

CHAPTER 4

CONFIRMATION

A. INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 Confirmation extends to the Church of every time and place the gift of the Holy Spirit sent to the Apostles on Pentecost. Many signs accompanied the coming of the Spirit. But the most notable effect was the transformation of this frightened cowardly group of men into inspired and fearless witnesses to their Lord's resurrection and to his saving power.⁴¹⁵
- 4.1.2 Confirmation confers on the baptized an indelible character, the seal of the Lord, and enriches them with the gifts of the Holy Spirit which conforms them more closely to Christ, binds them more perfectly to the Church, and gives them grace and strength, as true witnesses of Christ, to spread the Lord's presence among others and to defend the faith by word and deed.⁴¹⁶
- 4.1.3 The rite itself has a twofold meaning: the laying on of hands is the biblical gesture by which the gift of the Holy Spirit is invoked, while the anointing with chrism and the accompanying prayers express clearly the effects of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.⁴¹⁷
- 4.1.4 Baptism, the Eucharist, and confirmation together constitute the "sacraments of Christian initiation," whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be

⁴¹⁵ Bishop Donald W. Wuerl, et al., eds., *The Gift of Faith* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 2001) 236.

⁴¹⁶ CCC 1285, citing LG 11; RC, Introduction, 2; *ibid.* 9. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 22: 7: "With oil he anointed your head, your forehead, in the God-given sign of the cross, so that you may become that which is engraved on the seal, 'a holy thing of the Lord.'"

⁴¹⁷ Cf. RC 9. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lectures* 21: 3-4: "After you had come up from the pool of the sacred streams, there was given chrism, the antitype of that with which Christ was anointed, and this is the Holy Spirit. But beware of supposing that this is ordinary ointment. For just as the bread of the Eucharist after the invocation of the Holy Spirit is simple bread no longer, but the body of Christ, so also this ointment is no longer plain ointment, nor, so to speak, common, after the invocation. Further, it is the gracious gift of Christ, and it is made fit for the imparting of his Godhead by the coming of the Holy Spirit. This ointment is symbolically applied to your forehead and to your other senses; while your body is anointed with the visible ointment, your soul is sanctified by the holy and life-giving Spirit. Just as Christ, after his baptism, and the coming upon him of the Holy Spirit, went forth and defeated the adversary, so also with you after holy baptism and the mystical chrism, having put on the panoply of the Holy Spirit, you are to withstand the power of the adversary and defeat him, saying, 'I am able to do all things in Christ, who strengthens me.'"

explained to the faithful that the reception of confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace.⁴¹⁸

- 4.1.5 Confirmation, then, should be understood in the context of Christian initiation, and not as a method of marking the “coming of age” of a candidate, since the sacrament of confirmation is in fact administered to people from infancy through adulthood.

B. OFFICES AND MINISTRIES

Parish Community

- 4.2.1 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. The latter bears special responsibility for the preparation of confirmands.⁴¹⁹
- 4.2.2 Since the preparation of candidates for confirmation is one of the highest responsibilities of the people of God, parish communities are to provide a spirit of welcome, good example and opportunities for their involvement in parish life.⁴²⁰
- 4.2.3 A partial indulgence is granted to the faithful who teach or study Christian doctrine.⁴²¹

Pastors

- 4.3.1 Pastors should see to it that all the baptized come to the fullness of Christian initiation and are carefully prepared for confirmation.⁴²²

⁴¹⁸ CIC can. 842 §2; CCC 1285, citing RC, Introduction 1. Theophilus of Antioch, *Apologia ad Autolyicum* 1, 12: “Are you unwilling to be anointed with the oil of God? It is on this account that we are called Christians: because we are anointed with the oil of God.”

⁴¹⁹ CCC 1309; cf. RC, introduction, 4.

⁴²⁰ RC 3.

⁴²¹ MI, grants, 6.

⁴²² RC 3.

4.3.2 Pastors should see to it that the sponsors chosen by the candidates are qualified for the office and fulfill its requirements.⁴²³

Catechists

4.4.1 Catechists assist both the progress of the candidates and the growth of the community. They should take care that their teaching is:

- a. filled with the spirit of the Gospel;
- b. adapted to the signs and cycles of the liturgical year; and
- c. suited to the needs of the candidates.⁴²⁴

Parents

4.5.1 In the case of children preparing for confirmation, parents, along with pastoral leaders, are to see to it that they are properly instructed about the sacrament and approach it at the appropriate time.⁴²⁵ In fulfilling their role, parents are to:

- a. strive to increase a spirit of faith in their children;
- b. help their children to prepare to celebrate the sacrament fruitfully; and
- c. give expression to their own faith through active participation in and celebration of the sacraments.⁴²⁶

Sponsors

4.6.1 Insofar as it is possible, a candidate for confirmation is to have a sponsor, who is to be approved by the priest.⁴²⁷

⁴²³ RC 5.

⁴²⁴ RCIA 16.

⁴²⁵ CIC can. 890.

⁴²⁶ RC 3.

⁴²⁷ CIC can. 892. The lack of a suitable sponsor is not an impediment to confirmation.

