

Liturgical Guidelines for Confirmation

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INTRODUCTION

The celebration of the sacrament of confirmation is a deeply important event in the life of the Church. “Those who have been baptized continue on the path of Christian initiation through the sacrament of confirmation. In this sacrament, they receive the Holy Spirit whom the Lord sent upon the apostles on Pentecost. This giving of the Holy Spirit conforms believers more fully to Christ and strengthens them so that they may bear witness to Christ for the building up of his Body in faith and love” (*Rite of Confirmation*, Introduction). Great care is taken that there be adequate preparation for all those involved.

The following guide contains a number of important considerations. On the final three pages, you will find attachments that can assist with the frequently asked questions around the Confirmation liturgy: a checklist for things to be prepared, the order of ministers in the procession, and the procedure for the mitre (Episcopal head garment) and crosier (pastoral staff). These can be printed and kept in the sacristy or at server stations to aid in the preparation and celebration of the confirmation.

Regarding Candidates

It is the responsibility of the people of God to prepare the baptized for the reception of the sacrament of confirmation. In the Diocese of Bismarck the young people who are candidates for confirmation are in grades seven through ten. Each pastor and parish or institution determines the age or level at which the sacrament is to be celebrated, the readiness of the candidates, and the formational and catechetical program that is followed.

In regard to the liturgical celebration, the candidates should be instructed and rehearsed to make their responses clearly and audibly in the proper places. Those who prepare the candidates for the confirmation liturgy will want to be familiar with the Rite of Confirmation. Contact the Office of Worship for an outline of the most current Rite of Confirmation.

It is not necessary for a candidate to take a new name at confirmation. The use of the candidate's baptismal name can serve to further emphasize the threefold process of Christian initiation: baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist. If a new name is chosen it should represent a biblical figure or a Christian saint.

Regarding Sponsors

There is one sponsor for each person confirmed. It is highly recommended that the sponsor be a baptismal godparent of the confirmand. If this is not possible it is permissible that another person be chosen. There is no specification in regards to the sex of the sponsor, but it is important that the candidate be able to identify with the sponsor in terms of Christian living. Parents may not serve as sponsor for their child.

To be a sponsor the person must:

1. be at least sixteen years of age (unless the pastor considers there is a just reason for an exception to be made);
2. be a practicing Catholic who has been confirmed, received the Eucharist, and lives the Christian life of faith and morals;
3. be in good standing with the Church and not prohibited by law from exercising the role of sponsor.

The sponsors should be reminded that they are not merely functionaries for a celebration, but are expected to assist the candidates in fulfilling their baptismal promises faithfully through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They are the representatives of the whole Church into which the candidate is being confirmed.

Regarding the Parish Community

The sacrament of confirmation is a community experience. It is the time at which “the Holy Spirit already present in a believing community manifests His power as a new reality through the life experience of expressed love and faith in the living Church.” Therefore, every effort should be made in order that the administration of confirmation be made a celebration of the entire parish. The use of homilies and prayers at Sunday liturgies prior to the celebration, as well as bulletin announcements, music preparation, invitations to the celebration, can all contribute to an awareness that the local parish is celebrating a community event in which its life is enriched by the gift of the Spirit in the newly confirmed.

Regarding Readings and Texts

The Ritual Mass of Confirmation will be celebrated, **except** on the Sundays of Advent, Lent and the Easter season, solemnities, and days in the Easter octave (the prayers, readings, liturgical color and other particulars will follow the ordo for those days). Prayer texts in the *Roman Missal* are found under Ritual Masses, I. For the Conferral of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation, 4. For the Conferral of Confirmation. Either Preface of the Holy Spirit (see the Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit) may be used. Readings may be selected from those suggested in the *Lectionary*, #764-768 – Confirmation. (During the Easter season, if two readings are proclaimed before the Gospel, both are usually selected from the New Testament.)

