

SECTION 7: CONFIRMATION

7.1 INTRODUCTION (CANON 879)

- 7.1.1 The Sacrament of Confirmation represents for the Church the great day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles. In that moment the Apostles were given a great grace, which prodded them on towards the mission of making disciples for the Lord. It was the Holy Spirit which helped them to carry out the Lord's command, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20)
- 7.1.2 The candidates who present themselves for Confirmation become "more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit." (CCC 1285) Like the Apostles, this "special strength" urges the confirmed to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. Thus, they are missioned to work for the fostering of the Kingdom of God here on earth.
- 7.1.3 We see this descent of the Holy Spirit symbolized in the rite through the laying on of hands and the anointing with chrism. The symbols clearly and effectively express the passing on of the same grace bestowed at Pentecost, the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- 7.1.4 Confirmation, however, must not be seen as a sacrament in isolation. Together with Baptism and Eucharist, Confirmation "constitute[s] the 'sacraments of initiation' whose unity must be safeguarded." (CCC 1285) It is important then that we catechize the faithful, especially parents, that while Confirmation is **not** necessary for marriage in the Church, "reception...of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace." (CCC 1285) As in baptism the Sacrament of Confirmation imparts an indelible mark and therefore cannot be repeated. (cf. CCC1304)
- 7.1.5 Confirmation, then, should be seen as a sacrament of initiation, conversion and renewal. When it is celebrated after First Eucharist, it completes the process of initiating the candidate into the Body of Christ. It also allows the candidate to experience conversion and renewal by having a deeper encounter with the Living God. However, the sacrament is not a rite of

passage serving to mark a certain milestone of adulthood. Further, it does not complete one's formation in the Christian Life.

- 7.1.6 It is important to remember the diversity of times at which Confirmation can be celebrated in the Universal Church, from infancy to adulthood.
- 7.1.7 The sacrament of Confirmation is required for some roles in the life of the Church, i.e. Holy Orders, entrance into consecrated life and serving as a sponsor for baptism or Confirmation. It is not, however, required for the sacrament of holy matrimony.
- 7.1.8 The particular law of the archdiocese requires the sacrament of Confirmation to be received before one can be delegated by the archbishop to serve as an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion.
- 7.1.9 Previously, at least one year of ongoing formation was required before entering into sacramental preparation. With the promulgation of this particular law, all that is required of a candidate who presents him or herself for Confirmation is the period of sacramental preparation described in this policy. However, there is a hope that the person has been engaged in youth ministry or ongoing formation.

7.2 CELEBRATION OF CONFIRMATION (CANONS 880-881)

7.2.1 Liturgy Planning Form

- 7.2.1.1 The Office of Worship, in conjunction with the Archbishop and his assistant bishops, have prepared a form to be used in planning the Confirmation liturgy at all parishes within the Archdiocese of New Orleans. This form can be obtained by calling the Office of Worship or by going to their website. The form must be submitted to the Office of Worship no less than three weeks prior to the celebration of the sacrament.
- 7.2.1.2 It will take the collaborative work of the pastor or his delegate, the Director of Religious Education, the Confirmation Coordinator and the Music Director to plan the liturgy. Care should be taken not to return to an old liturgy form as a way of simply reusing a previous year's selections. Good liturgy requires careful and appropriate preparation, which is the key to a successful celebration.
- 7.2.1.3 Ordinarily, if a parish has less than eight (8) candidates to be confirmed they should join another parish for the Rite of Confirmation.
- 7.2.1.4 Ordinarily, Confirmation is not celebrated on Sundays. The rite can be celebrated at a Saturday vigil Mass.

7.2.2 The Scripture

- 7.2.2.1 If Confirmation is celebrated at a vigil Mass within the Octaves of Christmas and Easter, on Solemnities, and on Sundays of Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter, the readings of the day must be used.

- 7.2.2.2 If Confirmation is being celebrated on a Sunday, outside of the days or seasons mentioned in section 7.2.2.1 of this policy then the parish, under the direction of the pastor, may select readings from the Lectionary for Mass Volume IV (Ritual Masses-Confirmation).
- 7.2.2.3 For all other days, the readings are to be selected from the Lectionary for Mass Volume IV (Ritual Masses-Confirmation).
- 7.2.2.4 A copy of the readings selected must be provided with the liturgy planning form submitted to the Office of Worship.