- 4.6.2 A sponsor should be obtained for each candidate. While one sponsor may serve for two candidates, the practice of having one sponsor for a whole class or for part of a class is not in keeping with the spirit of the Rite of Confirmation.⁴²⁸
- 4.6.3 In order to express more clearly the relationship between baptism and confirmation, it is desirable to choose as sponsor the one who undertook the same function in baptism. If there were two godparents at the candidate's baptism, it is acceptable for both of them to act as sponsors at confirmation if the candidate so wishes. (However, at the rite of anointing, only one sponsor should accompany the candidate in approaching the bishop.) This provision is made in view of the special relationship established with the godparents at baptism, and to make the duties and functions of godparents more apparent. In such a case it is necessary to ensure that the person remains qualified for the role of sponsor.⁴²⁹
- 4.6.4 In all other cases, only one sponsor is to be chosen.
- 4.6.5 The sponsor is to take care that the person to be confirmed behaves as a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations that come with the sacrament.⁴³⁰
- 4.6.6 To be permitted to take on the function of sponsor, a person must
- a. be designated by the one who is to receive confirmation, by his or her parents or the person who takes their place, or, in their absence, by the pastor or minister of the sacrament, and have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function;⁴³¹
 - b. have completed the sixteenth year of age, unless the pastor or minister of the sacrament has granted an exception for a just cause;⁴³²
 - c. be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on;⁴³³

⁴²⁸ ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007.

⁴²⁹ CIC can. 893 §2; RC 5; ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007.

⁴³⁰ CIC can. 892.

⁴³¹ CIC can. 874 §1 1°.

⁴³² CIC can. 874 §1 2°.

⁴³³ CIC can. 874 §1 3°.

- d. not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;⁴³⁴
 - e. not be the father or mother of the one who is to receive the sacrament.⁴³⁵
- 4.6.7 A member of an Eastern rite of the Catholic Church may serve as a sponsor for confirmation in the Latin Rite.⁴³⁶
- 4.6.8 A Catholic who is in an irregular marriage, or a Catholic who has joined another Church or ecclesial community, cannot serve as a sponsor, inasmuch as such a person does not lead “a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on,” and in fact may have incurred an ecclesiastical censure.⁴³⁷
- 4.6.9 The pastor of the designated sponsor is normally responsible for determining that he or she understands the sponsor’s role and is qualified to assume it, and is to provide a letter of eligibility when the confirmation is to be celebrated in another parish.

Ministers of the Sacrament

- 4.7.1 The ordinary minister of confirmation is a bishop; a priest provided with this faculty in virtue of universal law or the special grant of the competent authority also confers this sacrament validly.⁴³⁸
- 4.7.2 The Archbishop will administer confirmation personally or will take care that another bishop administers it.
- 4.7.3 A priest has the faculty from the law itself to confirm in the following circumstances:

⁴³⁴ CIC can. 874 §1 4°.

⁴³⁵ CIC can. 874 §1 5°.

⁴³⁶ CIC can. 874 §1 3°; cf. CCEO can. 685 §1 2°.

⁴³⁷ CIC can. 874 §1 3°; cf. can. 751: “Heresy is the obstinate denial or obstinate doubt after the reception of baptism of some truth which is to be believed by divine and Catholic faith; apostasy is the total repudiation of the Christian faith; schism is the refusal of submission to the Supreme Pontiff or of communion with the members of the Church subject to him.” See also CIC can. 1364 §1: “[A]n apostate from the faith, a heretic, or a schismatic incurs a *latae sententiae* excommunication....”

⁴³⁸ CIC can. 882; cf. can. 883 1°-3°. A priest of the Latin Church must have the faculty to confirm either from the law itself or by a special grant of the competent authority for the validity of the sacrament, but a priest of an Eastern Catholic Church always validly administers the sacrament to all the Christian faithful of any Church *sui iuris*, including the Latin Church. See CCEO can. 696 §1; IALP 50.

- a. when he baptizes a person who is no longer an infant;⁴³⁹
- b. when he receives a baptized non-Catholic into the full communion of the Catholic Church;⁴⁴⁰
- c. when he readmits to communion a baptized person who has been an apostate from (i.e., had totally repudiated) the Christian faith;⁴⁴¹
- d. when he welcomes again to Catholic practice a baptized Catholic who has, without fault, been instructed in or adhered to a non-Catholic religion;⁴⁴² or
- e. when a baptized Catholic, even an infant, is in danger of death.⁴⁴³

4.7.4 A priest does *not* have the faculty to confirm:

- a. a baptized Catholic who has adhered to a non-Catholic church or ecclesial community, but did not defect from the Catholic faith by a formal act;⁴⁴⁴ or
- b. a baptized Catholic who simply never put the Catholic faith into practice.⁴⁴⁵

In these cases the priest must request the faculty to confirm from the Archbishop. This delegation is necessary for the validity of the sacrament.⁴⁴⁶

⁴³⁹ CIC can. 883 2°.

