

CONFIRMATION LITURGY GUIDELINES



ROMAN CATHOLIC
Diocese of Calgary

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Introduction

Pastors have the special responsibility to see that all the baptized reach the completion of Christian Initiation and therefore that they are prepared with the utmost care for Confirmation. – Order of Confirmation (OC), no. 3

On the feast of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles to help them witness to Christ and strengthen them in building the Church. In the Sacrament of Confirmation the power of the Spirit and the sign of the Cross complete the grace begun in baptism so that Christians may bear witness to Christ's Passion and Resurrection in their lives. Confirmation conforms the baptized to Christ and makes them more fully members of the Church. In this way, the Sacrament of Confirmation perpetuates the grace of Pentecost, distributing to individuals the diverse graces needed to build up the Mystical Body of Christ in unity and love. Before the celebration, the candidates will have undergone a suitable period of catechesis, be in a state of grace, and capable of renewing the baptismal promises. (OC no. 12)

Attention should be paid to giving the liturgical action the festive and solemn character that its significance for the local Church requires – OC, no. 4

The celebration of Confirmation is a grace filled occasion for those who will be receiving the Sacrament as well as for their families and friends, the parish community, and for the entire Church. Due to the connection of Confirmation to Baptism, and the special connection of the Easter season to the sacraments of initiation, in the Diocese of Calgary, preference will be given to scheduling all Confirmations during the Easter Season.

The catechesis preceding the reception of the Sacrament should include an explanation of the Confirmation rite, especially the twofold symbolism. The laying on of hands is a biblical gesture, by which the Holy Spirit is invoked. By the anointing with Chrism and accompanying words "the baptized receive the seal of the Lord and gift of the Spirit that gives them the grace to spread 'the pleasing fragrance of Christ' in the world." (OC no. 9) Use the texts of the liturgy in the preparation of the candidates. It is important that they understand what they are responding to so that their "I do" and their "Amen" are authentic and their confidence will enliven the faith of the assembly. A rehearsal with all involved close to the celebration itself is important. Leave ample time for everyone to practice so they are confident in their role and can be fully present to the liturgy.

Please use these guidelines to prepare for the parish celebration of Confirmation. The *Liturgical Planning form for Confirmations* is available on the diocesan website or from the Office of Liturgy. Please **complete and return the form at least two weeks before your celebration**. For liturgical matters, contact Simone Brosig at 403-218-5524 or liturgy@calgarydiocese.ca. For scheduling matters, contact the Bishop's Office at 403-218-4426 or diane.jackman@calgarydiocese.ca.

Guidelines

Resources

These resources are available through CCCB Publications:

- *Order of Confirmation*. We recommend reading the Apostolic Constitution and Introduction to the ritual book.
- *Guide for Celebrating Confirmation*, by Paul Turner

Available from the Diocesan Office of Liturgy and on the diocesan website:

- *Liturgical Planning Form: to be returned to liturgy@calgarydiocese.ca two weeks before the celebration*
- *Supplementary Rites: Rite of Enrollment*. A rite provided by the CCCB for use at the parish to ritualize the intention of candidates presenting themselves for the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- *Supplementary Rites: Presentation of the Candidates*. Three options provided by the CCCB to use at the celebration when the candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation are presented to the bishop.
- *Altar server Guidelines* for serving the Confirmation Mass
- *Psalm settings* for the *Confirmation Ritual Mass*

Coordination

Your parish's celebration of Confirmation requires collaboration between key members of the parish and the diocesan offices.

Diocesan Offices

- Bishop's Office
 - Scheduling matters
- Office of Liturgy
 - Turn in the Liturgy Preparation Form two weeks before your celebration.
 - Discuss any questions you may have about the directions in this document.

Parish

- Pastor
- Confirmation Catechist(s)
- Music Director
- Liturgical Ministers (lectors, servers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, environment and art, hospitality, etc.)
- Candidates, sponsors, parents

Rehearsal

A rehearsal should take place in advance so that all ministers as well as candidates, sponsors, and parents, understand their roles and have an opportunity to practice. The rehearsal enables all to be present to what is unfolding in the liturgy.

