The following pages present some directives and helpful information for those responsible for the planning of a parish celebration of the Rite of Confirmation. Thorough preparation for both the candidates and the rite itself is essential. Because the Rite of Confirmation is a celebration of the entire parish, responsibility for planning the Mass lies with the pastor, working with the Confirmation catechetical team and the parish liturgy/music director.

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I. Preparing for the Rite of Confirmation

Attention should be paid to the festive and solemn character of the liturgical service, and its significance for the local church . . . The whole people of God, represented by the families and friends of the candidates and the members of the local community, will be invited to take part in the celebration and will express its faith in the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Introduction to the Rite of Confirmation #4

Participation

As in every liturgy, the goal to be considered before all else is the full, conscious, and active participation of the entire assembly. The revised Rite of Confirmation is for those to be confirmed and for the entire assembly. It is a celebration of the local church. The Confirmation of some members of the parish should ideally affect the life of the entire parish. It is appropriate that the entire parish family be invited to join in the celebration of Confirmation.

Choice of Mass Texts

When Confirmation is celebrated on any of the following days in the liturgical year, the Mass of the Day and the readings of the day must be used:

- Ascension
- Pentecost
- Sundays of Advent, Lent, and the Easter Season
- Ash Wednesday
- Weekdays of Holy Week from Monday to Wednesday inclusive
- Days within the Octave of Easter
- Solemnities of the Lord
- Solemnities of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Solemnities of the saints listed in the General Calendar
- All Souls Day
- Proper Solemnities

-- General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar (GNLYC) #59

Please refer to the Ordo. If S is used next to MASS, it is a proper solemnity and the prayers and readings of the day must be used.

If you see V1, V2, V3 next to MASS, a Ritual Mass is permitted. (A “Ritual Mass” is one in which a “rite” occurs.) On days when Ritual Masses are permitted, the Ritual Mass for Confirmation with its proper readings may be celebrated (Ceremonial of Bishops, #459). Please see the Lectionary nos. 764-768 for the readings. See the Roman Missal under “Ritual Masses: Confirmation” for the proper prayers.
Vestments

The vestments for the liturgy are red or white or some other festive color (Ceremonial of Bishops, #459). On the Sundays of Advent and Lent, the vestments are violet.

Planning

The Confirmation Liturgy has its own structure: the Liturgy of the Word, the Rite of Confirmation and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Its integrity must be maintained. In planning the Confirmation Liturgy, the following procedure may be helpful:

1. Begin with the Rite of Confirmation. How is it structured? How will the various movements of this part of the Mass be coordinated so that the whole rite flows smoothly?

2. Pray with and study the readings selected and the prayers of the Roman Missal keeping in mind the following points:
   a. The proper readings and prayers of the day must be used on all Sundays in Advent, Lent and Easter, and on all Solemnities. (See “Choice of Mass Texts”, above.)
   b. On other days, the ritual Mass of Confirmation is used. The readings are chosen from those options given in the Rite of Confirmation.

Environment

The environment of the worship space should reflect the liturgical season primarily and the sacrament of Confirmation secondarily. The entire worship space should be considered, not just the sanctuary. Avoid banners with words. Flowers should not impede movement within the sanctuary or elsewhere in the worship space.

Musical Selections

Music should complement the readings, refer to the Holy Spirit, and/or speak of discipleship. It should be within the capabilities of those assembled. Since many friends and relatives are welcomed by the parish community for this liturgy, familiar hymns ought to be considered. Silence can also be important at various parts of the rite, especially during the anointings. The parish director of music should be an integral part of the planning.

Liturgical Ministries

Confirmation is the sacramental celebration of the whole parish community. Therefore, as witness of the parish community’s support of those being confirmed, it is recommended that the
various liturgical ministries be exercised by those who already function in those ministries. Assigning the confirmandi to the ministries for this Mass is not recommended. Within the Confirmation Mass, the role of those to be confirmed is that of “Candidate for Confirmation.”

Worship Aid

A printed worship aid with congregational responses and hymns may be helpful to encourage full participation, although it is not required. If a worship aid is to be printed, permission for the use of copyrighted materials must be obtained and indicated in the worship aid. The worship aid should not contain the text for the readings or presidential prayers since their proclamation is to be heard rather than read. The exception to this would be in the case of Masses which are celebrated in more than one language. In this case, the readings could be printed in the language not utilized in the proclamation.

