

# Preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation

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The liturgy during which the Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred is the most frequent opportunity for the Archbishop to celebrate the sacred mysteries in the various parish churches of the Archdiocese. The *Ceremonial of Bishops* reminds us that “the office of bishop as teacher, sanctifier, and pastor of his Church shines forth most clearly in a liturgy that he celebrates with his people.”<sup>1</sup> It also states, “In the person of the bishop, with the presbyters gathered round him, the Lord Jesus Christ, the High Priest, is present in the midst of the faithful.”<sup>2</sup> Any liturgy celebrated with the diocesan bishop, then, regardless of location, is truly a liturgy of the entire local Church, not just that of the immediate individual assembly of the faithful. Given the rich theological significance of these liturgies, the following principles and guidelines are offered to assist pastors and parish staff members in the remote, proximate, and immediate preparation for the celebration of the liturgy for the conferral of confirmation.

## Remote Preparation

### Candidate Requirements

In the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, confirmation is celebrated when candidates are between the ages of 12 and 16.<sup>3</sup> The parish is to ensure that the candidates receive an adequate catechesis on the sacrament and express the desire to be confirmed.

### Sponsor Requirements

The sponsor helps the candidate learn to be a true witness to Christ and to faithfully share and defend the faith.

The sponsor must meet the following canonical requirements:<sup>4</sup>

1. completion of the sixteenth year of age, unless the pastor determines an exception is justified
2. be a baptized Catholic who has been confirmed, has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist, leads a life of faith, and is not bound by any canonical penalty

Parents may not be sponsors.<sup>5</sup>

It is desirable that one of the candidate’s godparents be the sponsor for confirmation to more fully express the connection between the two sacraments.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Ceremonial of Bishops*, n. 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Ceremonial of Bishops*, n. 8.

<sup>3</sup> cf. Archdiocese of Cincinnati, *Sacraments for Young People*, pg. 37.

<sup>4</sup> cf. Code of Canon Law (CIC), canons 893 and 874.

<sup>5</sup> cf. CIC, canon 874 §1, 5°.

<sup>6</sup> cf. CIC, canon 893 §2.

## Sacramental Form

“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: *‘Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.’*”<sup>7</sup>

A double symbolism exists in Confirmation. The laying on of hands expresses the biblical gesture by which the Holy Spirit is invoked. In the anointing and the accompanying words, the effect of the giving of the Holy Spirit is clearly signified. Through this two-fold action the baptized receive the indelible character, the seal of the Lord, together with the gift of the Spirit that conforms them more fully to Christ and gives them the grace of spreading among men and women “the pleasing fragrance of Christ.”<sup>8</sup>

## Proximate Preparation

### Planning the Liturgy

A liturgical planning sheet is sent at the same time as this packet. Please fill out the sheet according to the guidelines below and return it via email as indicated on the sheet to the Master of Ceremonies to the Archbishop.

#### 1. Presidential Prayers/Orations

The presidential prayers from the Ritual Mass *For the Conferral of Confirmation* are used on the following occasions:

- weekdays of Advent, Ordinary Time, Lent, and Easter
- Sundays of Ordinary Time (including Saturday Vigil Masses)

The presidential prayers of the *proper liturgical day* are used when confirmation is conferred on:

- Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter (including Saturday Vigil Masses)
- any solemnity

#### 2. Penitential Act

This is chosen from one of the three standard forms (Confiteor; Have mercy on us..., or invocations). Form B (Have mercy on us...) is not recommended unless a parish community is accustomed to this infrequently used form. If Form C is selected, the invocations should be chosen only from those listed in the Introductory Rites of the Roman Missal or from the options in Appendix VI of the Roman Missal; the invocations should not be composed by the parish.

When appropriate (outside of the seasons of Advent and Lent), the Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water (see Appendix II of the Roman Missal) may replace the Penitential Act.

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<sup>7</sup> *The Roman Pontifical: The Order of Confirmation*, n. 9.

<sup>8</sup> cf. *The Roman Pontifical: The Order of Confirmation*, n. 9.

### **3. Gloria**

The Gloria is sung whenever the Ritual Mass is celebrated, *even on weekdays of Advent and Lent*. On Sundays of Ordinary Time and of Easter and on solemnities, it is also sung, as usual.

### **4. Readings**

When the Ritual Mass is said, the readings are taken from the selections for the Mass for the Conferral of Confirmation (numbers 764-768 in the Lectionary, typically vol. IV).

