The Order of Confirmation


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Rite and Resource

The Order of Confirmation

Guide for Celebrating Confirmation
Remember...

- Confirmation is not graduation
- Confirmation is not a reward for years of catechesis
- Confirmation is not a final exam

- Confirmation is a Sacrament of Initiation
- Confirmation is a strengthening
- Confirmation is the gift of the Holy Spirit

“[Vatican II] aimed to change the theology of Confirmation... situating it more squarely among the initiation rites of the Church.”

Paul Turner, 12

Garments

- There is no vesture for those being confirmed.
- They should wear their “Sunday Best”
- Robes and stoles are inappropriate for the candidates
USCCB Decree of Promulgation
August 21, 2001

COMPLEMENTARY NORM ON THE AGE OF CONFIRMATION

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, in accord with the prescriptions of canon 891, hereby decrees that the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Latin Rite shall be conferred between the age of discretion and about sixteen years of age, within the limits determined by the Diocesan Bishop and with regard for the legitimate exceptions given in canon 891.

The Order of Confirmation
Introduction paragraphs 1 - 19

READ THE INTRODUCTION!

I. The Dignity of Confirmation 1-2

Those who have been baptized continue on the path of Christian Initiation through Confirmation

By the gift of the Holy Spirit the faithful are more fully conformed to Christ and strengthened to build up his body in faith and charity.
II. Duties and Ministries in the Celebration of Confirmation

The People of God

One of the highest responsibilities of the People of God is to prepare the baptized to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Adult catechumens are to be prepared for full initiation. Adults Catholics in need of confirmation should be prepared using an adapted plan based on the catechumenate.

Christian parents have responsibility to show concern for the initiation of their children.

The liturgical action should have a festive and solemn character.

The whole People of God (family, friends, community) will be invited to take part...

Music & Participation

- A worship aid should be provided which is not merely a program but includes music and responses for the people so they can fully participate.

- Musical selections should take into account the season of the church year, the celebration of Confirmation and the variety of people present at the celebration.

- All songs do not have to be about the Holy Spirit! E.g. The opening song can reflect the season of the church year. The communion song should be Eucharistic in nature.
Sponsors

- Sponsor for each candidate who presents them to the bishop and helps them fulfill their baptismal promises
- Godparent can be sponsor which would show the link between baptism and confirmation
- Note: in the previous edition, parents were permitted to present their children for Confirmation. In the new rite this is no longer permitted.

Requirements:
- Chosen by candidate
- Sufficiently mature (16+)
- Fully initiated Catholic
- Not impeded by law
- Not the father or mother

The Ordinary Minister of Confirmation is the Bishop

Normally a bishop administers the Sacrament so that there will be a clearer reference to the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. For after the Apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, they themselves transmitted the Spirit to the faithful through the laying on of hands.
Other Ministers of Confirmation

Any priest who baptizes a catechumen (7+ years old) must also confirm them (see RCIA 206-243). The same priest baptizes, confirms and gives first Communion to the catechumen. The sacraments are not to be split up among concelebrants and never to a deacon.

Any priest who receives a person already baptized into full communion of the Catholic Church must confirm them (see RCIA 473-498).

Any priest for those in danger of death

In the Archdiocese of Newark:

Vicars General and Regional Vicars

Pastors with delegation from their regional vicar may confirm adult (18+) baptized Catholics on the Sundays of Easter (Easter Sunday through Pentecost). Delegation is not given to confirm at the Easter Vigil.

“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 also associate Priests to themselves to administer the Sacrament.

This is not done in the Archdiocese of Newark.

“Associated priests” should not be confused with concelebrating priests. Concelebrants do not extend their hands with the confirming bishop or priest during the Laying on of Hands.
III. The Celebration of the Sacrament 9-15

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.

The laying of hands on those to be confirmed, which is accompanied by the prayer “Almighty God...,” although it does not pertain to the validity of the Sacrament, should still be considered to be of great importance with regard to the integrity of the rite and a fuller understanding of the Sacrament.

The sacred Chrism is consecrated by the bishop in the Mass that is celebrated during Holy Week

Only a bishop can consecrate sacred Chrism
• Catechumens should be admitted to confirmation and Eucharist at the same time they receive baptism.

• If Confirmation coincides with marriage preparation, it may be more beneficial for Confirmation to be deferred until after the marriage.

As a rule, Confirmation takes place within Mass so that the fundamental connection of this Sacrament with all of Christian Initiation, which reaches its culmination in the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, may stand out in a clearer light. The newly confirmed therefore participate in the Eucharist, which completes their initiation.