Attire

The confirmandi should be in Sunday dress. Special robes are neither necessary nor desirable. **Stoles should never be created and worn.** “The distinction between the universal priesthood of all the baptized and the ministerial priesthood of the ordained is blurred when the distinctive garb of ordained ministers is used at Confirmation. Therefore, the use of a stole for the confirmandi should be avoided” (*BCL Newsletter, Vol. XX, December, 1984*).
II. The Order of Mass

All directives of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and the *Rite of Confirmation* are to be followed in planning the Mass in which the Sacrament of Confirmation will be celebrated. The following will serve to provide additional direction in planning the Mass.

The Introductory Rites

ENTRANCE PROCEDURE

The order of procession for the entrance is as follows:

- Incense Bearer (thurifer) with burning incense
- Cross Bearer with the Processional Cross
- Candle-Bearers
- Chrism Bearer (optional)
- Candidates and Sponsors (optional)
- Lectors
- (Deacon with the Book of Gospels)
- Concelebrants
- Master of Ceremonies
- Bishop with miter and crozier

RITE OF BLESSING AND SPRINKLING HOLY WATER OR PENITENTIAL RITE

During the Easter Season and on all Sundays of the year, the Rite of Blessing and Sprinkling Holy Water is used. It replaces the Penitential Rite (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, #133). Moreover, it relates the sacrament of Confirmation to the sacrament of Baptism.

GLORIA

When Confirmation is celebrated on a day which is a solemnity (see above), the Gloria is always sung. When Confirmation is celebrated in a Ritual Mass, the Gloria is not obligatory. If used, however, it should be sung. The Gloria is never used in Advent or Lent. It should always be sung in its proper place and not as an entrance song or during the sprinkling rite.

The Liturgy of the Word

1. It is preferable that the readings be proclaimed by trained parish lectors.
2. If the Ritual Mass for Confirmation is not used because the Mass of the day has precedence, then the first or second reading from the *Lectionary* (nos. 764-768) for the Confirmation Mass may be substituted.
The responsorial psalm should always be sung.
4. There should be periods of silence after each reading.
5. The Gospel Acclamation should be one of a joyous nature.
6. The Gospel is proclaimed by the pastor (or a Deacon, if present).

The Rite of Confirmation

PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES
Following the proclamation of the Gospel, the pastor or catechist will present the candidates to the Bishop.

1. The pastor or catechist faces the Bishop.

   ▶ HINT: Ideally the ambo should not be used for this purpose. It is reserved for the Word of God. An additional microphone should be used for this presentation. The pastor or catechist may use these or similar words:

   Bishop McRaith, we present to you these baptized young men and women who have prepared for and are now ready to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The candidates may either be called by name or as a group if the number is great. They stand, then are seated once again for the homily.

HOMILY
The Bishop gives the homily.

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES
The candidates for Confirmation stand alone and the Bishop leads them in the renewal of baptismal promises.

   ▶ HINT: The renewal of baptismal promises replaces the Creed.

LAYING ON OF HANDS
The Bishop invites all to pray in silence. The Bishop and the priests who will minister the sacrament with him lay hands upon all the candidates.

1. Instrumental music may be played or an appropriate hymn sung during the laying on of hands.
2. The prayer of consecration should not be begun until the laying on of hands is completely finished so that full attention can be given to the solemn prayer of consecration.
3. The Bishop alone prays the prayer after the laying on of hands.
ANointing with Chrism

1. The people remain seated during the anointing.
2. During the anointing, the sponsors place their right hand on the shoulder of their candidate.
3. The norm is that the anointing is done by the Bishop; if the number is large then anointing ministers may be delegated.
4. The candidate clearly states his/her name.
5. The Bishop anoints and says: N., be sealed with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.
6. The candidate responds: AMEN
7. The Bishop then says: Peace be with you.
8. The candidate responds: And also with you.
9. It is preferable that there be no music during the Anointing with Chrism.
10. After all have been confirmed, the Bishop washes his hands.

Profession of Faith

The profession of faith is always omitted because the renewal of baptismal promises has taken place.

