

Diocese of Stockton

Sacrament of Confirmation Liturgical Guidelines

The following pages contain detailed information about each element of the celebration of Confirmation. It is important that this information is carefully reviewed before finalizing any parish's plans.

If there are questions regarding any aspect of the Confirmation Liturgy, contact the Director of the Office for Worship, Virginia Meagher at (209) 466-0636, ext. 637, or via email at vmeagher@stocktondiocese.org.

Preparations for the Celebration of Confirmation

1. **Servers:** At least five (5) servers are required. One will carry the cross (and serve as book bearer); two (2) will carry lighted candles; and two (2) will hold the miter and pastoral staff. A sixth server can be assigned to carry incense. If desired, a seventh server can be assigned as book bearer.

Experienced servers are to be assembled, vested in **albs**, and ready to rehearse with Master of Ceremonies at least thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of confirmation. The Master of Ceremonies will assign and review with them their duties prior to the ceremony. Adequate seating is to be reserved for the servers and Master of Ceremonies.

2. In addition to the vessels and items normally prepared for Mass, the following are also to be prepared:
 - a. Chrism and purificator
 - b. A pitcher of water and a large bowl with a lemon cut into quarters
 - c. A couple of hand towels

Sufficient bread and wine for the assembly are to be prepared in one (1) plate and one (1) or more flagons prior to Mass. Communion from the tabernacle should be used only in exceptional circumstances.

3. Those to be confirmed are to be seated with their sponsors in the assembly **before the liturgy is scheduled to begin.**

Introductory Rites

4. Before the procession begins, if incense is to be used, the incense bearer presents the open censer to the Bishop, who places incense in the censer.

5. The order of the procession is as follows:
 - Incense bearer (if used)
 - The server carrying the cross **between** two (2) servers carrying lighted candles
 - The deacon (or reader) carrying the Book of the Gospels
 - Concelebrating presbyters, with the pastor of the parish at the end
 - The Master of Ceremonies
 - The Bishop
 - Behind the Bishop, the deacon(s) assisting him
 - Servers who assist with the miter, pastoral staff, and book.
6. The sprinkling Rite is recommended during the Easter season in place of the Penitential Rite.

Liturgy of the Word

7. Normally, the readings of the day are used. If only two (2) readings are assigned for the day, an additional reading may be chosen from those provided in the *Lectionary for Mass* for the Ritual Mass for Confirmation. The Bishop may elect to use the readings of the day.
8. Readers are to be assigned to proclaim the readings before the Gospel. *Confirmandi*, as a rule, should not exercise this ministry at their Confirmation.
9. A deacon, if present, proclaims the Gospel, otherwise a concelebrant proclaims the Gospel, both after receiving a blessing from the Bishop. After the proclamation, the Book of the Gospels is taken by the deacon or concelebrant to the Bishop for veneration.

Rite of Confirmation

10. After the proclamation of the Gospel, the pastor presents the *Confirmandi* to the Bishop. If the number of *Confirmandi* is fewer than ten (10), their names should be called individually; otherwise, they are presented as a group.
11. The Bishop will preach the homily. If available, a free-standing, hand-held microphone may be used by the Bishop in talking with the candidates.
12. After the homily, the *Confirmandi* stand and renew their baptismal promises. They should be instructed to respond as a group to the Bishop's question with an **enthusiastic** "I do."
13. The Bishop alone lays hands on (or extends hands over) the *Confirmandi* during the prayer *All powerful God . . .*
14. The Bishop stands during the anointing of the *Confirmandi*. The *Confirmandi* approach the Bishop two-by-two, lined up one behind the other. The Godparent presents the

candidate to the Bishop by saying the candidate's confirmation name: ***Bishop, I present N.*** Names should be spoken loudly and clearly. Name tags, printed with the confirmation name only, can be helpful. The Confirmation name may be either the Candidate's baptismal name or the name of a saint.

Soft instrumental music should be played during the anointing of the Candidates. There is to be no singing at this time.

The *Confirmandi* are to be instructed on their parts of the ritual dialogue with the Bishop. They are to respond with a *confident* "Amen" and "And also with you."

15. Only the official parish photographer may take pictures. No other photographs or videos are to be taken during the Mass, including the actual confirmation.

While the Bishop is confirming the *Confirmandi*, the official photographer may take one picture of each person being confirmed. The Bishop will not be available for individual photos either before or after Mass.

These photos are to be made available to ALL participants, regardless of ability to pay. The parish should include the cost in the upfront cost of the program. Photographers who require those confirmed to buy photo packages after confirmation are not appropriate.

