

PASTORAL GUIDANCE FOR

The Preparation and Celebration of Confirmation





GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Wisdom
Understanding
Counsel
Fortitude
Knowledge
Piety
Fear of the Lord

FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Love
Joy
Peace
Patience
Kindness
Goodness
Trustfulness
Gentleness
Self-control

ISSUED BY THE DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG

22 APRIL 2021

Foreword



The Sacrament of Confirmation is one of the sacraments of Christian initiation. Two words particularly require our attention: *initiation* and *sacrament*.

As a rite of *initiation*, Confirmation is necessarily received after Baptism and, at least logically,

prior to our first reception of Holy Communion, which is the summit and completion of our initiation into sharing fully in the life of the Church. It is right, then, that the day of Confirmation in the parish is a celebration by and in the community of the children being confirmed.

Confirmation is also a *sacrament*. This Catholic expression means 'God is doing something here.' In Confirmation, God is sending his Holy Spirit into the lives of the children who are confirmed. So there is more going on than a 'rite of passage' that the community might devise to celebrate its children growing up. At the heart of the Rite is the moment of God's action, where the community is simply present, albeit praying, while God does what only God can do - bestow the Holy Spirit.

The *Order of Confirmation* presents a depth and breadth of options for both the preparation and celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. This set of guidelines for the preparation and celebration of Confirmation liturgies is full of details and helpful pointers. Behind the details in these guidelines, there is the attempt to bring people together for a genuine community celebration while also leading them into an experience of God present-and-powerful in their midst. We need 'space' for the community and 'space' for God.

I am grateful to the Diocesan Liturgical Commission, the Diocesan Coordinator of Liturgy and Ministry, and those who have helped in 'road-testing' some of the ideas and forms presented here. I thank prospectively all those who will use these guidelines to help them produce wonderful celebrations of this great sacrament.

+Brian Mascord

Most Rev Brian G Mascord DD
Bishop of Wollongong



22 April 2021



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1 The Order of Confirmation

1.1 CHOICE OF LITURGY

When Confirmation is celebrated **within Mass**, preference is to be given to the Mass of the day – the readings and proper – especially on Sundays.

If there is a significant pastoral concern about the appropriateness of the readings of the day, please contact the Liturgy Office to discuss this, well before it is time to send in your liturgy.

When Confirmation is celebrated **within a Liturgy of the Word**, prayers and readings would normally be from the *Order of Confirmation*.

Templates are provided for both forms of liturgy at dow.org.au/confirmation



Parishes **are asked to consider** using the *Order for the Conferral of Confirmation without Mass* when the celebration is scheduled for a weekday.

Communion takes place on Sunday (Vigil included) – the Lord's Day – and in the presence of the worshipping community. It therefore does not normally accompany Confirmation when it is celebrated on a weekday.

In keeping with the presumption made in the *Order of Confirmation*, candidates **do not** process in at the beginning of the liturgy, especially when confirmation takes place at the normal parish Sunday Mass.

The parish liturgy takes precedence at the normal parish Sunday Mass. The community gathers as usual, including candidates for confirmation. The latter are already members of the community by virtue of their baptism. The *Order of Confirmation* assumes the entrance procession takes place as normal. This is a clearer symbol of our understanding of confirmation as part of the larger process of initiation.

Confirmations are celebrations of the whole community. They are not children's liturgies. Therefore the *Children's Lectionary* and *Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children* **are not to be used**. Ideally, preparation for these sacraments



would include prayer and reflection with the texts used by the whole community.

To prioritise thorough and thoughtful preparation of the liturgy that includes consideration of the local community, those preparing confirmation **liturgies are to make all the liturgical choices required** e.g. the choice of elements in the Introductory Rite and the Eucharistic Prayer. As always the discretion of the presider in these matters remains.

The choice of 'The Asperges' in the Introductory Rite and the use of water from the baptismal font **is recommended**. This highlights the essential unity of the Sacraments of Initiation. Also, a procession of symbols is an option in the Introductory Rites when celebrating *Confirmation without Mass*.

When using water from the baptismal font **the blessing prayer is omitted**. A suggested Introductory Statement is included in the liturgy templates. This statement would be used instead of one from the Missal as the latter presumes that a blessing prayer follows.

To strengthen the power of our symbols, when water from the baptismal font is used, the Bishop/presider goes to the font and takes the water from the font rather than the water being brought to him. If additional ministers are involved in the sprinkling, the Bishop/presider draws water from the font and gives it to each minister.

Rites variously called 'Witness/commitment of Parents and Sponsors' **are not** to be included in the confirmation liturgy. Such rites belong at the beginning of the preparation for confirmation.

1.2 PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES

At Confirmation the candidates are called forth by name, one at a time. *They do not present themselves; they are called forth*. They come to Confirmation not as a testimony of their action but

as a reminder of God's action. This ritual moment thus reflects the truth of all Christian initiation: the initiative does not rest with the individuals, but with God.

When called by name, each candidate stands as the focus of attention for the bishop and the entire assembly (*Order of Confirmation*, 21).

