

# THE SEAL OF THE SPIRIT

## INTRODUCTION

*When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.* Acts of the Apostles 2:1-4.

*Through the sacrament of confirmation, those who have been born anew in baptism receive the inexpressible Gift, the Holy Spirit, by which, they are endowed...with special strength.* Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation.

To all who will be responsible for the preparation of youth and adults for the Sacrament of Confirmation, this document is presented. What a privileged moment, to guide others to experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit, promised by Jesus, and manifested at Pentecost!

Come, Holy Spirit, who filled the apostles with zeal and courage  
at Pentecost, giving birth to the Church.

Come, Holy Spirit, who descended upon Jesus at his baptism and  
impelled him to go forth and proclaim the Kingdom of God.

Come, Holy Spirit, moving over the waters at the dawn of creation,  
enkindle in those who will be confirmed in a new millennium,  
a fire of love which will bring forth a new creation of justice and  
Peace.

Come, Spirit of Truth, promised by Jesus, guide all who will be preparing  
others for Confirmation.

Bold Spirit of life, truth, joy and grace, come upon all who will be  
confirmed, fashioning them into faithful witnesses and ardent  
Disciples.

*You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes down on you; then  
you are to be my witnesses.* Acts 1:8.

The first edition of *The Seal of the Spirit* was published in 1976. The second edition was written in 1983 and reflected the implementation of *The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)* published by the Congregation for Divine Worship, 1972; the publication of *Sharing the Light of Faith, the National Catechetical Directory* (NCD 1979); the publication of the revised Code of Canon Law (1983); and insights from experienced parish leaders on the most appropriate methods of preparation for the sacrament. Now, in 2000, continuing publication of catechetical and liturgical documents and a growing awareness of needs and issues concerning young people being confirmed, has sparked a need for another revision – thus a third edition of *the Seal of the Spirit*.

*The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)* was canonically approved by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops November 11, 1986, and subsequently confirmed by the Apostolic See by decree of the Congregation for Divine Worship on February 19, 1987. On July 1, 1988, RCIA was published and was to be used in the liturgy. On September 1, 1988, use of RCIA was mandated in dioceses of the United States of America. The RCIA continues to provide a comprehensive approach to the initiation of individuals into the community, and the meaning of Confirmation as a Sacrament of Initiation, integrally linked to Baptism and Eucharist.

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church* was published in 1994 and provides current and thorough reference material on doctrinal content associated with remote and immediate catechetical preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation. *The General Directory for Catechesis* was promulgated by the Congregation for the clergy in Rome in 1997 and published in the United States in 1998. This document culls the wisdom of thirty years since the Second Vatican Council and promotes and directs catechesis with a new vigor toward a broader understanding of evangelization and the catechumenate. This document expands the NCD's four tasks of catechesis to six – adding missionary initiation and moral formation. Both documents reinforce the idea of Confirmation as a Sacrament of Initiation (CCC #1212, #1285; GDC #65, #66).

The GDC calls the catechumenate a model for catechesis and gives the responsibility for this initiatory catechesis to the entire Christian community (GDC #91). The local expression of this community (as stated in the code of Canon Law) is the parish—the proper setting for the preparation and celebration of Confirmation. *Resounding the Good News*, second edition, 1999 Curriculum Guidelines for religion in the Archdiocese of Baltimore, highlights for adolescent catechesis the faith themes contained within *The Challenge of Adolescent Catechesis: Maturing in Faith*, NFCYM, 1986 and *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*, NCCB, 1997.

This document also addresses the number of young people being confirmed, the appropriate grade(s), the quality of the preparation, and the effectiveness of the covenant year (Mystagogy).

## THEOLOGICAL AND CATECHETICAL PRINCIPLES

These regulations and guidelines are based on important theological and catechetical principles. Parish personnel involved in the planning and implementation of Confirmation preparation programs and celebrations are responsible for insuring that these principles are followed:

1. Confirmation is one of the Sacraments of Initiation and it is to be catechized and celebrated this way, i.e. emphasizing its connection with Baptism and Eucharist (RCIA #27; GDC #91) “The sacraments of Christian initiation—Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist—lay the *foundations* of every Christian life” (CCC #1212). “...the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace.” (CCC#1285 cf. *Roman Ritual*, Rite of Confirmation (OC), Introduction).
2. All sacraments signify in one way or another God’s initiative in salvation. Therefore the catechesis for Confirmation stresses the salvation events which underline the three Sacraments of Initiation since they are the signs of our redemption and bearers of it. In particular, the lessons of the Pentecost event and the meanings, which emerge from it, are very relevant to Confirmation (cf. Introduction: Rite of Confirmation, #11; CCC #1287, #1288, #1299, #1302, #1303). “...the sacrament of Confirmation perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church.” (CCC #1288 – Paul VI, *Divinae consortium naturae*, #659).
  - the confirmandi should have such an understanding of the sacrament, should study the Scriptures, especially passages referring to the actions of the Holy Spirit, as a source of inspiration and strength.
3. The catechesis of Confirmation should stress the communal dimension of the Sacrament, since the Holy Spirit is given by Christ to His Church, the community of believers (cf. *Introduction: Rite of Confirmation*, #4; GDC #91). “In light of what is said in *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction (#7), the people of God, as represented by the local church, should understand and show by their concern that the initiation of adults (and children and youth) is the responsibility of all the baptized.” (RCIA, #9, cf. Vatican Council II, decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity, *Ad gentes*, #14).
  - The confirmandi should be aware of Confirmation as a celebration of the universal Church as expressed through the diocesan and parish community.
  - The entire parish community needs opportunities to witness to their involvement and support of the faith life of the candidate.