Regarding Vestments

The bishop will bring an alb, stole and chasuble for his personal use. Ordinarily the color of vestments will be red, **except** on the Sundays of Advent, Lent and the Easter season, solemnities, and days in the Easter octave (consult the ordo for the appropriate color of vestments for those days). The deacon and concelebrants should wear vesture of the same color as the bishop’s vestments. It is the Pastor’s responsibility to ensure that the proper vestments are available and in good clean condition. It is most appropriate for deacons to wear a stole and dalmatic and for concelebrating priests to wear a chasuble and stole of the same liturgical color as the bishop, if they are available.

Regarding Liturgical Ministers

The candidates are encouraged to take part in the liturgy as readers, gift bearers, greeters, ushers, etc. Their involvement, however, need not exclude the participation of other members of the parish community.

The pastor and other priests are invited to concelebrate the liturgy with the bishop. A deacon will assist at the liturgy. A deacon may be assigned by the Director of Deacons in those parishes without deacons. Please contact him in advance to ensure that a deacon can be assigned.

Communion may be distributed under both forms. Concelebrating priests and the assisting deacon[s] are asked to help with the distribution of communion. If there are not a sufficient number of ordinary ministers (priests and deacons), extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion may be assigned from the parish.

There should sufficient servers to assist at the liturgy. A good guide would be to have three servers. Their duties, beyond their usual responsibilities, include attending to the miter and crosier (pastoral staff) of the bishop. A helpful chart containing the flow of the use of the mitre and crosier is found at the end of this document and on the website. It may be helpful to photocopy, and even laminate, the document for use by the servers.

Other servers may assist as cross bearer and candle bearers. All servers should be instructed of their responsibilities previous to the confirmation liturgy, as well as the appropriate attire for the ceremony. The Bishop will not provide training for the servers prior to the confirmation liturgy.

Regarding Music

The music selected first of all gives honor and glory to God. The appropriate parts of the Mass should allow for congregational singing, using a Mass setting that is familiar to the people of the parish. Any hymns used should be from the common repertoire of well-known Catholic hymns. It is possible for a schola cantorum or choir to sing some portions of the Mass, so long as the selections are truly liturgical music (eg. the proper chants or sacred polyphony), and not a performance. Texts and music that enable congregational singing at the appropriate times are to be provided. If the parish has a good hymnal there may be no need to provide special booklets. If a booklet with music is printed, copyright laws are to be respected and followed. The Office of Worship can be of assistance with copyright law.

The principles, rubrics, and norms concerning music put forth by the liturgical books are to be carefully followed. Dialogues (when sung by the celebrant) and acclamations (including the Lord have Mercy, Lamb of God, Gospel Acclamation and Holy Holy) are to be sung by all. Other hymns common to the Mass (the Glory to God when prescribed) should also be sung using the approved translations, as should the Psalm/Gradual. The introit, offertory and communion chants should follow the norms as laid out in the

General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) #48: “This chant is sung alternately by the choir and the people or similarly by a cantor and the people, or entirely by the people, or by the choir alone.” One of the four options given in the GIRM is to be selected for each of these moments. A hymn or instrumental music may be used at the conclusion of the Mass.

THE CONFIRMATION LITURGY

Introductory Rites

The candidates and their sponsors or the candidates alone may be in the entrance procession or they may be seated at their places in the Church shortly before the liturgy begins.

It is appropriate that the Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water replace the Penitential Act, particularly during the Easter season.

The Liturgy of the Word

Readers should be selected who proclaim well. They should practice their readings and the readings are to be proclaimed from the Lectionary. Some moments of silence for reflection should follow each reading.

If incense is used, it is brought to the bishop as soon as the Gospel acclamation begins. (The bishop will remain seated while the assembly and ministers all stand.) After preparing the incense (if it is used), the deacon asks for a blessing from the bishop and then proceeds to the ambo. If it is convenient, the Book of the Gospels is brought to the bishop to kiss after the proclamation of the Gospel.

Rite of Confirmation

After the Gospel, the candidates are presented by the pastor or catechist. If they are called individually then acknowledge their call with a bow, and remain standing until all names have been called. It is not necessary to have the candidates respond with words.

After the candidates are presented, the bishop will preach the homily. He generally does this from the center aisle of the nave. One of the servers will need to hold the *The Order of Confirmation* for the bishop through the entire rite, beginning with the homily, until the bishop begins to exchange the sign of peace with the newly confirmed.

