



**OFFICE FOR DIVINE WORSHIP
ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA**

**2025 INSTRUCTIONS
FOR THE ORDER OF CONFERRAL OF CONFIRMATION
WITHIN MASS**

These instructions are provided to assist the pastor and those associated with him to prepare for the celebration of Mass with a Bishop for the Sacrament of Confirmation. These instructions cull details from the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, the *Order of Confirmation*, the *Ceremonial of Bishops*, *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *Code of Canon Law* to propose a fitting and authentic form of celebration. In the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, the norm is to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation within Mass.

**PART ONE:
PREPARATIONS IN GENERAL**

CANDIDATES AND SPONSORS

Candidates

- School Age Children may be presented for the Sacrament of Confirmation when they are in the 7th or 8th grade. If the number of candidates is determined to be too large for one celebration, an additional celebration may be scheduled. If this is the case, candidates from the same family should be confirmed in the same celebration. If the number of candidates is few, the celebration of the Sacrament may be scheduled every other year.
 - Bishop McIntyre's Office assigns a set of parishes for each Bishop each year. Each Bishop's Office arranges the schedule with pastors for the parish celebrations of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Questions about the parish celebration should be directed to the Office of the Bishop-celebrant.
 - Planning for the grade and date of the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation should necessarily correspond to the period of catechesis in the parish school, the religious education program and/or the regional school.
 - Every effort is to be made for all teenage and adult baptized Catholics who have been catechized for the Sacrament of Confirmation to receive the Sacrament during the pastoral visit of the Bishop. The Easter Time celebration of the Sacrament of

Confirmation by a priest is intended for those who cannot, for serious reason, participate in the parish celebration with the Bishop.

- It is the personal responsibility of the pastor to ensure the adequate catechetical formation of the candidates and to vouch for such preparation in his presentation of the candidates to the Bishop. Because of this presentation, it is not necessary or required to have a public presentation of the candidates during a Sunday Mass prior to the conferral of the Sacrament of Confirmation. The pastor should encourage the parish community to pray for the candidates for Confirmation, especially with a petition in the *Universal Prayer* near the date of the celebration of the Sacrament. Additionally, the pastor should ensure the candidates celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation in advance of the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- The candidates may use their baptismal name alone or add a confirmation name. The candidate is encouraged to choose the name of a canonized saint. The candidate should research and become familiar with the life of the saint.

Seating of Candidates and Sponsors

- The candidates are to be seated together as a group in the pews in the front of the church, with their sponsors seated together as a group behind them. Candidates and sponsors are not to be intermingled or scattered in their seating throughout the church. When there is an exceptional situation or a special needs candidate, arrangements can be made to seat the sponsor near the candidate. All candidates and sponsors are to be in their places in church before Mass begins.

Already confirmed Roman Catholic classmates of the candidates or classmates who belong to an Orthodox Church or an Ecclesial Communion may be identified for a blessing from the Bishop before or after the celebration of Mass. These classmates may not in any way simulate the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation by attire or by participation in the any part of the Order of Confirmation.

Archbishop Perez asks to meet with the candidates approximately twenty minutes before Mass for about five minutes in a room apart from the church.

Robes for Candidates

- Candidates may wear a white robe, recalling the Sacrament of Baptism, or a red robe for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Stoles and other ornamentation over these robes, in any form, are not permitted. Also, so called “robing ceremonies” are not to be associated with the celebration of the Order of Confirmation within Mass.

Letter to Bishops

- Many parishes have a practice of having the candidates write letters to the Bishop. This is not obligatory or required. This practice may continue at the discretion of the pastor or the request of the Bishop. If a letter is written by the candidates, it should not be a letter that they merely copy from a form letter provided to them by the catechist. The content of the letter should express why and how the Sacrament of Confirmation is significant in the candidate’s Christian life.

Service Projects

- Some parishes incorporate a service component in preparing candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is preferable to use terms such as “Works of Charity” or “Works of Mercy” when describing the service component. Through assignments or classroom activity, candidates should be encouraged to describe how the Work of Charity/Mercy is rooted in their faith in Jesus and flows from the grace of God. Also, since Works of Charity/Mercy are not limited by time, they should not be defined by *required hours*.

Sponsors

- Each candidate should have his/her own separate sponsor:

It is preferred that one of the candidate's godparents at Baptism exercises the role of sponsor at Confirmation. A candidate (with his/her parents) may choose another person as a sponsor. A sponsor must be at least 16 years of age, and have received Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Communion. A parent, step-parent or guardian may not be a sponsor for his/her child. The sponsor's gender need not be the same as that of the candidate. It is the responsibility of the pastor to ascertain that the sponsors are practicing Catholics and qualify for their role (Letter of Eligibility).

