



CELEBRATION OF CONFIRMATION

Diocese of Alexandria

The celebration of the sacrament of confirmation is a significant moment in the life of the parish. It is important that the liturgy be carefully and appropriately prepared. The pastor or his delegate is to complete the attached [planning sheet](#) and return it to the Office of the Bishop no later than *two weeks* before the liturgy. Also, if there are confirmation certificates for the bishop to sign, they should also be received *two weeks* prior to the liturgy. For questions regarding the ceremony, please call or email Deacon Richard Mitchell (dcnrmithell@diocesealex.org) or 318-445-2401 ext. 206.

The liturgy is to be celebrated according to the Rite of Confirmation. Ceremonies not included in the liturgical Rite of Confirmation, such as the distribution of individual certificates after the anointing with chrism, or other non-liturgical devotional rites, are not permitted. They distract and detract from the rich ritual of the sacrament itself and unduly prolong the liturgy.

Scripture Reading and Liturgical prayers: For Mass readings and settings, please note GIRM 372

Ritual Masses are connected to the celebration of certain Sacraments or Sacramentals. They are prohibited on Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, on Solemnities, on the days within the Octave of Easter, on the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day), on Ash Wednesday, and during Holy Week, and furthermore due regard is to be had for the norms set out in the ritual books or in the Masses themselves."

If confirmation is held during the Saturday Vigil, Sunday Mass, or a day listed above, the readings proper for that day must be used. On other days, the Mass of Confirmation will be used and the readings will be selected for the year by the bishop. Using the same readings at most Confirmation Masses will assist him in homily preparation. The bishop will select the Preface (from among those of the Holy Spirit) and the Eucharistic Prayer.

Liturgical Items: The bishop will ordinarily be accompanied by one of the Diocesan Masters of Ceremonies and will bring his necessary liturgical items to include: Chrism in its stock, Ritual of Confirmation, Miter and Crozier, Alb and Chasuble.

It would be helpful to have two additional servers who would be assigned to holding the miter and crozier. These two servers walk behind the bishop in both the entrance and recessional processions.

Photography: Photos (videotape or still) may be taken *in moderation* during the liturgy. Photos taken during the liturgy should be *without* flash. A group photo and/or individual photos of the newly confirmed with the Bishop may be taken following the liturgy.

Attire of the Confirmandi and Sponsors: Both male and female candidates should be modestly dressed, as befits the celebration of a sacrament. At a minimum, male candidates should wear long dress trousers with a collared long-sleeve shirt and dress shoes. A necktie and suit or sport coat may be worn. Female candidates should wear a dress (or skirt and blouse) of appropriate length. The dress (or blouse) should have sleeves (long or short). A candidate may not wear strapless dresses or dresses/blouses with only straps. The candidate may wear an appropriate jacket or sweater. No candidate should wear clothing with a slogan or representing a sports team. A parish may establish a dress code for their candidates for Confirmation which goes beyond these minimal standards. Sponsors should be encouraged to dress in a comparable manner.

Proclamation of the Gospel: A deacon, if the parish enjoys the ministry of one, will proclaim the Gospel. If no deacon is present, the pastor or another priest will proclaim the Gospel.

Prior to the Ceremony: Before the Mass begins it would be helpful to have the candidates in a room, not in church, where the bishop may meet with them privately for about ten minutes before going to the church. This allows the bishop to be able to introduce himself to them before the celebration.

Arrangements of Candidates in church: In this pandemic, the candidate should sit with those in his or her household in the first pews (allowing for social distance). Sponsors may sit with the household or separately, coming up for the administration of the sacrament.

Introductory Rites: The opening song accompanies the procession of the ministers to the sanctuary and should continue at least until the bishop has reached his chair. The song may continue even after the bishop has reached the chair, if this seems fitting. The candidates may enter the church in the procession before the ministers – single file and socially distanced – or they can be in their place when the Mass begins.