Following the homily, still from the center aisle of the nave, the bishop invites the candidates to renew their baptismal promises. The candidates respond "I do" to each of the questions. The bishop then prays the prayer over the candidates. There is an invitation to prayer, and then all pray in silence for a moment. The bishop alone extends his hands over the candidates (unless there are other priests who will be conferring the sacrament along with the bishop), and prays the prayer, "All-powerful God."

After the prayer, the mitre and crosier are brought to the bishop who remains in the center aisle of the nave. The deacon brings the sacred chrism to the bishop. As the candidates come forward, one by one, the bishop stands in the center, the deacon

stands to the bishop's right holding the vessel with sacred chrism, and the pastor may stand to the left of the bishop.

The candidates should come forward with their sponsors who place their right hands on the candidates' right shoulders. **Candidates announce their confirmation names to the bishop in a clear and distinct voice.** They should wear name-tags with their confirmation name printed legibly on it as well. Please remind the candidates to look at the bishop when he anoints them and to make all responses loudly. After the formula for the anointing ("Be sealed with Gift of the Holy Spirit"), the newly confirmed responds "Amen." Then, the bishop extends a sign of peace to which the response is "And with your spirit."

When the anointing has been completed, the bishop will wash his hands using lemon, water (warm if possible), and a towel. The lemon and water are to be disposed of in the same manner as any blessed object. The bishop will then return to the presider's chair and introduce the Universal Prayer (general intercessions, petitions, bidding prayer). Please use the formula for the Universal Prayer as found in the *The Order of Confirmation*. The intercessions are led by the deacon.

Since the stole is a vestment and sign of ordained ministry, "confirmation stoles" are not to be used.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

The gifts of bread and wine that will be used for the Eucharist are brought up in procession and received by the bishop or the deacon. Normally there is one vessel of each. (Using sacred hosts consecrated at previous Masses is discouraged.) The deacon prepares the altar and gifts in the usual manner. If incense is used, it is brought to the bishop after the gifts are prepared and before the washing of the bishop's hands. During the Eucharistic Prayer the concelebrants pray their designated parts in a **low** tone of voice, so that the bishop's voice may be clearly heard over all the others. The pastor should pray one of the concelebrant's parts (this should be determined before the liturgy).

Communion Rite

The deacon introduces the greeting of peace, using the words as given in the *Roman Missal*: "Let us offer each other the sign of peace."

During the Breaking of the Bread (fraction rite), the *Lamb of God* is sung. No extra verses or words should be added to the *Lamb of God* (eg. "Prince of Peace," Word of God," etc.). Additional purificators and patens/vessels if used are brought to the altar at this time. The deacon or another priest offers hosts to the concelebrants. At the appropriate time the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion take their places — they will receive communion after the bishop, priests and deacon have received. Then all move to their respective Communion stations.

After the bishop has distributed Holy Communion, servers will come to the presider's

chair and wash the bishop's hands again with water, a basin, and a towel. Please note that this water should be discarded to the sacrarium (piscina) or directly into the ground, if there is no sacrarium.

Concluding Rite

Following the Prayer after Communion, brief announcements may be made. The bishop concludes with a Solemn Blessing or a Prayer Over the People. This is taken from the *Order of Confirmation*, and a server should bring the *Order of Confirmation*, to the bishop. The deacon, at the appropriate time, invites the assembly to "Bow down for the blessing" and also dismisses the assembly.

The order for the procession at the conclusion of the liturgy is to be the same as at the beginning.

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

The bishop will greet the people after the celebration at a convenient place, e.g. Gathering Space, and/or at the reception (if one is planned).

If his schedule permits the bishop is willing to meet for a short time with candidates before the confirmation liturgy. Please make a request for this to his secretary — notification will be given if the bishop is able to meet with the confirmation candidates or not.

If the bishop is invited for a meal or hospitality before or after confirmation, please call his secretary with this information, and notification will again be given if he is able to attend the meal.

It is suggested that formal photographs with the bishop and the candidates be taken before the Confirmation liturgy. Individual photographs with the bishop may be taken after the liturgy or at the reception, if the bishop is available. Again, this is to be communicated to the bishop's secretary well in advance of the celebration.

