



**PARTICULAR GUIDANCE FOR THE CELEBRATION  
OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION  
FOR SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN FOR THE FALL OF 2020**

**OFFICE FOR DIVINE WORSHIP  
ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA  
MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2020**

This particular guidance is provided for pastors and all those who assist him with the Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation for school age children in the parish to comply with the necessary safety restrictions in the face of COVID-19.

- In general, except for what is below, the instructions provided on the website of the Office for Divine Worship are to be followed for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. These instructions can be found here:  
<http://www.odwphiladelphia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Confirmation-Liturgy-Instruction-Form-2020.pdf>
- In addition, the archdiocesan liturgical directives for the green phase in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, issued on June 24, 2020, are to be followed. These directives can be found here:  
<http://www.odwphiladelphia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Coronavirus-Liturgy-Update-Open-Period-6-24-20.pdf>.

**SEATING OF THE CANDIDATES**

All candidates are to be seated in place in the church before Mass begins.  
The Bishop celebrant will not meet separately with the candidates prior to Mass.

Presently, seventy-five percent of the church may be occupied for liturgical celebrations in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This may limit, depending on church size and the number of candidates, the attendance only to candidates, sponsors and parents/guardians for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is permissible to insist on this limitation.

If it is possible, observing reasonable social distancing, for the candidates to be seated as a group with their sponsors directly behind them as a group, then this should be maintained.

If this is not possible, then the candidate, sponsor and parents/guardians may sit together in the same pew. In this instance, there is no need to observe social distancing and this allows for more places in the church.

### **DELEGATION OF THE PASTOR FOR ADDITIONAL CELEBRATIONS**

If neither of the above options are feasible, and it is determined by the Pastor and his staff that to accommodate especially the number of candidates, sponsors and parents/guardians that an additional celebration or celebrations are needed, then the Pastor, in consultation with the scheduled Bishop celebrant, may request of him delegation to confirm.

- The Bishop and the pastor determine both the celebrants and number of celebrations.
- Additional celebrations are to be based on the genuine need to accommodate the candidates, sponsors and parents/guardians.
- The delegation is to be recorded in the Register for Confirmation, that is, who gave the delegation and to whom as well as the date it was given.
- Pastors are reminded that the 2016 edition of the *Order of Confirmation* must be used for the Conferral of the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- Additional Sacred Chrism can be obtained from the Cathedral Sacristy.

It is also possible to use another facility, such as a gymnasium or auditorium, properly furnished and prepared for the Sacred Liturgy, for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation if this will allow for the single celebration.

### **THE USE OF A PROXY FOR THE SPONSOR**

Especially with the safety and travel restrictions in place during the pandemic, the use of a proxy for the sponsor provides a suitable option when the sponsor cannot be present for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. The proxy should be chosen beforehand who fulfills the same requirements of a sponsor for the Sacrament of Confirmation. A parent, stepparent or guardian may not act as a proxy for the sponsor.

### **CONFERRAL OF CONFIRMATION WITHIN MASS**

The Conferral of the Sacrament of Confirmation within Mass takes place as described in the archdiocesan instructions.

- The form for the Sacrament of Confirmation is rather precise as promulgated by Pope Saint Paul VI in his Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation on August 15, 1971. It is reiterated in introduction to *The Order of Confirmation*:

*The Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred through the anointing with Chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of the hand, and through the words: Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.*

*The laying of hands on those to be confirmed, which is accompanied by the prayer Almighty God, although it does not pertain to the validity of the Sacrament, should still be considered to be of great*

*importance with regard to the integrity of the rite and a fuller understanding of the Sacrament. (The Order of Confirmation, n. 9)*

In other words, as the minister anoints with his thumb the rest of his hand is imposed on the head of the candidate.

- It is strongly encouraged that the candidates wear masks for the anointing with Sacred Chrism and the dialogue with the Bishop.
- For all Confirmations for the Fall 2020, cards should be prepared with the Confirmation Name of the candidate for the Bishop to easily read during the actual Conferral of Confirmation. The pastor, another priest, deacon or another person should stand at the side or sides of the Bishop with the card.

### **PICTURES AND LIVE STREAMING**

Pictures and videotaping during the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy are permitted, especially as the candidate is confirmed. Photographers and videographers should not be obtrusive nor impede the reverent celebration of the Sacred Liturgy.

The Bishop celebrant will not pose for individual, family or group pictures following the celebration. However, the Bishop celebrant will greet the newly confirmed as they leave the church, keeping in mind reasonable social distancing.

If possible, the Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation should be made available to parishioners, family members, classmates and friends through published live streaming.

### **REMINDERS**

Pastors should insure that the candidates and their families have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation prior to the Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation (see *The Order of Confirmation*, n. 12).

Candidates should be well prepared with an understanding of the Sacrament of Confirmation and capable of renewing their Baptismal Promises (see Confirmation Questions, revised 2019, <http://www.odwphiladelphia.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Confirmation-Questions-Revised-4-19.pdf> and *The Order of Confirmation*, n. 12).

Notice of the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation is to be inscribed in the parish Register for Confirmation and also sent to the church of Baptism immediately following the celebration (see Canons 894-896 and *The Order of Confirmation*, n. 14).

Thank you and God bless you,  
Father Dennis Gill  
Director, Office for Divine Worship