



The Roman Catholic
Diocese of Thunder Bay

Confirmation Guidelines

May 2008

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The Celebration

All priests are most welcome to concelebrate if they wish at the Confirmation Mass.

Candidates may sit with their sponsors and they should be seated together in a group at the front of the church either on one side or on both sides of the main aisle, depending on the number of candidates.

When the celebration takes place on a Sunday, the liturgy, readings and colour of vestments, are that of the Sunday. The usual Sunday or feast day collection is encouraged.

The Gloria is not said, nor sung, unless the Sunday or feast day calls for it.

The Procession

Altar Servers – The number required varies according to parish custom. Generally a cross-bearer and two acolytes, who also serve the wine and water etc. are sufficient. One server is to act as the book bearer for the Bishop. The Bishop will attend to his mitre and crozier himself.

The Candidates generally follow the cross bearer and two acolytes and precede the concelebrating priests and the Bishop in the processional. However, the Candidates follow the Bishop in the recessional.

The Celebration of the Mass

The pastor generally introduces the Confirmation Candidates to the Bishop after the reading of the Gospel. There are suggested introductions in the ritual for Confirmation. If there are some who have already been Confirmed and are participating in the ceremony, there is an accompanying instruction in these guidelines suggested for the introduction.

The deacon, pastor or another priest proclaims the Gospel of the Mass.

The Bishop will preach the homily and will speak to the Candidates, their sponsors and those gathered for the celebration. Sometimes the Bishop will question the Candidates on the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The Bishop will bring his own ritual book for Confirmation.

The general intercessions used for the celebration should include reference to the Sacrament being received, suggestions are found in the ritual book.

Candidates may proclaim the readings and intercessions. It is recommended that they practice their readings before the celebration to be familiar with them. In some cases, parishes might wish their regular parish lectors to read.

The Anointing

The Sacred **Chrism** is placed on the altar before the celebration takes place. The Bishop will bring the Sacred Chrism.

The pastor or another priest or the deacon should hold the Chrism on the right side of the Bishop during the anointing. Along with the Chrism he should hold a small cloth to assist the Bishop with the dripping Chrism.

The candidates should be encouraged to respond to the Bishop with “AMEN” after the anointing then “AND WITH YOUR SPIRIT” after the sign of peace.

The Bishop will stand during the anointing.

Quiet music may be played during the anointing. It should begin after the first few candidates have been anointed and conclude after the washing of the hands.

The washing of the hands after the anointing, takes place at the chair, a larger bowl and towel with some warm soapy water or some pieces of lemon in the water is sufficient.

Photos

Generally photos are not taken during the celebration itself in order to maintain the dignity and prayerfulness of the event. The Bishop will remain in the sanctuary after the celebration for individual photos with the newly confirmed and their sponsors. This announcement may be made before the celebration begins.

Certificates and Special Gifts

Certificates and special gifts to the newly confirmed are not given out as part of the liturgy. Please make them available at the school, or in the parish hall or at the back of the church or after the individual photo session.

Collections

If a special collection (other than a regular Sunday collection) is being taken up at the Confirmation ceremony, it is recommended that an announcement be made either at the beginning of the ceremony or at the preparation of the gifts, noting the recipient of the funds of this special collection. v.g. for the missions, for youth works, for the poor etc.

Students Already Confirmed

Since there are at times requests concerning students who are already confirmed participating in their parish celebration of Confirmation, I am sending this pastoral guideline to assist you for the ceremony.

Those who are already Confirmed may participate in the Confirmation liturgy of their classmates by sharing in the ministry of reading, petitions, procession of the gifts etc. which is a most appropriate example for the candidates.

They re-confirm their commitment to the Catholic Church through the renewal of their baptismal promises with the confirmation candidates. This is the proper form of recommitment used by the Church, v.g. each Easter.

I request that when the confirmation candidates are introduced after the Gospel that it be clearly stated that there are a number of members of the group who are already confirmed but who wish to share in a special way with the others in this liturgy.

An example: "Bishop Colli, I now present to you the Confirmation candidates of our parish for this year. We have...#...of candidates for Confirmation...and also there are...#... members of the group who are already confirmed but who have shared in the preparation of this Sacrament with the candidates. They will approach you individually, after the anointing with Holy Chrism, to receive any words of encouragement you might have for them, and to receive the greeting of peace."

Those already confirmed should:

- ❖ approach the bishop at the end of the anointing
- ❖ they should come up individually – **without** a sponsor
- ❖ they should indicate to the bishop where they were confirmed
- ❖ listen to any words from the bishop
- ❖ receive the greeting of peace and return to their seats.

It should be clear to the congregation that those approaching the bishop at the end of the anointing are already confirmed and are personally witnessing to the fact.

If this method could be followed, it would be very much appreciated.

Thank you