⁴⁴⁰ CIC can. 883 2°. This category includes persons who were baptized as Catholics but who left the Church by a formal act. See also ADW, Liturgical Norms and Policies, 2010, 2.20.5.b and 2.32.1.b and its note

⁴⁴¹ Pontifical Commission for the Interpretation of the Decrees of the Second Vatican Council, in BCLN December 1975; NSC 28 a. Apostasy is defined in CIC can. 751 as “the total repudiation of the Christian faith.” An apostate incurs a *latae sententiae* excommunication (can. 1364 §1). Note that the remission of an excommunication is separate from reconciliation through sacramental confession. However, one cannot incur a penalty if the offense is not imputable (see CIC cann. 1321-1330).

⁴⁴² NSC 28 b. If a person has defected by a formal act, he or she comes under 4.7.3.b.

⁴⁴³ CIC cann. 883 3°, 889 §2, 891. The chrism used in the sacrament of confirmation must be consecrated by a bishop even if a priest administers the sacrament. CIC can. 880 §2.

⁴⁴⁴ If the person defected from the Church by a formal act, see ADW, Liturgical Norms and Policies, 2010, 4.7.3.b, cf. 2.20.5.b and 2.32.1.b and its note. This category of persons is not included in NSC 28. Schism is defined in CIC can. 751 as “the refusal of submission to the Supreme Pontiff or of communion with the members of the Church subject to him.” A schismatic incurs a *latae sententiae* excommunication (can. 1364 §1). Note that the remission of an excommunication is separate from reconciliation through sacramental confession. However, one cannot incur a penalty if the offense is not imputable (see cann. 1321-1330).

⁴⁴⁵ NSC 28 c.

⁴⁴⁶ See NSC 28 c. See also ADW, Liturgical Norms and Policies, 2010, 2.19.2.

- 4.7.5 In the circumstances listed in 4.7.3 above, the priest who possesses this faculty to confirm must use it for the sake of those in whose favor the faculty was granted.⁴⁴⁷ This applies in particular to situations where the priest has administered the sacrament of baptism to an adult; he must immediately confer the sacrament of confirmation as well.⁴⁴⁸
- 4.7.6 If necessity requires it, the Archbishop can grant the faculty to one or more specific priests, who are to administer this sacrament.⁴⁴⁹
- 4.7.7 For a good reason a priest may request from the Archbishop the faculty to confirm baptized Catholics who are under his parochial care. This request is made through the Vicar for Canonical Services.⁴⁵⁰
- 4.7.8 For a grave reason (e.g., a large number of candidates) the bishop or priest who has the faculty to confirm may associate other priests with himself in conferring the sacrament.⁴⁵¹

C. CANDIDATES

- 4.8.1 Every baptized person not yet confirmed and only such a person is capable of receiving confirmation.⁴⁵²
- 4.8.2 To receive confirmation licitly outside the 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.⁴⁵³
- 4.8.3 Persons with physical or learning disabilities and those who are behaviorally disturbed are to receive formation and be presented for confirmation along with their age peers, seeking a degree of understanding appropriate to their individual condition.

⁴⁴⁷ CIC can. 885 §2.

⁴⁴⁸ CIC can. 866.

⁴⁴⁹ CIC can. 884 §1.

⁴⁵⁰ For example, a priest may wish to confirm, at the Easter Vigil, a baptized but uncatechized Catholic who has participated in the parish's RCIA process. He does not have the faculty to confirm a baptized Catholic who simply never put the faith into practice, but must request this faculty from the Archbishop. This delegation is necessary for the validity of the sacrament. See NSC 28 c; ADW, Liturgical Norms and Policies, 2010, 2.19.2 and 4.7.4.

⁴⁵¹ CIC can. 884 §2; RC 8; cf. 25, 28.

⁴⁵² CIC can. 889 §1.

⁴⁵³ CIC can. 889 §2.

- 4.8.4 Persons who are intellectually disabled and have reached the normal age and are receiving formation within the community according to their capacity, as is their right, are to be confirmed if they express some disposition to receive the sacrament. In cases of profound disability, there should be no hesitation about confirming the person at the normal age, if not sooner, without further requirements.
- 4.8.5 The faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the proper time. 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 time.⁴⁵⁴
- 4.8.6 In the Archdiocese of Washington, young Catholics who were baptized as infants are confirmed in the seventh or eighth grade.⁴⁵⁵
- 4.8.7 Non-Catholic children who have reached catechetical age are to be confirmed at the time of their baptism or reception into full communion, even when this occurs before the normal age mentioned above.⁴⁵⁶

D. FORMATION AND READINESS

Formation of Candidates

- 4.9.1 The time of formation is understood to include the whole period following baptism.
- 4.9.2 This long-term formation is to help the candidates:
- a. to develop a sufficient effective relationship with the Christian community;
 - b. to give the witness of a Christian life;
 - c. to exercise the Christian apostolate; and
 - d. to develop a genuine desire to participate in the Eucharist and the sacramental life of the Church.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁴ CIC can. 890.

⁴⁵⁵ ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007; cf. CIC can. 891; NCCB complementary norm on CIC can. 891.

⁴⁵⁶ See ADW, Liturgical Norms and Policies, 2010, 2.34.1-2.

⁴⁵⁷ RC 12.

