

RITE OF CONFIRMATION

INTRODUCTION

I. ON THE DIGNITY OF CONFIRMATION

1 The baptized follow the path of Christian Initiation through the Sacrament of Confirmation, by which they receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit who was sent by the Lord upon the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost.

2 By this gift of the Holy Spirit the faithful are more perfectly conformed to Christ and are strengthened with courage to bear witness to Christ for the building up of his Body in faith and charity. Indeed the character or seal of the Lord is imprinted on them, so that the Sacrament of Confirmation cannot be repeated.

II. ON THE OFFICES AND MINISTRIES IN THE CELEBRATION OF CONFIRMATION

3 The preparation of the baptized to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation pertains very much to the People of God. Certainly, it is up to pastors to take care that all the baptized come to the fullness of Christian Initiation and therefore are prepared for Confirmation with every care.

Adult catechumens, who will receive Confirmation immediately after Baptism, enjoy the help of the Christian community and especially the instruction given to them during their time of catechumenate, for which task catechists, sponsors, and members of the local Church unite for catechesis and also for common ritual celebrations. Such a catechumenal arrangement may be suitably adapted for those who, baptized as infants, approach Confirmation only in adulthood.

In particular, the greater part of the initiation of children into the sacramental life belongs to Christian parents anxious to ensure, not only for the spirit of faith to be formed and gradually increased in them, but also for them to be prepared for the fruitful reception of the Sacraments of Confirmation and the Eucharist with the help of their teachers who at one time or other take care of catechetical formation. This duty of parents means also for them active participation in the celebration of the Sacraments.

4 Care will be taken that a festive and solemn quality be given to the sacred action which expresses its significance for the local Church. This is achieved especially if all the candidates gather for a communal celebration. Indeed the entire People of God, represented by the families and friends of those to be confirmed and members of the local community, will be invited to participate in this celebration; and it will strive to manifest its faith by the fruits that the Holy Spirit will produce in it.

5 Generally each one to be confirmed has a sponsor who will lead them to receive the Sacrament, who will present them to the minister of Confirmation for the holy anointing and who will also assist afterwards, that the promises they pronounced in Baptism are faithfully carried out according to the Holy Spirit whom they received.

Taking account of today's pastoral circumstances, it is fitting for the sponsor of Baptism, if present, to be also the sponsor of Confirmation. In this way the link between Baptism and Confirmation is more clearly indicated while the office and duty of the sponsor is more effectively expressed.

However, least of all is excluded the faculty to choose one's own Confirmation sponsor. It is also possible that parents themselves present their children. It will be up to the local Ordinary, taking account of conditions and local circumstances, to establish what plan of action is to be observed in his diocese.

6 Pastors of souls will ensure that the sponsor chosen by the one to be confirmed or his family, is spiritually suitable for the duty he accepts and possessed of these qualities:

- a) That he is mature enough to fulfill this office;
- b) That he belongs to the Catholic Church and is initiated with the three Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist.
- c) That he is not prohibited by law from the office of sponsor.

7 The Bishop is the ordinary minister of Confirmation. Generally the Sacrament is administered by him so that it may reproduce more clearly the first outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. For after they were filled with the Holy Spirit, the Apostles themselves transmitted him to the faithful through the laying on of hands. So the reception of the Holy Spirit through the ministry of the Bishop demonstrates more closely the bond that binds those confirmed to the Church and also the mandate received to bear witness to Christ among men.

Apart from the Bishop, they enjoy under the same law the faculty to confirm:

- a) territorial Prelates and territorial Abbots, vicars and prefects apostolic, apostolic administrators and diocesan administrators, within the limits of their territory and while they hold office;
- b) in consideration of the person to be confirmed, a Priest who, in virtue of his office or the mandate of the Diocesan Bishop, baptizes a person who is no longer an infant or admits one already baptized into the full communion of the Catholic Church;
- c) as regards those who are in danger of death, the pastor or indeed any Priest.

8 The Diocesan Bishop is to administer Confirmation personally or is to take care that another Bishop administers it; if necessity requires, he can grant the faculty to one or more specific Priests, who are to administer this Sacrament.

