

ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION IN THE DIOCESE OF SAVANNAH

PRELIMINARY NOTES

According to conciliar teaching, the three sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist form the one experience of initiation into the Christian life and community. Although pastoral practice has separated the three sacraments, any program of catechetical preparation for Confirmation and its liturgical celebration should be planned in the light of such an integral view.

It is to be preferred “that the celebration of Confirmation be within Mass, when the complete sequence of Christian initiation may be shown: baptism (through the renewal of promises), confirmation, Eucharist”.

Like Baptism and Eucharist, Confirmation should be prepared for and celebrated in the midst of the Christian community. Bishop Hartmayer hopes the celebration of Confirmation will be a parish community celebration. Accordingly, all parishioners should be invited, if room permits.

Since it is not possible for the Bishop to arrange with any regularity a complete parish visit, his presence for Confirmation should be the occasion for meeting, at least socially, with representatives of the parish and for reviewing the parish sacramental registers.

To underline the relationship of Confirmation with Baptism, the candidate is encouraged to retain his/her baptismal name, rather than taking on a new name. *Care should be taken to ensure the baptismal name has Christian roots, if not, an appropriate name should be chosen.* Also, in addition to the ritual renewal of the baptismal promises, during the Easter season, the Confirmation should begin with the blessing of holy water and the ritual sprinkling of the assembly. *The water and the chrism to be used in the rite of Confirmation can be given prominence by being carried in the entrance procession and then placed on a small table near the Easter candle, which outside the Easter season, is placed back in the sanctuary area.*

Since this is not, however, a baptismal liturgy, the practice of giving individual candles to the confirmed is not recommended. *Concerning the use of stoles at Confirmation, we bring to your attention a response to this question from the December 1984 issue of the Bishops’ Committee on the Liturgy Newsletter:*

Q. Is there any legislation regarding the use of stoles at the celebration of Confirmation?

A. The traditional vesture of the newly baptized is 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 stole, however, *should be avoided* for the reasons already indicated.

AGE OF CONFIRMATION

The age for Confirmation is *ordinarily* between the 7th and 9th grades.

SPONSORS

The following canonical directives apply: Italics added by the Bishop for emphasis.

Can. 892 - As far as possible a sponsor for the one to be confirmed should be present; it is for the sponsor to see that the confirmed person acts as a true witness to Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations connected with this sacrament.

Can. 893 - § 1: To perform the role of sponsor, it is necessary that a person fulfill the conditions mentioned in Can. 874.

§ 2: It is desirable that the one who undertook the role of sponsor at baptism be sponsor for confirmation.

Can. 874 - § 1. To be admitted to the role of sponsor, a person must:

1° be designated by the one to be baptized, 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 this role;

2° 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.

3° be a Catholic who has *been confirmed* and has already received the sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken;

4° *not be bound by any canonical penalty* legitimately imposed or declared; (*i.e. in a non-sacramental marriage*)

5° *not be the father or mother* of the one to be baptized (or confirmed)

§2. A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community may not be admitted except as a witness to baptism (or confirmation) and together with a Catholic sponsor.



While parents cannot act as sponsors, they may present their children for confirmation.

It is the responsibility of *the pastor* or minister to ascertain the *spiritual qualifications of the sponsors*.

Sponsors should, if possible, be chosen at an early stage in the preparation for the sacrament and be invited to participate in the program of preparation.

You may choose either to have the class in the front pews on both sides of the main aisle and come forward to the bishop at the time of Confirmation or have the class at the end of the pew and the Bishop will come to each pew. Please let us know which procedure you will be following

It is desirable that the candidates and their sponsors take part in the entrance procession.

The use of a single sponsor or a single pair of sponsors, acting as proxies for the entire class of candidates, should be allowed only when the limitations of space clearly demand it.

NAME TAGS

The practice of the members of the class wearing name tags is retained. The name tag should be fastened high on the right shoulder of the Confirmand. This will be the confirmation name. Even though the candidate wears a name tag, he/she should mention his/her name to the Bishop.

PLACE OF MUSIC AND SONG

As in all Catholic worship, the use of music and song is encouraged, with the maximum participation of the whole assembly. Bishop Hartmayer would like to know in advance which parts of the Mass will be sung.