Candidates Who Are of the Normal Age for Confirmation

- 4.10.1 From the age of reason, children should be participating in the catechetical program provided by the parish to assist and augment the formation that they receive within their families.
- 4.10.2 Catechesis in the Catholic faith, teachings and moral life is to be comprehensive, yet accommodated to the various stages of children's growth as faithful disciples of the Lord.
- 4.10.3 Specific preparation of the candidates for confirmation is to occur during the year preceding the celebration of the rite. Such preparation includes:
- a. reflection on the life and commitment implied in the renewal of one's baptismal promises;
 - b. reflection on the nature and dignity of the sacrament of confirmation and the rite in which it is celebrated;
 - c. guidance toward a more intimate union with Christ and a deeper knowledge of his saving mysteries; and
 - d. leading the candidates towards spiritual purification and enlightenment as immediate, inward preparation for the celebration of the sacramental rite.
- 4.10.4 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.⁴⁵⁸
- 4.10.5 Although confirmation is sometimes referred to as the “sacrament of Christian maturity,”⁴⁵⁹ it should not be implied that confirmation marks the achievement of natural adulthood, the end of Christian conversion, the completion of religious formation, or the reception of the Holy Spirit for the first time. The celebration of the sacrament underscores the need for baptismal faith to be nourished and to grow.

⁴⁵⁸ CCC 1309.

⁴⁵⁹ CCC 1308.

- 4.10.6 The doctrinal elements of such catechesis must always reflect the teaching of the Church in its worship and its creeds. In preparing for their role, catechists are to rely especially on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, *The United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, *The Teaching of Christ*, and other archdiocesan-approved catechetical materials.
- 4.10.7 In order that the Archbishop can participate in the preparation of each person to be confirmed a video teaching component for use in all confirmation preparation programs is provided to every parish.⁴⁶⁰
- 4.10.8 Opportunities for service should occur within the context of the apostolic activity of the family and the life of the parish. However, any notion of contracts or required service hours is to be avoided.
- 4.10.9 In the case of children who have not participated consistently in such catechetical programs, the pastor should consult with catechists and parents and determine the type of preparation required. As baptized persons, such children may not be held back from confirmation if they seek it at the proper time and fulfill the requirements.⁴⁶¹
- 4.10.10 Eastern Catholic children who attend schools under the auspices of the Latin Church are likely to be included in their classmates' sacramental preparation programs. However, since Eastern Catholics are normally chrismated (confirmed) at baptism, and the sacrament of confirmation cannot be repeated, any attempt to do so in their case is strictly prohibited.⁴⁶²
- 4.10.11 If, however, it is found that a child belonging to an Eastern Catholic Church has not yet received the holy mystery of chrismation, the child must be chrismated in his or her proper Church *sui iuris*.⁴⁶³

Candidates Who Are Beyond the Normal Age for Confirmation

- 4.11.1 In the case of baptized Catholics who are beyond the normal age for confirmation, the religious formation of the individual candidates must be

⁴⁶⁰ ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007.

⁴⁶¹ CIC cann. 843, 885 §1, 889 §2. See also ADW, Liturgical Norms and Policies, 2010, 4.8.2.

⁴⁶² CCEO cann. 692, 694-695; NCCB, Eastern Catholics in the United States of America, 1999. Those who have already been confirmed can be recognized during the confirmation of their classmates. See also ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007, 105.

⁴⁶³ NCCB, Eastern Catholics in the United States of America, 1999; CCEO can. 695 §1. If chrismation in the proper church *sui iuris* is not possible, a priest of another church *sui iuris* (even the Latin Church) can administer the sacrament, in accordance with the provisions of CCEO can. 696 §§1-3.

considered. Those who have been living a Catholic life and have an understanding of faith appropriate to their age may be presented for confirmation after a period of spiritual discernment. For those who have been uncatechized, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Part II, Chapter 4, is to be followed.⁴⁶⁴

4.11.2 Such candidates should be presented for confirmation:

- a. when the Archbishop or confirming bishop comes to the parish to celebrate the sacrament;
- b. when the Archbishop or confirming bishop is confirming in a neighboring parish, in which case the pastor of the candidate should make arrangements with the pastor of the other parish;
- c. when the Archbishop or confirming bishop gathers candidates at the cathedral in the Easter season, according to arrangements made through the Office of Worship.

4.11.3 For the uncatechized candidates who have been associated with the catechumenate process, if it seems advisable, the pastor may request from the Archbishop the faculty to confirm them at the Easter Vigil. This faculty must be requested in writing through the Vicar for Canonical Services, and is required for the validity of the sacrament.

4.11.4 When a pastor judges that there are serious reasons to do so, he may request from the Archbishop the faculty to confirm a particular candidate at some other time. This faculty must be requested in writing through the Vicar for Canonical Services, and is required for the validity of the sacrament.

4.11.5 If they can do so without serious inconvenience, Catholics who have not yet received the sacrament of confirmation are to receive it before being admitted to marriage.⁴⁶⁵

- a. When Catholics seek confirmation in preparation for marriage their readiness for confirmation should be determined in accord with the norms given above.

⁴⁶⁴ See ADW, Liturgical Norms and Policies, 2010, 2.16.1-5.

⁴⁶⁵ CIC can. 1065 §1.