General Intercessions

The intercessions are best sung as a litany, with cantor singing the intention and everyone the response (i.e. chant settings, “O God, Hear Us”, Hurd, OCP)

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Altar and the Gifts

1. The altar is prepared and the gifts are brought to the Bishop. Some of the newly confirmed should be included in the procession with the gifts.
2. Sufficient bread should be prepared for communion and enough wine so that the entire assembly may receive both the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Concluding Rite

Blessing

The Bishop imparts the solemn blessing from the eucharistic celebration of the Rite of Confirmation. All respond “Amen” to both the prayer and blessing.

Recessional Hymn

A familiar hymn known to the entire assembly is most appropriate.
III. JURIDICAL GUIDELINES

Below are some of the canons from the Code of Canon Law concerning the Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

Canon 880

• The sacrament of Confirmation is conferred by anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the imposition of the hand, and through the words prescribed in the approved liturgical books.

• The chrism to be used in the sacrament of confirmation must be consecrated by a bishop, even if the sacrament is administered by a presbyter.

Canon 881

• It is desirable that the sacrament of confirmation be celebrated in a church and during Mass, but for a just and reasonable cause it may be celebrated outside Mass and in any worthy place.

THE MINISTER OF CONFIRMATION

Canon 882

• The ordinary minister of confirmation is the bishop; a presbyter who has this faculty by virtue of either the universal law or a special concession of competent authority also confers this sacrament validly.

Canon 883

• The following have the faculty of administering confirmation by the law itself:
  1. within the limits of their territory, those who are equivalent in law to the diocesan bishop;
  2. with regard to the person in question, the presbyter who by reason of office or mandate of the diocesan bishop baptizes one who is no longer an infant or one already baptized whom he admits into the full communion of the Catholic Church;
  3. with regard to those in danger of death, the pastor or indeed any presbyter.
Canon 884

- The diocesan bishop is to administer confirmation personally or see that it is administered by another bishop, but if necessity requires he may give the faculty to administer this sacrament to one or more specified presbyters.
- For a grave cause, a bishop and likewise a presbyter who has the faculty to confirm by virtue of law or special concession of competent authority may in individual cases associate presbyters with themselves so that they may administer the sacrament.

THOSE TO BE CONFIRMED
Canon 889

- All baptized persons who have not been confirmed and only they are capable of receiving confirmation.
- Outside the danger of death, to be licitly confirmed it is required, if the person has the use of reason, that one be suitably instructed, properly disposed and able to renew one's baptismal promises.

Canon 890

- The faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the appropriate time; their parents and shepherds of souls, especially pastors, are to see to it that the faithful are properly instructed to receive it and approach the sacrament at the appropriate time.

Canon 891

- The sacrament of confirmation is to be conferred on the faithful at about the age of discretion unless the conference of bishops determines another age or there is danger of death or in the judgment of the minister a grave cause urges otherwise.

SPONSORS
Canon 892

- As far as possible a sponsor for the one to be confirmed should be present; it is for the sponsor to see that the confirmed person acts as a true witness to Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations connected with this sacrament.

Canon 893

- To perform the role of sponsor, it is necessary that a person fulfill the conditions mentioned in canon 874 (see below).
• It is desirable that the one who undertook the role of sponsor at baptism be sponsor for confirmation.

Canon 874

• To be admitted to the role of sponsor, a person must:
  1. be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or the one who takes their place or, in their absence, by the pastor or minister and is to have the qualifications and intention of performing this role;
  2. have completed the sixteenth year, unless a different age has been established by the diocesan bishop or it seems to the pastor or minister that an exception is to be made for a just cause;
  3. be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken;
  4. not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;
  5. not be the father or the mother of the one to be baptized.

THE PROOF AND RECORD OF CONFERRED CONFIRMATION

Canon 894

• The prescriptions of canon 876 are to be observed for the proof of the conferral of confirmation.

Canon 895

• The names of the confirmed with mention of the minister, the parents and the sponsors, the place and the date of the conferral of confirmation are to be noted in the confirmation register in the diocesan curia, or, where the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop has prescribed it, in a book kept in the parish archive; the pastor must advise the pastor of the place of baptism about the conferral of confirmation so that notation be made in the baptismal register, in accord with the norm of canon 535, #2.

Canon 896

• If the pastor of the place were not present, the minister either personally or through another is to inform him of the confirmation as soon as possible.