

Celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation



In Confirmation it is Christ who fills us with his Spirit, consecrating us as his witnesses. I wonder: How can one see that we have received the Gift of the Spirit? If we fulfil the works of the Spirit, if we speak the words instructed by the Spirit. Christian witness consists in doing only and all that the Spirit of Christ asks of us, giving us the strength to accomplish it.

Pope Francis, General Audience, 23rd May 2018

These guidelines are intended as a resource for all those who are responsible for preparing and co-ordinating the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation in our diocese. We are grateful for the time and energy you put into helping our young people prepare for this important step on their journey of faith and we hope that these resources will be useful to you in planning and preparing your celebration.

May God bless you in all that you do with and for our young people.

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✠ Fintan Gavin
Bishop of Cork and Ross

BEFORE THE CELEBRATION BEGINS

- A few minutes before the ceremony begins it is useful for the priest or other nominated person to begin preparing the congregation for the celebration that is to follow. This is an opportunity to quieten the gathering, to remind them of the need to switch off their phones, not to take pictures during the ceremony and to invite them to be prayerfully present by participating fully and actively in the prayers and the hymns that are part of the ceremony. It is also an opportunity to ask the congregation to take a moment in quiet prayer for the candidates who are to be confirmed.

ENTRANCE PROCESSION

- An entrance hymn that focuses on the theme of Confirmation and the gift of the Holy Spirit should accompany the entrance procession. All the candidates should participate in the singing of this hymn and, where possible, the congregation should be encouraged to join them.
- If the candidates take part in the procession they are followed in the procession by the priests and finally by the Bishop.

SEATING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CANDIDATES

The diocese recommends that each candidate would sit in the pew with their family and sponsor for the ceremony as it is in our family that our faith is first formed and nurtured. Just as we are presented for Baptism by our family at the beginning of our faith journey, so now on their Confirmation Day each candidate is called forth from their family, together with their sponsor, to confirm that baptismal calling and commitment.

PROCESSION OF SYMBOLS [*Optional*]

If the candidates have symbols to present of their giftedness or of their work and preparation for receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation – now is the time in which to bring them forward to the sanctuary. Symbols are brought forward by the candidates and presented to the bishop.

Have a space or table arranged in the sanctuary, or to one side of it, where these symbols can be placed and be visible, but preferably not in front of the altar or ambo and not on top of the altar. If a commentary accompanies the bringing forward of these symbols, it should be simple and brief.

PENITENTIAL RITE

In general there are two options for praying the Penitential Rite:

Option A:

The Bishop first leads the congregation in praying the Confiteor *I confess to almighty God and to you my brothers and sisters.* and the bishop then leads the congregation in the response: *Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.*

These responses can be spoken or they can be sung as one of the following:

Lord have mercy or *A Thiarna, déan trócaire* or *Kyrie elesion.*

Option B:

In this case the Confiteor is not prayed and the bishop leads the penitential rite as follows:

Bishop: Lord Jesus, you raise us to new life: *Lord have mercy / A Thiarna déan trócaire*

All: *Lord have mercy / A Thiarna déan trócaire*

Bishop: Lord Jesus, you forgive us our sins: *Christ have mercy / A Chríost déan trócaire*

All: *Christ have mercy / A Chríost déan trócaire*

Bishop: Lord Jesus, you feed us with your body and blood: *Lord have mercy / A Thiarna déan trócaire*

All: *Lord have mercy / A Thiarna déan trócaire*

GLORIA

- Where possible the Gloria should ideally be sung rather than being simply prayed. The Gloria is **omitted** when the Confirmation ceremony takes place during the season of Lent.

† LITURGY OF THE WORD †

FIRST READING

The First Reading can be chosen from Suggested [Scripture Readings for the Liturgy of the Word](#).

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

The Responsorial Psalm should ideally be sung and is to be taken from the Biblical Psalms. The Responsorial Psalm ought not to be replaced with another hymn.

Suggestions for Responsorial Psalms are included [here](#).

SECOND READING

The Second Reading can be chosen from Suggested [Scripture Readings for the Liturgy of the Word](#).

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION.

The *Alleluia* should be sung by the entire congregation. The antiphon/ short verse can be spoken or sung and then the *Alleluia* is repeated once more. Suggestions for the Gospel acclamation are included in the [resource for music and hymns](#).

During the Season of Lent, the response 'Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ, King of Eternal Glory' is sung in place of the Alleluia.

GOSPEL READING

The reading from the holy gospel is proclaimed by the Bishop.

HOMILY

† RITE OF CONFIRMATION †

[Here is a Link to the Resource](#)

PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES

- + *The congregation remain seated during the Rite of Confirmation.*
- + *A teacher or another nominated person from the parish community calls the candidates by name. Each candidate stands when their name is called.*
- + *An appropriate hymn invoking the power of the Holy Spirit may be sung by the candidates. Suggestions are available [here](#).*

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

- + *The candidates stand for the Renewal of Baptismal Promises. See 'Text of the Rite of Confirmation' resource.*

LAYING ON OF HANDS AND PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

- + *The candidates are invited to kneel.*
- + *The Bishop, accompanied by the concelebrating priests, extend their hands as a sign of blessing and the Bishop prays the Prayer of Consecration.*

ANOINTING WITH CHRISM

- + *The Bishop takes his place at the front of the sanctuary. At this point the candidates are signalled to come forward to the altar. The Bishop normally administers the anointing **with both he and the candidates standing**. This better expresses the symbolism of the candidate stepping into a new moment on their journey of faith.*
- + *Sponsors come forward and stand behind the candidate and place their right hand on the right shoulder of the candidate as a sign of their commitment to support the candidate in their journey of faith.*

- + *The words spoken by the bishop and the candidate's responses are as follows:*
 - Bishop:** [Chosen Confirmation Name of Candidate] Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.
 - Candidate:** Amen.
 - Bishop:** Peace be with you.
 - Candidate:** And with your spirit.
- + *To help the bishop to know the Confirmation Name of the candidate, it may be useful for them to have their chosen name printed clearly on a simple card.*
- + *Gentle hymns or instrumental music can accompany the rite of anointing.*

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS / PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

- + Candidates are invited forward by the bishop to lead the prayers. The readers of the intercessions remain on the sanctuary until the Bishop reads the concluding prayer.

† LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST †

PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS

- The Bread and Wine only are brought in procession by some of the candidates and presented to the Bishop.
- An Offertory Hymn or an instrumental piece of music may accompany the Offertory Procession. See list of 'Suggested [Hymns and Music](#)'.

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

During the Eucharistic Prayer, the following responses may be sung by the candidates and the congregation:

- Holy, Holy. [Sanctus]
- Acclamation of Faith.
- The Great Amen.

COMMUNION RITE

- The Lord's Prayer may be spoken or sung in English or 'as Gaeilge'.
- A suitable hymn to accompany the Sign of Peace may be sung.
- The Lamb of God [Agnus Dei] may be spoken or sung.

Suitable Communion Hymns may be sung by candidates and congregation during the distribution of Holy Communion. Suggestions are available [here](#).

POST-COMMUNION REFLECTION [Optional]

- An appropriate spoken reflection, hymn or instrumental piece can be used.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- The closing prayer of the Mass is led by the bishop.

WORDS OF THANKS [*Optional*]

- A brief word of thanks may be offered, if it is considered appropriate.

FINAL BLESSING

RECESSIONAL HYMN

- A suitable hymn with a Confirmation theme should be sung to conclude the liturgy. Suggestions are available [here](#).