In the Archdiocese of Newark, Confirmation is celebrated at Mass, preferably on a Sunday.

Candidates, and indeed all of the faithful, should receive communion from Eucharist consecrated at the Mass they are attending.

Enough wine should be consecrated so that all present may be able to receive the Blood of Christ.
Great emphasis should be placed on the celebration of the word of God that introduces the Rite of Confirmation. For it is from the hearing of the word of God that the many-sided work of the Holy Spirit flows out upon the Church.

Readers should be chosen who are imbued with the spirit of the liturgy and are capable of proclaiming the word in the assembly of the church.

In the Archdiocese of Newark, Confirmation candidates should not proclaim the readings at the Mass during which they are confirmed.

Register of Names

- The names of the confirmed, the minister, parents and sponsors should be recorded in the Confirmation registry.

- The place of Baptism must also be informed about the conferral of Confirmation.
IV. Adaptations That May Be Carried Out in the Rite 16-18

V. Things to Be Prepared 19

- Sacred vestments
- Chairs
- Sacred Chrism
- Ritual Books
- Items for Mass, including cups for communion under both kinds
- Items for washing hands after anointing

Which Mass to Celebrate

- On days when the ritual Mass for Confirmation is not permitted, the presidential prayers, readings, preface and color of vesture are all of the day. This includes:
  - Easter Triduum, Christmas, Epiphany, Ascension, Pentecost, Sundays of Advent, Sundays of Lent, Sundays of Easter, Solemnities
  - Even on days when the ritual Mass is permitted, the Mass of the day could still be used, especially when appropriate such as during the Easter Season.
Ritual Mass for Confirmation

- On days when the ritual Mass for Confirmation is permitted, the presidential prayers, readings and preface are chosen from the ritual Mass.

- Sundays of Ordinary Time
  - The ritual Mass for Confirmation is permitted on Sundays of Ordinary Time.
  - If Confirmation takes place at a regularly scheduled Sunday Mass during Ordinary Time, the Mass of the day may be used.

- In all cases, be certain that the presiding minister is aware of the Mass and readings to be used.

The Introductory Rites

- Opening Song & Procession
- Sign of the Cross
- Greeting
  - Bishop: Peace be with you.
  - Bishop or Priest: “…and the communion of the Holy Spirit…”

- After the greeting, it is customary for the pastor of the parish to welcome the Bishop.
**Penitential Act**

- Sample

- Lord Jesus, you sent your Holy Spirit upon the Apostles at Pentecost: Lord, have mercy.

- Lord Jesus, by baptism you have given us a share in eternal life: Christ, have mercy.

- Lord Jesus, you promised to be with your Church, until the day of glory: Lord, have mercy.

**Sprinkling Rite**

- The Sprinkling Rite may replace the Penitential Act, especially during the Easter Season

- Blessings of water for both outside and during the Easter season are provided in the Roman Missal

- If the water has already been blessed, a prayer of thanksgiving is said over the water (See “Thanksgiving Over Water Already Blessed” RCIA, 389)

- In the Archdiocese of Newark, the candidates may be sprinkled after the renewal of baptismal promises. If the candidates are to be sprinkled, then the Sprinkling Rite would not be done at the beginning of the Mass.
Gloria

- Whenever the ritual Mass for Confirmation is celebrated, the Gloria is sung, even during the seasons of Advent or Lent.

- On days when the ritual Mass is not permitted, the Gloria is sung according to the rubrics of the Mass of the day being used.
  - For example, if Confirmation were celebrated on a Saturday morning during Advent, the ritual Mass would be permitted for use and therefore the Gloria would be sung.
  - If Confirmation were being celebrated on a Sunday of Advent, the ritual Mass would not be permitted. Since Masses on the Sundays of Advent do not permit the Gloria, it would not be sung.

Collect

- Of the day or from the ritual Mass when permitted

The Order for the Conferral of Confirmation

- The Liturgy of the Word
  - Readings of the day when required
  - When ritual Masses are permitted, see Lectionary 764-768
Presentation of the Candidates

- After the Gospel the Bishop takes an assigned seat
  - This may be the presider’s chair or a chair closer to the candidates

- The candidates for Confirmation are presented by the Pastor or another Priest, or by a Deacon, or even by a catechist, in accordance with the custom of each region, in this way: if possible, each of those to be confirmed is called by name and individually approaches the sanctuary...

- If there are very many candidates, they are not called by name; but they are assigned to a suitable place before the Bishop.

- In practice, the candidates should sit together as a group to make it clear who the Bishop is speaking to and praying over. Sponsors may sit with them.