- b. The importance and dignity of confirmation should not be compromised. If necessary, confirmation should be delayed until after the wedding so that it can be celebrated worthily.⁴⁶⁶

Parental Formation

- 4.12.1 Parents of children who are to be confirmed should be gathered and prepared in the year or so prior to the celebration of confirmation.
 - a. Parents are to be reminded of their unique and God-given role in the Christian formation of their children. They should have opportunities for personal spiritual preparation, and be given information about practical preparations for their children's confirmation.
 - b. Parents who are leading a child to confirmation for the first time are to receive catechesis about the sacrament in order to deepen their understanding and appreciation of confirmation in the life of the Church and in their own lives.
 - c. Parents who have previously participated in such programs should be welcomed to take part again.
 - d. Parents and families with special needs (e.g., family crisis, alienation from the Church) are to receive particular pastoral attention to enable them to participate fruitfully in the celebration of the sacrament.
- 4.12.2 Candidates whose parents do not participate in special programs may not for that reason be denied the sacrament of confirmation, which is their right if they are prepared and properly disposed.⁴⁶⁷

E. NOTES ON RITES, TIMES, AND PLACES

Planning

- 4.13.1 In the period of preparation for confirmation, rites of blessing, intention, etc., may be celebrated if they are adapted to the liturgical year and always respect

⁴⁶⁶ See RC 12.

⁴⁶⁷ CIC cann. 843, 912.

the candidates as baptized members of the faithful already participating in the mystery of Christ. However, such rites should not be too numerous.⁴⁶⁸

- 4.13.2 Pastors are to request dates for the celebration of the sacrament of confirmation when they respond to the annual inquiry sent by the Moderator of the Curia.
- 4.13.3 In the Archdiocese of Washington, confirmation is always celebrated within Mass, to express more clearly the fundamental connection of the sacrament with the entirety of Christian initiation, which reaches its culmination in the Eucharist.
- a. Confirmation shall be celebrated in the parish that the candidate's family attends. Pastors may allow exceptions to this policy.⁴⁶⁹
 - b. Two or more parishes can join together for the celebration of the sacrament.
 - c. Normally, confirmation should be scheduled for a weekday evening. If circumstances determine, confirmation may be celebrated at a regularly scheduled Sunday Mass or other scheduled parish Masses in consultation with the confirming bishop.
- 4.13.4 Opportunities to receive the sacrament of penance must be provided for all those to be confirmed. Each candidate must have the opportunity to receive the sacrament of penance individually.
- 4.13.5 Parishes must treat all candidates for confirmation equally.
- a. There is to be no distinction or separation of candidates according to school or parish religious education programs.
 - b. The needs of persons with physical and developmental disabilities are to be considered fully in planning and celebrating the rite.
- 4.13.6 According to the custom of the Archdiocese of Washington, candidates may choose the name of a Christian saint by which to be called. Candidates should be mindful that this custom places them under the special patronage of the saint on whose intercession the confirmed Christian will call and who

⁴⁶⁸ CIC cann. 843, 890, 912. Candidates who do not participate in these rites may not for that reason be denied the sacrament of confirmation, which is their right if they are prepared and properly disposed.

⁴⁶⁹ ADW, Policies for Catholic Schools, 2009, 1215, 1225-1226.

provides a role model for living the Christian life. Baptismal names may be used if the candidates wish.

- 4.13.7 Liturgical planners should follow the Guidelines and Ceremony Notes issued by the Office for Worship and approved by the Archbishop. There are to be no additions to the rite (e.g., no calling on the community to accept the candidates or use of additional prayers not in the rite).⁴⁷⁰
- 4.13.8 The candidates should know the various elements of the ceremony and their significance: the profession of faith, laying on of hands, prayer for the coming of the Holy Spirit, anointing and the formula for anointing, and the sign of peace. If asked, they should be able to explain these to the Archbishop or confirming bishop.
- 4.13.9 In addition to their normal participation in the liturgy, the special focus of the candidates should be on their renewal of baptismal promises and reception of the sacrament of confirmation. Other liturgical roles (e.g., reader, usher, etc.) are better given to other competent young people and adults.
- 4.13.10 The use of special robes is entirely optional. Stoles, however, are not to be worn by those being confirmed. The stole is a vestment proper to the ordained; the priesthood of the faithful, which is conferred in baptism and complemented in confirmation, is symbolized by a white garment.⁴⁷¹

Archbishop of Washington

- 4.14.1 The Archbishop or confirming bishop will be the principal celebrant of the Mass. The pastor is requested to concelebrate with him. Other priests may be invited to concelebrate, especially those who have a pastoral role with the confirmands. If a deacon is available, he assists the Archbishop or confirming

⁴⁷⁰ See ADW, *Liturgical Norms and Policies*, 2010, 1.1.6.

⁴⁷¹ ADW, *Rite of Confirmation within Mass*, 2007. See BCLN December 1984: "Q. Is there any liturgical legislation regarding the use of stoles at the celebration of confirmation? R. The traditional vesture of the newly baptized in the white robe. There is no indication in liturgical tradition that the stole—which properly is the vesture of ordained ministers—was used for neophytes. The current practice in some places of using stoles at confirmation seems to have arisen out of the laudable desire to provide a symbol signifying the confirmands' participation in the life and ministry of the Church. However, 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 in this manner. To emphasize the relationship between confirmation and baptism, a white garment might be used at confirmation—just as the baptismal robe was used to clothe the newly baptized. Use of a stole, however, should be avoided for the reason already indicated." See also ADW, *Liturgical Norms and Policies*, 2010, 1.1.5-6, 4.20.4, 11.24.8 and its note.

bishop at the liturgical celebration; other deacons, too, may assist if they are available (e.g., principal deacons to the Archbishop or confirming bishop, Deacon of the Gospel, Deacon of the Sacred Chrism).