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 in virtue of the law or the special grant of the competent authority can in single cases also associate Priests to themselves to administer the Sacrament.

It is preferable, moreover, that the Priests who are so invited:

- a) either exercise a particular function or office in the diocese, being, namely, either vicars general, episcopal vicars, or district or regional vicars;
- b) or are the pastors of the places where Confirmation is conferred, or pastors of the places where the candidates belong, or Priests who have had a special part in the catechetical preparation of those to be confirmed.

III. ON THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

9 The Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred through the anointing with Chrism on the forehead by virtue of the laying on of hands and the words: *Be Sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.*

Although the laying on of hands made over those to be confirmed along with the prayer *All-powerful God* does not affect the validity of the Sacrament, it is important for the integrity of the rite and the more intelligent understanding of the Sacrament.

Priests who at any time are joined with the principal minister in conferring the Sacrament, carry out the laying on of hands at the same time, along with him, over all the candidates, yet saying nothing.

The entire rite offers two meanings. Through the laying on of hands made over those to be confirmed by the Bishop and the concelebrating Priests, the biblical gesture is expressed by which the gift of the Holy Spirit is invoked in the best way suited to the understanding of the Christian people. In the anointing with Chrism and in the accompanying words, the effect of the gift of the Holy Spirit is clearly expressed. Signed with the fragrant oil by the hand of the Bishop the baptized person receives an indelible character, the Lord's seal, along with the gift of the Spirit who more perfectly configures him to Christ and confers grace upon him to spread the "good odor" among men.

10 Sacred Chrism is consecrated by the Bishop in the Mass usually celebrated on Thursday of Holy Week for this reason.

11 Adult catechumens who are being baptized and also children at the age to receive catechesis, along with receiving Baptism, are generally also admitted to Confirmation and the Eucharist. If this is not possible, they may receive Confirmation in another communal celebration (cf. no. 4). Likewise, in communal celebrations, adults who were baptized in infancy, after being appropriately prepared, may receive Confirmation and the Eucharist.

In respect to children, the administration of Confirmation in the Latin Church is generally deferred until about seven years of age. However, for pastoral reasons, especially that full obedience to Christ the Lord and strong witness to him be imprinted more powerfully in the life of the faithful, the Episcopal Conferences may determine an age higher than that envisaged, so that this Sacrament may be conferred at a more mature age, after suitable instruction.

In danger, the necessary precautions should be taken, that if there is danger of death or other grave difficulties, children would be confirmed at a suitable time, even before the use of reason, so as not to be deprived of the good of the Sacrament.

12 To receive Confirmation it is necessary that one is baptized. Moreover, if a member of the faithful has the use of reason, it is necessary to be in the state of grace, to be suitably instructed and to be able to renew the baptismal promises.

It is up to the Conference of Bishops to more precisely define the pastoral resources so that the candidates, especially children, would be suitably prepared for Confirmation.

However, regarding adults, principles should be followed, suitably adapted, that are established in each diocese for admitting catechumens to Baptism and the Eucharist. It should be especially provided for that suitable catechesis would precede and that the association of the candidates with the Christian community and with individual members of

the faithful would be effective and sufficient to give them suitable assistance, that these candidates would pursue formation to give witness to the Christian life and to exercise the apostolate, and that their desire to participate in the Eucharist would be true (cf. Introduction to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, no. 19).

The preparation of a baptized adult for Confirmation sometimes coincides with his preparation for Marriage. Whenever in these cases it is foreseen that the conditions required for the fruitful reception of Confirmation cannot be fulfilled, the local Ordinary will judge whether it is more suitable to defer the same Confirmation until the time after the celebration of Marriage.

If Confirmation is conferred on a member of the faithful enjoying the use of reason but tending towards danger of death, a spiritual preparation appropriate to each case should precede, if possible.

13 Confirmation generally takes place during Mass so that the fundamental connection between this Sacrament and the entire Christian Initiation which reaches its culmination in Communion with the Body and Blood of Christ would be more manifest. For this reason, those confirmed participate in the Eucharist which perfects their Christian Initiation.