When the Ritual Mass is not said (Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, or on a solemnity), the readings are those of the proper liturgical day.

### **5. Universal Prayer**

The parish may prepare the petitions of the Universal Prayer for the Mass. A prepared introduction for the Celebrant can also be prepared by the parish. Any prepared texts should be forwarded to the Master of Ceremonies to the Archbishop along with the completed planning sheet.

The parish may also choose to use the form of the Universal Prayer as given in *The Order of Confirmation*, the text of which is included at the end of this document.

In either case it is common practice in the Archdiocese to conclude the Universal Prayer with the archdiocesan Prayer for Vocations. The text of the Prayer for Vocations should be provided for the congregation in the program or worship aid for the Mass.

### **6. Preface**

When the Ritual Mass is said, either Preface I or Preface II of the Holy Spirit is prayed. On other occasions the preface proper to the season or feast is prayed.

### **7. Solemn Blessing**

The parish should select either the Solemn Blessing or the Prayer over the People as provided in *The Order of Confirmation* for use during the Concluding Rites. The texts of blessing and the Prayer over the People are included at the end of this document.

### **8. Vestments**

These are typically red, or white, except on the Sundays of Advent and Lent when violet is used. The celebrant will bring his own chasuble.

## Assisting Ministers and Liturgical Roles

### Acolytes

Typically five experienced servers are needed to perform the duties of cross bearer/book bearer, acolyte (2), miter bearer, and crozier bearer. If incense will be used, at least one additional server is required.

### Deacons and Lectors

Lay lectors, who can be regularly scheduled parish lectors or catechists, proclaim the first two readings. The deacon or a concelebrating priest proclaims the Gospel. If a deacon is present, he proclaims the petitions; if not, one of the lectors does. It is very helpful if the lectors and deacons know beforehand which readings are to be read. If there are two or more deacons involved with the Mass, they should determine their roles in advance (Deacon of the Word/Deacon of the Eucharist).

### Gift Bearers

It is appropriate that during the hymn for the presentation of the gifts some of the newly confirmed present the bread and the wine (and water) for the celebration of the Eucharist to the deacon or priest preparing the altar.<sup>9</sup>

### Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

As needed, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be assigned to assist with distribution of Holy Communion.

## Some General Norms

1. **Candidates should not take on liturgical roles** such as lector, cantor, server, or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.
2. The candidates should choose the **name of a saint**, and it is a fitting option that, in order to show unity between Baptism and Confirmation, the baptismal name be used. However, if another name is chosen that is not the name of a saint, it is to be one that is not alien or offensive to Christian sensibilities.<sup>10</sup>
3. For liturgies celebrated at the cathedral or another location with the participation of candidates from more than one parish, pastors are to **coordinate** among themselves and their staff members to determine the assignments of assisting ministers and other roles.
4. If there is a parish school, **no distinction** is to be made between candidates from the school and those from the parish's religious education classes.
5. The text of the archdiocesan **Prayer for Vocations** should be available for the congregation either in the worship aid or in a hymnal or other more permanent location.
6. Wearing of stoles by the candidates is **not permitted** since the stole is a proper liturgical garment reserved to the ordained clergy.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> cf. *Ceremonial of Bishops*, n. 470.

<sup>10</sup> cf. CIC, canon 855.

<sup>11</sup> cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, nn. 123-126.

7. The readings of the Mass are to be taken directly from the approved version as provided in the Lectionary for Mass. Other translations of the texts or modifications to them in any way are not permitted (approved settings of the Psalms are permissible).<sup>12</sup>
8. Glass and earthenware vessels are **not suitable** for containing the sacred Body and Blood of the Lord.<sup>13</sup>

## Rehearsal of the Liturgy

To facilitate a reverent and meaningful celebration of this significant liturgy in the life of a parish, a rehearsal with the candidates and their sponsors and, if possible, the servers should take place prior to the scheduled date of the Confirmation. A general sequence of events with some particular notes is provided below.

### 1. Procession

The procession should move to the sanctuary by the center aisle. The cross bearer and acolytes lead the procession unless incense is used (in which case the thurifer goes first). If there is a separate book bearer, he or she should walk directly behind the cross bearer and acolytes. They are followed by the candidates (usually accompanied by their sponsors). Next come the deacon with the Book of the Gospels (if used), the concelebrants, a second deacon (or the single deacon, if the Book of the Gospels is not used), the Master of Ceremonies, and the confirming celebrant. The miter and crozier bearers follow the celebrant. After the proper reverences are made, all go to their assigned places. The Master of Ceremonies, book bearer, miter and crozier bearers should sit together.