- Family members and sponsors need opportunities to demonstrate that they are confirmed witnesses in the faith and to participate in the preparation of the candidates.
4. The decision to prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation presumes a basic baptismal faith commitment on the part of the candidate. Since faith involves a relationship with the Lord, there are various levels and stages of faith development, and individuals possess and express faith to differing degrees. (cf. NCD #174; *Resounding the Good News*, second edition, pp. 57-67; GDC #181, #184; CCC #1308, #1309).
- The confirmandi should be prepared to deepen their personal relationship with God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.
5. Confirmation is a sealing with the gift of the Holy Spirit, an empowering which “conforms believers more perfectly to Christ and strengthens them to bear witness to Christ for the building up of his body in faith and love” (*Introduction: Rite of Confirmation*, #2). Consequently, a personal commitment to become more involved in the life of the Church flows from the reception of this sacrament. Confirmation...”gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witness to Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross.” (CCC #1303; cf. Council of Florence (1439); DS #1319; LG #11, #12)
- Confirmandi should be prepared to participate in the Rite of Confirmation with an understanding of the ritual language, symbols, and gestures and what these signify for the living out of their faith.

Confirmation preparation programs in the Archdiocese of Baltimore are planned and implemented in light of these principles. At the same time, the structure of the Confirmation preparation program in the parish provides sufficient flexibility to incorporate persons who are involved in different forms of religious education programs or who are at different stages of their faith development. The following regulations are provided for the planning, design and implementation of parish Confirmation preparation in accord with Policies 2.13, 1.5, 1.9 and 1.15 in the *Policy Manual*, Department of Catholic Education Ministries, Archdiocese of Baltimore (1995).

- 2.13 Religious Education Programs in parishes and schools include a basic understanding of all the sacraments and are understood as remote preparation for the sacraments in accord with *Signs of God's Love*, regulations published by the Division of Religious Education. (See also Policies 1.8, 1.9, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12).
- 1.5 The immediate preparation for, and first celebration of, the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) are properly a responsibility of the parish. The essential role of the family is properly incorporated according to the age of the candidate for initiation.

- 1.9 Parishes provide a program for immediate preparation for Confirmation distinct from the ordinary parish or school catechetical program. This is done in accord with the Archdiocesan regulations, *Signs of God's Love* and *The Seal of the Spirit*. (See also Policy 2.13).
- 1.15 In addition to initial catechesis for the sacraments, parishes provide ongoing catechesis and enrichment for a continually deepening understanding of the sacraments.

This document is divided into two sections.

Section 1 states the Archdiocesan regulations parishes are to follow in the preparation for and celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Section 2 contains guidelines which provide background information on the regulations as well as suggestions for effective pastoral implementation of remote, immediate, and follow up phases of catechesis for Confirmation.

# ARCHDIOCESAN REGULATIONS FOR CONFIRMATION

## 1. PARISH RESPONSIBILITY

Since Confirmation is one of the three sacraments of initiation and since those confirmed seek to become more involved in the life of the parish, the preparation for and celebration of Confirmation is a responsibility of the parish under the direction of the pastor who is responsible to the Archbishop. “As with Baptism, catechesis for this sacrament takes place within the parish community which has an obligation to participate in the catechetical preparation of those to be confirmed.” (NCD #119) “...Christian initiation...should be the care of the entire Christian community.” (GDC #91).

## 2. MINISTERS

“The ordinary minister of Confirmation is the bishop. Ordinarily, the Sacrament is administered by the bishop so that there will be a more evident relationship to the first pouring forth of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost...the reception of the Spirit through the ministry of the bishop shows the close bond which joins the confirmed of the Church and the mandate of Christ to be witness among people.” (*Introduction: Rite of Confirmation* #7)

Priests may be the ministers of Confirmation if they are baptizing an adult or a child of catechetical age or if they are admitting a validly baptized adult or child of catechetical age into full communion with the Church.

- The priest, by law, has the faculty to confirm such persons at the time of Baptism or reception and need not apply to the Chancery Office for delegation.
- However, a priest who has the faculty to confirm in the above circumstances may confirm **only** within the actual Rite of Baptism or reception; he may not postpone the Confirmation to a later time. (Canons #842, #852, #882, #883: 2, #885).
- “in respect of the person to be confirmed, the priest who by virtue of his office or mandate of the diocesan bishop, baptizes one who is no longer an infant or admits one already baptized into the full communion of the Catholic Church.” ...has the faculty to administer Confirmation. (#883:2; cf. Also – National Statutes for the Catechumenate, NCCB, November 11, 1986, #11, #12, #14, #18, #32, #35).
- “Since children who have reached the age of reason are considered, for purposes of Christian initiation, to be adults (Canon #852:1), their formation should follow the general pattern of the ordinary catechumenate as far as possible, with the appropriate adaptations permitted by the ritual. They should receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil together with the older catechumens.” (RCIA, National Statute #18). (cf. Also National Statute #14 – Canon #842:2; National Statute #19).

The rite does make provisions for the minister of Confirmation to associate other priests with himself in the administration of the Sacrament “in case of true necessity and special reason.” (*Introduction: Rite of Confirmation*, #8). This will not be done in the Archdiocese unless exceptional circumstances would warrant it.

Priests also have the faculty to confirm baptized Christians already in full communion with the Church who are unconfirmed and in danger of death. (cf. *Introduction: Rite of Confirmation*, #7, b, c and *Newsletter of the Bishops Committee on the Liturgy*, February, 1975)

Although in the revised Code of Canon Law, the diocesan bishop may grant the faculty to confirm to priests on a regular basis, this is ordinarily not the practice in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

### **3. CANDIDATES**

#### **A. Conditions**

“Persons who are to receive Confirmation must have already received baptism. Moreover, those possessing the use of reason must be in the state of grace, properly instructed, and capable of renewing the baptismal promises.” (*The Rite of Confirmation* #12, cf. Canon 889)

It is essential that all forms of the liturgy be completely accessible to persons with disabilities, since these forms are the essence of the spiritual tie that binds the Christian community together. To exclude members of the parish from these celebrations of the life of the Church, even by passive omission, is to deny the reality of that community. Accessibility involves far more than physical alterations to parish buildings. Realistic provision must be made for persons with disabilities to participate fully in the eucharist and other liturgical celebrations such as the sacraments of reconciliation, confirmation, and anointing of the sick. (*Pastoral Statement of U.S. Catholic Bishops on Persons with Disabilities*, November 1978; revised 1989).