7.2.3 Sacred Music

- 7.2.3.1 It is preferred that all music selected come from a Catholic hymnal. If the music is taken from another source the text must be submitted to the Office of Worship with the liturgy planning form. Pre-recorded music is not to be used in the liturgy.
- 7.2.3.2 Those planning the liturgy must remember to select music that will be familiar to the congregants and that will allow for their participation in the singing. A choral selection may be chosen for the presentation of the gifts.
- 7.2.3.3 The music chosen for the Mass should reflect the liturgical season. Thus, in Advent and Lent the music should have a more somber tone than in Christmas or Easter. When Confirmation is celebrated within Advent, Christmas, Lent or Easter there should be some seasonal music selected.
- 7.2.3.4 During the rite of Confirmation music which can be sung **softly** or instrumental music is preferred so that the candidates can hear the celebrant and respond appropriately.
- 7.2.3.5 There should be no music after the reception of Communion. Parishes should plan to provide a time for silent prayer in this space.

- 7.2.3.6 No speeches or awards should be given at the end of the Mass. Someone from the parish may express thanks to those who served in the liturgy. Also, one of the newly confirmed may give a brief thank you on behalf of the class.

7.2.4 Liturgical Ministers

- 7.2.4.1 As you plan for the celebration make certain that you select the ministers necessary for the Mass. These should include but are not limited to:
- Altar Servers (About 6)
 - Deacons (At least 1, unless none are assigned to the parish)
 - Readers
 - Hospitality Ministers
 - Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (This is dependent upon the number of ordinary ministers assisting at the liturgy and the number of communion stations needed.)
- 7.2.4.2 It is incumbent upon the planner of the liturgy to ensure all ministers of the Mass know and understand their responsibilities for the Mass. This allows for a worthy sacrifice of the Mass. If it is possible all the ministers should come together for a rehearsal prior to the liturgy.
- 7.2.4.3 If a parish does not have a deacon but the pastor would like for a deacon to be present at the liturgy he can call the Director of the Office of the Permanent Diaconate who will attempt to assign one for the liturgy.
- 7.2.4.4 The Office of Worship will assign a Master of Ceremonies (MC) for the Confirmation. The MC will assist the celebrant and coordinate the servers who directly assist him (i.e., the crozier, miter and book bearers).

7.2.5 The Procession

- 7.2.5.1 The Order of the Procession shall be:
- Cross Bearer
 - 2 Candle Bearers
 - The Candidates (w/sponsors if desired)
 - Deacon of the Gospel
 - Vested Deacons (If present)
 - Concelebrating Priests
 - Master of Ceremonies
 - Celebrant
 - Assisting Deacons (1 or 2)
 - Servers to the Celebrant

- 7.2.5.2 The procession should move continuously down the aisle to the altar. The candidates should not be spaced, so as to indicate a type of graduation procession.

7.2.6 Seating of the Candidates

- 7.2.6.1 The candidates should be seated together as a discernible group in the front of the Church. This makes it possible for the celebrant to speak directly to them during the homily and at other times during the liturgy.
- 7.2.6.2 The preferred methods are:
- a. Candidates seated together as one group with sponsors seated behind them as a group, or
 - b. Candidates seated together with sponsors next to them or in the pew behind them.

7.2.7 The Rite

- 7.2.7.1 After the Gospel, the pastor, or someone he delegates (another priest or a catechist) presents the candidates for Confirmation to the celebrant. This should be done briefly. It is not necessary to list all that was required to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation nor should the meaning of the Sacrament be explained.
- 7.2.7.2 During the renewal of the baptismal promises, the candidates alone stand and respond, "I Do," to the celebrant.
- 7.2.7.3 The celebrant then invites all present to pray for the candidates. After praying silently for a short time, the celebrant lays hands upon all the candidates by extending his hands over them. The celebrant alone prays the prayer.
- 7.2.7.4 During the anointing the pastor or one of the deacons stands to the celebrant's left to collect the cards and verbally informs the celebrant of the candidates' chosen name.
- 7.2.7.5 For validity, the words prescribed in the approved liturgical books must be used.

7.2.8 Liturgy of the Eucharist

- 7.2.8.1 Ordinarily, at the presentation of the gifts, only bread and wine and a collection (if taken) or an offering for the poor (optional) are to be presented.
- 7.2.8.2 Sufficient bread and wine for all communicants at that Liturgy are to be presented. If necessary, The Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle can be used for the Mass.

- 7.2.8.3 Ordinary ministers of Holy Communion (i.e., the celebrant, priests and deacons) are to administer Holy Communion. If additional, ministers are needed, then extraordinary minister of Holy Communion may assist. (Note: The Master of Ceremonies does not assist with distributing Holy Communion.)