If the sponsor for the Sacrament of Confirmation cannot participate in the celebration of the Sacrament, a proxy is chosen beforehand who fulfills the same requirements of a sponsor as listed above. A parent, step-parent or guardian may not act as a proxy for the sponsor.

SANCTUARY

Flowers and other decorations ought to be in place, except during Advent and Lent, for the celebration of Confirmation. Also, flowers at the altar should not impede the celebrant as he incenses it. Amplification ought to be insured for the Bishop at the chair, ambo and altar.

The Altar

- Four to six candles ought to be on or near the altar.
When the Archbishop is the celebrant, there may be seven candles on or near the altar.

The Chair

- The chair for the Bishop celebrant ought to be situated so that it faces the people but never directly in front of the tabernacle.
Only deacons sit next to the Bishop. In the absence of deacon chaplains, the deacon of the Mass sits next to the Bishop. If there are three deacons, the deacon of the Mass sits in a separate place with convenient access to the ambo and altar. If a concelebrant, in the absence of a deacon, assumes the diaconal role, then he sits with the other concelebrants.

A chair for the Master of Ceremonies ought to be conveniently near to that of the Bishop.

The Credence Table (to the right of the Bishop at the altar)

- All the items usually needed for the celebration of Mass, including the Sacred Chrism, as well as an ewer and basin [not provided by the Bishop], bread and lemon, and three hand towels are placed on the credence table. The corporal should be on the credence table as well and not on the altar prior to the celebration of Mass.

Arrangements ought to be made for the basin to be emptied after each use, and after the final use, following the distribution of Holy Communion, it is emptied into the sacrarium.

A white stole should be available at the credence table for the use of the Master of Ceremonies during the Communion Rite of the Mass.

The Gift Table

- All the sacred vessels with hosts, sufficient for all those expected to receive Holy Communion. *One large host for the Bishop celebrant is sufficient. Concelebrants can receive the Body of Christ with a small host.*
- All the cruets with wine, sufficient for Communion under both kinds, if this is to take place.

ROMAN MISSAL AND LECTIONARY TEXTS

- The ritual Mass, *For the Conferral of Confirmation* may be used on all days except the Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter, the octave days of Easter and all Solemnities, Ash Wednesday and the days of Holy Week. On these days, and their anticipated celebrations, the proper Mass of the day is used from the *Roman Missal*.
- The proper readings for Sunday must be used for the Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter Time, including anticipated celebrations. The proper readings must be used on all the days of the Octave of Easter and all Solemnities, including anticipated celebrations. On all other days, including feasts, the readings for *Confirmation* may be used as found in Volume IV of the *Lectionary for Mass*.
- The text for the Responsorial Psalm must be the given biblical text in the *Lectionary for Mass*. Paraphrased texts and hymns may never substitute for the sung Word of God. The Acclamation before the Gospel and verse comes from the choices provided in the *Lectionary for Mass*.

VESTMENTS

- Red or white vestments are worn for the ritual Mass, *For the Conferral of Confirmation*. On all other occasions, Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter, the octave days of Easter and all Solemnities, Ash Wednesday and the days of Holy Week, the color of the Mass of the day is worn. Vesting rooms should be arranged for the Bishop, concelebrants and deacon(s).

SACRED MINISTERS

Bishop Celebrant

- Customarily, the Bishop brings his own vestments for the Mass.
- The Bishop brings the *Order of Confirmation* and vimps for the insignia bearers.
- The Bishop brings the Sacred Chrism.

However, please have the parish supply of Sacred Chrism available.

- If a spiritual bouquet is planned for the Bishop, it may be presented before or after Mass in the narthex or after the *Prayer after Communion* in the sanctuary.

The presentation of the spiritual bouquet need not include any spoken statement. If it does, please provide a microphone for the speaker. A financial offering or stipend for the Bishop is neither required or expected.

Concelebrants

- All priests are invited to concelebrate this Mass and, if possible, sit as a group in the sanctuary. Since the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation is the celebration of Mass with a Bishop, priests may concelebrate even if circumstances require them to celebrate another Mass on the same day.

- Typically, the archdiocesan vestment is worn by concelebrants.

The color of the ritual Mass or of the day may be worn by concelebrants if a sufficient number is available.