If, however, children are to be confirmed who have not yet received the Most Holy Eucharist nor are admitted to First Communion in this liturgical action or if other special reasons advise, it should be conferred outside of Mass. Whenever Confirmation is conferred without Mass it should be preceded by a sacred celebration of the Word of God.

Whenever Confirmation is conferred during Mass it is appropriate that the same minister should celebrate the Mass of Confirmation and by all means concelebrate, especially with the Priests who happen to be associated with him in administering the Sacrament.

If the Mass is celebrated by another, it is appropriate that the Bishop would preside at the Liturgy of the Word in which he does everything that generally pertains to the celebrant and at the end of Mass gives the blessing.

It is of great importance that the celebration of the Word of God is carried out, from which the Rite of Confirmation takes its lead. For truly, from hearing the Word of God comes forth the multiform action of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in each one of the baptized or of those to be confirmed, and by this the will of God is manifested in the life of Christians.

Great importance is to be given to the recitation of the Lord's Prayer which those confirmed will recite along with the people, either during Mass before Communion or outside of Mass before the blessing takes place, for it is the same Spirit who prays in us, and in the Spirit the Christian says: "Abba, Father."

14 The names of those confirmed, with mention made of the minister, the parents, and sponsors, and the place and date of the conferral of Confirmation are to be recorded in the Confirmation register of the diocesan curia, or, where the Conference of Bishops or the Diocesan Bishop has prescribed it, in a register to be kept in the parish archives. The pastor must inform the pastor of the place of Baptism about the conferral of Confirmation, so that a notation is made in the baptismal register, according to the norm of the law.

15 If the pastor of the place was not present, the minister either personally or through another is to inform him, as soon as possible, about the conferral of Confirmation.

IV. CONCERNING THE ADAPTATIONS THAT MAY BE MADE IN THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

16 It is up to Episcopal Conferences in virtue of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (art. 63 b), to prepare a section in the local rituals that would correspond to this section of *The Roman Pontifical* on Confirmation, taking account of the needs of each region that, given the recognition of the Apostolic See, would be followed in the relevant regions.²²

17 The Conference of Bishops will consider whether, taking account of local circumstances and conditions, and also the innate character and traditions of peoples, it would be appropriate:

a) To suitably adapt the formulae by which the promises and baptismal professions are renewed, whether to consider the same text used in the Order of Baptism or to accommodate the same formulae that they respond more closely to the conditions of those to be confirmed;

b) To introduce an alternative for the peace given by the minister after the anointing, either individually or for all those confirmed at the same time.

18 The minister may, in individual cases and attentive to the condition of those to be confirmed, introduce some explanations into the rite and may suitably modify those already there, for example, to give them in the style of a familiar conversation, especially with children, and so on.

When Confirmation is conferred by an extraordinary minister or by a concession of the general law or by a special indult of the Apostolic See, it is recommended that he should give mention to the Bishop as the original minister of the Sacrament and should explain why Priests also are given the faculty to confirm by law or by indult of the Apostolic See.

V. THE ITEMS TO BE PREPARED

19 For Confirmation to be administered there should be prepared:

a) The sacred vestments required for the celebration of Mass, whether for the Bishop or, if there are any, for the Priests assisting him, when Confirmation is conferred during Mass which they concelebrate; if the Mass is celebrated by another, it is appropriate that the minister of Confirmation and the Priests who join with him in administering the Sacrament would participate in the Mass dressed in the prescribed sacred vestments for the celebration of Confirmation namely alb, stole and for the minister of Confirmation, a cope; these vestments are worn also when Confirmation is conferred outside of Mass.

b) A seat for the Bishop and for the Priests assisting him;

c) The vessel (or vessels) with sacred Chrism;

d) *The Roman Pontifical* or *The Roman Ritual*;

e) When Confirmation is conferred during Mass, what is necessary for the celebration of Mass and, if Holy Communion is distributed in this form, for Communion under both species;

f) What is necessary for the washing of hands after the anointing of those to be confirmed.

²² Cf. *Ordo Baptismi parvulorum* (Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1969), Praenotanda generalia de Initiatione christiana, nos. 30-33, pp. 12-13.

