

CONFIRMATION

Those who have been baptized continue the path of Christian Initiation through the Sacrament of Confirmation. In this sacrament they receive the Holy Spirit who was sent upon the Apostles by the Lord on the day of Pentecost.

This gift of the Holy Spirit conforms believers more perfectly to Christ and strengthens them so that they may bear witness to Christ for the building up of His Body in faith and love. They are so marked with the character or seal of the Lord that the Sacrament of Confirmation cannot be repeated. (RC nn. 1 and 2)

I. The Minister of Confirmation:

- A. The ordinary minister of Confirmation is a bishop (C 882).
- B. All priests (*ipso iure*) may administer the Sacrament of Confirmation in danger of death (C 883.3; PP).
- C. Priests mentioned in canon 883.2 also have the faculty to confirm (a) in the case of the readmission to communion of a baptized Catholic who has been an apostate from the faith and also (b) in the case of a baptized Catholic who has without fault been instructed in a non-Catholic religion or adhered to a non-Catholic religion, but (c) not in the case of a baptized Catholic who, though raised in the faith, was never confirmed (National Statutes 28).
- D. In the instance mentioned in C.(c), in order to maintain the inter-relationship and sequence of Confirmation and Eucharist as defined in canon 842.2, priests who lack the faculty to confirm should seek it from the diocesan bishop, who may, in accord with canon 884.1, grant the faculty if he judges it necessary (National Statutes 29).
- E. Deacons: An adult should be immediately Confirmed after the reception of Baptism by the minister who confers the Baptism. Since a deacon cannot administer Confirmation, he cannot baptize an adult except in danger of death. Deacons may baptize infants and children under the age of seven. Such children will then be Confirmed in the usual way by the bishop. Persons seven years old and older will be baptized by a priest and Confirmed by him as part of the same ceremony. (C 97.2, 852, 866, 883.2, 891)

II. Recording Confirmations: The pastor should record the names of the minister, those Confirmed, parents, sponsors and the date and place of Baptism in a special book. In addition, a notice is sent to the Church of Baptism.

III. Diocesan Guidelines For the Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation:

A. Qualifications of Candidates:

- 1 Each baptized Catholic has the right and the obligation to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, but the candidate has the responsibility to personally choose to complete initiation into the faith life of the Church. The candidate may request the sacrament if he/she:

- a. is baptized and able to renew Baptismal promises, unless a grave reason suggests otherwise
 - b. exhibits an active faith life and knowledge of the Church
 - c. participates in the sacramental life of the Church, especially Eucharistic liturgies
 - d. is willing to commit to active involvement in the parish Confirmation catechesis
 - e. is willing to respond to the call to active ministry
 - f. is willing to continue to learn and grow in faith following Confirmation and throughout his/her lifetime
2. Age of candidate: The Diocese of Tyler has not set specific age requirement for reception. Setting an arbitrary, unbending age for Confirmation can be a disservice to those who are not yet able to make any kind of faith commitment. People do not mature and develop at the same rate. Not all young persons in a particular grade will be at the same stage in moral, faith or intellectual development. Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation is most important. Extensive catechesis is necessary distinct from the regular religious education programs. At least one school year is to be devoted to this special catechesis. The ninth, tenth or eleventh grades seem to be an appropriate age for the Sacrament. (THIS NEEDS TO BE DECIDED IN OUR DIOCESE **)
3. One Confirmed at birth: Confirmation may not be repeated. The young person can be encouraged to participate in the preparation and celebration. At the time of Confirmation, he/she would simply be greeted and blessed rather than anointed.

B. Sponsors

1. Sponsors represent in a personal way the witness and support of the parish community. Opportunities for catechesis should be offered to the sponsors in order to assist them in fully understanding their role in the ongoing formation of the candidates. The sponsors should participate with the candidates in their preparation, as well as the celebration.
2. To perform the role of sponsor, it is necessary that a person:
 - a. be designated by the one to be Confirmed, by the parents or the one who takes their place or, in their absence, by the pastor or minister and is to have the qualifications and intention of performing the role
 - b. have completed the sixteenth year, unless a different age has been established by the diocesan bishop or it seems to the pastor or minister that an exception is to be made for a just cause
 - c. be a Catholic who has been Confirmed and has already received the Sacrament of the Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with faith and the role to be undertaken.
 - d. not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared
 - e. not be the father or the mother of the one to be Confirmed.
(C 874)
3. More than one Sponsor: More than one can be used but only one is designated as the liturgical sponsor, standing with the candidate at

Confirmation.

4. Sponsor-Proxy: A proxy may be used, but it is recommended that someone nearby be chosen to sponsor, so that he/she can become more involved in the candidate's preparation.
- C. Parents: For the Sacrament of Confirmation, the parental role is very much one of spiritual companion and advisor, that is, both parent and child learning and growing in understanding of Catholic traditions and beliefs. As part of their continuing support and witness, parents should attend catechetical sessions provided by the parish for their own faith formation. With the parish's help, parents will be better able to share their own faith journey, thereby helping the candidate reach his/her own decision to go forward in faith.
- D. Catechesis: Keeping in mind that all catechesis should lead a person to a conscious, active and living faith, each parish should provide a process of immediate preparation to celebrate the Confirmation.
- E. For baptized Catholics who seek Confirmation as adults: Some adult Catholics though raised in the faith, for various reasons, were not Confirmed in their youth. These persons are not to be confused with "baptized, uncatechized Catholics." The parish should develop flexible programs to prepare these adults for confirmation. They are to be confirmed by the bishop, normally at the parish confirmation celebration.
- F. Celebration: The celebration of Confirmation should be carefully prepared and well executed, following the Rite of Confirmation.
 1. The ceremony should normally be celebrated within the Eucharistic Liturgy. The Sacrament of Confirmation should be held at a time when the parish community can witness and participate in this celebration of the growth of their parish family.
 2. Use of Stoles: It has become a practice in some communities for the candidate to be presented with stoles after the Confirmation rite. The Bishops Committee on the Liturgy has deemed this an inappropriate symbol and practice for Confirmation. Therefore in union with the Bishops the practice is to be discontinued in the Diocese of Tyler.
- G. Confirmation and Matrimony: 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 (C 1065). If one has not been Confirmed and presents himself/herself for marriage, then Confirmation should be given if the person can be adequately prepared and Confirmation with the bishop is scheduled in that parish or nearby before the marriage takes place. If it is impossible to prepare someone for Confirmation adequately before marriage, then the priest or deacon should proceed with the wedding but use every means possible to see that the person is Confirmed on the first occasion after the marriage has taken place.
- H. Taking Another Name: As greater emphasis is placed on the intimate connection between Baptism and Confirmation, the Baptismal name is seen as having greater significance. Candidates may choose a Confirmation name if they so desire. This is especially true if the Baptism name is not a saint's name.

- I. Confirming Those Entering Full Communion: All baptized persons who have not been Confirmed are capable of receiving Confirmation (C 889). In the Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Sacrament of Confirmation (chrism) is always lawfully administered by the priest at the same time as Baptism. Even though no mention is made of the Confirmation in the canonical testimony of Baptism, this does not give grounds for doubting that the sacrament was conferred (DCE n. 12). Therefore, a member of an Eastern Church who enters full communion in the Roman Catholic Church is not re-confirmed. Candidates for full communion who were confirmed in a non-Eastern Church (e.g. Protestant), like Episcopalians/Lutherans, are confirmed upon initiation due to the question of the validity of their previous confirmation. (RC n. 6; EGD pp. 5-6)