

TO: PCLs
FROM: Georgette Dionne
DATE: April 8, 2022
RE: Planning, Guidelines & Instructions for the Parish Celebration of Confirmation and First Communion

Dear Parish Catechetical Leaders:

Msgr Marc Caron is communicating directly with pastor/administrators about the liturgical aspects of the parish celebrations of Confirmation and First holy Communion. At the same time, PLCs, PCLs, catechists and others having a role in the liturgy should take note of the following as you work with the pastor/administrator to prepare for and celebrate this Mass. Ideally, those who accompanied the young people and their families throughout the preparation process will be on hand to help direct them during the liturgy and post-Mass functions while those who typically organize weekend Masses will fulfill their roles for this liturgy as well.

This liturgy is intended for: persons already baptized as Catholics to receive Confirmation and first holy Communion; and persons who were baptized in another Christian tradition. **Different from past practice, these persons do not need to make a separate Profession of Faith or Rite of Reception during the liturgy.** The persons do this along with their peers in renewing the baptismal promises. However, their reception into full communion should be noted in the parish sacramental record along with the place/date of their baptism (similar to what we do for adults welcomed into full communion).

Persons who are **unbaptized** are to be initiated at another time (through the process of RCIA). **Thus, neither Baptism nor Rite of Reception will be part of this celebration.**

Appendix A includes the approved Confirmation Ritual (newly translated in 2016) approved by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments. If including the ritual in your worship aid/program, please make certain that you are using the correct translation.

Pre-Mass Planning: Do you have ministers of hospitality/welcome at the doors? If a program is printed, do the ministers distribute the programs?

Order of Procession: The procession will be as follows:

1. Altar Server – Cross, followed by servers with Processional Candles (if used).
2. **OPTIONAL:** Children/candidates receiving the sacraments (if processing, but **not** required).
 - The seating of the children can be in any configuration. It is helpful if they are accessible to the bishop who will engage them during the homily.
 - If there is a large group of children, please consider grouping them together near the front of the Church, with their sponsors. Families would sit elsewhere.
3. Knights of Columbus (if present; they are **always** welcome)
4. Readers & Procession with the Book of the Gospels
 - Because of the dignity demanded in the proclamation of God's Word, the preference is that the parish use experienced and trained adult readers/lectors.
 - The deacon will process with the Book of the Gospels; if there is no deacon, an adult reader may process with the Book of the Gospels and place it on the altar.
5. Concelebrating Priests, followed by the Pastor
6. Bishop, followed by the Crosier and Miter Bearers

Introductory Rites:

1. Sprinkling Rite
2. Gloria IS SUNG ONLY if it is a SUNDAY Mass (including the Saturday Vigil), a FEAST or SOLEMNITY, or during the OCTAVE of EASTER (April 1-8, inclusive). All other days, there is NO Gloria.
3. Mass Prayers: When the celebration takes place on a SUNDAY during the Easter Season, a FEAST or SOLEMNITY, or during the OCTAVE of EASTER, the Bishop will use the prayers and Preface proper to the day. On weekdays during the Easter Season (after the Octave) and on other days outside of the Easter season, the bishop will use the prayers for the Ritual Masses for Confirmation (pp.997-981) and the preface to the Eucharistic Prayer will be Holy Eucharist II (Preface #61).

Liturgy of the Word:

1. If Confirmation takes place at a SUNDAY Mass (including the Saturday Vigil), OR during the OCTAVE OF EASTER (April 1-8, inclusive), the readings of the day must be used (in accord with the Directives for Masses with Children, the second reading may be omitted, and the Lectionary for Masses with Children may be used).
2. All other weekdays of the Easter Season or during Confirmation Masses celebrated in the fall, the readings may be selected from among the available texts as provided in the Lectionary for the Sacraments of Christian Initiation.
3. A cantor/ choir leads the congregation in the Psalm (after the 1st reading and before the Gospel Acclamation, i.e., “Alleluia”).
4. The deacon or priest who reads the Gospel must ask for the bishop’s blessing. No incense to be used at these Masses.
5. When the Book of the Gospels is used for the proclamation, it should be brought to the bishop so that he may reverence/kiss it and then bless the people with it.
6. Immediately after the reading of the Gospel, an appropriate representative from the parish (the pastor, PCL, etc.) introduces the candidates to the bishop, asking them to stand and remain standing.

Sample Presentation of Candidates for Confirmation and First Eucharist

Bishop Deeley,

*The parish of _____ welcomes you.
We are honored that you are here with us today.*

*We present to you, our sons, and daughters,
who are candidates for the Sacraments of Confirmation and first Eucharist.*

*Under the guidance of their parents, guardians, and catechists,
and with the prayerful support and encouragement of this parish community,
they have prepared for these Sacraments of Christian Initiation,
which were begun at their baptism.*

*We ask that you impose hands upon them
and anoint them with the Sacred Chrism,
sealing them with the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

We pray that their regular participation in the Holy Eucharist

will strengthen them as faithful witnesses to Christ.

