



CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF
JEFFERSON CITY

Master of
Ceremonies

A Practical Guide to prepare for the Rite of Confirmation Celebrated During Mass

Revised 22 June 2023

1. Preparations for Submitting the Confirmation Liturgy Form

Please distribute this Practical Guide document to those who are involved with planning the Confirmation Ceremony (see helpful checklist found at the end of this document).

Please submit completed/final (Confirmation) liturgy forms to Mrs. Ginger Borlinghaus, and not exclusively to the Master of Ceremonies. You may direct any questions to the MC prior to the submission and prior to the ceremony.

If your Confirmation Ceremony is celebrated within Mass on a Sunday, please let everyone who might be attending know that it does fulfill their Sunday Obligation.

If your Confirmation Ceremony falls on a Sunday in Ordinary Time, please have the Pastor confer with the Bishop regarding the readings to use – one of which would be from the Rite of Confirmation and the other two of which would be the normal Sunday readings. We will also use the prayers from the Ritual Mass for Confirmation (C). On the Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter, on solemnities, and the Octave of Easter, the prayers and readings from the day must be used. During the Easter season, readings from the Old Testament are not used; rather, the First Reading is from the Acts of the Apostles.

If at all possible, the Confirmation Ceremony should begin at 6:30 PM on weeknights, and – while not required or expected – if a supper is going to be served prior, please have food ready to be served by 5:30 PM. Sufficient time should also be allowed for the review of Sacramental records, vesting, and group/individual photos prior to the ceremony.

Please choose well-trained altar servers for these ceremonies – it is nearly impossible to coach servers during Holy Mass for the specifics of the Confirmation Rite if they do not know how to serve at a regular Mass. The Master of Ceremonies will help coach them on the differences from a normal Mass, but the MC does not have time to teach them the basics of how to serve.

2. Confirmation Within Mass or Without Mass

The Ritual book for the Conferral of Confirmation allows for the Rite to take place within or outside of the Celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. On Sundays and other Holy Days of Obligation, Confirmation should take place within Mass. If back-to-back Confirmation Ceremonies occur, Confirmation would normally take

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place outside of Mass. Additionally, on weekdays, if there are more than 50 candidates for Confirmation, please consider scheduling Confirmation outside of Mass.

3. Practicing for the Confirmation Ceremony

It is vital to practice with Confirmation Candidates prior to the Ceremony. Candidates, at the time for Chrismation, should be ready with their sponsors to come (close) to the Bishop, two by two – one immediately after the other. There should be no lag time, gaps, pauses, or waiting for the next group to enter/exit the pews – it does not have to be rushed, it needs to flow smoothly rather than extend it out unnecessarily.

At the practice, it would be helpful to review:

- That the sponsors are to say the Confirmation name of their candidates to the bishop when they approach him.
- How photos will be organized and arranged before the ceremony begins.

4. Preparation Before the Confirmation Ceremony begins:

Please set the climate controls well in advance of the ceremony, so that the air-conditioning or heating might provide for a comfortable environment for the assembled congregation.

Kindly inform the Bishop's Master of Ceremonies before arrival where the Bishop should vest. If a portable microphone is needed for the ceremony, please have it ready for him with *new* batteries at that location as well.

Red vestments are normally worn when the Ritual Mass for the Conferral of Confirmation is celebrated. However, when Confirmation is celebrated during another Mass, the color of the vestments should correspond to the Mass (i.e. Confirmation on a Sunday during the Easter Season is White; during Advent or Lent it is violet/purple.) When Confirmation takes place outside of Mass, the Bishop would vest in a (Red) Cope while any attending clergy would dress in alb and (red) stole; or cassock, surplice and (red) stole.

The Ritual Mass for the Conferral of Confirmation may not be used on days listed in nn. 1-4 of the *Table of Liturgical Days according to their Order of Precedence*, namely:

1. Easter Triduum of the Lord's passion and resurrection.
2. Christmas, Epiphany, Ascension, and Pentecost.
Sundays of Advent, Lent, and the Easter season.
Ash Wednesday.
Weekdays of Holy Week from Monday to Thursday inclusive.
Days within the octave of Easter.
3. Solemnities of the Lord, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and saints listed in the General Calendar.
All Souls.

4. Proper solemnities, namely:
 - a.) Solemnity of the principal patron of the place, that is, the city or state.
 - b.) Solemnity of the dedication of a particular church and the anniversary.
 - c.) Solemnity of the title of a particular church.
 - d.) Solemnity of the title or of the founder or of the principal patron of a religious order or congregation.