In order to keep the procession flowing, two things are helpful. First, space out the candidates (and sponsors if processing), allowing about six feet of space between each two-by-two pair. This allows them to bow at the front of the aisle and not have the pair behind them stop and wait. Second, it is generally preferable that upon reaching the front of the aisle, the candidates (and sponsors) bow to reverence the altar and then proceed across the front of the pews and enter their pew via the side aisle. This may not be possible in every church, but, if it is possible, it works much better than having the candidates and sponsors enter by the center aisle.

### 2. Introductory Rites and the Readings

The Mass follows its usual form from the Introductory Rites through the Gospel.

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<sup>12</sup> cf. *The Lectionary for Mass*, Introduction: n. 111.

<sup>13</sup> cf. *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, n. 117 and *The General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, nn.327-329.

### 3. Presentation of the Candidates

Immediately after the Gospel, the candidates for confirmation are presented as a group. Individual name presentation of candidates does not take place.

The pastor, or an appropriate parish representative (DRE, catechist, or teacher), presents the candidates with the following words:

*Archbishop Schnurr (or name of the priest confirming the candidates), the parish community of \_\_\_\_\_ wishes to present to you its young people who have been prepared and freely wish to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Each candidate has been well instructed in the significance of this sacrament for the life of Christian faith and is accompanied by a sponsor to assist in living out that faith with conviction. It is my privilege to present them to you at this time. Candidates please stand.*

If more than one parish is represented at the liturgy, the presentation should only be done once. Simply name the various parishes who have candidates present.

### 4. Homily

The celebrant will preach.

### 5. Renewal of Baptismal Promises

After the homily, the candidates renew their Baptismal promises by responding ***“I do”*** to the questions asked by the celebrant. All present may join the candidates in responding. Baptismal candles **should not** be lighted for the renewal of promises as this liturgical action is reserved only for the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism itself and for the renewal of baptismal promises at the Easter Vigil.

In Masses where the Creed would normally be recited, the Renewal of Baptismal Promises serves as the profession of faith.

### 6. Conferral of the Sacrament

- a. Following the renewal of the baptismal promises, the celebrant will extend his hands and pray over the candidates as a group. Concelebrating priests are not to extend their hands over the candidates during the prayer. Only the bishop or priest actually administering the sacrament should extend hands.
- b. After the prayer over the candidates, the celebrant will move to the designated location for the anointing.
- c. Three ministers join the celebrant during the anointing. (These are the pastor and two others: typically any other concelebrants and deacons who are assisting at the Mass, or catechists, teachers, or DREs.)
  - i. The pastor should hold the vessel of Sacred Chrism immediately to the confirming celebrant’s right

- ii. The other two ministers stand one to the confirming minister's left and one to the right of the pastor; these individuals assist with:
  - 1. receiving name cards from the candidates and holding them where the celebrant can easily see them;
  - 2. positioning the candidates very close to the celebrant, two-by-two, so that they are within arm's reach for the anointing;
  - 3. reminding the sponsor, if necessary, to place their right hand on the candidate's right shoulder during the anointing
  
- d. Once the Celebrant and the assisting ministers are in position, the candidates and sponsors stand and immediately move towards the celebrant, two by two.
  - i. **CANDIDATES APPROACH IN TWO LINES**
    - 1. the next candidate to be confirmed should step up beside the candidate currently being confirmed so that the celebrant can simply turn from one to the other and continue the confirmations without delay
    - 2. the candidates are each followed by the sponsor. If the candidates are carrying their confirmation name cards, they present them to the assisting minister as they approach.
  
  - ii. Candidates should be instructed:
    - 1. to **stand very close** to the celebrant (beside the person being confirmed before them)
    - 2. to **respond** "Amen" as follows:  
*Celebrant: "N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit."*  
*Candidate: "Amen."*
    - 3. to shake hands and **respond** "And with your spirit" while exchanging the Sign of Peace:  
*Celebrant: "Peace be with you."*  
*Candidate: "And with your spirit."*
  
  - iii. Sponsors should be instructed:
    - 1. to proceed behind the candidate to the Celebrant and place his/her right hand on the right shoulder of the candidate as the candidate is being confirmed.
    - 2. to assist the candidate to move very close to the celebrant.
  
