

February 3, 2020

Circular 2020-6

RE: Administering the Sacrament of Confirmation

Reverend Fathers:

Our catechism teaches us that we receive the life of faith at baptism. This same grace is strengthened by the sacrament of confirmation through which we enter into spiritual adulthood. Faith cannot grow if we do not know. It is therefore imperative that the conferment of confirmation be preceded by formation in the faith.

In the tradition of the Catholic Church, the minister for confirmation is the bishop unlike the Eastern Churches. That the bishop is the regular minister of confirmation helps us to see that in confirmation, the young adult enters into full communion with apostolic Church, connecting the newly confirmed to the apostolic origins of the Church. (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1290, 1292).

Owing to the zeal of our catechists and the Commission on Evangelization, we now have annual parish and school based confirmation programs preceded by organized catechesis and confessions. This has become a part of the sacramental rhythm of our parishes and schools. This must be sustained.

On the matter of children and young adults who live in foreign countries and request for confirmation in the course of their visit to the Philippines, please observe the following:

1. The parents must be able to present a certification from the pastor of the parish abroad attesting to the fact that the child had undergone the required catechesis in their parish abroad.

Or

The parents present a letter from the parish abroad assuring the Archdiocese of Lingayen Dagupan that the same pastor assumes full responsibility for the post sacramental catechesis of the child when they return to their parish abroad.

2. In case the said certification of completed confirmation course or the assurance of a post sacramental catechesis cannot be presented, the child

must undergo at least a **three day** formation seminar with the catechists of the Cathedral of Saint John the Evangelist consisting of instruction on the Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Seven Sacraments and the mysteries of the Holy Rosary so that the life of the Lord may be better known. Within the three day seminar, half a day must be allocated for charity work with the Missionaries of Charity in Lucao, Dagupan City. Needless to say, the confirmand must go to confession.

3. All these must be celebrated at the Cathedral of Saint John the Evangelist.

On the matter of adults preparing for matrimony who have not received confirmation, which is required before entering into matrimony, I, as Local Ordinary invoking Canon 882 of the Code of Canon Law, grant faculty to the pastor of the parish or to the moderator of the team ministry to confer confirmation in preparation for matrimony. This faculty cannot be sub-delegated.

Needless to say, the comprehensive pre-confirmation catechesis must be done for couples preparing for matrimony. This privilege takes into consideration the distance and difficulty in having to go to the Cathedral for this. It is an expression of pastoral charity and compassion.

Sacraments are path to holiness. The sacraments are channels of grace. The sacraments must be moments of encounter. Let us celebrate the confirmation as memorable encounters with the Lord.

Sincerely yours,

+SOCRATES B. VILLEGAS
Archbishop of Lingayen Dagupan