Primary attention should be given to the acclamations (including the Gloria and Sanctus) and the responses. Hymns are of secondary concern, but can be used to accompany processional movements, such as the entrance, incensing, communion (during distribution, and not after) and recessional.

The affirmation of faith, after the renewal of the baptismal promises, can be made by the entire assembly either by a recited Amen or the singing of a short and appropriate acclamation, but not with a hymn.

Bishop Hartmayer would prefer no singing or music played during the anointing so that everyone can hear what he is saying to those being confirmed.

If a hymn is sung during the preparation of the gifts, it should be relatively short so as not to delay the liturgical action at the altar.



During the distribution of communion, a well-known hymn or text, alternating with the cantor, can be sung. After distribution, there should follow a brief period of silent reflection, but not a so-called meditation hymn.

The Lord's Prayer should not be sung, unless it is in the familiar chant mode.

LITURGICAL MINISTERS

It is fitting that all the priests present, but especially those who have a pastoral relationship with the candidates, join with the Bishop in concelebrating the Mass. A priest who acts in another capacity in the ceremony, e.g. master of ceremonies, leader of song, commentator, etc. should not concelebrate.

If a deacon is available, he should participate as a major minister in the liturgical celebration, according to the usual rubrics.

The reader(s) should not be seated in the sanctuary, but rather in the assembly, coming forward only at the time of the reading.

The commentator, lectors, and song leader should be well prepared and the Scriptures proclaimed so everyone can hear what is being read.

In the celebration of Confirmation, those chosen to fulfill the different ministries should not be from among the candidates to be confirmed.

ADULT CANDIDATES FOR CONFIRMATION

A distinction should be made between Catechumens, i.e. candidates who will be received in the church by baptism, and other candidates who are already baptized but will be received into full communion by profession of faith.

Catechumens are to be confirmed at the same time as they are baptized, at the Easter Vigil or at another time, by the same minister who baptizes them.

Candidates already baptized and joining the Church by a profession of faith can be confirmed:

Either in the same rite in which they make their profession of faith; or

By the Bishop when he visits the parish for the celebration of Confirmation.

SACRAMENTAL REGISTERS

Certification of baptism is required for each of the candidates to be confirmed.

If it is not possible to obtain a baptismal certificate, the **Can. 876** is to be followed:

It is not prejudicial to anyone, to prove the conferral of baptism, the declaration of a single witness who is above suspicion suffices or the oath of the baptized person, if the baptism was received at an adult age.



Can. 895 - The names of the confirmed with mention of the minister, the parents and the sponsors, the place and the date of the conferral of confirmation are to be noted in the confirmation register in the diocesan curia, or, where the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop has prescribed it, in a book kept in the parish archive; *the pastor must advise the pastor of the place of baptism about the conferral of confirmation so that notation be made in the baptismal register*, in accord with the norm of Can. 535 - §2.

SCHEDULING AND HOSPITALITY

The dates for confirmation will be assigned in conjunction with the drawing up of the Bishop's schedule.

In advance of the date, a form will be sent from the Bishop's office concerning the time of the ceremony, number of candidates, the choice of readings and arrangements for hospitality. Thirty days prior to the date of Confirmation, please send the schema form and order of worship to Ginger Ansel at veansel@diosav.org or by fax to 912-201-4081.

If the scheduled Confirmation takes place Sunday-Thursday, the Mass shall begin no later than 6:00 pm.

Bishop Hartmayer would enjoy meeting and examining the class twenty minutes before the procession begins. Please have only the class assembled in a classroom or parish center. The Bishop wants the Confirmandi to be at ease and relaxed. There will be no questioning of the candidates during the homily; however, he usually asks individuals questions as they come up to be confirmed. If a group photograph with the Bishop is desired, this should be done a few minutes before this class meeting. Photographs taken during the ceremony are subject to local parish policy.

Bishop Hartmayer will bring his own alb and vestments and will vest in the rectory or whatever place you have designated for him. The color of vestments is red or white, unless the rubrics of the day state otherwise. Please indicate the color you have chosen when you send in the order of worship.

In church, please make the usual preparations for Mass. If there will be a large number of concelebrants, and/or Communion under both species, please have adequate chalices and extra hosts. If a significant number of priests and deacons are available, please assign them as Ministers of the Eucharist.

Please have a pitcher of warm water, large bowl, liquid soap and towel for the Bishop to wash his hands after the anointing. **(The Bishop does not use lemons and bread).**

Bishop Hartmayer will bring the oil of Chrism and Confirmation Ritual with him.