  - iv. After the anointing and the Sign of Peace, the newly confirmed and his/her sponsor return to their places.
  
- e. Confirmation Names: At the time of anointing, the Celebrant must be made aware of the candidate's confirmation name. The names should be printed in large letters on the card so the Celebrant can read them easily.

## 7. Hand-washing

When the last candidate is confirmed, the acolytes wash the Celebrant's hands using lemon slices, water, and towel.

The Universal Prayer follows immediately. The deacon or reader (if there is no deacon) should be prepared to read the intercessions as the hand-washing is taking place.

## **8. Preparation of the Gifts**

A procession with the offerings for the Eucharist should be organized in which some of the newly confirmed may bring the gifts forward to the deacon or concelebrant preparing the altar.

## **9. Eucharistic Prayer**

If concelebrants are present, they are welcome to join in praying aloud the respective parts of the Eucharistic Prayer indicated for concelebrants. The Master of Ceremonies will assign specific parts to concelebrants before Mass begins. Eucharistic Prayer III is typically prayed with the insert from the Ritual Mass for the Conferral of Confirmation, if the Ritual Mass is used. The insert for confirmation is not used if the Ritual Mass is not prayed.

## **10. Communion**

Distribution of Holy Communion under both Eucharistic species is desirable in this liturgy.

## **11. Concluding Rites**

After the Prayer After Communion, the pastor is welcome to make any announcements or comments. The final blessing and dismissal follow; then the recessional hymn begins. The recessional procession is formed in the same order as the entrance procession except for the newly confirmed. If the newly confirmed are to join the recessional procession, they follow **behind** the Celebrant. The ministers will begin to form the procession at the direction of the Master of Ceremonies.

## **12. Photographs**

If a group photo will be taken, it should occur immediately after the liturgy. The candidates should have rehearsed where they will stand for the photo; they should begin to be positioned for the photo immediately once the final hymn concludes. In order to facilitate these movements, if there will be a group photo, the candidates should not process out of the church, but should remain in their pews until they move into position for the photo. The Archbishop will stand for the photo, so a chair is not necessary for him.



## Immediate Preparation

### Preparation of the Rectory (or other vesting space)

1. Given the crowds typical for such liturgies, please have a parking space reserved for the Celebrant. The celebrant will typically arrive about 30 minutes before the scheduled start of the liturgy.
2. Normally a room in the rectory or the parish offices is to be arranged to allow the Celebrant to vest. If the sacristy is more convenient, it should be prepared appropriately. Please have the following available in the place of vesting:
  - a. a glass of water for the archbishop
  - b. the Roman Missal
  - c. the text of the petitions of the Universal Prayer
  - d. a copy of the worship aid for the liturgy
  - e. the wireless microphone for the archbishop (a lavalier style microphone is preferred)
3. Parish **sacramental records books** should be arranged for review as well. Parishes celebrating confirmation at the cathedral should bring their **sacramental records books to the cathedral sacristy** before the liturgy and pick them up after the liturgy.

### Preparation of the Church

1. In accord with the sanctuary design and space, the celebrant's chair, deacon's chair, and concelebrants' chairs should be appropriately arranged.
2. A small table with a **glass of water** should be next to the celebrant's chair.
3. Servers should be seated at chairs from which they can best perform their duties. (The Master of Ceremonies may rearrange the seating for the servers, if necessary.)
4. Any worship aids for the liturgy should be placed on all the chairs for the ministers in the sanctuary.
5. The altar should be clear.
6. In addition to the normal items required for Mass, the credence table should also have sliced **lemon quarters, a bowl, a pitcher of water, and a hand towel** for washing hands after the anointing with Chrism.
7. The Roman Missal and the text for the Universal Prayer should be available for the Master of Ceremonies and the Celebrant to review prior to the Mass.
8. Hosts and wine (and water) should be at a table provided for the offertory procession.

## Additional considerations

1. The Celebrant will bring his own vestments, the Chrism, and the ritual book of *The Order of Confirmation*.
2. If a parish celebrates Confirmation at the Cathedral, reception of the sacrament should be recorded in the parish sacramental records, not the Cathedral's (with a note indicating that the sacrament took place at the Cathedral). Consult the *Sacramental Records Handbook* pages 11-12 for more details on the recording of confirmation in various situations.