Parish sacramental celebrations should be accessible to persons with disabilities and open to their full, active and conscious participation, according to their capacity. Pastoral ministers should not presume to know the needs of persons with disabilities, but rather they should consult with them or their advocates before making determinations about the accessibility of a parish’s facilities and the availability of its programs, policies, and ministries. These adaptations are an ordinary part of the liturgical life of the parish. (*Guidelines for The Celebration of Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities* #3)

“Persons who because of developmental or mental disabilities may never attain the use of reason are to be encouraged either directly or, if necessary, through their parents or guardian, to receive the sacrament of confirmation at the appropriate time.” (*Guidelines For the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with Disabilities*, #16)

#### **B. Age**

As the ordinary norm for this Archdiocese, those in the eighth through tenth grade levels and who fulfill the expectations for remote preparation for Confirmation (see pages 10-11) are to be invited to participate in the immediate preparation for Confirmation.

The implementation of this norm should be flexible enough, however, to allow for individual differences. No one is to be constrained to receive the sacrament in eighth, ninth or tenth grade. Pastors should provide the opportunity, in accord with the regulations and guidelines, for the Confirmation of those who did not receive the sacrament at the recommended grade levels.

#### **C. Numbers**

The number of persons to be confirmed should not be so great as to preclude the following:

- 1) the celebration of the sacrament within mass,
- 2) the use of individual sponsors,
- 3) the presence of the parish community,
- 4) the presence of the family, relatives and friends of those being confirmed.

If the number of those to be confirmed does preclude any of the above noted conditions, more than one Confirmation should be requested. To preserve the personal quality of relationship among candidates, the minister, and the parish community, more than one Confirmation celebration should be requested if the number to be confirmed exceeds 90.

If the number to be confirmed is fewer than 25 the parish is requested to celebrate Confirmation every other year or to merge with another parish for the celebration of Confirmation.

#### **D. Names**

In order to manifest the close relationship of Confirmation to Baptism, the candidates, according to the longstanding custom of the Church, may

retain their baptismal name. However, a special name may be chosen if desired, in which case it should be that of a recognized saint of the Church, or a person from scripture (CF Canon #855).

#### **E. Records**

The names of those confirmed, as well as the names of the minister, parents, and sponsors, and a notation of the place and date of the Confirmation conferred, are to be entered into the registry of confirmation kept in the parish archives. The pastor must inform the pastor of the recipient's place of baptism that confirmation has been conferred, so that this may be recorded in the baptismal register, according to the requirements of the law. (*The Rite of Confirmation* #14, Canon 895, 535 #2).

It is the responsibility of those being confirmed to provide the parish with a copy of their baptismal certificate prior to the Confirmation. This record is needed to establish proof of Baptism and to allow for the appropriate transfer of Confirmation information to the recipient's place of baptism.

#### **F. Invitation**

All are called to freely choose to receive the gifts of the church – the sacraments. There is a need to continually invite those young people who elect not to come into the immediate preparation phase. Reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is not grade dependent. Young people who choose to delay their entrance into the immediate preparation phase are not “not normal” or “behind.” It is incumbent on pastoral staff members to openly and frequently extend the invitation, as called for by ongoing evangelization.

(See the guidelines for suggestions on outreach to young people and adults who have not been confirmed.)

### **4. SPONSORS**

“As a rule there should be a sponsor for each of those to be confirmed. These sponsors bring the candidates to receive the sacrament, present them to the minister for the anointing, and will later help them to fulfill their baptismal promises faithfully under the influence of the Holy Spirit whom they have received.” (*The Rite of Confirmation* #5)

“In view of contemporary pastoral practices it is desirable that the godparents at baptism, if available, also be the sponsors at confirmation. This expresses more clearly, the link between baptism and confirmation and also makes the function and responsibility of the sponsor more effective. Nonetheless, the option of

choosing a special sponsor for confirmation is not excluded.” (*The Rite of Confirmation* #5, cf Canon 893)

The sponsor is selected by the candidate and parents of the candidate or the one who takes their place. (Canon 874) There should be a sponsor for each person confirmed. The practice of having one sponsor for many candidates has been abolished. (*Notitiae*, #47, page 359)

Pastors will see that the sponsors, chosen by the candidates and their families, are spiritually fit to take on this responsibility and have these qualities:

- sufficient maturity to fulfill their function,
- have completed the sixteenth year unless it seems to the pastor that an exception is to be made for a just cause,
- membership in the Catholic Church and their own reception of Christian initiation through Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist
- leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken,
- freedom from any impediment of law to their fulfilling the office of sponsor.

(*The Rite of Confirmation* #6, Canons #893, 874)

Parents may not act as sponsors (cf Canon #874)

If the sponsor cannot be present a proxy may be designated. The proxy must have the same qualifications as the sponsor.

There is no specification with regard to the sex of the sponsor. It is important, however, that the candidate be able to identify with the sponsor in terms of Christian living.

## 5. PREPARATION

### A. Context

“Those who have been baptized continue on the path of Christian initiation through the sacrament of Confirmation. In this sacrament they receive the Holy Spirit whom the Lord sent upon the apostles on Pentecost.”

“This giving of the Holy Spirit conforms believers more fully 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 cannot be repeated.”

