

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF OAKLAND



OFFICE OF WORSHIP

Guide to Celebrating of the Sacrament of Confirmation

Updated March 2024

To better assist your parish in preparing to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation, the following guidelines are provided to ensure the reverent and uniform celebration of the liturgy. This document has two parts: Part I concerns the preparations for the liturgy and Part II concerns norms for the celebration of the liturgy. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Worship at worship@oakdiocese.org. This document and all other resources for the celebration of Confirmation can be found at <https://oakdiocese.org/worship>.

PART I: PREPARING FOR THE LITURGY

General Considerations

- A Master of Ceremonies (MC) will accompany the Bishop/Vicar General to serve as the liaison between the celebrant and the parish and will ensure a smooth and prayerful celebration.
- Please reserve two parking spaces: one for the Bishop/Vicar General and one for the MC.
- The Bishop brings his own vestments and the Vicar General typically wears vestments provided by the parish.
- The stipend for the Bishop/Vicar General is at the pastor's discretion and generosity.
- The standard stipend for the MC is \$125.
- One lemon (sliced) and bread (two slices) are needed for the washing that takes place after the anointing and are provided by the parish.

Ministers of the Mass

- **Clergy**
 - All priests are invited to vest and concelebrate. Please note that visiting clergy who do not have faculties in the Diocese of Oakland should follow the established protocol of submitting a letter of good standing to the chancery in advance of the celebration.
 - In addition to his normal duties during the Mass, the deacon will also hold the Chrism on the Bishop/Vicar General's right-hand side during the anointing. In the absence of a deacon, the pastor holds the Chrism.
- **Altar Servers**
 - At least three servers are required.
 - In addition to their normal duties during the Mass:

- The book bearer will hold the Confirmation ritual book during the Renewal of Baptismal Promises.
- Two servers will assist the Bishop/Vicar General in washing his hands with the lemon, bread, and water. This takes place when he returns to the chair after the anointing.
- If the Bishop is present, one additional server (ideally two) will be dedicated to holding the miter and crosier.
- If incense is used, an additional server who is trained to be a thurifer is required. Incense is used (a) to incense the altar after the entrance procession, (b) at the Gospel procession, (c) at the offertory, and (d) at the consecration.
- Readers (lectors)
 - The readers chosen for the Mass should be trained individuals who regularly serve as readers. To allow Confirmation candidates to focus more fully on receiving the sacrament and not be burdened with liturgical duties, they should normally not serve as readers.

Dress Code

- The standard dress code for church is simply “Sunday’s best.” The celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation is an important, formal event and our attire should reflect this.
- The use of matching gowns for the candidates is permitted, but not required.
- The use of stoles by candidates during the liturgy is **not permitted**. Stoles are liturgical vesture proper to ordained ministers.
- Formal ethnic/cultural attire is appropriate.
- For males: Dress shirts should be tucked in. T-shirts and hoodies should be avoided. Pants should be worn at the waist and over the hips. Jeans should be avoided.
- For females: The knees and shoulders should be covered. Tops must completely cover the stomach. Heels/dress shoes should allow you to walk around safely and comfortably.

Planning a Mass

- The Mass to be celebrated is as follows:
 - On Solemnities, Feasts, and the Octaves of Christmas and Easter, the prescribed Mass of the day is required.
 - On Sundays (including Saturday evening), the Sunday Mass is usually celebrated. However, during the Sundays of Ordinary time, the Ritual Mass for the Conferral of Confirmation, along with red vestments, may be used.
 - On other days (weekdays), the Ritual Mass for the Conferral of Confirmation is normally used.

- Readings
 - The readings proclaimed at Ritual Masses are pre-selected each year and will be communicated to the parish during the planning with the Office of Worship.
 - The readings at all other Masses (Sundays/solemnities) are the readings of the day.
- Language
 - Masses may be celebrated completely in English or Spanish.
 - In a Mass that is celebrated primarily in English, other languages may be used in the readings, music, and Prayer of the Faithful.
 - Readings and intercessions read in a language other than English should always be announced in English (e.g., “A reading from...;” “For the Church...”)
 - If any part of the Rite of Confirmation is to be celebrated in Spanish, this needs to be clearly indicated on the planning form and confirmed with the MC. Candidates must be prepared to respond correctly in Spanish.
- Red vestments are worn for Confirmation Masses. Violet is used on Sundays of Advent or Lent.

PART II: NORMS FOR CELEBRATING THE LITURGY

Sponsors

- Sponsors must:
 - be at least 16 years of age
 - have received the Sacrament of Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation in the Roman Catholic Church.
 - practice the Catholic faith by attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation.
 - sincerely try to follow the moral teachings of the Catholic faith and try to lead a Catholic life with integrity.
 - (if married) be married in the Catholic Church.
 - not be one of the parents of the child receiving the Sacrament.
- During the Rite of Confirmation, the sponsor presents the candidate to the Bishop/Vicar General in these or similar words: ***Bishop (Father), I present N. for Confirmation***
 - If the candidate has chosen a saint’s name, the sponsor should present the candidate using the new name and not the candidate’s given name.