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Any questions regarding the preparation or execution of the liturgy for the Conferral of the Sacrament of Confirmation should be directed to the Master of Ceremonies to the Archbishop:

Reverend Jason Williams  
[jwilliams@catholicaoc.org](mailto:jwilliams@catholicaoc.org)  
513-263-3344

## Appendix I

### Text for the presentation of candidates

If candidates from only one parish are present:

**Archbishop Schnurr (or name of the priest confirming the candidates), the parish community of \_\_\_\_\_ wishes to present to you its young people who have been prepared and freely wish to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Each candidate has been well instructed in the significance of this sacrament for the life of Christian faith and is accompanied by a sponsor to assist in living out that faith with conviction. It is my privilege to present them to you at this time. Candidates please stand.**

If candidates from more than one parish are present:

**Archbishop Schnurr (or name of the priest confirming the candidates), the parish communities of \_\_\_\_\_ wish to present to you their young people who have been prepared and freely wish to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Each candidate has been well instructed in the significance of this sacrament for the life of Christian faith and is accompanied by a sponsor to assist in living out that faith with conviction. It is my privilege to present them to you at this time. Candidates please stand.**

## Appendix II

### Option for the Universal Prayer as given in *The Order of Confirmation*:

**Celebrant:**

**My dear brothers and sisters,  
let us humbly pray to God the almighty Father  
and be of one mind in our prayer,  
just as faith, hope, and charity,  
which proceed from his Holy Spirit, are one.**

**Deacon or minister:**

**For these his servants,  
whom the gift of the Holy Spirit has confirmed:  
that, planted in faith and grounded in love,  
they may bear witness to Christ the Lord  
by their way of life,  
let us pray to the Lord.**

**R.** Lord, hear our prayer.

**Deacon or minister:**

**For their parents and sponsors:  
that by word and example  
they may continue to encourage  
those whom they have sponsored in the faith  
to follow in the footsteps of Christ,  
let us pray to the Lord.**

**R.** Lord, hear our prayer.

**Deacon or minister:**

**For the holy Church of God  
together with N. our Pope, N. our Archbishop,  
and all the Bishops:  
that, gathered by the Holy Spirit,  
the Church may grow and increase in unity of  
faith and love  
until the coming of the Lord,  
let us pray to the Lord.**

**R.** Lord, hear our prayer.

Deacon or minister:

**For the whole world:  
that all people, who have one Maker and Father,  
may acknowledge one another as brothers and sisters,  
without discrimination of race or nation,  
and with sincere hearts seek the Kingdom of God,  
which is peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,  
let us pray to the Lord.**

**R.** Lord, hear our prayer.

Celebrant:\*

**O God, who gave the Holy Spirit to your Apostles  
and willed that through them and their successors  
the same Spirit be handed on to the rest of the faithful,  
listen favorably to our prayer,  
and grant that your divine grace,  
which was at work when the Gospel was  
first proclaimed,  
may now spread through the hearts of those  
who believe in you.  
Through Christ our Lord.**

**R.** Amen.

\*The celebrant may lead the congregation in the Prayer for Vocations in place of the concluding prayer.

## Appendix III

### Text of the archdiocesan Prayer for Vocations

**Almighty Father,  
You have created us for some definite purpose.  
Grant us the grace to know the path  
You have planned for us in this life  
and to respond with a generous “Yes.”**

**Make our archdiocese, parishes, homes and hearts  
fruitful ground for Your gift of vocations.  
May our young people respond to Your call  
with courage and zeal.**

**Stir among our men a desire and the strength  
to be good and holy priests.  
Bless us with consecrated religious  
and those called to a chaste single life,  
permanent deacons, and faithful husbands and wives,  
who are a sign of Christ’s love for His Church.**

**We commend our prayer for vocations to You, Father,  
through the intercession of Mary our Mother,  
in the Holy Spirit, through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

## Appendix IV

### Options for the final blessing as given in *The Order of Confirmation*:

#### Option I – Solemn Blessing:

The deacon or, in his absence, the minister of Confirmation himself, says the invitation: Bow down for the blessing.

The Celebrant, 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 gather 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.

Option II – Prayer over the People:

The deacon or, in his absence, the minister of Confirmation himself, says the invitation: Bow down for the blessing.

The Celebrant, with hands extended over 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 he adds immediately:

**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.