CHAPTER I

RITE OF CONFIRMATION DURING MASS

The Liturgy of the Word

20 The Liturgy of the Word is celebrated in the ordinary way. The readings may be taken in whole or in part from the Mass of the day or from the texts for Confirmation in the *Lectionary for Mass* (nos. 764-768) and listed in Chapter V, part III, p. 372.

Sacrament of Confirmation


PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

21 After the Gospel the Bishop and the Priests who will be ministers of the Sacrament with him take their seats. The Parish Priest (pastor) or another Priest, Deacon, or catechist presents the candidates for Confirmation, according to the custom of the region. If possible, each candidate is called by name and comes individually to the sanctuary. If the candidates are children, they are accompanied by one of their sponsors or parents and stand before the celebrant.

If there are very many candidates, they are not called by name, but simply take a suitable place before the Bishop.

HOMILY OR ADDRESS

22 The Bishop then gives a brief Homily. He should explain the readings and so lead the candidates, their sponsors and parents, and the whole assembly to a deeper understanding of the mystery of Confirmation. He may do so in these or similar words:

n the day of Pentecost the Apostles received the Holy Spirit as the Lord had promised. They also received the power of giving the Holy Spirit to others and so completing the work of Baptism. This we read in the Acts of the Apostles. When Saint Paul placed his hands on those who had been baptized, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they began to speak in other languages and in prophetic words.

Bishops are successors of the Apostles and have this power of giving the Holy Spirit to the baptized, either personally or through the Priests they appoint.

In our day the coming of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation is no longer marked by the gift of tongues, but we know his coming by faith. He fills our hearts with the love of God, brings us together in one faith but in different vocations, and works within us to make the Church one and holy.

The gift of the Holy Spirit which you are to receive will be a spiritual sign and seal to make you more like Christ and more perfect members of his Church. At his Baptism by John, Christ himself was anointed by the Spirit and sent out on his public ministry to set the world on fire.

You have already been baptized into Christ and now you will receive the power of his Spirit and the Sign of the Cross on your forehead. You must be witnesses before all the world to his suffering, Death, and Resurrection; your way of life should at all times reflect the goodness of Christ. Christ gives varied gifts to his Church, and the Spirit distributes them among the members of Christ's Body to build up the holy People of God in unity and love.

Be active members of the Church, alive in Jesus Christ. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit give your lives completely in the service of all, as did Christ, who came not to be served but to serve.

So now, before you receive the Spirit, I ask you to renew the Profession of Faith you made in Baptism or your parents and godparents made in union with the whole Church.

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

23 After the Homily the candidates stand and the Bishop questions them:

Bishop:

**Do you renounce Satan,
and all his works,
and all his empty show?**

Candidates:

I do.

Bishop:

**Do you believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth?**

Candidates:

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?**

Candidates:

I do.

Bishop:

**Do you believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who came upon the Apostles at Pentecost
and today is given to you sacramentally in Confirmation?**

Candidates:

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?**

Candidates:

I do.

The Bishop accepts their Profession of Faith 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 whole congregation replies:

Amen.

For This is our faith, some other formula may be substituted, or the community may express its faith in an appropriate song.

LAYING ON OF HANDS

24 The concelebrating Priests stand near the Bishop. He faces the people and, with hands joined, sings or says:

**My dear friends,
in Baptism God our Father
gave the new birth of eternal life
to his chosen sons and daughters.
Let us pray to our Father
that he will pour out the Holy Spirit
to strengthen his sons and daughters with his gifts
and anoint them to be more like Christ the Son of God.**

All pray in silence for a brief period.

25 The Bishop and the Priests who will minister the Sacrament with him lay hands upon all the candidates (by extending their hands over them). The Bishop alone sings or says:

**All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by water and the Holy Spirit
you freed your sons and daughters from sin
and gave them new life.
Send your Holy Spirit upon them
to be their helper and guide.
Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of right judgment and courage,
the spirit of knowledge and reverence.
Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.
Through Christ our Lord.**

R. Amen.

ANOINTING WITH CHRISM

26 The Deacon brings the Chrism to the Bishop. Each candidate goes to the Bishop, or the Bishop may go to the individual candidates. The one who presented the candidate places his (her) right hand on the latter's shoulder and gives the candidate's name to the Bishop; or the candidate may give his (her) own name.