- Concelebrants should be provided with copies of the *Eucharistic Prayer* and ought to be reminded that the common parts are prayed in a low voice, with the intercessions assigned ahead of time to particular concelebrants. Eucharistic Prayers I, II and III have a proper addition for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. If possible, concelebrants should move to the altar for the *Eucharistic Prayer*.

In the absence of a deacon, a concelebrant carries out the diaconal role, including the carrying of the Book of the Gospels, the proclamation of the Gospel, the preparation of the gifts, the raising of the chalice at the doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer, and the invitation to the sign of peace and the dismissal. A concelebrating priest asks for the Bishop's blessing before proclaiming the Gospel.

Priests who are not concelebrating, vested in cassock and surplice, likewise should have seats and Communion stoles prepared for them in the sanctuary area.

Deacons

- Every effort ought to be made for a deacon to assist the Bishop at this celebration.
- The deacon(s) wears a dalmatic the same color as the principal celebrant.
- If three deacons are present, two serve as chaplains to the Bishop and the third as the deacon of the Mass.
- If two deacons are present, they both serve as chaplains and carry out the proper roles during the Liturgy of the Word and the Eucharist.

LITURGICAL MINISTERS

- The leader of song, the psalmist, the choir, the lectors and, if needed, the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, should be those trained members of the parish who carry out these roles at the Sunday Mass. In the absence of a deacon or a concelebrant, the lector may carry the *Book of the Gospels*.

The chants and acclamations are led from the sanctuary area but not from the ambo. The lectors move from the congregation to the ambo for each reading. The psalm is sung from the ambo. Each reading has its own lector. [A deacon reads the *Universal Prayer* if he is present for

the Mass.] If needed, the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion move from the congregation to the altar after the invitation to receive Holy Communion.

The candidates do not serve in any liturgical ministries—as leader of song, psalmist, altar servers, lectors for the Sacred Scripture or the Universal Prayer—during the celebration of the Rite of Confirmation within Mass. The newly-confirmed may bring forward the Gifts.

Altar Servers

- Eight altar servers are needed for Mass: thurifer, crucifer, two candle bearers/servers, Sacred Chrism bearer, miter bearer, crozier bearer and book bearer. The servers should be well rehearsed in advance of the celebration. The Master of Ceremonies will meet with the servers prior to the Mass only to review specific details and not to rehearse them for the Mass.

Already confirmed Roman Catholic classmates may however act as altar servers and may also bring forward the Gifts. Please see separate notes found on the website of the Office for Divine Worship for altar servers.

LITURGICAL MUSIC

- The directives found in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* and *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, with regard to liturgical music, should guide liturgical music planning. All copyright regulations are to be observed. Licenses and permissions for reprint of liturgical music are to be included in printed participation aids for the celebration. The *Gloria* is always sung with the ritual Mass, *For the Conferral of Confirmation*, even during Advent and Lent.
- The chant or music during the Anointing of Sacred Chrism should correspond with its text to the action of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is preferable that a single selection be used during this time to accompany the single action of the anointing. The Litany of the Saints, which has its own unique role in other ritual celebrations, should not be used during the anointing with Sacred Chrism.
- When the ritual Mass, *For the Conferral of Confirmation*, is not used, the liturgical music should correspond to the Mass of the day, especially the Entrance and Communion.

VIDEO-TAPING AND PHOTOGRAPHS

- Video-taping should not be obtrusive nor impede the reverent celebration of the Sacred Liturgy. This precludes videographers roaming during the celebration.
- After Mass, the Bishop is willing to pose for photographs with the newly-confirmed, their sponsors and family members who would like this opportunity. The arrangements for photographs are to be well organized, with the assistance of coordinators for its orderliness. All are to be aware of the procedures for photographs prior to the celebration. The location for photographs is determined by the Bishop.