“One of the highest responsibilities of the people of God is to prepare the baptized for confirmation. Pastors have the special responsibility to see that all the baptized reach the completion of Christian initiation and therefore that they are carefully prepared for confirmation.” (*The Rite of Confirmation*, #1, 2, 3)<sup>1</sup>”

Preparation for the celebration of the Rite of Confirmation should provide opportunity for the entire parish community to celebrate the indwelling Spirit and to take part in this responsibility (named above) of the entire people of God in a meaningful manner. The life of the faith community is the context in which candidates continue their growth in faith, and the communal dimension of the celebration of and preparation for this sacrament underlines the community’s responsibility to model discipleship as a lived reality. Welcoming the baptized into full initiation with the celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation should be something the community longs for, just as it longs for the initiation of the catechumens at the Easter Vigil.

Preparation for the celebration of Confirmation should be part of the rhythm of parish life. Just as it is known that RCIA takes place during certain seasons with accompanying markers, so the process of preparation for Confirmation should be at an identified time with markers the community can recognize and in which they can take part.

“Parents receive in the sacrament of matrimony ‘the grace and the ministry of the Christian education of their children,’ (ChL #62), to whom they transmit and bear witness to human and religious values. This educational activity which is both human and religious is ‘a true ministry’ (FC #38) through which the Gospel is transmitted and radiated so that family life is transformed into a journey of faith and the school of Christian life.” (GDC #227) Preparation for Confirmation must take seriously the centrality of the family and the true ministry of the parents in the faith life of the candidate. It is essential that opportunities be provided for parents and families to celebrate, to pray, to witness, and to be formed and informed.

## B. Remote Preparation

“The fully initiated Christian is not the fully mature Christian. Catechesis is lifelong and the Christian community needs to provide learning opportunities for continuing growth in faith.” (*The Challenge of Adolescent Catechesis*, p.15)

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<sup>1</sup> “Christian initiation reaches its **culmination** in the communion of the body and blood of Christ.” (*Rite of Confirmation* #13) The celebration and reception of the Eucharist is this culmination. For young people who have been baptized and received Eucharist, the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation completes their Christian initiation.

“The sacraments..are the actions of Christ and the Church...[and] stand out as the signs and means by which the faith is expressed and strengthened, worship is rendered to God and the sanctification of humankind is effected”. (Canon #840)

Remote preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation is part of the ongoing growth in faith and understanding that should be part of the life of the young disciple. Students in parochial schools and parish religious education and youth ministry programs with systematic and intentional adolescent catechesis components receive remote preparation for Confirmation as part of these programs. This remote preparation enables the young person to have sufficient knowledge of the Catholic faith so that they can decide whether to join the process for immediate preparation for Confirmation, when an invitation is extended to them. The remote preparation for the sacrament should be part of the regular catechesis of adolescents as outlined in the *Challenge of Adolescent Catechesis: Maturing in Faith, Renewing the Vision* (of youth ministry), and *Resounding the Good News: Religion Curriculum Guidelines*. A minimum of one year’s consistent participation in these programs or a process approved by the parish is required prior to entrance into immediate preparation.

During this time period, it is the responsibility of the parish to provide to young people and their parents, families, and godparents appropriate information on Archdiocesan regulations and specific parish requirements for the process of immediate preparation for the sacrament and the covenant time period and commitment to follow.

### C. Immediate Preparation

“When Confirmation is celebrated in the adolescent years, it affords the parish a significant opportunity to foster the faith maturing of adolescents.” (*The Challenge of Adolescent Catechesis: Maturing in Faith*, p.15)

The process of immediate preparation for Confirmation should be conducted as a free-standing program, and not be placed within the parish’s or school’s regularly standing program for religious education. The immediate preparation is not tied to a particular grade level. The purpose of the immediate preparation is to provide formation for full, conscious, and active participation in the Rite of Confirmation. It is successful if it invites the candidate to deeper openness to the indwelling Spirit and a willingness to witness to Christ as his disciple<sup>2</sup>; and to more responsible participation in the life, mission and work of the Catholic Christian faith community.<sup>3</sup> Great care is exercised in the planning of this phase that the expectations not be unnecessarily burdensome, thus avoiding the error of having the reception of the sacrament appear to be a reward, or a prize, rather than

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<sup>2</sup> *Rite of Confirmation #1; Renewing the Vision*, p.9.

<sup>3</sup> *Renewing the Vision*, p.11.

a wonderful gift. The process or model utilized in a parish should reflect good youth ministry and adolescent catechesis principles and be invitational.

## **Components**

This immediate preparation includes:

- the resourcing of *families* with opportunities for formation and materials for faith sharing
- faith sharing opportunities between *candidate and sponsor*
- celebration with the *parish community*
- 9-12 hours of *catechesis*,
- involvement in *service* and a continued sharing of the church's social mission,
- a *retreat* experience,
- opportunities for *prayer and worship*
- an *interview* with a member of the pastoral staff.

### **(1) Families**

“As the children grow, exchange of faith becomes mutual and ‘in a catechetical dialogue of this sort, each individual both receives and gives.’” (*GDC* #227, *CT* #68, *EN* #71b) The immediate preparation for confirmation should provide encouragement, materials, and advice for sharing faith stories, prayer, and deepening the faith of the “domestic church”. (*FC* #21<sup>4</sup>) “By means of personal contact, meetings, courses, and also adult catechesis directed toward parents, the Christian community must help them.” (*GDC* #227). It is appropriate for parishes to provide gatherings for parents (and sponsors) which gives information on the sacrament of Confirmation, insight into adolescent faith development, and assistance for common concerns of parents in their efforts to continue to educate their children in faith.

### **(2) Faith Sharing Between Candidates and Sponsors**

The sponsor should participate with the candidate in preparing for Confirmation (*NCD*, #119). The sponsors role is outlined previously in these guidelines in #4. Immediate preparation processes should provide guidance and opportunities for

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<sup>4</sup> “The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion, and for this reason too it can and should be called ‘the domestic church’.”

candidates and sponsors to communicate about faith, membership in the Catholic community, and discipleship.