The bishop then preaches. After the homily, he receives the miter and crosier.

Confirmation Ritual

1. *The Order for the Conferral of Confirmation within Mass* provided Appendix A can be used at your rehearsal. If you are including the text of the ritual in your worship aid/program, please make certain that you are inserting the correct translation.
2. The bishop will stand for the entire confirmation ritual, including the renewal of baptismal promises, the laying on of hands with the prayer of Confirmation, and finally, the anointing with the Sacred Chrism.
3. The emcee or pastor asks that ONLY the Candidates for Confirmation stand for examination by the bishop (Renewal of Baptismal Promises).
4. After the Renewal of Baptismal Promises, the laying on of hands with the prayer of Confirmation is done.
5. After the prayer of Confirmation, the emcee or pastor asks the Sponsors to stand and accompany their candidate(s) as they approach the bishop for anointing with the Sacred Chrism. Please note that the formula essential to the Sacrament of Confirmation, as found in the ritual book, will be used (i.e., “N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.”).
6. As described in the ritual, after the anointing, the bishop will greet the newly confirmed with the words, “Peace be with you.” The response is: “And with your spirit.” (The ritual does not ask for a handshake; therefore, none will be used.)
7. Afterwards, the candidate and his/her Sponsor return to their pew.
8. After the Rite of Confirmation is completed, the bishop returns to stand at or near his chair, from where he washes his hands (need for a large bowl/basin and a quartered lemon; a pitcher of warm water; and one towel).
9. **The Universal Prayer (Prayers of the Faithful/General Intercessions) – Two samples are included in Appendix A along with the Confirmation Rite.** Please note that the intercessions that pray for our pope and bishop should read, “...for Francis our Pope, and Robert our Bishop.”

Liturgy of the Eucharist

1. Preparation of the Altar and Presentation of the Gifts – This occurs as usual (including the collection at weekend Masses: *the first collection should accompany the presentation of the bread and wine; if there is a second collection, it should be taken while the bishop concludes the preparation rites*). Two/three newly confirmed present the gifts. Incense will not be used at these Masses.
2. The Eucharistic Prayer, Lord’s Prayer, Fraction Rite and Lamb of God as usual.
3. Due to the pandemic, First Communicants are to be offered the Body of Christ under the form of the Consecrated Bread.
 - Both the Bishop and Pastor will distribute the hosts to the children when there are 10 or more first communicants. Under 10, the bishop will distribute to all the children.
 - Please make certain that there are sufficient ministers for the general distribution of Holy Communion prior to the start of Mass.
4. Note: The Bishop, all concelebrating priests, and all the First Communicants must receive the hosts that were consecrated at that Mass (not from the tabernacle).
5. To ensure that the reception of the sacraments themselves remains the focus of the liturgy and given the attention span of children (during an already long ceremony), there shall be neither a post-communion hymn nor a performance by the children.

6. Prayer after Communion, Final Blessing (Pontifical) and Dismissal as usual.
Bishop: The Lord be with you.
All: And with your spirit.
Bishop: Blessed be the name of the Lord.
All: Now and forever.
Bishop: Our help is in the name of the Lord.
All: Who made heaven and earth.
Bishop: And may almighty God bless you, the Father + and the Son + and the Holy + Spirit.
All: Amen.

Post-Mass Details

1. Photography: If the children are staying in the church for group photos, the bishop and other assisting ministers/servers will NOT process out. To expedite the taking of photos in an orderly manner, a member of the parish staff should be assigned to organize and direct the effort. Individual photos may be done in the church or reception area. Again, a member of the parish staff should be available to organize and direct the efforts, as well as to help maintain decorum (especially if this takes place in the church). Parents should be instructed beforehand to join the photo line before going to the food line.
2. Post-Mass Reception: Please inform the Bishop's Office if there is a reception.
3. Departure Items: Please assist the bishop in retrieving his belongings.

Thank you for your attention to these details. *Please do not hesitate to call with questions.*

Appendix A

THE ORDER FOR THE CONFERRAL OF CONFIRMATION WITHIN MASS

After the proclamation of the Gospel, all are seated.

The designated individual (i.e., pastor, priest, parish catechetical leader, parish life coordinator, etc.) welcomes the bishop and then introduces the candidates for the sacraments. The candidates are asked to stand and remain standing.

THE HOMILY

The bishop then preaches the homily, shedding light on the reading and leads those to be confirmed, their sponsors and parents, and the whole gathering of the faithful to a deeper understanding of the mystery of the sacraments to be conferred.

After the homily, the bishop receives his miter and crosier.

The candidates (only) for confirmation are invited to stand.

The pastor, holding the Sacred Chrism, stands to the right of the bishop, who introduces the Rite of Confirmation with these or similar words:

Bishop: The Apostles, who had received the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost in fulfillment of the Lord's promise, had power to complete the work of Baptism by the giving of the Holy Spirit as we read in the Acts of the Apostles. When Saint Paul had laid his hands on certain people who had been baptized, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

The bishops, as successors of the Apostles, possess the same power and, either in their own right or through Priests lawfully appointed to fulfill this ministry, they confer the Holy Spirit on those who have already been born again in Baptism.

