them to you.

The Bishop inquires as to the readiness of those to be confirmed.

**The Church asks that its members
be suitably prepared for the sacraments
so that they may receive the grace of God
freely and knowingly.**

Have these candidates been formed and instructed?

The priest or parish minister responds.

They have participated
in our community's process of Confirmation formation
and have received appropriate catechesis.
We feel they are ready for Confirmation.

Then the Bishop questions those to be confirmed.

**My dear candidates,
do you understand what this sacrament means to you
and to your sharing in the life and mission of the Church?**

They respond:

I do.

Then the Bishop concludes.

**In the name of Jesus Christ and his Church,
I accept you and I pray that the sacrament
which you are about to receive,
will strengthen your faith
and assist the growth of God's kingdom among us.**

Then the congregation gives its assent by **applause**.

The Homily follows.

THE RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

After the Homily, the deacon (or another minister) addresses the candidates.

Will the candidates for Confirmation please stand.

The Bishop questions those to be confirmed saying:

**Dear candidates,
before you receive the Spirit,
call to mind the faith which you professed in Baptism
or which your parents and godparents
professed with the Church.
And so, I ask you:
Do you renounce Satan,
and all his works and empty promises?**

Together, all those to be confirmed reply:

I do.

Bishop:

**Do you believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth?**

Those to be confirmed:

I do.

Bishop:

**Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered death and was buried,
rose again from the dead
and is seated at the right hand of the Father?**

Those to be confirmed:

I do.

Bishop:

**Do you believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who today through the Sacrament of Confirmation
is given to you in a special way
just as he was given to the Apostles
on the day of Pentecost?**

Together, all those to be confirmed reply:

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?**

Those to be confirmed:

I do.

The deacon (or another minister) addresses the assembly.

Will the assembly please stand.

The Bishop gives his assent to the profession by proclaiming the faith of the Church:

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

The assembly gives its assent by replying:

Amen.

THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

Then the Bishop (while the Priests associated with him remain by his side) standing, facing the people, with hands joined, says:

**Dearly beloved,
let us pray to God the almighty Father,
for these, his adopted sons and daughter,
already born again to eternal life in Baptism,
that he will graciously pour out the Holy Spirit
upon them
to confirm them with his abundant gifts,
and through his anointing
conform them more fully to Christ, the Son of God.**

And all pray in silence for a while.

Then, the Bishop, with hands extended says:

**Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who brought these your servants to new birth
by water and the Holy Spirit,
freeing them from sin:
send upon them, O Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete;
give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and fortitude,
the spirit of knowledge and piety;
fill them with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.
Through Christ our Lord.**

All:

Amen.

THE ANOINTING WITH CHRISM

The sacred Chrism is brought by the Deacon to the Bishop. Each of those to be confirmed goes to the Bishop. The sponsor who presents the person to be confirmed places his (her) right hand on his (her) shoulder and says the name of the one to be confirmed to the Bishop; or the one to be confirmed alone says his (her) own name.

The Bishop dips the tip of the thumb of his right hand in the Chrism and, with the thumb, makes the Sign of the Cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed, as he says:

N., BE SEALED WITH THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The newly confirmed replies:

Amen.

The Bishop adds:

Peace be with you.

The newly confirmed:

And with your spirit.

During the anointing a suitable chant may be sung. After the anointing the Bishop washes his hands.

The Universal Prayer follows.

IMPORTANT NOTES

Associated Priests

“For a grave cause, as sometimes is present because of the large number of those to be confirmed, the Bishop and even the Priest endowed with the faculty of confirming...can in single cases associate Priests to themselves to administer the Sacrament.”

–*The Order of Confirmation*, Introduction, 8

This practice is not permitted in the Archdiocese of Newark.

Only those priests associated to the minister of Confirmation extend their hands with the confirming Bishop or Priest during the Laying on of Hands.

Celebration of the Sacrament

“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:

N., BE SEALED WITH THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

But the Laying on of Hands over the elect, carried out with the prescribed prayer (Almighty God...) before the anointing with Chrism, even if it is not of the essence of the sacramental rite, is still to be regarded as very important, inasmuch as it contributes to the complete perfection of the rite and to a more thorough understanding of the Sacrament.”

–*Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation*

It is absolutely essential that the confirming Bishop or Priest use the prescribed formula for the conferral of Confirmation.