Other Ministers

- 4.15.1 A Master of Ceremonies is assigned by the Office of Worship to accompany the Archbishop or confirming bishop. If the Master of Ceremonies is a deacon, he functions as a Master of Ceremonies and not as a deacon; therefore, he is not to proclaim the Gospel or to assist at the altar as would the deacon of the liturgy. In this way the Master of Ceremonies can attend to the many details of the ceremony and principally assist the Archbishop or confirming bishop. He will have a copy of the parish liturgical planning sheet from the Office of Worship to assist him with the ceremony. The pastor may wish to contact the Master of Ceremonies a few days prior to the scheduled confirmation Mass to communicate and discuss any particular issues or concerns.⁴⁷²
- 4.15.2 Depending on the local circumstances of the parish, the lectors may be adult readers who already exercise this ministry in the parish and are well-prepared to proclaim the Word effectively, or readers chosen from among those to be confirmed who have been well-trained and rehearsed to proclaim the Word.⁴⁷³
- 4.15.3 If needed, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are contacted and assigned Communion stations in the church. A sufficient number is needed to accommodate the distribution of Holy Communion under both species to the assembly. Please note that as ordinary ministers of Holy Communion, all concelebrating priests and attending deacons, unless physically unable, should be assigned Communion stations before extraordinary ministers are used for the distribution of Holy Communion.⁴⁷⁴
- 4.15.4 If possible, there should be at least six altar servers for the ceremony: cross bearer and acolytes (or two candle bearers), miter bearer, crozier bearer, and book bearer.⁴⁷⁵
- 4.15.5 If incense is used, a thurifer carries the thurible and boat of incense.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷² ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007.

⁴⁷³ ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007.

⁴⁷⁴ ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007. See also ADW, Liturgical Norms and Policies, 2010, 6.10.1-16.

⁴⁷⁵ ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007.

- 4.15.6 Vimps are worn by the miter and crozier bearers and are normally brought to the parish by the Archbishop or confirming bishop.⁴⁷⁷
- 4.15.7 All candidates and sponsors gather in a convenient place (e.g., parish hall, school room, etc.) before the appointed hour of the Mass (e.g., one hour beforehand) to check in and receive their confirmation name tags. Candidates and their sponsors are to be seated near the front of the church at reserved places visible to the Archbishop or confirming bishop. Sponsors should be seated behind the candidates so they can simultaneously exit their pews in an orderly fashion when approaching the Archbishop or confirming bishop with the candidates for the administration of the sacrament.⁴⁷⁸ All other guests sit in the other sections of the church.

Sanctuary

- 4.16.1 The arrangement of the chairs in the sanctuary should accommodate the Archbishop or confirming bishop and his deacon(s), the pastor and concelebrants, and the other liturgical ministers as space allows. The Archbishop or confirming bishop presides at a principal chair. At confirmation, depending on the sanctuary arrangements and space available, the pastor is seated normally to the bishop's right and a deacon (if present) to the bishop's left. Additional deacons are seated near the celebrant's chair or at an appropriate place in the sanctuary.⁴⁷⁹
- 4.16.2 The ritual book, brought to the parish by the Archbishop or confirming bishop, is placed in the sanctuary near the celebrant's chair by the Master of Ceremonies prior to the Mass, opened to the Introductory Rites.⁴⁸⁰
- 4.16.3 Normally, the parish should provide the sacred chrism for the anointing during the sacrament. The container of chrism is placed on a side table (or on the credence table), or it may be carried in the liturgical procession by a deacon (or server). A small finger towel and hand towel should also be available for the Archbishop during the anointing with the chrism.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁶ ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007.

⁴⁷⁷ ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007.

⁴⁷⁸ See also ADW, Liturgical Norms and Policies, 2010, 4.17.2.

⁴⁷⁹ ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007.

⁴⁸⁰ ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007.

⁴⁸¹ ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007. In case of true necessity only, a priest may increase the volume of blessed oils by adding unblest oil to them. It would be an abuse, however, if this practice became routine for the sake of expedience or convenience. CDWDS, Response, 18 April 1994, in BCLN August-September 1994; RRAA 1996, 10.