16. After the anointing, the Bishop will return to the chair, where servers with pitcher, bowl, lemon, and towels will assist him with washing his hands.
17. The general intercessions are announced by the deacon, a reader, or a cantor. In composing the intercessions, the model provided in the *General Instruction to the Roman Missal*, 69-71, is to be followed. The prayers include intercessions for the Church, civil authorities, those in need, and the needs of the local community related to the celebration. It is recommended that there are no more than five (5) petitions. **NOTE: At this point, the *Confirmandi* (those to be confirmed) are now the *Confirmati* (the confirmed). They should NOT be referred to as the *confirmandi* in the intercessions.**

Liturgy of the Eucharist

18. A collection is taken up at the Confirmation Mass. The newly confirmed and their sponsors are encouraged to participate. Envelopes for this purpose should be distributed to the *Confirmandi* and their sponsors in the weeks prior to the Confirmation Mass.
19. Some of the newly confirmed may present the gifts of bread and wine.
20. Communion is to be distributed under both kinds, with two (2) cups for each distribution of the consecrated bread. The Eucharistic bread distributed for Holy Communion is to be consecrated within the Confirmation Mass.

If there is not sufficient concelebrating presbyters or deacons available for the distribution of Communion, commissioned Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be ready to serve.

Concluding Rite

21. Any announcements, if necessary, are to be made following the Prayer after Communion. The Bishop will thank those involved in the preparations for and execution of the event. No other thank yous are necessary or appropriate.
22. The procession out of the Church follows the same order as at the beginning of the Mass, with the exception of the deacon of the Gospels who is to follow the Bishop.

Varia

23. **Dress for *Confirmandi* and Sponsors:** Candidates and sponsors are to dress modestly. Shorts, bare midriffs, and plunging necklines are examples of inappropriate dress.

Because the stole is the sign of ministerial office of a priest or deacon, it is not permitted for *Confirmandi* to wear any type of stole for Confirmation.

24. **Confirmation Names:** Candidates may use their baptismal name or the name of a saint as the Confirmation name. Candidates whose baptismal names are not those of saints are to be encouraged to select a saint as his or her patron(ess). All *Confirmandi* should then research the life of the chosen patron and identify the virtues of his or her sainthood.
25. **Sponsors:** Insofar as possible, each candidate for Confirmation is to have his or her sponsor present. It is recommended that one of those who acted as a sponsor at baptism should also serve as the sponsor at Confirmation. Parents may not serve as Confirmation sponsors for their children. All sponsors must meet the requirements in the *Code of Canon Law*.
26. **Music:** The music selected should be artistically good, liturgically appropriate, and pastorally suitable. A cantor—not a music group—should lead the assembly in singing so that there is full, active, and conscious participation.

Because of the importance of the sung participation of the *Confirmandi* and sponsors cannot be overstated, **the songs to be sung at the Confirmation Mass are to be selected a year in advance** so that all can learn them during their catechetical sessions throughout the year. At the very least, the *Confirmandi* and their sponsors should know the acclamations for the Eucharistic Prayer (Holy, Holy, the Memorial Acclamation, and the Great Amen), the *Alleluia*, and the Communion song.

27. It is recommended that a stipend of not less than \$50.00 be offered to the Bishop's Master of Ceremonies in gratitude for his ministry. The deacons and lay men who

accompany the Bishop do so at their own expense and without remuneration from the Diocese.

28. The **Confirmation Information Sheets** are to be returned to the Chancery no later than ten (10) days prior to the confirmation Mass.
29. The Bishop only uses the *Rite of Confirmation* (which the Bishop will bring) and the *Sacramentary*. Do not prepare a binder with anything other than the intercessions. A copy of the worship aid should be available for the Bishop. Readings are to be proclaimed from the *Lectionary* and, if available, the *Book of the Gospels*. If the Mass will be in both English and Spanish, both Sacramentaries are to be available.
30. The Bishop will review all parish sacramental registers on the occasion of Confirmation in a parish. They should be out and waiting for the Bishop in the sacristy.
31. Confirmation certificates will no longer be signed by the Bishop. They are to be signed by the pastor of the parish.

Confirmation certificates are not to be distributed during or after Mass in the church. It is preferable that certificate be given out following the liturgy.

32. The custom whereby the Bishop shares a meal with the priests of the parish and the neighboring parishes is encouraged. The Confirmation catechists would be most welcome. The Bishop's Master of Ceremonies should be invited also. This meal can be either before or after the liturgy, depending on the time of the Mass.
33. **Parking Space for the Bishop:** A place is to be reserved for the Bishop's car near the rectory or the vesting area.
34. **Vestments:** The parish provides the chasuble and stole for use by the Bishop.
35. The celebration of Confirmation is not an occasion for witness talks or acknowledgements by the candidates as if it were a graduation ceremony, or for other non-liturgical rituals, which are best left to Confirmation retreats and preparation programs.