7.2.9 Candidates' Vesture

- 7.2.9.1 Candidates should be dressed in their "Sunday best". (Tennis shoes should not be worn. The attire of all the candidates should be modest.) If it is desirable candidates may be vested in a white or red robe prior to the start of the liturgy.
- 7.2.9.2 There is no tradition within the Church of vesting a candidate with a stole. The stole is a symbol of ordained ministry, not a sign of the universal priesthood of the baptized. Therefore, stoles are not to be worn by the candidates.

7.3 MINISTER OF CONFIRMATION (CANONS 882-888)

- 7.3.1 The ordinary minister of Confirmation is a bishop; a presbyter provided with this faculty in virtue of universal law or the special grant of the competent authority also confers this sacrament validly. (c. 882)
- 7.3.2 Those granted the faculty by universal law or special grant of the bishop may confirm when:
- baptizing one who is no longer an infant;
 - receiving someone who is already baptized into full communion with the Church; and
 - encountering one who is in danger of death.
- 7.3.3 In any case **not** mentioned in section 7.3.2 of this policy the presbyter will need to be delegated the faculty to confirm by the bishop for the sacrament to be valid.

- 7.3.4 Candidates for Confirmation who are beyond the age established by section 7.4.3 of this policy are to receive the sacrament either at the parish celebration of the sacrament or at the annual celebration of adult Confirmation on Pentecost at St. Louis Cathedral.
- 7.3.5 Presbyters, who have the faculty by law or those granted the faculty by the diocesan bishop, are to confirm those persons who have attained the age of reason at the time of baptism or reception into full communion with the Catholic Church. (cf. c. 883 2° and c. 885 § 2)
- 7.3.6 A priest may request from the diocesan bishop the faculty to confirm a baptized Catholic who is under his pastoral care. This request must be made in writing to the Archbishop of New Orleans.

7.4 THE CANDIDATES (CANONS 889-891)

- 7.4.1 Every baptized person not yet confirmed and only such a person is capable of receiving Confirmation. (c. 889 § 1) To receive Confirmation licitly outside of danger of death requires that a person who has the use of reason be suitably instructed, properly disposed, and able to renew the baptismal promises. (c. 889 § 2)
- 7.4.2 In order to provide for suitable instruction the periods of preparation are established as:
- a. **Ongoing Faith Formation** includes infancy and adolescence. During this period all young people should be actively participating in faith formation either at a Catholic school or in a parish catechetical program to further develop the formation that they are receiving from their parents, who are the primary teachers of the faith.
 - b. **Sacramental Preparation** includes the period of a parish based sacramental catechesis specific to the Sacrament of Confirmation, an interview with a member of the parish clergy or catechetical team, a retreat, service experiences and preparation for the liturgy itself. The process of completing the required elements of Confirmation preparation established in this document should begin no more than twelve (12) months prior to reception of the sacrament.

7.4.3 Ongoing Faith Formation

- 7.4.3.1 Parents and pastors of souls, especially pastors of parishes, are to take care that the faithful are properly instructed to receive the sacrament and come to it at the appropriate age. (c. 890)
- 7.4.3.2 The Church views the role of parents in religious formation of children as both a privilege and an obligation. Having presented their child to the Church for Baptism, they are distinctly reminded that they have the responsibility to “bring [their child] up in the practice of the faith” (Rite of Baptism 56). This privilege and obligation extends to all sacramental preparation. Parents, being the primary religious educators; both are responsible for forming and informing the faith of the candidates. Parishes are encouraged to assist parents in this endeavor by providing opportunities for spiritual growth through meetings, presentations, retreats, prayers, adult formation classes, etc.
- 7.4.3.3 Pastors should take great care to inform parents at baptism and continuously thereafter that it is their responsibility to form their children in the faith. In order to assist them, pastors must ensure that they have viable faith formation programs for the youth of their parish, that can pass on the Catholic faith, including teachings on the moral life, which are age appropriate.

7.4.4 Sacramental Preparation

- 7.4.4.1 Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit-his actions, his gifts, and his biddings-in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community. (CCC 1309)