In the event that a full meal is planned for the Bishop and other visitors, preference should be given to scheduling the meal after the ceremony and reception. If it is scheduled before the ceremony, it should be at least 1½ hours before the ceremony



begins.

THE ORDER OF SERVICE

The Mass of Confirmation as found in the Sacramentary can be used on any day (even Sundays) except the Sundays of Advent, Lent and Easter Solemnities. On those days, the Mass will be that of the day. Bishop Hartmayer prefers to offer the Mass of the day with readings from this day, particularly if it is a Feast day.

Five servers will be needed - cross bearer, two acolytes, miter bearer and crosier bearer. If you are having incense, you may need another server. One server should be assigned to hold the book for the bishop.

The servers and members of the class, including the adults if you wish, meet the Bishop and the clergy outside the rectory or wherever they are vesting.

Introductory rites

Entrance Procession

1. Thurifer and Boat bearer (if you choose to have incense)
2. Cross bearer and acolytes
3. Honor Guard (if you wish to have them)
4. Confirmation Class
5. Additional servers should you opt to have more than the three at the front (perhaps someone to carry the Chrism to be placed near the Pascal Candle)
6. Deacon carrying the Book of the Gospels (if you have a deacon in your parish or have invited one to participate)
7. Pastor and Associate Pastors
8. Visiting clergy and concelebrants Deacon
9. Bishop Hartmayer
10. Miter and Staff bearers

The procession moves directly into the Church and the members of the class go to their pews.

If there is an honor guard, they should be seated on the side aisles or in the back of the Church.

The pastor/associate(s) are seated near the Bishop's chair. If there is a deacon, he assists the Bishop at the chair. If there is room, the concelebrants and visiting clergy are seated in the sanctuary; otherwise in the pews. However, care should be taken that the clergy do not block the view of the class or the congregation.

Rite of Sprinkling (Only during the Easter Season)

Hymn of praise: Gloria (except Advent and Lent)

Opening Prayer



Liturgy of the Word

Equal emphasis should be given to the celebration of the Word of God, which begins the rite of Confirmation

The readings, usually three in number, may be taken in whole or in part earlier from the Mass of the day. Bishop Hartmayer prefers the readings of the day be used particularly if it is a feast day. On all Sundays and Solemnities, the readings are always from the Mass of the day. During the Easter season, readings from the Old Testament are not used.

As in all celebrations of the Word of God, great care should be given to the choice and preparation of lectors. Only those who have already been confirmed should serve as lectors.

The deacon (or pastor or associate, if no deacon is present) proclaims the Gospel.

Only an approved Lectionary or Book of the Gospels should be used by the one proclaiming the Word, and not a missalette or typewritten sheets or programs.

Since the homily should be related to the biblical readings, notice should be given in advance of the readings.

Rite of Confirmation:

After the Gospel, the Pastor or a representative of the Parish Pastoral Council, or catechist presents the candidates to the Bishop. The following text or similar wording may be included:

“Bishop Hartmayer, the candidates of the parish community of _____ have been properly prepared to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. The pastor (and associate), parents and teachers, and the members of our parish community ask you, Bishop Hartmayer, to confer the gift of the Holy Spirit upon them. Bishop, it is my privilege to present these candidates to you at this time.”

Individual names may be read.

The candidates all rise and then sit for the Bishop’s homily.

After Bishop Hartmayer concludes the homily, he will lead the class in the renewal of Baptismal promises. The class answers “I do” five times (loud and clear) and the entire congregation responds with “Amen” at the conclusion. The assembly may sing a short song or acclamation of faith.

After the invitation to prayer, the Bishop, Pastor, Associate(s), the Concelebrants will join in imposing hands upon the candidates (by extending their hands over them). Bishop Hartmayer says the prayer over the candidates.



Paragraph #26 of the Ritual for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation provides that the candidates can come to the minister of the sacrament or the minister of the sacrament can go to the individual candidates. Either option may be used.

If the candidates are to come to the minister, the following directives are to be observed.

The pastor goes with the Bishop to the edge of the sanctuary.

As the confirmandi come before the Bishop, boys and girls are to come up simultaneously, two at a time, and stand in front of the Bishop. If the class is very small, the candidates may come up single file.