The catechesis offered to the candidates for Confirmation should include an explanation of the texts and rituals of the celebration. The candidates should practice so that the confidence of their responses will enliven the faith of those gathered.

Walk through the entrance of the candidates and sponsors and their movement towards the bishop. Be sure to also practice the flow for taking pictures following the liturgy. The movement of all people should be organized and unhurried to emphasise the importance and solemnity of the occasion.

Materials

- *The Order of Confirmation*
- *Roman Missal*
- *Lectionary* marked with ribbons or tabs for the readers
- Requisites for the celebration of Mass
- Vessel with Sacred Chrism
- A bowl with warm water, lemons, and a hand towel at the credence table
- Cards for sponsors printed with the Confirmation candidates' names
- Reserved seating as necessary
- During Easter season the Paschal candle is lit.

Roles

Confirmandi

- Have undergone a suitable period of catechesis
- Are in a state of grace before the celebration
- Are capable of renewing their baptismal promises
- Have been prepared with the texts of the rite and can respond with confidence
- If you will have more than 120 confirmandi, consider having two celebrations.
- No ceremonial garments are prescribed for those to be confirmed. As any baptized Christian may wear an alb, these are permitted. **Stoles are reserved for deacons, priests, and bishops. They are not permitted for Confirmation candidates.**

Bishop

- The Bishop is the celebrant and confers the sacrament of Confirmation.
- The Bishop brings sacred Chrism but the parish should also have some available.

Priests

- The parish pastor should concelebrate with the Bishop.
- The pastor should carry the Sacred Chrism in the entrance procession.
- If no other clergy are present, the pastor should proclaim the Gospel.
- The pastor receives the name cards from the sponsors and holds the card in a way that is easy for the Bishop to read the name.
- Other priests may concelebrate and assist the Bishop as needed.

Deacon

- If there is a deacon assigned to the parish, the deacon may serve in the celebration of the Eucharist as usual.
- The deacon may assist during the anointing by bringing and holding the Sacred Chrism.

Catechists

- A catechist should briefly welcome everyone to the celebration before the entrance procession begins.
- Catechists should assist candidates for Confirmation and their sponsors so that processions into the church, towards the Bishop for the anointing, and out of the church flow smoothly and without confusion.

Sponsors

- Ideally the godparent at Baptism serves as the sponsor at Confirmation but the sponsor can be someone else
- The sponsor must be mature, fully initiated, having received Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, and not impeded by law of fulfilling the responsibility of a sponsor

Servers

- Cross and book bearer (1 server)
- Candles (2 servers)
- Cross and mitre bearer (1-2 servers)

Lectors

- **Candidates for Confirmation may not serve as lectors**
- If necessary, candidates for Confirmation may serve in other ministries but these roles are more appropriately carried out by other ministers from the parish so that the candidates for Confirmation can focus on the liturgy
- Candidates for Confirmation may offer the Universal Prayer if no deacon is present
- It is encouraged that some of the newly confirmed bring up the gifts

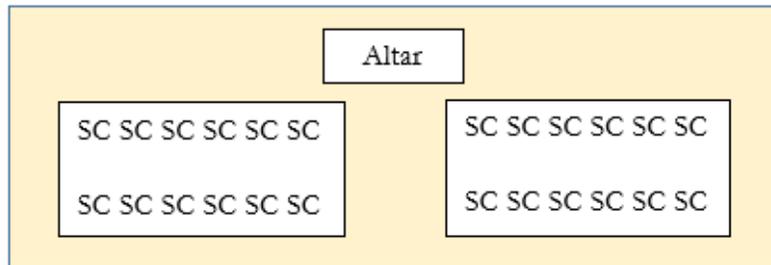
Musicians

- The parish music ministry makes selections that are in line with the parish repertoire and show good liturgical, musical, and pastoral judgement