### **(3) Celebrations with the Parish Community**

By including candidates in parish events, works of service and ministries, and by introducing them to parish members, we invite them to full membership in the community. We celebrate this in the sacrament of Confirmation as candidates complete their initiation into the Catholic Church. “Because of the importance of Confirmation as a celebration of local parish or community, the catechetical and pastoral instruction should be addressed to the whole parish or community, as well as to the group of candidates.” (from forward to the rite...see p. #6 of present guidelines)

### **(4) Catechesis**

The immediate preparation process for confirmation must be understood within the context of life long catechesis and within the context of ongoing adolescent catechesis. It is not an appropriate time to bear the weight of providing all information and formation in faith necessary for adult living. It should thoroughly inform and prepare the candidate for participation in the Rite of Confirmation, its components, symbols, and effects. It should focus on completion of initiation and on active membership in the church community, as well as invite young people to a lived discipleship in the world. Like all catechesis, it should focus on the person of Jesus (*CCC* #426, *CT* #5), draw its lessons from the scripture, and invite them to closer relationship and modeling of him in everyday life. Opportunities for parents and sponsors to meaningfully participate in the catechetical preparation should be provided.

Canon Law reminds us of the following regarding appropriate catechetical methodology for preparation for Confirmation.

“Catechetical formation is to be given by employing all those helps, teaching aids and communications media which appear to be more effective in enabling the faithful in light of their characteristics, talents, age and conditions of life, to learn the Catholic teaching more fully and practice it more suitably.” (Canon #779)

### **(5) Service and the Church’s Social Mission**

The life of the Christian should be marked by the attitude of a servant, in imitation of Christ (John 13), and the actuality of service to the community. Candidates’ participation in acts of service may be in partnership with their school communities, families, through parish ministries, and through community and regional outreaches. Some young people are already consistently involved in service. The immediate preparation process should provide not only opportunities to serve, but the all important opportunities to reflect on their experiences with service and on its challenge and meaning for their life. Focus on principles of Catholic social teaching is appropriate.

### **(6) Retreat Experience**

The time frame of a retreat may vary depending on the parish program. It should be no less than 6 hours, and may be a weekend in length in some parishes. Retreats have been very successful with young people. They provide privileged opportunity for community building, prayer and worship, focus on one's personal identity and faith identity, and opportunities to be impacted by the ministry of catechists, youth ministers, volunteers and peers.

### **(7) Prayer and Worship**

Participation in various forms of prayer is appropriate and formative. Formation for more meaningful participation in the liturgy and sacramental life of the faith community is a priority.

### **(8) Interview**

It is also appropriate for parish staff to meet with candidates in a pastoral context. This provides for encouragement, discussions of faith content and the individual's personal and faith journey, opportunity to deepen the candidates' awareness of the Rite of Confirmation, and to invite them to continued growth in both knowledge and practice of the Christian life. Such meetings or interviews offer a context for personalizing the candidates' experience of the immediate preparation and allow for guidance from adult disciples who themselves continue to come to deeper knowledge and more authentic practice of faith. In this setting questions and struggles, challenges and joys are sometimes more easily shared and heard.

## **6. LITURGICAL CELEBRATION**

### **A. Rite of Confirmation**

The revised Rite of Confirmation is not only for those to be confirmed, but it is a celebration of the whole local Church. That is, the Confirmation of some members of the parish should ideally affect the life of the entire parish.

- Preaching on the sacrament prior to the date of Confirmation is essential and the celebration of Confirmation should reflect an awareness that this is a celebration for the whole parish.
- “Ordinarily confirmation takes place within Mass in order to express more clearly the fundamental connection of this sacrament with the entirety of Christian initiation. The latter reaches its culmination in the communion of the body and blood of Christ. The newly confirmed should therefore participate in the Eucharist which completes their Christian initiation.” (*Rite of Confirmation* 13; See also Canon 881.)

- The Celebration of Liturgy and the Rite of Confirmation begins after the proclamation of the Gospel. (*Rite of Confirmation* #23 and following)
- The Celebration of Liturgy and the Rite of Confirmation avoids any additional nonessential elements so that the fundamental signs of the sacraments are the focal point of the celebration.
- The Celebration of Liturgy and the Rite of Confirmation Celebration takes care to involve the confirmandi and those who assisted with the preparation program in the Mass: readers, cantors, gift bearers, processions, greeters, special ministers of the Eucharist, and preparations prior to the service.
- Readings are taken from the Lectionary for Mass numbers 763-767. There are normally three readings at Confirmation.
- The prayers of the presider are taken from the sacramentary. The opening prayer, etc. may be found under the title, “ritual Masses”, Christian Initiation (1) and Confirmation (4) in the back of the sacramentary.
- The Preface of the Eucharistic Prayer may be one of two Prefaces of the Holy Spirit (P54 or P55}. Eucharistic Prayer II or III is preferred.
- The parish master of ceremonies should be familiar with and expected to follow the directives listed in *The Ceremonial of Bishops* with regard to the use of the miter and crozier during confirmation. (See appendix #1 of this document.)
- It is the office of the pastor to present the candidates to the bishop.
- The ministers and the bishop should precede the confirmati during the recessional.
- See other notes on preparation for Confirmation in Catechetical and Liturgical Guidelines for Confirmation. (See page 23)
- The formula between the bishop and candidate during the anointing should be rehearsed ahead of time. (cf. Rite of Confirmation)

## B. Music

The music, which is chosen for the celebration, should conform to the three principles described in *Music in Catholic Worship*, the 1983 statement of the Bishop’s committee on Liturgy.

Music should be liturgically appropriate both to the theme of the celebration and to its place within the celebration, and it should be pastorally suited to the congregation.

### **C. Bishop**

The parish provides a set of red or white vestments for the bishop, or he may provide his own. The bishop will bring his own alb and cincture. Concelebrating priests may wear either red or white vestments, depending on which are available in sufficient numbers.