Candidates

- Candidates should be:
 - “properly disposed” (i.e., in a state of grace; Canon 889 §2).
 - Wearing a nametag with the name to be used during the anointing.

- The nametag should be placed on or near the shoulder and easily legible from a distance.
 - Prepared to respond to the Renewal of Baptismal Promises.
 - Prepared to respond the dialog during the anointing:
 - *Bishop/Vicar General: N., be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit*
- R. Amen*
- Bishop/Vicar General: Peace be with you.*
- R. And with your spirit.*
- (if a saint has been chosen) prepared to talk about the saint and why the saint was chosen.

Photography

- Memorializing the occasion is acceptable and indeed important, but as far as possible should never distract from the liturgy in any way. Those chosen as photographers should be reverent and discreet.
- Photographers (and even family/friends of the candidates) should not move into aisles, use flash, or stand on chairs or pews. Use of elaborate studio equipment should be avoided.
- During the anointing, the photographer should remain at a respectful distance from the area where the sacrament is taking place.
- The Bishop/Vicar General will be available after the liturgy for one group photo with the newly confirmed. There are two options for the group photo:
 - The newly confirmed process out of the church after the Bishop/Vicar General and stand in front of the church or some other place for the photo OR
 - The newly confirmed remain in their pews when the Bishop/Vicar General processes out of the Church and when the hymn concludes, arrange themselves in front of the altar for the photo. The Bishop/Vicar General will return to the sanctuary after completing the recession.

During the Mass

- Procession and Introductory Rites
 - Candidates may:
 - already be in place before Mass OR
 - process in (with or without sponsors) **before** Mass begins (5-10 minutes before the start of Mass). All candidates should be seated by the time Mass is scheduled to begin.

- The ministers of the Mass enter separately, after the candidates, and in the following order: thurifer (if incense is used), cross-bearer w/candles, Other servers, a deacon or reader carrying the Book of Gospels, other vested deacons (if any), concelebrating priests, Celebrant, MC (with miter/crozier bearer if Bishop celebrating)
- There are four options for the Penitential Act
 - Form A: The Confiteor (“I Confess”)
 - Always followed by the Kyrie
 - Form B: “Have mercy on us, O Lord”
 - Always followed by the Kyrie
 - Form C: Kyrie with invocations (“You were sent to heal the contrite of heart...”)
 - Sprinkling Rite
 - Always accompanied by its own song and not combined with the Gloria.
- The Liturgy of the Word
 - All readings should be proclaimed from the approved liturgical books (i.e., Lectionary and Book of Gospels) and not from a piece of paper.
 - The Prayer of the Faithful should be taken from the Rite of Confirmation ritual book.
- The Rite of Confirmation
 - The Presentation of Candidates takes place *after* the proclamation of Gospel and *before* the homily. Candidates must be presented using the standard form of presentation. Candidates are always presented as a group and are never named individually / presented one by one.
 - Following the homily, the Bishop/Vicar General asks the candidates to stand and renew their baptismal promises. The responses should be loud and clear.
 - Then comes the Laying on of Hands, after which the candidates come forward to be anointed.
 - The candidates should approach the Bishop/Vicar General using the center/main aisle and return to their pews via the side aisles. Candidates should be closely lined up so that there is a steady flow. It is not necessary for each candidate to have a long, ceremonial approach. Each sponsor stands behind the candidate and places the right hand on the candidate’s right shoulder.
 - The Bishop/Vicar General stands at the foot of the altar and from there anoints each candidate as he/she is presented. Candidates should stand within arm’s length from the Bishop/Vicar General. Please ensure that sponsors and candidates have memorized their parts.
 - If some candidates are to be anointed in English and some in Spanish, it is preferred that the candidates are grouped accordingly (i.e., all of one language first and then the other language after) and not mixed. It is acceptable for a candidate to be presented in a language other than English, even if the candidate is to be anointed in English. To avoid confusion, nametags should somehow indicate that a candidate is to be anointed in Spanish.

- Although music is not necessary during the anointing, if music is used it should be kept to a very low volume. Light instrumental music is okay, but any singing should be done softly and without microphones so as to not drown out the dialog between the Bishop/Vicar General and the candidates.
- The Liturgy of the Eucharist
 - This part of the Mass proceeds as usual.
- The Concluding Rites
 - If any announcements or words of gratitude are to be shared, they take place *after* the Prayer After Communion. For the sake of time, those speaking should keep their remarks brief.

Planning Checklist

- Altar Servers scheduled
- Readers (lectors) scheduled
- Lemon and bread prepared
- The Music Director is aware of the music-related norms outlined above and your selection of the Penitential Act
- If a photographer will be present, the norms outlined above have been reviewed with him/her
- Nametags prepared
- Sponsors and candidates have rehearsed the rite and know their responses
- The dress code has been reviewed with the sponsors and candidates
- 2 parking spaces (1 for the Bishop/Vicar General and 1 for the MC) have been reserved
- Stipend(s) prepared
- Lectionary and Book of Gospels have been marked with the correct readings
- A copy of the Prayer of the Faithful has been prepared for the reader or deacon (if any additions are made to the intercessions, please provide a copy to the MC)
- Opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation have been made available to the candidates