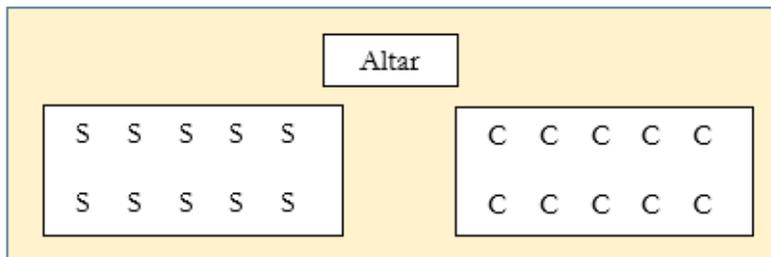
Seating

You have three choices:

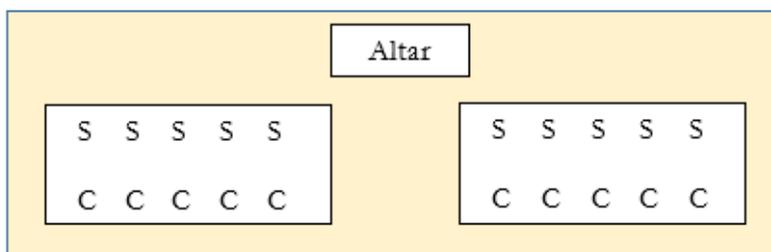
1. The sponsors and candidates are seated side by side.



2. The candidates are seated on one side of the nave, the sponsors on the other side.



3. The candidates are seated together in the front pews and the sponsors are seated together behind them.



Whichever seating arrangement you choose, be sure to have catechists in place to **coordinate the flow** of movement. There should be one or more catechists in place at the ends of the rows (you will need two if you choose seating arrangements two or three) and another near the bishop to guide candidates and sponsors and ensure flow of movement.

Choice of Mass

Confirmations are scheduled during Easter Season.

- **Sundays in Easter season:** the Ritual Mass is not permitted. The bishop will use the Mass texts for the Sunday.
- **Weekdays in Easter season:** the Ritual Mass is permitted. The bishop will use the Mass texts for the Ritual Mass of Confirmation.
- See the Liturgy of the Word section below concerning the choice of readings
- If your Confirmation celebration is scheduled outside of Easter season, please contact Simone to discuss.

Procession

- A catechist should briefly welcome everyone to the celebration
- The candidates for Confirmation should process in before Mass with or without their sponsors (depending on the seating arrangement)
- This pre-procession could be accompanied by a hymn to the Holy Spirit
- The Mass begins with the usual entrance procession
- The pastor should carry in the Sacred Chrism

Introductory Rites

Penitential Rite

The Roman Missal offers three options plus the Sprinkling Rite as an option on Sundays.

1. *Confiteor* (I Confess) and Lord, have mercy. If you choose this option the bishop will lead the people in reciting the *Confiteor* and you have the option to either recite or sing the Lord, have mercy.
2. The second option is less commonly used in our diocese but it is a valid option
3. The third option has invocations followed by the Lord, have mercy. It begins “You came to heal the contrite, Lord, have mercy.” This option can be recited or sung.
4. The Sprinkling Rite would be suitable for Confirmations taking place on Sunday.

Gloria

The Glory to God is sung at a Confirmation Mass even if it takes place on a weekday using the weekday readings.

Liturgy of the Word

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 and upon each one of the baptized or confirmed and that the Lord's will is made known in the life of Christians. – OC no. 13

- **Confirmandi should not be the lectors.**

Sundays (and Saturday Vigil Masses) in Easter

- The readings and Psalm for the Sunday are used
- The Creed is omitted; there is a Profession of Faith in the Confirmation ritual

Weekdays in Easter

- The readings may be taken from the Mass of the day or from the texts for Confirmation. Please choose one or the other so that the readings are from a single lectionary. You should not photocopy the readings.
 - Weekday lectionary
 - Ritual lectionary (or another copy of the Order of Confirmation).
 - The readings will not be in order so you will need to use ribbons or post it flags for the lectors.
 - During Easter season the first reading should be from the Acts of the Apostles.
 - The Responsorial Psalm text (refrain and verses) must be in the translation approved for Canada that is from one of the lectionaries.
 - The psalm should be sung. Musical settings are in the CCCB collection, *Psalms for Sundays and Solemnities* or in *Psalms for the Liturgical Year* by Gordon Johnson. For weekday and ritual Masses, the Psalm from the lectionary might not be in these collections.
 - For the Responsorial Psalms from the texts for Confirmation, musical settings are available from the Office of Liturgy or you may apply a Psalm tone to the text.
 - For weekday Psalms for which you do not have a musical setting, you may either apply a Psalm tone to the text or you may substitute one of the Common Psalms for the liturgical season that are from either of the aforementioned collections for Sundays and solemnities.
- The Creed is omitted; there is a Profession of Faith in the Confirmation ritual.