Even if today the coming of the Holy Spirit is no longer widely made manifest by the gift of tongues, we know by faith that the Spirit, through whom the love of God has been poured into our hearts and through whom we are gathered in unity of faith and in diversity of callings, is received by us and is working invisibly to make the Church holy and one.

Dearly beloved, the gift of the Holy Spirit, which you are about to receive, will be a spiritual seal, by which you will be conformed to Christ and will be made more fully members of his Church. For Christ himself, anointed by the Holy Spirit in the baptism he received from John, was sent forth for the work of his ministry, to pour out on the earth the fire of the same Spirit.

Bishop: [Therefore,] you who are already baptized will now receive the power of his Spirit and be signed with his Cross on your foreheads. And so, you must always bear witness to his Passion and Resurrection before the world, so that your manner of life, as the Apostle says, may be in every place the pleasing fragrance of Christ. His Mystical Body, which is the church, the People of God, receives from him diverse graces, which the same Holy Spirit distributes to individuals for the building up of that Body in unity and love.

Be living members of this Church, therefore, and, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, seek to serve all people like Christ, who came not to be served but to serve.

And now, before you receive the Spirit, call to mind the faith which your parents and godparents professed with the Church.

[Please respond, “I do.” to the questions that I now ask:]

THE RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

Bishop: Do you renounce Satan,
and all his works and empty promises?

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 today through the Sacrament of Confirmation
is given to you in a special way
just as he was given to the Apostles
on the day of Pentecost?

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.

Bishop: This is our faith.
This is the faith of the Church.
We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.
All: Amen.

THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

All stand.
The bishop relinquishes the crosier and the miter.
The bishop faces the people, and with hands joined, says:

Bishop: Dearly beloved,
let us pray to God the almighty Father,
for these, his adopted sons and daughters,
already born again to eternal life in Baptism,
that he will graciously pour out
the Holy Spirit upon them
to confirm them with his abundant gifts,
and through his anointing conform them more fully
to Christ, the Son of God.

All pray in silence for a while.

Then the Bishop lays hands over all those to be confirmed and says:

Bishop: Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who brought these your servants to new birth,
by water and the Holy Spirit, freeing them from sin:
send upon them, O Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete;
give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and fortitude,
the spirit of knowledge and piety;
fill them with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.
Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

THE ANOINTING WITH CHRISM

All are seated.

The bishop receives the miter and crosier.

The sponsors are invited to stand with their candidates. The candidates, accompanied by the sponsor, go to the bishop. The sponsor places his/her right hand on the shoulder of the candidate he/she is presenting for confirmation.

The sponsor says the name of the one to be confirmed to the bishop.

The bishop dips the tip of the thumb of his right hand in the Chrism, and, with the thumb, makes the Sign of the Cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed, as he says:

Sponsor: Bishop, I present **N.** for the sacrament of confirmation.

Bishop: **N.**, be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

Newly Confirmed: Amen.

Bishop: Peace be with you.

Newly Confirmed: And with your spirit.

The newly confirmed and the sponsor then return to their seat.

During the anointing, a suitable chant may be sung.

After the anointing, the bishop relinquishes the crosier and washes his hands.

The bishop returns to his chair and relinquishes the miter.

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER – OPTION I

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

Deacon: 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.

Deacon: 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.

Deacon: For the holy Church of God together with *Francis* our Pope, and *Robert* our
Bishop, and all 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.

Deacon: 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.

Other intercessions, according to local community needs, may be included.

Bishop: 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 all 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.

All: Amen.

The bishop receives his miter.

The Mass continues with the preparation of the altar and the gifts.

THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER – OPTION II

Bishop: We have faith in God, who loves all his children.
We trust that He hears and answers all our prayers.

Deacon: For all who have been confirmed:
may the Holy Spirit be our constant friend and helper
every day of our life, we pray to the Lord.

For all who come to the table of the Lord:
may Jesus, who is truly present in the bread and wine, nourish and strengthen
us for our journey of faith,
we pray to the Lord.

For the leaders of our world and Church,
especially *Francis* our Pope and *Robert* our Bishop:
may the holy Spirit guide us all to unity and peace,
we pray to the Lord.

For our families, friends, and sponsors:
may the Holy Spirit guide our lives and lead us to heaven,
we pray to the Lord.

For all who are poor, sick, and alone,
for all the special needs we hold in our hearts,
and for our family and friends who have died,
may the holy Spirit bless us all with his comfort, care, and life,
we pray to the Lord.

Other intercessions, according to local community needs, may be included.

Bishop: Heavenly Father,
Thank you for making us strong in faith, hope and love.
Help us always to serve you in a spirit of joy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The bishop receives his miter.

The Mass continues with the preparation of the altar and the gifts