1.3 PROFESSION OF FAITH

The 'Renewal of Baptismal Promises' from the *Order of Confirmation* **is to be used**. It is important that each candidate understands clearly the basic tenets of our faith and is able to respond with clarity and commitment to the questions asked of him or her during the Confirmation ceremony. An explanation of this creedal statement, the Profession of Faith in the Rite of Confirmation, is an important part of the preparation for Confirmation. "To believe in Him means to do his will." (St Irenaeus)

NB: Please ensure that your catechist spends time explaining the fundamentals of the faith that the ritual Profession of Faith highlights in the Confirmation ceremony.



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1.4 MODE OF CELEBRATION

Depending on numbers and the physical arrangement of your church, I would like you to have the child and sponsor at the end of a seat which contains the family, thus allowing me to go down the aisle and Confirm the candidates in their places as they stand facing me. This also means those at the back of the Church are not disadvantaged. The whole family in that row can also stand so they can see better. This has the advantage of allowing each family, who would stand at that moment, to witness their child's Confirmation. It also allows me to acknowledge the family. The number of candidates may require the use of more than the centre aisle. In my experience, this works well.

1.5 THE ACTUAL CONFIRMATION

I will use the parish supply and container of Chrism.

At the moment of Confirmation, the candidate should have my full, unhurried, undisturbed attention, so that he or she may be aware of the Sacrament being celebrated and not be distracted by anything peripheral to this.

Therefore, **please ensure** before the ceremony that the sponsor knows to put the **right hand** on the candidate's **right shoulder**; that the candidate knows to answer **"Amen"** to the sacramental formula, **"and with your spirit"** to the caress of peace. While this all seems so simple, in my experience many candidates seem to freeze at this moment, preventing the sacramental action and dialogue from flowing naturally.

Some **soft** music during the Confirming, or the Taize chant "Veni Sancte Spiritus," – or something similar to allow a prayerful atmosphere to be open to the coming of the Holy Spirit – enhances the celebration more than a number of hymns loudly sung.



I have also found it is difficult to anoint a girl on the forehead if she is wearing a hat. You may need to point out that **it is better if a girl does not wear a hat or headband for Confirmation**, or at least remove it for the moment of Confirmation.

After Confirming all the candidates, to clean my hand of the Chrism, I simply need **a single slice of lemon** because it is the best agent to neutralise the oil, as well as some soap and water.

1.6 MUSIC

I recommend singing during the *Entrance*, *Recessional* and *Sprinkling* processions. I also recommend singing the *Responsorial Psalm* and *Gospel Acclamation*, and **soft** music or chant during the *Anointing with Chrism*. When celebrated within Mass, I recommend singing *Holy Holy*, *Acclamation* after the Consecration, *Amen* at the end of the Doxology and *Lamb of God*, if possible, as well as appropriate hymns for the *Procession of the Offerings* and the *Communion Procession*.

1.7 ASSISTANCE AT CELEBRATION

Candidates for confirmation **do not** exercise additional liturgical ministries within the liturgy. They participate fully, actively and consciously in the liturgy as members of the assembly and as candidates for confirmation.

It is my custom to wear the mitre and carry the pastoral staff while Confirming each candidate. Hence I require a priest, deacon, acolyte or adult server beside me to hold the Chrism.

1.8 AFTER CONFIRMATION

I like to greet the people and Candidates, either outside the church or wherever you suggest, after the Confirmation Liturgy.

I am willing to pose for photographs in groups or individually, in or outside the church or in the hall.

Titles such as “My Lord” or “Your Lordship” are really archaic in this day and age. I would like you to introduce me and refer to me as “Bishop Brian.”



1.9 LITURGY OUTLINE & BOOKLET

Liturgies are to be sent to the Coordinator of Liturgy at the Office of the Bishop **at least three weeks prior to your Confirmation celebration**. Any queries should be directed to Sr Monica Barlow 4222 2462. The form for submitting the Liturgy Outline and Briefing for Bishop is available at: dow.org.au/confirmation/

Please fill out the form online or forward a printed copy of the form, including a master copy of the liturgy for the Bishop in A4 size (see templates), the people's booklet, the Universal Prayer of the Faithful, and the PowerPoint presentation. Please note that the **Liturgy Outline Form** is to be **reviewed by the Parish Priest** prior to submission. The Liturgy Office will insert the Master copy of the liturgy provided into Bishop Brian's Folder, which he will bring with him to the celebration.

Support in preparing the confirmation liturgy is available from the Liturgy Office. Please make contact with Sr Monica Barlow RSJ by phone or email well in advance of the time the Liturgy Outline and Briefing for Bishop is due to be sent.

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2 Other Matters

2.1 THE SPONSOR

Ideally, the sponsor chosen should be the person who undertook this role at Baptism, thus emphasising the important link between Baptism and Confirmation and highlighting the function and responsibility of the sponsor (*cf* canons 892-893). Nonetheless, the option of choosing a special sponsor for Confirmation, other than the baptismal godparent, is not excluded. While the *Rite of Confirmation*, art. 5, does not exclude parents from presenting their children, it is my wish that in our Diocese a sponsor other than the parent be chosen. Article 6 of the Rite highlights the qualities required by a person acting as a sponsor.