The sponsor comes up with the candidate and places his/her right hand on the right shoulder of the Confirmand. Please advise the sponsor in advance. If the pastor wishes, the parents, godparents and immediate family of the Confirmand may also come up with the sponsor.

In order that everyone in the pews may witness the ceremony, the members of the class should remain seated in the pews until it is time to come up. Only a very few candidates should be in the aisle at one time so they will not block the view of the congregation. As soon as the newly confirmed and his/her sponsor return to the pew, they should be seated.

If the second option is to be used, the Bishop goes to the candidates.

The candidates should be seated in such a way that the sponsor is seated next to them and the minister of the sacrament can easily approach each candidate. e.g. Each candidate sits at the end of the pew with her/his sponsor next to the candidate and Bishop Hartmayer proceeds down the aisle stopping at each candidate for anointing.

Only the candidate who is being anointed and the sponsor should be standing, all others should remain seated. The sponsor is to place his/her right hand on the right shoulder of the Confirmandi.

The candidate stands before the Bishop and says:

“I am _____ (*Confirmation name*)_____.”

The Bishop says:

“_____, BE SEALED WITH THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.”

The newly confirmed responds: “Amen.”

The Bishop says: “Peace be with you.”

The newly confirmed answers: “And with your spirit.”



The oil on the forehead of the Confirmandi is left on as a visible sign of the matter and form of the sacrament.

Bishop Hartmayer would prefer no singing or music played during the anointing so that everyone can hear what he is saying to those being confirmed.

After the anointing, the Bishop returns to his chair and washes his hands with liquid soap and water.

The Creed is omitted whenever the Sacrament of Confirmation is administered because of the renewal of Baptismal promises, including weekend Masses.

The general intercessions follow. The usual norms for these prayers should be followed. The published Rite of Confirmation already includes a set of petitions if you chose to use them. The Bishop will give an opening comment (Invitation to Pray) before the intentions are read by the deacon or cantor or one of the newly-confirmed and he will offer the concluding prayer. A maximum of six petitions would be appropriate.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins as members of the class bring up the gifts of bread and wine and any other symbolic gifts to the bishop.

If four (4) or more chalices are to be used for distribution of the Precious Blood, they should be prepared before Mass and brought to the Altar from the credence table as the gifts are brought forward.

For the distribution of Holy Communion, the Bishop will distribute to the members of the class. He will go to the edge of the sanctuary in the center aisle and the Confirmandi are to come up two by two. If communion is distributed under both species, the Ministers of the Blood of Christ should be ready to go to their stations when the Bishop begins to distribute the Body of Christ.

While the Bishop is distributing to the members of the class, other priests or Eucharistic Ministers may begin to distribute on the side aisles or in other designated parts of the church.

If Communion is distributed under both species, please make all necessary preparations in advance. Special ministers are used only if there are not enough priests and deacons present. Please inform Bishop Hartmayer of the details of distribution before Mass.

Because of the solemnity of the celebration, the gifts, altar celebrant and assembly are incensed.

Concluding rites

Any announcements or formulas of commitment are made *after the closing prayer*.

The blessing or prayer over the people is said at the end of Mass.



The procession begins as soon as the recessional hymn or music has begun. The cross bearer and acolytes, Honor Guard, if present, lead the clergy and Bishop Hartmayer out of the Church.

The members of the Confirmation class, including adults, follow the Bishop.

Please inform concelebrants and clergy before Mass, they are to follow the Honor Guard and/or cross bearer and acolytes and walk ahead of the class. Bishop Hartmayer will greet the class and the members of the congregation at the reception if one is scheduled.

PHOTOGRAPHS

The Bishop would be happy to have individual pictures taken with the newly confirmed and their sponsors and families at the reception if there is one; if no reception, right after Mass in the sanctuary or wherever you have planned.

CLASSMATES WHO HAVE ALREADY BEEN CONFIRMED

Some parishes have young people who have already been confirmed when they were received into the church at the time of their baptism or prior to coming to the parish, but want to participate with their classmates at the time of their Confirmation. We suggest that something be written into the liturgy that acknowledges their presence. They should certainly renew their baptismal promises with the group at the liturgy. Perhaps they could come forward for a blessing after the group has been confirmed or rise as a group to be acknowledged. Exactly how they are recognized is a local parish decision. Simply inform Bishop Hartmayer at the time of the ceremony.