- 4.16.4 On the credence table are the chalice, purificator, pall, chalice veil, lavabo, water cruet, Missal or Sacramentary, concelebration cards or booklets, and several extra finger towels. There should also be a sufficient number of vessels (ciboria and cups with purificators) for the distribution of Holy Communion under both species.⁴⁸²
- 4.16.5 An additional hand washing bowl with soap, a lemon sliced into disks or wedges, water, and hand towels are prepared for the Archbishop for the washing of his hands after the anointing.⁴⁸³
- 4.16.6 On the gift table are the gifts to be offered by the confirmed: flagon(s) of wine, a cruet of wine, the large paten plate of bread, and the bishop's paten plate of bread (containing his large host). (Gifts intended for the poor may also be placed on or near the gift table and presented.)⁴⁸⁴
- 4.16.7 Flowers may adorn the sanctuary but should be so arranged as not to interfere with the celebration of the rites. In Lent, a parish could use greenery instead of flowers.⁴⁸⁵

Mass – An Overview

- 4.17.1 A detailed description of the Mass for confirmation will can be found in the Office of Worship publication, Rite of Confirmation Within Mass, Guidelines and Ceremony Notes, August 15, 2007, nos. 60-148.
- 4.17.2 Confirmands and sponsors should be pre-seated in their places in church before the bishop's procession begins. Confirmands are not part of the liturgical entrance procession with the bishop and other ministers. Each sponsor should be seated directly behind his or her confirmand in order to facilitate the distribution of Holy Communion by the bishop to the confirmands.⁴⁸⁶ The sponsors receive Holy Communion after all the confirmands have received.
- 4.17.3 Generally speaking, the use of photography during the Mass should be limited, so that the solemnity of the celebration is maintained. At the pastor's discretion and approval, the use of an official photographer or videographer

⁴⁸² ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007.

⁴⁸³ ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007.

⁴⁸⁴ ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007.

⁴⁸⁵ ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007.

⁴⁸⁶ See also ADW, Liturgical Norms and Policies, 2010, 4.15.7.

may be arranged and should follow the appropriate guidelines provided by the Office of Communications.⁴⁸⁷

- 4.17.4 If incense is used as a highlight to the liturgical celebration, the thurifer carries it at the head of the liturgical procession. Incense may be used customarily at the entrance after the bishop venerates the altar, at the Gospel, and at the Preparation of the Gifts.

Liturgy of the Word

- 4.18.1 The readings should be proclaimed from the Lectionary, which is placed on the ambo before the ceremony begins, open to the first reading.⁴⁸⁸
- 4.18.2 The gospel is proclaimed by the deacon; or, in the absence of a deacon, the pastor (or another priest) may proclaim it. It is preferred that the Book of the Gospels (if the parish has one) be placed on the altar before Mass, unless there is a specific Deacon of the Gospel who carries it in the entrance procession and then places it on the altar (or, in some parishes, places it before the ambo).

Rite of Confirmation

- 4.19.1 Immediately after the Gospel, the pastor presents the confirmands to the Archbishop or confirming bishop and asks them to stand. If the number of confirmands is relatively few, the pastor may call them by name.
- 4.19.2 If there are so many confirmands that the reading of their names during the Mass would be a burden, their names can also be read before the Mass begins.
- 4.19.3 After the presentation of the confirmands, the pastor leads the assembly in an acclamation of an appropriate applause. The pastor then invites the confirmands to be seated.
- 4.19.4 The confirmands should know the various elements of the ceremony and their significance: profession of faith, laying on of hands, prayer for the sending of the Holy Spirit, the anointing and the formula for anointing, and

⁴⁸⁷ See ADW, Liturgical Norms and Policies, 2010, 1.11.1.

⁴⁸⁸ ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007. See also ADW, Liturgical Norms and Policies, 2010, 1.4.8, 6.27.1.

the kiss of peace. If asked, they should be able to explain them to the Archbishop or confirming bishop.

- 4.19.5 There are to be no additions to the rite (e.g., no calling on the community to accept the confirmands or other additional prayers not contained in the ritual).⁴⁸⁹
- 4.19.6 The Archbishop or confirming bishop will stand at the entrance to the sanctuary for the anointing. Traditionally, the pastor stands to the bishop's left. A deacon (or, in the absence of a deacon, the pastor or another priest) assists the Archbishop or confirming bishop by holding the sacred chrism, standing to his right with a finger towel in the left hand (and a hand towel over the left arm) and gently motioning the candidates forward to stand close to the bishop for the anointing with his right hand.
- 4.19.7 No hymns should be sung during the anointing so as not to distract from the central liturgical action of the anointing; quiet instrumental music, however, is permissible.
- 4.19.8 Each confirmand, followed by the sponsor, goes to the Archbishop or confirming bishop. Standing behind and to the left of the confirmand, the sponsor places his or her right hand on the confirmand's right shoulder. For the sake of brevity, the confirmand should announce only his or her chosen confirmation name, while looking directly at the bishop.⁴⁹⁰
- 4.19.9 Name tags with the confirmation name clearly printed, while not required, are much appreciated. Neither the family name nor the baptismal name (unless this is used for confirmation) should appear on the tag.
- 4.19.10 The practice of presenting a card with the name of the candidate and the sponsor on it may be continued. This facilitates record keeping. The cards may be collected immediately before the ceremony or as the confirmands are leaving the pews.
- 4.19.11 The confirmands may use their baptismal name again for confirmation. They should understand that saints' names are chosen because they are models and intercessors. The doctrine of the communion of saints should be thoroughly explained to the confirmands as part of their catechesis.

⁴⁸⁹ See ADW, Liturgical Norms and Policies, 2010, 1.1.5-6, 4.13.10 and its note, 4.20.4.

⁴⁹⁰ Parents may "present" their children for confirmation, together with a sponsor, but this does not necessarily involve them in the rite itself. RC 21; cf. BCLN December 1983.