If, the Ritual Mass for the Conferral of Confirmation is used, then the **Roman Missal** should be set for the Ritual Mass for the Conferral of Confirmation (Option C) and the Preface of the Holy Spirit (I) from the Votive Mass of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, it should be set to the appropriate Mass. The Roman Missal also indicates that the **Gloria is part of the Ritual Mass for the Conferral of Confirmation**, even when celebrated on a weekday during the Seasons of Advent & Lent.

The Bishop will bring the Rites Book, “The Order of Confirmation”, and if a Master of Ceremonies is not present, it should be placed in a convenient place for the Renewal of Baptismal Promises and Laying on of Hands which follows immediately after the homily.

The **readings** for the Liturgy need to be chosen and marked in advance of the ceremony. They may be taken in whole or in part from the Rite of Confirmation section of the “Lectionary for Mass” 2002 Edition, Vol. IV, pages 330 and following. On the Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter, on solemnities, and the Octave of Easter, the prayers and readings from the day must be used. During the Easter season, readings from the Old Testament are not used; rather, the First Reading is from the Acts of the Apostles.

In preparation for the Ceremony, please arrange a clean white altar cloth on the altar. The credence table should be prepared with the sacred vessels for Mass (if applicable), a clean corporal, clean purificator(s), a bowl with one large quartered lemon, a pitcher of water, a cruet of water and two finger towels. Please make sure that the number of vessels, corresponds to the number of Holy Communion stations during Mass. The key should be placed in the tabernacle. The Bishop will bring the Sacred Chrism, which will be placed on the credence table before Mass begins.

When **considering using incense and/or having a Gospel procession**, please use prudent judgment. For example, if your servers are not used to using incense or having a Gospel procession, the Sacrament of Confirmation is not the time to start this or for the MC to train the servers on this matter.

The Confirmation ceremony requires **five altar servers**; six if incense will be used. One carries the thurible (censer) and boat, if incense is to be used; another carries the processional cross and two servers carry lighted candles. Two servers wear vimp veils, assisting with the Bishop’s mitre and crozier, and following behind him in the procession. The vimp veils that are worn are brought to the parish by the Bishop. *It is kindly requested that all altar servers be vested and ready for any instructions 30 minutes before the ceremony begins.* This time of instruction is not a “training

session,” hence it is expected that the altar servers would have a good knowledge of their role and function during Mass.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are to be assigned Communion stations in the church only if needed. As ordinary ministers of the Eucharist, concelebrating priests and attending deacons should distribute Holy Communion.

Each candidate **needs to wear a nametag** with his or her Confirmation name printed legibly in large script. The sponsor will also state the Confirmation name when the candidate is presented to the Bishop during the ceremony. The use of *flash* photography during the Mass is absolutely prohibited. **Photography** and **videography** by a professional are acceptable, provided they are done without distraction. Group and individual photos with the Bishop usually take place 15 minutes before the Liturgy begins. A good procedure is to take the group photo first, and then have all the candidates form a line to the Bishop’s right, so that they can approach one at a time, stand at his right for a photo, then move to the left out of the way of the next candidate.

5. The Procession:

It is important for the Liturgy to begin in a timely manner. Therefore, musicians and choir should be sure their preludes conclude in time so that entrance song can begin promptly. If, for some reason, a Master of Ceremonies is not present, the Pastor needs to organize the entrance procession.

The liturgical **procession** proceeds in this order: [thurifer with censer and boat], cross bearer, acolytes, Knights of Columbus Honor guard, [deacon with the Book of the Gospels], [attending deacons], concelebrants, Pastor, Master of Ceremonies, Bishop, [two assisting deacons], and servers with vimps. Candidates are usually seated before the liturgical procession begins.

6. The Liturgy of the Word:

When the Bishop sits for the First Reading, he receives the miter at his place. The **readings** need to be proclaimed from the “Lectionary for Mass” (2002 Edition) rather than from loose sheets. If Confirmation candidates serve as readers, please ensure that they are able to do so audibly and with a clear sense of the reading’s meaning.

If the deacon, who ordinarily proclaims the **Gospel**, is not present, the Pastor or another assigned priest does so. The deacon or priest who proclaims the Gospel needs to request a blessing from the Bishop. The Gospel acclamation should begin at the time when the deacon/priest is receiving the blessing from the Bishop.