PART TWO: THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRED LITURGY

INTRODUCTORY RITES ---

- The procession for this Mass usually moves from the vesting area to the church unless the layout of the parish buildings or weather requires other arrangements. Every effort is to be made for the Mass to begin on time. The order of procession can be found in the notes for altar servers.
- The *Book of the Gospels* is carried in the procession by the deacon ahead of [other deacons and] the priest-concelebrants. [The concelebrant who will proclaim the Gospel in the absence of the deacon carries the *Book of the Gospels* in the procession. *The Book of the Gospels* is not carried in the procession at the end of Mass.] The *Book of the Gospels* is placed flat and closed upon the altar.
- Without waiting for the Bishop, altar servers and deacons make their reverence (genuflection) immediately when they enter the sanctuary, and then proceed to their places. Concelebrants, after they reverence (genuflection) and venerate the altar, then proceed to their places. The deacons chaplains or deacon of the Mass venerates the altar with the Bishop.
- The Bishop imposes incense before the procession moves and incenses the altar after he reverences it. Music should accompany the complete incensation of the altar until the Bishop reaches the chair.
- The *Entrance Chant*, sung by all, should accompany the procession and introduce the congregation to the Sacrament of Confirmation or the liturgical day/season.
- The *Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water* is reserved to Sundays and is appropriate when Confirmation takes place within Sunday Mass. The accompanying song should reflect the mystery of Baptism in Christ.
- The *Gloria* is always sung with the ritual Mass, *For the Conferral of Confirmation*, even during Advent and Lent. When another Mass is celebrated other than *For the Conferral of Confirmation*, then the rubrics for that Mass indicate whether or not there is a *Gloria*. The text must be faithful to the translation in the *Roman Missal*.

LITURGY OF THE WORD ---

- The *Lectionary for Mass* provides the scripture readings and the chants between the readings for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. The *Responsorial Psalm* and the *Acclamation Before the Gospel* are to be sung. During the *Acclamation before the Gospel* there should be incense and candles to accompany the procession to the ambo with the *Book of the Gospels*. Only the *Book of the Gospels* is presented to the Bishop to be venerated and not the *Lectionary for Mass*. A reflective silence follows the First Reading, the Second Reading and the Homily.

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION ---

Clear directions should be provided for the candidates, sponsors and congregation for the variations in posture during the Rite of Confirmation.

- The *Presentation of the Candidates* is made by the pastor. A sample form for this presentation is attached. The pastor, keeping in mind the content of the sample form, may craft his own presentation of the candidates. *The candidates stand as a group for this presentation* for the Sacrament of Confirmation and the congregation remains seated. This is not an occasion for applause.
- The *Homily* by the Bishop follows the *Presentation of the Candidates*.
- The *Renewal of Baptismal Promises* takes place in a dialogue between the Bishop and the candidates. On weekdays, the candidates alone stand, ready to respond robustly, *I do*. On Sundays and Solemnities' all stand and participate in the renewal of baptismal promises and the *Profession of Faith* is then omitted.

Archbishop Perez receives the ritual book, Order of Confirmation, at the conclusion of the homily at the entrance to the sanctuary. The Renewal of Baptismal Promises follows the homily at this place.

- For the *Laying on of Hands* all stand—candidates, sponsors and congregation. After this all sit.

Archbishop Perez will carry out the Laying on of Hands at the entrance to the sanctuary. The insignia and insignia bearers are needed at this point.

- For the *Anointing with Chrism* the deacon [or in his absence a concelebrant] brings the Sacred Chrism to the Bishop. The Bishop takes his place, standing in the center at the entrance to the sanctuary, for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Archbishop Perez will hold his own Sacred Chrism and will not make use of the crozier.

- The candidates come forward to the Bishop, two by two (side by side) with their sponsors and stand as near to the Bishop as possible. The foreheads of the candidates must be completely uncovered, for example, no veils, hats, flowers, make-up or hair, for the anointing with Sacred Chrism.
- The sponsor stands behind the candidate with his/her right hand on the candidate's shoulder and clearly and audibly says only, "N. (The confirmation name)," without any additional words.

Archbishop Perez requests that the pastor or another priest, deacon or another person, stand at his side with the printed Confirmation name of the candidate on a card that can be easily read by him.

- The candidates should memorize in advance their responses to the Bishop for the Sacrament of Confirmation, ready to respond robustly, *Amen*, as well as, *And with your spirit*.
- Once a candidate has been confirmed and steps away, the next candidate steps immediately into place. Every effort should be made to prevent gaps in the procession. Catechists or other persons may be positioned near the Bishop to guide the candidate and ensure that the procession of candidates and sponsors is orderly and efficient.

- During the anointing a suitable psalm or hymn associated with the action of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation may be sung. This is not the occasion for asking the intercession of the saints with the Litany of the Saints. The volume of the music should not impede the Bishop and the candidate from hearing one another in the dialogue during the *Order of Confirmation*.
 - The Bishop washes his hands after the anointing. After the last candidate is confirmed, the Bishop is approached by the servers, with the ewer of water and the basin along with lemon, bread and a towel, ready for the washing of his hands.