The example that one has to be a full member of a Leagues Club or RSL to sponsor a new member is the same principle that the Church has always had, that a fully-initiated Catholic is necessary to be able to sponsor a candidate for Baptism or Confirmation.

Note: Of course, **be alert that any candidates baptised in Maronite, Ukrainian, Chaldean or Melkite Eastern Catholic Rites have usually already been Confirmed at Baptism and cannot be presented to receive Confirmation again**, even though they will need to benefit from, and share in, the preparatory catechesis available to other candidates.

Special Greetings may be included in the confirmation liturgy to acknowledge these people. This Greeting would be offered in the Concluding Rite. Those to be presented to the bishop could be accompanied by their sponsors/godparents. A way of doing this is included in the confirmation liturgy templates.

It is important to **check baptism certificates of the candidates**, and especially double-check Lebanese names and Ukrainian children. A recent complaint by Eastern Rite Catholic Bishops in Australia highlights the sensitivity needed here, as well as awareness of a possible invalid celebration of Confirmation.

In the Syro-Malabar Rite, Confirmation is sometimes conferred at Baptism. Any children of Indian parents from Kerala who were not confirmed at Baptism, may be confirmed.

2.2 CONFIRMATION NAME

The *Order of Confirmation* presumes that Confirmation **confirms the baptismal name**. Candidates wishing to adopt a saint's name for Confirmation are in fact choosing a patron or mentor for Christian life. The name of a special patron saint is added to our baptismal name at Confirmation to signify the special step of Confirmation. In no way does it overshadow our primary Christian name chosen at Baptism.

Learning about the life and example of the saint whose name is taken, is part of the candidate's preparation. Candidates may, if they wish, choose the name of a saint of either gender.

2.3 CERTIFICATES

The Bishop's name should be printed on the certificates which are signed by the Parish Priest. Certificates **are to be presented by Sponsors** in the Concluding Rite or at the community gathering after the liturgy.



2.4 COPYRIGHT

Copyright permission cannot be presumed. This requirement must be fulfilled out of justice for copyright owners and so that you do not expose your parish to litigation. Copyright permission must be sought for hymns, music or liturgical texts, and listed appropriately in the booklet.

All parishes and schools have access to One License, the Diocesan copyright provider, which provides permissions for most hymns used in Catholic liturgy.

The Diocese provides comprehensive guidelines on Copyright in Liturgy for Parishes and Schools, which have been recently updated. They are available at dow.org.au/confirmation.

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Glendalough Mass Copyright

Glendalough Mass is produced by GIA and sold through Willow Publishing in Australia. Music scores must be purchased for each musician and choir member. There is no copyright license available for photocopying music. Glendalough music folios can be purchased for a very reasonable cost of \$6.95 at bookshops or online at www.asonevoice.com.au.

The texts of the Mass may be reproduced without special permission, with the acknowledgement: "Excerpts from *The Roman Missal* © 2010. International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL)."

If you have any queries concerning copyright, please contact Sr Monica Barlow RSJ on 4222 2462 or monica.barlow@dow.org.au.



2.5 MINISTRY AUTHORISATION - SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION

All Sacramental Preparation Coordinators and Sacramental Team Members are required to:

- Have a current Working With Children Check (WWCC),
- Have a Minister Engagement Form (MEF) authorising their ministry for a service period no longer than the expiry of their WWCC,
- Undertake Diocesan Ministry Training and Formation in:
 - » The Celebration of Confirmation,
 - » Child Protection,
 - » Ongoing ministry formation.

NB: Changes to Preparation Materials: Please use the same names as in the *Order of Confirmation* when instructing candidates about the **gifts of the Spirit** and the same names as in the *Jerusalem Bible* and *Lectionary* for the **fruits of the Spirit** (Gal 5:22).

2.6 YEAR 6 GATHERING & PRAYER WITH BISHOP BRIAN

While it is not possible for me to visit the candidates in advance, the regional pastoral meetings with Year 6 students in Catholic Schools are meant to help compensate for this.

Appendices

RESOURCES

There are a number of resources available to help you in your preparation of Confirmation celebrations.

The Diocese has procured parish-wide licenses of the LiturgyHelp service, which provides all the liturgical texts and liturgy outlines for preparing Confirmation.

The appendices to this pastoral guidance for Confirmation help in the choosing of options, the preparation of your Confirmation celebrations and the Liturgy Master to be inserted in Bishop Mascord's folder and used during the celebration.

The templates and forms contained in these appendices can be downloaded from the Diocesan Liturgy Handbook website at:

dow.org.au/confirmation

Our Coordinator of Liturgy, Dr Edsel Parke, is available to help you in the planning and preparation of your Confirmation celebrations:

edsel.parke@dow.org.au

Ph: 02 4222 24272