The Book of the Gospels is brought to the Bishop to be revered after the Gospel is proclaimed.

7. The Sacrament of Confirmation:

The Catechist (or Deacon or Pastor) presents the Confirmation candidates to the Bishop immediately after the Gospel Book has been revered by the Bishop. If there

are less than 30 candidates, they may all be presented by name, otherwise they should be presented all together as a group. If there are candidates from multiple parishes, they can be presented in separate groups by someone from their respective parishes. When the Bishop has finished his homily, he will invite those to be confirmed to stand for **the renewal of baptismal promises** (the sponsors remain seated at this time). They are to respond with a loud and clear “I do.”

The Bishop will then go to the front of the altar to pray the prayer for **the Laying on of Hands**. The concelebrating priests join behind him and also extend their hands as a single gesture over the entire group of candidates. The deacon does not participate in this ritual action.

Following the Laying on of Hands prayer over the Candidates, the Sponsors should stand, and place their **right** hand on the **right** shoulder of the candidate as they come forward with their Candidate. The line should be kept flowing.

The Pastor(s) should remain standing next to the Bishop during the Chrismation Rite. The Pastor(s) should help the Candidates respond during the Chrismation if they do not.

For **the Anointing with Sacred Chrism**, it is kindly requested that candidates (with sponsors) come up close to the Bishop for the anointing – **two by two, no gaps please**.

The sponsor of the candidate should state the Confirmation name of the candidate immediately upon arriving to the Bishop.

- For example, John’s Confirmation Saint is St. Isidore the Farmer; when it is John’s turn to be confirmed, he approaches the Bishop and his Confirmation Sponsor immediately says, “Isidore.”

The Bishop will say “*N.* Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

The Confirmed replies, “Amen.”

The Bishop will say, “Peace be with you.”

And the Confirmed replies, “And with your Spirit.”

- N.B.: The Sponsor could say “Amen” and “And with your Spirit” with the Confirmed, but it should primarily be the confirmed who says it.
- Pastors, while near the Bishop should be attentive to the following:
 - How well or poorly their Confirmed are responding.
 - To respond “Amen” and “And with your Spirit” if the Confirmed does not.
 - To direct the candidates to come close enough to the Bishop, if necessary.

The Bishop will **wash his hands** after the anointing. Servers should take the lavabo set and towel, as well as bowl of sliced lemons, and approach the Bishop.

For the **Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful)**, it is the Bishop’s preference that they be taken directly from the Ritual for the Conferral of Confirmation. If a deacon is present, he normally reads the petitions.

If Confirmation takes place outside of Mass, the Universal Prayer is concluded with the Our Father, followed by the Blessing and Dismissal.

Within Mass, the altar is prepared in the customary manner when the Universal Prayers are concluded and Mass continues as normal.

During the **Communion Rite**, please indicate to the Bishop beforehand his station for the distribution of Holy Communion. After the Prayer after Communion, but before the Solemn Blessing and dismissal, the Pastor (or another suitable minister) may wish to make **announcements** about the reception, etc., after the post-Communion prayer and before the final blessing.

Incense - It may be used three times during the Liturgy:

1. During the entrance procession, with its use before the Introductory Rites to incense the Altar
2. Before the Proclamation of the Gospel
3. At the Preparation of the Gifts

While the Bishop does not insist on the use of incense at every Confirmation, it is appropriate to use it during the Octave and Sundays of Easter and on solemnities. On other days, please use pastoral common sense.

Dress Code – The custom of male candidates wearing a clean shirt and tie, and possibly a jacket is to be maintained and encouraged. Female candidates may wear dresses or other clothing that cover their shoulders and should be of a length that is appropriate for the reception of the Sacrament. Confirmation candidates and/or their sponsors should not wear shorts or flip-flops.

8. *Varia*:

The Bishop desires to review the parish registers (i.e., records of baptisms, professions of faith, confirmations, marriages, and deaths) during his visit to your parish(es). Please have them available for his examination and signature in the rectory before / following the meal.

Finally, **please copy this document** and **share it** at least a week before Confirmation with:

- || Your parish priests
- || Deacon(s)
- || Confirmation coordinator
- || Parish musicians
- || Servers' instructor
- || Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus Honor Guard Commander

If you have any questions concerning this information, please feel free to contact the Bishop's Masters of Ceremonies.