- 4.19.12 The sacrament of confirmation is conferred by anointing the person with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the imposition of the hand and through the words prescribed in the approved liturgical books.⁴⁹¹ Concelebrating priests, unless they are to assist in the actual administration of the sacrament, are not to join in the imposition of hands at the invocation of the Holy Spirit.
- 4.19.14 During the confirmations, the candidate announces the confirmation name clearly to the Archbishop or confirming bishop, who anoints the forehead of the candidate with sacred chrism, saying, "N., be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit." The newly confirmed responds, "Amen." The bishop says, "Peace be with you." The newly confirmed responds, "And also with you."⁴⁹²
- 4.19.15 A sign of peace is exchanged between the Archbishop or confirming bishop and the newly confirmed with a handshake. The bishop may also shake the hand of the sponsor.
- 4.19.16 Following the anointing ceremony, the Archbishop or confirming bishop, if applicable, then offers to those present among the confirmation class who are already confirmed (e.g., those confirmed at birth) the Renewal of Commitment to Witness to Christ.⁴⁹³
- 4.19.17 The Profession of Faith is omitted.
- 4.19.18 The suggested text for the Prayer of the Faithful is given in the Rite of Confirmation.⁴⁹⁴ In the Archdiocese of Washington, as customarily observed, a special petition for vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life should be included.
- 4.19.19 While a deacon ordinarily offers the petitions, the pastor may permit the newly confirmed or other ministers to present them.

⁴⁹¹ CIC can. 880 §1.

⁴⁹² RC 27. Saint Hippolytus, *The Apostolic Tradition* 21-22: "Then, pouring the consecrated oil into his hand and imposing it on the head of the baptized, he shall say, 'I anoint you with holy oil in the Lord, the Father Almighty, and Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit.' Signing them on the forehead, he shall kiss them and say, 'The Lord be with you.' He that has been signed shall say, 'And with your spirit.' Thus shall he do to each."

⁴⁹³ See ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007, no. 105.

⁴⁹⁴ See ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007, app. A.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- 4.20.1 Some of the newly confirmed take the gifts in procession and present them to the Archbishop or confirming bishop at the entrance to the sanctuary.
- 4.20.2 The Archbishop or confirming bishop will distribute the hosts to the newly confirmed. The Communion procession should be arranged so that the newly confirmed receive Holy Communion first.
- 4.20.3 Those participating in the confirmation Mass may receive Holy Communion even if they have received at another Mass on the same day. Even when the Ritual Mass of Confirmation is celebrated on a Sunday in the Archdiocese, the Sunday obligation is fulfilled for the faithful.
- 4.20.4 Additional blessings or gestures by the faithful are not permitted.⁴⁹⁵

Following the Mass

- 4.21.1 If a photograph of the group of newly confirmed is to take place, it should be organized in a timely manner. The pastor should discuss the Archbishop or confirming bishop's participation in the photograph (i.e., availability, time, and location) with the Archbishop or confirming bishop and Master of Ceremonies prior to the Mass.
- 4.21.2 A simple reception honoring the newly confirmed and their parents may be held after the confirmation ceremony, to which members of the parish also are invited. Time permitting, the Archbishop or confirming bishop may attend this reception. It provides an opportunity for the newly confirmed to meet the Archbishop or confirming bishop and have a picture taken with him. The instruction indicating the availability of hospitality should be communicated in the printed program or in some other appropriate manner.
- 4.21.3 At the location for the reception, if the Archbishop or confirming bishop attends, there should be a clearly designated place for the Archbishop or confirming bishop to stand and to greet the newly confirmed, their sponsors, families, and guests who attend the Mass.
- 4.21.4 The pastor, director of religious education, or catechist should remain near the Archbishop or confirming bishop when he receives the newly confirmed

⁴⁹⁵ See ADW, Liturgical Norms and Policies, 2010, 1.1.5-6 and 4.13.10 and its note.

and their families and to make the proper introductions to the Archbishop or confirming bishop.

F. REGISTRATION OF CONFIRMATION

- 4.22.1 Soon after the celebration of confirmation, the pastor of the place is to make the appropriate entry in the confirmation register of the parish. This entry must include the names of the confirmand, the parents and sponsor(s), and the minister; the place and date of the confirmation; and the place and date of baptism for each of the confirmed. Notation must also be made in the baptismal registers of the confirmands. The pastor of the place where confirmation was celebrated is to inform the pastor of the church of baptism as needed.⁴⁹⁶

G. MYSTAGOGY (POST-SACRAMENTAL FORMATION)

- 4.23.1 After the celebration of the sacrament, those who have been confirmed are to be led to a richer participation in the mystery of Christ, especially in the Eucharist, and a more complete share in the mission of the Church.
- 4.23.2 Parishes are to assist those who have been confirmed in the next stage of their journey of faith (e.g., by providing programs of comprehensive youth ministry, further adult formation opportunities, etc., depending on the circumstances of the newly-confirmed).

⁴⁹⁶ CIC cann. 894–896; cf. ADW, Rite of Confirmation within Mass, 2007. See also ADW, Liturgical Norms and Policies, 2010, 2.48.3.