



ARCHDIOCESE
OF
LINGAYEN-DAGUPAN

October 7, 2020

ALD Circular 2020-35
RE: Sacrament of Confirmation

Reverend Fathers:

It is not difficult to see that the current worldwide COVID19 pandemic has greatly affected our lives particularly in the way we want to live our Catholic faith. It is certainly not our wish to allow this pandemic and its concomitant restrictions to deprive our Catholic faithful, especially the children, of the sacraments. Our Catholic faith teaches us that "both First Communion and Confirmation belong to the so-called "initiation sacraments", meaning sacraments of entrance into the Church. They are signs that accompany our youth on their journey of faith, strengthen them and allow them to mature in faith.

Our Fundamentals

1. During confirmation, candidates receive the power of the Holy Spirit. This happens through the anointing with chrism oil and the imposition of hands. With the Holy Spirit at their side, they are strengthened to be witnesses of Christ in the world. He gives comfort, hope, inspiration and peace. With this sacrament they confess that they want to belong to Jesus and His Church. (cfr. YouCat 203-206).
2. The Code of Canon Law gives a clear mandate with regard to confirmation in these words: The diocesan bishop is obliged to take care that the sacrament of confirmation is conferred on subjects who properly and reasonably seek it. (CIC 885)
3. The diocesan bishop must administer confirmation personally or to take care that another bishop administers it. If necessity requires it, he can grant the faculty to one or more specific presbyters, who are to administer this sacrament. (CIC 884)

Our Pastoral Situation

Before the pandemic, we had successfully made the pre-confirmation catechetical seminars part of the regular parish pastoral life. We have happily confirmed thousands of children by holding mass confirmations by the hundreds per parish. Sadly, until the pandemic is over, we are prevented to hold mass gatherings more so with children below eighteen years old.

Moved by pastoral charity especially for the children and youth, we are issuing this general faculty to administer the sacrament of confirmation despite the restrictions currently being observed to help stem the spread of the virus.



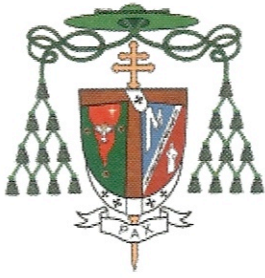
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The Special Faculty to Administer Confirmation

1. The faculty to confer the sacrament of confirmation is granted to all parish priests and moderators of team ministries.
 - 1.1. This faculty cannot be sub delegated.
 - 1.2. The parish priest or moderator of team ministry may use the faculty ONLY within his parochial jurisdiction and ONLY to the members of the Catholic faithful within the parish.
 - 1.3. School directors, chaplains and directors of pastoral stations are not recipients of this special faculty.
 - 1.4. This faculty is effective only starting October 12, 2020 until February 16, 2021, Tuesday before Ash Wednesday.
2. Confirmation outside the Mass must be administered in EVERY parish AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK, within the indicated period, for a limited number of confirmands of not more than TEN children per confirmation group, observing proper distancing, hand hygiene and face masks.
3. The school directors of our Catholic schools must coordinate with the parish priests where the school is located so that confirmation may also be offered to our Catholic school pupils.
4. Confirmations may be held in the parish church, barangay chapels and even in the BEC neighborhood provided the proper recording in the parochial book of confirmations is diligently done.
5. The confirmands:
 - 5.1. must have received baptism and received First Holy Communion;
 - 5.2. must be at least twelve years old;
 - 5.3. must undergo pre-sacramental catechesis about the basics of the creed, the sacraments and the commandments;
 - 5.4. must avail of the sacrament of penance before confirmation
6. The following are prohibited:
 - 6.1. to collect fixed fees for the conferment of confirmation;
 - 6.2. to confirm more than ten children in a confirmation batch no matter the size of the venue;
 - 6.3. to require the children to wear special clothes for the event
 - 6.4. to confer confirmation without catechesis of at least 4 hours of religious instruction.

The Ritual

1. The essential element of the rite of confirmation is the imposition of hands and the anointing with chrism while saying "*(Name), be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit*".
2. For the duration of the pandemic, the minister must prepare cotton balls soaked in chrism and use the same cotton ball to anoint the confirmand. After every confirmand, the cotton ball is discarded as another fresh cotton ball with chrism is used for the next confirmand. The cotton balls must be burned after the rites.
3. Only the confirmand approaches the minister without the sponsor.



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4. The minister must wear a cassock with surplice and red stole or alb with red stole.
5. The confirmands may receive Holy Communion outside the Mass which may be done after the Prayers of the Faithful having prayed the Lord's Prayer.

Pastoral charity urges me to grant this faculty during the pandemic keeping in mind that *salu populi suprema lex*, the salvation of the people is the supreme law.

I trust that moved by the same pastoral concern you will avail of the special faculty with your usual diligence and utmost care.

Sincerely yours,

+SOCRATES B. VILLEGAS
Archbishop of Lingayen Dagupan