## **7. INFORMATION FOR THE BISHOP**

If the bishop requests the Bishop's Information Form, it should be received at the office of the bishop who is confirming no less than one month before the scheduled ceremony. The bishop or his master of Ceremonies will be free to question and possibly reject any details of the liturgy up to two weeks before the Confirmation, but not later than that. However, if the bishop does not receive the order of worship in sufficient time, he is free to reject or change any details at any time. (See Appendix #2)

## **8. COVENANT COMMITMENT**

A covenant is a holy agreement. Candidates for Confirmation and their families are informed that it is an expectation that, once confirmed, the young people will agree to make a covenant to continue their understanding and living of the faith through specific activities, involvements, education, and ministries. The confirmed are invited to discern the ways in which they will choose to continue their faith growth in the immediate months, or perhaps year, following their reception of the sacrament. Individual conversations with catechists or youth ministers (another interview) may assist in this discernment. The arrived at covenant commitment is recorded in writing. This commitment may be celebrated or ritualized in a prayerful context with families and sponsors, and perhaps the whole parish community.

Confirmation is not graduation. The preparation process is not a period to "cram" the faith one needs for an adult life into a young person's experience. It must be said that, previously, parents may have received the message from pastoral leadership (or may have perceived) that they had "completed" their duty as Catholic parents if their children had received all of the sacraments. This is unfortunate. The Church wishes to continue to accompany young people in their discovery of God's call in their lives and in interpreting appropriate responses.

Since the newly confirmed are members of the community in a deeper way, a new structure or model should be considered for their continued catechesis. Again the key documents *The Challenge of Adolescent Catechesis: Maturing in Faith, Renewing the Vision* (of youth ministry), and *Resounding the Good News: Religion Curriculum Guidelines* should be consulted in planning. Creative opportunities for the newly confirmed to witness their faith should be explored and established. As with the other sacraments, the meaning of Confirmation will deepen as it is lived out. The community

must offer both challenge and support to the confirmed in their daily witness. The empowering in the Spirit will help them to discover the personal form of ministry toward which their own gifts lead them.

The witness that those living out their covenant commitment gives serves to encourage those not yet confirmed to respond to the gift of the Spirit by receiving the sacrament. It also challenges the confirmed members of the community to personal renewal in discerning and living out their own commitment to the mission of the church. This period of post-confirmation covenant learning and living closely parallels the period of mystagogia for newly initiated adults as described in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, “for their deeper Christian formation and incorporation into the full life of the Christian community.” (*RCIA: National Statues*, #24)

## **9. EXCEPTIONS TO THESE REGULATIONS**

There may arise circumstances which are not addressed by these regulations, or there may be particular pastoral situations for which an exception to one or other of these regulations may be desirable. The Division of Religious Education and the Division of Youth and Young Adult Ministry are ready to assist in clarifying these situations upon request.

If there is a need for an exception to these regulations, the request is made in writing to the Archbishop in sufficient time to allow for the Archbishop’s consideration of the request and to seek appropriate consultation if necessary. Any exceptions are in accord with the norm regarding *Confirmation in the Rite of Confirmation*, the *General Directory of Catechesis* and the *Code of Canon Law*. The request for an exception includes a description of the situation and the reason[s] for seeking an exception.

Any request for an exception is made at least six months before any initial publicity in the parish regarding the Confirmation Preparation Program in order to allow time for consultation by the Archbishop with the Division of Religious Education and the Division of Youth and Young Adult Ministry. Those making the request await the response from the Archbishop or his delegate before initiating any publicity regarding the Confirmation Program

Approved: March 20, 2000

+ William Cardinal Keeler  
Archbishop of Baltimore

# **CATECHETICAL & LITURGICAL GUIDELINES FOR CONFIRMATION**

## **PREPARATION**

### **SACRAMENTS FLOW FROM THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

- Context: Life of the Family and the Parish
- Free Standing
- Remote
- Immediate
- Preparing The Liturgy
- Covenant

#### **Context: Life of the Family and the Parish**

*Catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community. The latter bears special responsibility for the preparation of confirmands. (CCC #1309)*

In light of the integral nature of the role of the parish community in witnessing to the faith in which the candidates will be confirmed (*see regulation #3 from Theological and Catechetical Principles in Introduction. #1 from Regulations for Confirmation, and Preparation, Context, #1*), the following practical suggestions are offered:

- Maintain communication with the community through such means as bulletins, newsletters, posters, letters from the pastoral staff, web site information, Sunday homilies. These can be used to highlight components of the program such as retreats, service involvement, catechetical formation, and to invite the community to prayer and witness.
- Promote prayer for candidates, sponsors, families; use of prayer sponsors
- Introduce the candidates to the parish community through posting pictures and profiles of the candidates. Include their intention in the prayers of the faithful. Celebrate the rite of enrollment into immediate preparation for Confirmation.
- Invite parishioners to take more specific roles such as catechist, retreat facilitator, service coordinator, or to take on specific responsibilities such as providing transportation, organizational and administrative assistance, or provide letters or expressions of support.

There are numerous opportunities for the community to be actively involved in the preparation of candidates for the reception of the sacrament of confirmation. The more visible and active the community's participation, the more vibrant the program.

Preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation is within the context of total ministry to youth. There is a need to "make ministry with adolescents a concern of the entire church community, especially for leaders in parishes, schools, and dioceses. The Holy Father has emphasized repeatedly the importance of young people and ministry to them. His words at World Youth Day in 1995 called the Church to become the 'traveling companion of youth'." (RTV p. 1) Preparation programming can serve as a means to enable the parish community, in practical ways, to become the "traveling companion of youth".