ALL sacramental registers/record books (Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, Marriage, Funerals) should be available for the bishop to review and initial at some point during his time in the parish for confirmation.

For any further questions, please contact Fr. Schneider in the Office of Worship.
Email: frschneider@bismarckdiocese.com
Telephone: 701-663-8842

PREPARATIONS FOR THE LITURGY

Checklist

- ° Please ensure that all linens (altar cloth, vestments, etc.) are washed and in a good state before the bishop arrives.
- ° Be sure that you are using the proper Mass texts (see below), and that the books are properly set and in their proper locations.

In the Sanctuary

- ° Seating for bishop and deacon
- ° Seating for the pastor and any concelebrants
- ° Seating for servers
- ° A location for the mitre and crosier
- ° Programs as needed at the seats for the bishop, deacon and servers

At the credence table

- ° The vessels and linens (main celebrant's chalice with a purificator and as many corporals are needed to place under the vessels, chalices for distributing the Precious Blood if it is to be distributed, extra patens for distributing Holy Communion as needed, a *lavabo* bowl and towel for washing the bishop's hands at the offertory) normally used for Mass
- ° The Roman Missal with the ribbons set for the appropriate Mass
- ° The aspersorium filled with holy water and aspergillum (or branch) for the Sprinkling Rite, if one is to be used to replace the Penitential Act
- ° *The Order of Confirmation* with the rite of Confirmation (provided by the bishop)
- ° The vessel with the Sacred Chrism (provided by the bishop – this may also be placed in a prominent place in the sanctuary, but is not carried in procession)
- ° A lemon sliced in half, basin, pitcher of water (warm, if possible), and towel for washing the bishop's hands following the anointing. This water and lemon juice should be disposed of in the sacrarium, or if there is none, directly into the ground outside.

At the Ambo

- ° The Lectionary

In the Sacristy

- ° A stole [and dalmatic] for the deacon and stoles [and chasubles] for concelebrating priests
- ° The Book of the Gospels for the deacon in procession
- ° Adequate vestment for the servers
- ° Any necessary programs for concelebrating priests

Mitre and Crosier Protocol

Moment	Mitre	Crosier
Procession	+	+
At the foot of the altar
After the opening prayer	+	...
After blessing the deacon who proclaims the Gospel
After the Gospel Dialogue ("Glory to you, O Lord")	...	+
Immediately after the Gospel (bishop needs to reverence the Book of the Gospels – you can instruct the people to remain standing until the bishop has kissed the book)
Homily – The bishop has the option to preach with or without the mitre and crosier. Ask him what he prefers before the Mass	?	?
Baptismal Promises (bishop can be seated here – you may wish to prepare an extra stool for him)	+	+
Laying on of hands (Only the bishop lays on hands, unless there are priests who will be assisting him to anoint for the confirmation)
Anointing	+	+
Wash the bishop's hands	+	...
Universal Prayer (general intercessions, petitions, bidding prayers)
Receiving the Gifts at the Offertory	+	...
Before approaching the altar for the Eucharistic Prayer
At the beginning of the preface, take the zucchetto (skullcap) from the bishop
For the Final Blessing	+	+

Order of ministers in the procession.

The basic structure of a procession is constant. The order of the procession for your celebration will depend primarily on how many of various ministers you have. Below are several possibilities. The first is the most basic. The second is quite complete, and proper if you have a larger parish with more resources.

- 1 Concelebrating priest (CP)
- 1 Deacon (D)
- 3 Servers (S1, S2, S3)

S1
(with processional cross)
S2
(carrying nothing)
D
(carrying the book of the Gospels)
CP
Bishop
S3

(to care for the mitre and crosier – note that this server follows the bishop slightly behind and to the right of the bishop)

- 2 or more Concelebrating priests (CP)
- 3 Deacons
- 6 Servers

S1
(With incense)
S2
(with the processional cross)
S3 **S4**
(with candles)
D1
(with the book of the Gospels)
CP **CP**
(**CP** **CP**)
Bishop
D2 **D3**
(one will care for the altar, the other will assist with the chrism)
S5 **S6**
(One for the mitre, one for the crosier)