Presentation of the Candidates

- The CCCB Supplement gives three choices; the text is available from the Office of Liturgy.
- If you choose options B or C be sure to have the text ready for the bishop and a server to hold the book with that text.
- The candidates for Confirmation may be presented by the pastor, another priest, the deacon, or by a catechist.
- The *Order of Confirmation* makes no mention of using a special name for Confirmation. It presumes that the bishop will confirm using the candidate's baptismal name, which draws a close connection between these two sacraments. Even if the name of a saint is chosen, at this point, use the name by which family and friends know the candidate. Communicate the procedure with candidates and sponsors in advance.

Homily

The bishop may conclude his homily by reading the instruction from the ritual book. A book bearer should be prepared to hold this book for the bishop.

Creed

The Creed is not said because there is a Profession of Faith in the Confirmation ritual.

Profession of Faith – Renewal of Baptismal Promises

- 1 server to hold the book and 1-2 servers to take the crosier and mitre
- The bishop will say “This is our faith . . . “: Do not replace this text with anything

Laying On of Hands and Prayer

- A server continues to hold the book.
- The bishop invites all to pray for the candidates and gives them a period of silence in which to do so. The invitation offers a catechesis on the meaning of Confirmation that helps the community to know what it is praying for.
- This imposition of hands is similar to the gesture used for imparting a Solemn Blessing. The words have been part of the Confirmation ritual for over a thousand years. The hand laying associated with the apostolic tradition comes during the anointing with chrism.

Anointing with Chrism

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: Accipe signaculum Doni Spiritus Sancti (Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit) – OC no. 9

- **No music and no pictures** during the anointing please
- The pastor is on the Bishop's left to receive the name cards from the sponsor and the deacon (or another priest or server) is on the right side holding the oil.
- Sponsors should have a card with the name of the candidate clearly printed
- When reaching the bishop, the sponsor hands the name card to the pastor, who shows it to the bishop. The sponsor says: "**Bishop, I present to you for Confirmation, N.**" This way the bishop can hear and read the name.
- The *Order of Confirmation* makes no mention of using a special name for Confirmation. It presumes that the bishop will confirm using the candidate's baptismal name, which draws a close connection between these two sacraments. If the name of a saint is chosen as a model of holiness, it would be used here.
- While presenting the candidate for confirmation, the sponsor places his or her right hand on the confirmand's right shoulder because the Bishop will place his hand on the confirmand's left shoulder after the anointing and offer the greeting of peace.
- The bishop dips his right thumb in the chrism and then will trace the Sign of the Cross on the candidate's forehead while the other fingers of his hand are on top of the candidate's hand, which signifies the apostolic laying on of hands.

Washing Hands

- The bishop will go to the credence table to wash his hands. Do not bring the water and lemons to him.
- You may have music here.
- The server will take the crozier back and place it into the stand

Universal Prayer

- One of the newly confirmed may offer the petitions if no deacon is present.

Preparation of the Gifts

- Select some of the newly confirmed to present the gifts.

Communion

- May be under one species or two, as per the custom of the parish.

Recessional and Photos

- If photos are to take place in the church:
 - The candidates should not process out.
 - In this case the bishop will return to the altar after the recessional hymn for photos.
 - Organize the candidates so that that the photo process has a smooth flow.
- If photos are to take place in the hall:
 - The candidates can follow the bishop in the recessional.

Eastern-Rite Catholic Already Confirmed

- **After** the other candidates have been confirmed, a catechist may present this individual saying something like: “Bishop, N. was confirmed at baptism but has undergone a period of catechesis with his/her peers and wishes to receive a blessing.”
- The sponsor hands the pastor a card with the individual’s name.
- The bishop will bless the individual. There will be no anointing.