- 7.4.4.2 To accomplish this goal, the period of sacramental preparation will include twelve to fourteen (12-14) hours of parish based sacramental catechesis covering the following topics:
- Trinitarian Understanding of the Holy Spirit as the Bond of Love
 - The Relationship between Baptism & Confirmation
 - Understanding of the Mass
 - Reconciliation & Mercy: The Sacrament of Reconciliation
 - The Vocational Call: Priest, Prophet & King
 - The Gifts & Fruits of the Holy Spirit
 - Prayer: Personal and Communal
 - Faith Lived: The Ongoing Journey of Formation & Living as a Witness
- 7.4.4.3 These parish based sessions will be required of all young people seeking Confirmation whether they are enrolled in a Catholic school or the parish school of religion.
- 7.4.4.4 The structure of the sessions is at the discretion of the individual parishes. However, the total number of hours is not to exceed fourteen (14). This does not include the retreat.
- 7.4.4.5 The Interview
- a. Members of the parish catechetical team should conduct interviews with the candidates for Confirmation at least 30 days prior to the Sacrament. The purpose of these interviews is to assess the readiness of each individual candidate for Confirmation. This can be judged by asking about their practice of the faith and their understanding of Confirmation in the context of the sacraments of initiation.
 - b. The interview can also be an opportunity for the candidate to give voice to any particular questions or difficulties that may have arisen in the course of preparation for the sacrament.

- c. The final determination for readiness will be determined by the pastor in consideration of canon 889 and paragraph 1309 of the catechism.

7.4.4.6 Apostolic Hours (Service Program)

- a. Recognizing that the Holy Spirit sends us out as a people of God to serve in the kingdom here on earth each candidate will participate in four to six (4-6) apostolic hours.
- b. This will give candidates the opportunity as Christians to live out their vocation of Christian charity in a concrete way. This is not meant to be the only time candidates participate in service but to either be a start and/or continuation of the work they will be doing for the rest of their lives.
- c. These hours may be done either as a group with all the candidates participating, in small groups, or as individuals. In any case, all the experiences should be followed by a time of theological reflection to help candidates understand the connection between the apostolic work and the sacrament that they are preparing to receive, as well as, the continual mission to serve.
- d. The coordinators of Confirmation are encouraged to help students pick experiences that relate to the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy. This will help them to better understand the apostolic work as a lifelong commitment.

7.4.4.7 The Retreat

- a. The retreat should be an experience of prayer in which the encounter with the Holy Spirit can help the candidates discover the depth and beauty of the spiritual life. It will serve as a synthesis of the experience of Confirmation preparation and point them toward the celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation.

- b. The parish based retreat should be a minimum of eight (8) hours but no longer than one (1) weekend.
- c. The retreat should include, if possible, the opportunity for the sacrament of reconciliation. If it is not possible for this to occur during the retreat then reconciliation should be offered for the group at another time prior to Confirmation.
- d. The retreat should also include, if possible, an opportunity for Mass.
- e. In the case of parishes with a few candidates, effort should be made to share resources with other parishes to offer a quality retreat experience for the candidates.

7.4.5 Mass Attendance

- 7.4.5.1 Confirmation preparation should encourage all candidates to actively participate in the life of the Church by regularly receiving the sacraments in their parish community.
- 7.4.5.2 To this end, there should be continual emphasis on the grave obligation to attend Holy Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
- 7.4.5.3 While this is an obligation that the candidates should be living out, there will **not** be a process of verification as part of Confirmation preparation. Instead, we must invite, encourage, remind, and assist the candidates to attend Mass faithfully during the time of sacramental preparation and beyond.

7.4.6 Connection to Youth Ministry

- 7.4.6.1 In its document on youth ministry, *Renewing the Vision*, the United States Conference on Catholic Bishops (USCCB) lays out “three interdependent and equally important goals [to] guide the Church’s ministry with adolescents.” The goals are namely: to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today; to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community; and to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.
- 7.4.6.2 These goals, if enfolded well, are a concrete way to help young people to remain active in their faith after having received the sacrament of Confirmation.
- 7.4.6.3 Therefore, pastors, directors of religious education/parish catechetical leaders and youth ministers are highly encouraged to promote collaboration whenever possible between the parish religious education program and the youth ministry program.
- 7.3.6.4 It is possible that a parish with a youth ministry program following the principles of *Renewing the Vision* would not have to duplicate ongoing formation in the parish school of religion. But, can use the catechetical sessions with youth ministry as the opportunity of handing on the faith to all youth of the parish.

7.4.7 RCIA Participants

- 7.4.7.1 Unless granted the faculty to confirm, priests are reminded that RCIA does not give priests the faculty to confirm baptized Catholics.

- 7.4.7.2 Priests do have the faculty to confirm those persons who are welcomed into full communion with the Catholic Church, namely, those who have been baptized into another faith tradition whose baptism is recognized as valid by the Catholic Church and those unbaptized persons who have attained the age of reason.
- 7.4.7.3 A person who has been confirmed in a Protestant tradition must be confirmed because the conferral by these denominations is not recognized as valid by the Catholic Church.
- 7.4.7.4 Pastors are to send baptized Catholics who participate in the RCIA process to the archdiocesan celebration of Confirmation at Pentecost or they should take part in the regular parish Confirmation celebration.