Archbishop Perez does not use bread for the washing of his hands.

- The *Universal Prayer* follows the anointing with Sacred Chrism and is introduced and concluded by the Bishop. The deacon, or in his absence a lector, reads or sings the petitions. The *Order of Confirmation* provides an example for the number—not to be exceeded—and content of the petitions. Others may be used following the pattern and number in the *Order of Confirmation*.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST ---

- Once the altar is prepared, sufficient hosts for the Communion of all and wine should be brought forward to the Bishop at his chair by the newly confirmed. Gifts for the poor may also be included with the bread and wine. However, anything other than that which will be consumed or used for the glory of God is not to be included in this procession. On Sundays, the procession of gifts follows the collection of monies.
- A hymn or instrumental music accompanies the *Preparation of the Gifts*.
- The Bishop incenses the gifts and the altar. The deacon [or in his absence a concelebrant or the thurifer] incenses the Bishop, the clergy and the congregation. Music should accompany the complete incensation, including that of the congregation.
- The *Sanctus*, the *Mystery of Faith*, and the *Amen* during the *Eucharistic Prayer* are to be sung. The *Agnus Dei* is to be sung as well. The texts must be faithful to the translation in the *Roman Missal*.
- The consecrated Body and Blood of the Lord may be incensed at each showing during the *Eucharistic Prayer*. The deacon chaplain or server would customarily kneel at the center of the steps leading to the altar.
- The *Lord's Prayer* and its *Doxology* preferably are sung. The texts must be faithful to the translation in the *Roman Missal*.
- There should be sufficient ministers of Holy Communion so that its distribution is not unduly prolonged and can be carried out reverently. Extraordinary ministers from the parish are to be assigned to assist with Holy Communion only in the absence of priests and deacons. *The procession for Holy Communion should move toward the altar.*
- Holy Communion may be distributed under both kinds, especially if this is the parish practice.
- The purification of sacred vessels takes place at the credence table after Mass. This is carried out by the deacon (and/or priest). The sacred vessels should be placed on a corporal and covered with a corporal until they are purified if this takes place after Mass.
- The *Communion Chant*, sung by all, should accompany the Communion procession.
- If there is a *Hymn of Praise* after Holy Communion it ought to focus on the mystery just received.

- The purification of the sacred vessels may take place during or after Mass. If this takes place during Mass, then it is done at the credence table and not at the altar. If this takes place after Mass, the sacred vessels are placed on a corporal on the credence table and covered with a corporal until they are purified after Mass by a priest, deacon or acolyte.

CONCLUDING RITES

- The presentation to the Bishop (including the Spiritual Bouquet) may take place at this point if it is not planned to take place before or after Mass.
- The Solemn Blessing may take place at this point.
- As the Bishop venerates the altar, all the concelebrants bow to the altar.
- All in the sanctuary genuflect in place as the Bishop and deacon(s) genuflect.
- The liturgical music after Mass may be a hymn or instrumental.
- The candidates process after the Bishop and the liturgical procession.

CERTIFICATES AND RECORD KEEPING

- Parishes may issue certificates in commemoration of the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Such certificates should not be distributed during the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy.
- Pastors are to see that the complete information required by the *Register for Confirmation*, as well as notifying the church of Baptism, is recorded immediately following the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

SAMPLE PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES _____

For a Bishop Celebrant:

Candidates, please stand.

Your Excellency,

The parish of _____
is honored by the presence of a successor of the apostles.

I present to you, our sons and daughters,
who are candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Under the guidance of their parents, guardians and catechists
and with the prayerful support and encouragement
of this parish community
they have prepared for this Sacrament of Christian Initiation
which was begun at their baptism.

I ask that you impose hands upon them
and anoint them with the Sacred Chrism,
sealing them with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

We pray that their participation in the Holy Eucharist
with all of us assembled here
will strengthen them as faithful witnesses to Christ.

SAMPLE PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES_____

For a Priest Celebrant:

Candidates, please stand.

Reverend Monsignor/Reverend Father,

The parish of _____
is honored by your presence.

I present to you, our sons and daughters
who are candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Under the guidance of their parents, guardians and catechists
and with the prayerful support and encouragement
of this parish community
they have prepared for this Sacrament of Christian Initiation
which was begun at their baptism.

I ask that you impose hands upon them
and anoint them with the Sacred Chrism,
sealing them with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

We pray that their participation in the Holy Eucharist
with all of us assembled here
will strengthen them as faithful witnesses to Christ.