The regulations make clear that the involvement of the parents and family of candidates is essential (see regulations #3, Theological and Catechetical Principles, Introduction; Under Preparation, context, and #6 and under immediate preparation, see A. Components, first bullet and regulation #1). The family was the first traveling companion of the candidate and provides "the central place where the community of life and love are celebrated. Therefore, the Church's ministry with adolescents should lead young people into a deeper faith life within their own families. In other words, ministry with adolescents should not take adolescents away from the family, but rather foster family life." (RTV p. 21) Programming offered for young people and their families should be sensitive to the multiple demands on families. Outreach to the family unit should not be an afterthought to sacramental preparation. Family is the first of the areas listed in the regulations under immediate preparation (see reg. #3, Theological and Catechetical Principles, Introduction; Under Preparation, Context, see regulation #6); (and under Immediate Preparation, see A. Components, first bullet and regulation #1). (See Regulation #1 under A. Components).

## **Free Standing**

Sacraments flow from the life of the Church. Religious education, whether it takes place in a school or parish setting, functions as a support to the sacramental life of the Church. In the past, the practice was common that when individuals entered a certain grade they automatically received certain sacraments. Unconsciously, many people linked sacraments to school life more than to parish life. The immediate preparation for Confirmation should be conducted as a free standing program apart from either the parish or school religious education program as noted in the second paragraph under immediate preparation section. Immediate preparation for confirmation should not replace regularly scheduled religious education programming in parishes and schools. In scheduling immediate preparation there should be sensitivity to the time demands placed on young people.

## **Remote Preparation**

The remote preparation can be thought of as two-dimensional. In one sense, the remote preparation for Confirmation takes place within the regular parish or school religious education program. However, at some definite time, a more focused Confirmation catechesis along with program information is offered to the young people and their parents and godparents to assist them in determining the appropriate time to enter the immediate preparation phase. (see regulations #3 and #4 under Remote Preparation).

The catechesis of the remote preparation phase does not usurp or replace the catechesis of the immediate preparation phase. Passage into the immediate preparation phase is clearly designated in order to distinguish the difference between the two phases, and to avoid an attitude of automatic reception of the sacrament at a certain grade level, as cited in the regulations, (#3 under Remote Preparation). Consult the following documents for appropriate catechetical content: *Resounding the Good News, The Challenge of Adolescent Catechesis: Maturing in Faith, Renewing the Vision.*

Note: Some young people may choose not to be confirmed during the Grade 8-10 period. Pastors are strongly encouraged to track these young people, including them in a parish data base that would list their name, address, and phone number. This data should be reviewed annually so that the pastor sends a letter to the young people on this list and invites them to participate in the Immediate Preparation process for the sacrament of Confirmation. This letter should include information on the person to contact to register in the program. The preparation program and ritual celebrations should be appropriate for the older candidate.

## **Immediate Preparation**

The immediate preparation is brief in duration, focused on the sacrament's meaning and ritual. "The purpose of the immediate preparation is to provide formation for full, conscious, and active participation in the rite of confirmation." (Regulation #2 under Immediate Preparation) . Since candidates have exercised a degree of free choice in entering this phase, they are expected to fulfill certain expectations. Great care is exercised in the planning of this phase that the expectations not be unnecessarily burdensome, thus avoiding the error of having the reception of the sacrament appear to be a reward, a prize, a graduation, rather than a wonderful gift of God's love. This phase of the program is free standing, that is, it is separate from the regularly scheduled religious education of the parish or school.

The eight required components of this phase of preparation are outlined and explained in the regulations (A, Components, under Immediate Preparation, #1-8). It is important to remember that the goal of this preparation is to invite the candidates to continuing conversion, growth in faith, a life of discipleship, and increased participation in the life of the community. The following principles should be applied in planning this phase:

- Sufficient time should be provided for information and for reflection

- There is sensitivity to the demands on family time schedules
- The cultural perspective of the candidate and the larger faith community is respected
- The candidates works with the parish and community in fulfilling a commitment to service.
- The maturity of the candidates, resources of the parish and, consideration of the parents are key factors in planning retreat experiences. Where conditions are appropriate, an overnight retreat provides a more meaningful experience for a candidate preparing for Confirmation. Parents have the right to withhold permission for an overnight retreat. In this case, parents need to work with the parish staff to identify and provide a suitable alternative.
- Preparation includes meaningful participation of parents, families and sponsors
- The developmental characteristics of the young person are respected.
- Large and small group models of formation are employed.
- Young people who have been confirmed in previous years are vibrant witnesses to candidates. Utilizing their gifts, journey, understanding and articulation of church membership, and ministry abilities and skills through providing meaningful opportunities for peer ministry can richly enhance the immediate preparation process for the entire community. This can also be a significant expression of the covenant commitment of the confirmed. (see #3 and 4 under Covenant Commitment of the Regulations)

Specific suggestions include:

- Introduce the candidates to non-liturgical devotions i.e. the rosary, Stations of the Cross or visits to the Blessed Sacrament.
- Contact local community agencies and Catholic Charities when setting up service opportunities for candidates. Individual parishioners involved in service and members of parish organizations involved in service could be invited to mentor these young people. Service activities these young people may already be involved in should be taken into consideration. The use of hours to measure a young person's service can be more harmful than helpful. The components and completion of service should be measured against the candidate's attitude, experience, and reflection upon such experience.