27 The Bishop dips his right thumb in the Chrism and 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 says:

Peace be with you.

The newly confirmed replies:

And with your spirit.

28 If Priests assist the Bishop in conferring the Sacrament, all the vessels of Chrism are brought to the Bishop by the Deacon or by other ministers. Each of the Priests comes to the Bishop, who gives him a vessel of Chrism.

The candidates go to the Bishop or to the Priests, or the Bishop and Priests may go to the candidates. The anointing is done as described above (no. 27).

29 During the anointing an appropriate song may be sung. After the anointing the Bishop and the Priests wash their hands.

The Profession of Faith is omitted, since it has already been made.

UNIVERSAL PRAYER, OR PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

30 The Universal Prayer, or the Prayer of the Faithful, follows, in this or a similar form determined by the competent authority.

Bishop:

**My dear friends,
let us be one in prayer to God our Father
as we are one in the faith, hope, and love his Spirit gives.**

Deacon or minister:

**For these sons and daughters of God,
confirmed by the gift of the Spirit,
that they may give witness to Christ
by lives built on faith and love,
let us pray to the Lord:**

R/. Lord, hear our prayer.

Deacon or minister:

**For their parents and godparents
who led them in faith,
that by word and example
they may always encourage them
to follow the way of Jesus Christ,
let us pray to the Lord:**

R/. Lord, hear our prayer.

Deacon or minister:

**For the holy Church of God,
in union with N. our Pope, N. our Bishop,
and all the Bishops, that God,
who gathers us together by the Holy Spirit,
may help us grow in unity of faith and love
until his Son returns in glory,
let us pray to the Lord:**

R/. Lord, hear our prayer.

Deacon or minister:

**For all men and women,
of every race and nation,
that they may acknowledge the one God as Father,
and in the bond of common fellowship
seek his Kingdom,
which is peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,
let us pray to the Lord:**

R/. Lord, hear our prayer.

Bishop:

**God our Father,
you sent your Holy Spirit upon the Apostles,
and through them and their successors
you give the Spirit to your people.
May his work begun at Pentecost
continue to grow in the hearts of all who believe.
Through Christ our Lord.**

R/. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

31 After the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful) the Liturgy of the Eucharist is celebrated according to the Order of Mass, with these changes:

- a) the Profession of Faith is omitted, since it has already been made;
- b) some of the newly confirmed may join those who bring the gifts to the altar;
- c) when Eucharistic Prayers I, II, or III are used, the proper intercessions are said, as indicated (cf. Chapter V, part I, and Ritual Masses "For the Conferral of Confirmation").

32 Adults who are confirmed, their sponsors, parents, wives and husbands, and catechists may receive Communion under both kinds.

The Concluding Rites

33 Instead of the usual blessing at the end of Mass, the following blessing or the Prayer over the People is used:

SOLEMN BLESSING AT THE END OF MASS

The Deacon or minister says the following invitation:

Bow down for the blessing.

The Bishop, with hands extended over the newly confirmed, says:

**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.

And he blesses all the people, adding:

**And may almighty God bless all of you, who are gathered here,
the Father, ✠ and the Son, ✠ and the Holy ✠ Spirit.**

R/. Amen.

Or:

PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE

Instead of the preceding blessing, the Prayer over the People may be used. The Deacon or minister says the following invitation:

Bow down for the blessing.

The Bishop, with hands extended over the newly confirmed and the people, says:

**Confirm, O God,
what you have brought about in us,
and preserve in the hearts of your faithful
the gifts of the Holy Spirit:
may they never be ashamed
to confess Christ crucified before the world
and by devoted charity
may they ever fulfill his commands.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.**

R/. Amen.

**And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, ✠ and the Son, ✠ and the Holy ✠ Spirit,
come down on you and remain with you for ever.**

R/. Amen.