Penitential Rite: If the Penitential Act option will be used, there are three options to select from: Option A – The Confiteor; Option B – “Have mercy on us, O Lord”; Option C – Dialogue with “Lord, have mercy”.

Or

The rite of blessing and sprinkling with holy water may be used in place of the Rite of Penance, especially during the Easter Season. For this rite, the pastor and deacon (if one is present) will sprinkle the congregation.

Note: the sprinkling and Rite of Penance are never used in the same liturgy.

The Liturgy of the Word: To demonstrate respect for the Word of God, the readings are to be proclaimed from the Lectionary (and the Book of the Gospels, if available). At the end of the Gospel reading, the Book of the Gospels is brought to the bishop to be venerated.

THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION:

Presentation of the Candidates: After the Gospel the pastor, another member of the clergy, or a catechist presents the candidates for confirmation. The text for the presentation will be provided. The candidates are to stand at their places when their name is called. They are to be introduced individually and remain standing until the bishop instructs them to be seated. The homily follows.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises: The renewal of baptismal promises is for the *candidates only*. They stand for the renewal (which takes the place of the Creed if Confirmation is celebrated on a date when the Creed is required).

Imposition of Hands: After the baptismal promises have been renewed, the concelebrants stand near the bishop and he will invite all present to pray for the candidates. After praying silently for a short time, the bishop and the pastor (who will assist with the confirmation) will extend hands over the candidates. However, the bishop alone says the prayer.

Anointing with Chrism: The bishop, carrying the Crozier, and an assisting minister carrying the Sacred Chrism will stand in front of the altar (or another suitable place). Individual candidates and their sponsor will approach the bishop. Music, with or without singing, may accompany the

anointing. However, if there is music, it should be not begin until after the first confirmand is confirmed – allowing the people to hear the words that are part of the sacramental anointing.

The candidate or sponsor announces the name of the candidate to the bishop. *No other dialogue is used.* Ordinarily, only the confirmation name is given. This may be the candidate's own name or that of a saint chosen for confirmation.

As the bishop approaches the candidate, the sponsor places his/her right hand on the candidate's right shoulder. The bishop will anoint the forehead of the candidate with the words "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit." The newly confirmed responds: "*Amen*". Next the bishop says: "Peace be with you" and the response is: "And with your spirit." The bishop will exchange a few words with the candidate. In this time of pandemic, the customary handshake at the sign of peace may take a different form or be omitted.

After all have been confirmed, the bishop will wash his hands at the credence table and return to the chair.

General Intercessions: A deacon, or another person may offer the intercessions. If there is no deacon, it is recommended that one of the newly confirmed read the intercessions.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST:

At the presentation of the gifts, only bread and wine (and the parish collection, if one is taken) are to be presented. If there are other items which are significant to those being confirmed, these items may be brought in during the entrance procession. They may *not* be included in the presentation of gifts, and they are never placed on the altar.

Sufficient bread for all communicating at that liturgy should be prepared. If at all possible, the reserved sacrament from the tabernacle should *not* be used for the distribution of Holy Communion at the Mass. While the distribution of the Eucharist under both species is ordinarily encouraged, that practice is suspended until further notice.

Ordinary ministers of the Eucharist (bishop, priests and deacons) are to serve as ministers of Holy Communion. Only if there are not enough ordinary ministers may Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion assist in the distribution of Communion.

The bishop asks that purification of the sacred vessels take place at the Credence Table. (GIRM 279)

CONCLUDING RITES:

Announcements: Announcements are made *after* the Prayer after Communion. This allows the Communion Rite to be completed before the Concluding Rite begins. It is appropriate for the pastor to recognize the priests and deacons who are present, and to thank those who have been involved in the confirmation preparation and celebration.

If a group photo is to be taken after Mass, the newly confirmed should remain in their places. The bishop will process out and immediately return to the sanctuary (or designated place) for the group photo. If no photos are to be taken, the newly confirmed may precede the bishop in the recessional, or they may remain in their pews. The bishop will normally be available for a period after the celebration for additional photos and to greet the people of the parish.