Sample 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 minister of Confirmation.

For a Bishop: Most Reverend Father,
[Or 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 minister of Confirmation inquires as to the readiness of the candidates. 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 minister of Confirmation questions the candidates. 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 minister of Confirmation 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 Homily or Address

- The Bishop then gives a brief homily...sheding light on the readings, he leads...the whole gathering of the faithful to a deeper understanding of the mystery of Confirmation.

- A sample homily is provided

- If the homily is not used, the final sentence could be used to introduce the renewal of baptismal promises.
The Renewal of Baptismal Promises

- The candidates stand; only the candidates respond to the questioning.
- After the homily the Bishop questions those to be confirmed, who stand, as he says:
  - 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.
- 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?

Those to be confirmed: 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 assembly may 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 gathering of the faithful gives its assent by replying:
Amen.

For the formula This is our faith, it is permitted to substitute, if appropriate, some other formula or even some suitable chant, by which the community is able to express its faith.

In the Archdiocese of Newark, the candidates (only) may be sprinkled with holy water after the renewal of Baptismal promises. This would not be done if the Sprinkling Rite took the place of the Penitential Act at the beginning of the Mass.
The Laying on of Hands 24-25

If he is not already there, the Bishop may move to the place of Confirmation. The candidates may kneel.

Then the Bishop standing, facing the people, with hands joined, says:

Dearly beloved,
let us pray to God the almighty Father,
for these, his adopted sons and daughters,
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 lays hands over all those to be confirmed. 
Concelebrants do not extend hands.
The Bishop sings or 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.
R: Amen.

Text with music can be found on page 93.
The Anointing with Chrism 26-29

- The sacred Chrism is brought by the Deacon to the Bishop. Each of those to be confirmed goes to the Bishop; or, if appropriate, the Bishop goes to each of those to be confirmed.

- 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) name.

- “When the candidate and bishop face each other, the sponsor places his or her right hand on the shoulder of the candidate. Although the right hand is specified, the particular shoulder is not.” Paul Turner, 38

- Candidate may give own name

Taking a Confirmation Name?

- Not called for anywhere in the Rite

- Not called for anywhere in Canon Law

- RCIA – Catechumens should not be choosing a confirmation name as that defies the unity of the sacraments of initiation. They should be baptized and confirmed with their baptismal name.

“Furthermore, the rite makes no mention of a special Confirmation name, so it implies that the bishop administering the sacrament addresses each candidate using the person’s baptismal name.”

Paul Turner, 12
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.

*The rubric does not envision physical contact (handshake) here, just the dialogue.*

- During the anointing, a suitable chant may be sung.
  - *The music should not be too loud and should begin after the first few candidates are confirmed so the people can hear the dialogue*

- After the anointing the Bishop washes his hands.
  - *Discretely*
The Universal Prayer

- Sample intercessions included
- Read by Deacon or minister
- The Creed is omitted since the Profession of Faith has already taken place.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

- Some of the confirmed may join those who bring forward the offerings. Sponsors should accompany them.

- Special Inserts for EP I, II, III
  - II: Remember also Lord your servants whom you have been pleased to confirm today by bestowing the Holy Spirit, and keep them in your grace.
  - III: Remember also, Lord, your servants reborn in Baptism whom you have been pleased to confirm by bestowing the Holy Spirit, and in your mercy, keep safe in them your grace.
• The newly confirmed participate in the Eucharist
  • Candidates should be prepared to sing the acclamations

• Communion is offered under both kinds
  • Candidates should be encouraged to receive from the cup

• The deacon distributes the Blood of Christ

• Prayer after Communion

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**Conclusion**

• Announcements
  • Always follow Prayer after Communion
  • Brief – no need for the pastor to speak twice

• Solemn Blessing

• Or Prayer over the People

• May be used at Mass of the day or Ritual Mass
Solemn Blessing

May God the Father almighty bless you, whom he has made his adopted sons and daughters reborn from water and the Holy Spirit, and may he keep you worthy of his fatherly love.

R: Amen

May his Only Begotten Son, who promised that the Spirit of truth would abide in his Church, bless you and confirm you by his power in the confession of the true faith.

R: Amen

May the Holy Spirit, who kindles the fire of charity in the hearts of disciples, bless you and lead you blameless and gathered as one into the joy of the Kingdom of God.

R: Amen

Q & A

- How can we best stress that Confirmation is more initiation than graduation?

- How can we best prepare candidates for the ceremony?

- Does the liturgical year have an impact on the ceremony?

- See the Q & A section of Paul Turner’s book