7.4.8 Time of Confirmation

- 7.4.8.1 In the Archdiocese of New Orleans Confirmation is to be celebrated in the **eleventh grade**. All parishes within the archdiocese are to adhere to this grade in establishing preparation programs for Confirmation. Request for exceptions must be made in writing to the Archbishop.
- 7.4.8.2 This guideline does not affect those persons of catechetical age, children or adults, who are received into the Church through the RCIA process. For the guidelines governing these candidates refer to section 7.4.7 of this law.
- 7.4.8.3 If a young person has already been confirmed prior to their eleventh grade year because of coming from a diocese where the time differed, they were confirmed in danger of death or they are part of the Eastern Church, they cannot be confirmed again. Only those who have never been confirmed before are able to be confirmed.

7.5 SPONSORS (CANONS 892-893)

- 7.5.1 When possible there is to be a sponsor for the person to be confirmed. The sponsor serves as a role model and mentor to the confirmand to ensure that the person lives a life in accord with Christ's commandments and continuously practices the faith by participation in the sacramental life of the Church. (cf. can. 892)
- 7.5.2 In order for a person to be a sponsor he/she must:
- a. be designated by the one to be confirmed, by the parents or the person who takes their place. If necessary, the pastor may be requested to select a sponsor for the candidate;
 - b. be a Catholic who has celebrated Confirmation thus becoming fully initiated into the life of the Church;
 - c. be living a life in harmony with the Catholic faith and understand the role of a sponsor;
 - d. not be bound by any canonical penalty;
 - e. not be the parents, natural or adoptive, of the person being confirmed (cf. canons 893 & 874); and
 - f. be active in the Church and can serve as a model of faith.
- 7.5.3 In order to highlight the relationship between baptism and Confirmation, it is appropriate to choose as sponsor the one who undertook the same function in baptism. (canon 893 §2)
- 7.5.4 In order to standardize the process parishes use to certify that sponsors meet the requirements of canon law a Testimonial Form is attached in the appendix of this policy for use in all parishes of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. This allows pastors and coordinators of Confirmation to take the Sponsors 'at the word of their sworn statements' and eliminates the need for any other attestations regarding their 'good standing' in the Church, reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation, etc.

7.5 PROOF AND REGISTRATIONS (CANONS 894-896)

7.6.1 After the celebration of the sacrament has been completed, the pastor of the parish where the sacrament was conferred is to ensure that the names of the newly confirmed are entered into the parish Confirmation register.

7.6.2 The entry must include:

- a. the names of those confirmed;
- b. the name of the minister;
- c. the parents and sponsors;
- d. the date of conferral; and
- e. the place and date of baptism. (cf. canon 895)

7.6.3 The pastor of the parish, if applicable, must notify the parish of baptism about the conferral of the sacrament so that proper recordation can also take place in the register of that parish. (canon 895)

7.6.4 It is the responsibility of the parish where the sacrament was celebrated to issue Confirmation certificates to those who have been confirmed whenever they are requested.

*Archdiocese of New Orleans Policy Handbook
October 2018 Section 7: Confirmation*

ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW ORLEANS

Godparent/Sponsor Testimonial for Baptism/Confirmation

Date: _____

Name of Person to be Baptized/Confirmed: _____

Proposed Date of Baptism/Confirmation: _____

Criteria to Serve as Godparent/Sponsor for Baptism/Confirmation

1. The Godparent/Sponsor must be a Catholic in good standing with the Church who has been Confirmed and regularly practices his/her Catholic faith;
2. The Godparent/Sponsor must be at least sixteen years of age;
3. If married, the Godparent/Sponsor must be in a marriage recognized as valid by the Catholic Church. Person may not be cohabiting (living together without marriage);
4. If not previously attended, the Godparent/Sponsor will attend appropriate preparation for fulfilling this role (Baptismal or Confirmation seminar, RCIA session, etc.)

Statement of Godparent/Sponsor

"I meet the above-stated criteria to serve as a Godparent/Sponsor, and I will do all in my power to assist the parents of this child to raise their child in the Catholic faith, or - if an adult - to assist him/her in living faithfully as a Catholic Christian."

By signing below, the proposed Godparent/Sponsor solemnly swears that he or she has read the above criteria, and that the statement above is a true and correct indication of his/her intentions.

Godparent/Sponsor's Signature: _____

Godparent/Sponsor's Name Printed: _____

Signature of Pastor or Delegate (In Parish where the sacrament is to be celebrated)