- Candidates may write a letter to the pastor towards the end of the immediate preparation. This letter includes a summary of the young person's experience of preparation, their understanding of and awareness of their faith, and their reasons for wishing to be confirmed. Some pastoral reply should be made to these letters.
- Parishioners or families of the parish could be assigned to a candidate as special sources of prayer, support, and affiliation and welcome into greater identification with and involvement with the life of the total parish community

## **LITURGY PREPARATION**

### Guidelines For The Liturgical Celebration of Confirmation:

1. If the confirmation candidates are part of the entrance procession, they should precede the liturgical ministers. Sponsors may accompany candidates in the entrance procession.
2. It is preferred that the candidates are seated together in the front of the church. This allows the bishop to address the candidates during the homily. The sponsor may be seated with the candidates.
3. Readers should be prepared to proclaim the Word or the Prayer of the Faithful. Rehearsal with the microphone is recommended. The readers may be Confirmation candidates.
4. A chair for the bishop is prominently placed so that he can be visible while he presides.
5. Individual introduction of the candidates by the sponsor as they approach the bishop for anointing should not be done.
6. Be sure the candidates know the response for the anointing rite.
7. Some preparations should be made to assist the bishop in washing his hands after the anointing. Lemon wedges, water and a towel are recommended.
8. Images that are symbolic of the preparation of the candidates may be used in the environment or entrance procession but may not be brought forward during the Preparation of the Gifts. Bread, wine and/or collection of goods for the poor should be the only items brought forward at the Preparation of the Gifts.
9. If at all possible, Eucharist should be under both forms to give the sacrament its fullest expression.
10. In order to preserve the solemnity of the conferring of the sacrament, flash photography is not permitted during the liturgy.
11. A liturgy aide, prepared for all who gather for the Confirmation celebration, is helpful. Be sure to procure copyrights for all music prior to printing.

## **COVENANT COMMITMENT**

The young must not be excited by the prospect of receiving the Spirit only to be discouraged by the Church's disinterest afterwards. "Parishes should be a place where [young people] are welcomed, grow in Jesus Christ, and minister side by side with the adults of the community. In

parishes, young people should feel a sense of belonging and acceptance as full fledged members of the community. Young people are more likely to gain a sense of identity in the community if they are regarded as full fledged members.” (*Message to Youth: Pathway to Hope*)

We must make every effort to educate, by word and example, the lively faith that we have confirmed with a sacrament. This means developing ways in which people of all ages might respond to the Holy Spirit. Nothing says more about our trust in God than sharing in God’s work, in appropriate ways, with those graced with the seven-fold gift of the Spirit.

“The confirmed should be invited to discern the ways in which they will choose to continue their faith growth in the immediate months, or perhaps year, following their reception of the sacrament.” (see reg. #1 under Covenant Commitment). In addition to the guidance given in the regulations, here are further suggestions for this commitment period:

- Remember to make clear the expected discernment of a covenant commitment to candidates, parents, families, godparents or sponsors during the remote preparation period. (see Regulation #4 under Remote Preparation) This commitment should not be minimized, but allows the confirmed young person to choose an expression of their continued growth in faith.
- Encourage the continuing of the relationship (which is intended to be lifelong) between the confirmation sponsor and the confirmed. The sponsor “...will help the baptized to lead a Christian life in harmony with baptism, and to fulfill faithfully the obligations connected with it.” (Canon #872). “...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.” (Canon #892).
- During this time, continue to “feed” the relationship between confirmation sponsor and the confirmed. “The sponsor brings the candidate to receive the sacrament, presents him to the minister for the anointing and will later help him to fulfill his baptismal promises faithfully under the influence of the Holy Spirit.” (*Rite of Confirmation*, Introduction, #5)
- Consider initiating small faith sharing groups for the confirmed
- Foster continued and increased participation in the mission of the church through: service, liturgical life, sacramental life, involvement in outreach and parish committees, etc.
- Encourage active participation in youth and young adult ministry
- Provide opportunities for young people to gain training in peer ministry and express their faith by exercising this ministry
- Continue support of parents and families in their essential role in fostering faith

## RESOURCES

The following abbreviations have been used throughout this document.

CAC	<i>The Challenge of Adolescent Catechesis: Maturing in Faith</i> , NFCYM, 1986.
CCC	<i>The Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> . Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1994.
CEM	<i>Policy Manual, Department of Catholic Education Ministries</i> . Archdiocese of Baltimore, 1995.
CEREMONIAL	<i>The Ceremonial of Bishops</i> . Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1989.
CHL	<i>Christifideles Laici: The Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the World</i> . John Paul II, 1988.
CIC	<i>Codex Iuris Canonici</i> : The Code of Canon Law. Liberia Editrice Vaticana, 1983.
CT	<i>Catechesi Tradendae: On Catechesis in Our Time</i> . Pope John Paul II, 1979.
EN	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi: On Evangelization in the Modern World</i> . Pope Paul IV, 1975.
FC	<i>Familiaris Consortio: The Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World</i> . Pope John Paul II, 1981.
GDC	<i>General Directory for Catechesis</i> . Congregation for the Clergy, 1997
	<i>Message to Youth: Pathway to Hope (poster)</i> . United States Catholic Conference, 1995.
LECTIONARY	<i>Lectionary for Mass</i> . National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Book Publishing Co., New York 1970 (last approved translation published 1998).
NCD	<i>Sharing the Light of Faith: The National Catechetical Directory for Catholics in the United States</i> . National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1979.

(Resources continued)

NSC	<i>National Statutes for the Catechumenate.</i> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1986.
POSTER	<i>Message to Youth: Pathway to Hope.</i> United States Catholic Conference, 1995.
RC	<i>Rite of Confirmation.</i> International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc., 1976.
RCIA	<i>The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.</i> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1988.
RGN	<i>Resounding the Good News.</i> Archdiocese of Baltimore, 1999.
RTV	<i>Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry.</i> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1997.
SACRAMENTARY	<i>The Sacramentary.</i> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Book Publishing Co., New York, 1974.
SGL	<i>Signs of God's Love: Regulations and Guidelines for Catechesis and Celebration of Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, and Penance.</i> Archdiocese of Baltimore, 1987.

For specific catechetical resources consult the Coordinator of Adolescent Catechesis in the Division of Youth and Young Adult Ministry and the Director of the Archdiocesan Media Center.

For creative ideas for retreat experiences and service opportunities consult the Coordinator of Adolescent Catechesis. An excellent resource for retreats is the Msgr. O'Dwyer Retreat House, 410-666-2400.

## APPENDIX #1

**Taken from *The Ceremonial of Bishops.***

***Procedures for use of Miter and Crozier.***

- The entrance into the church, introductory rites, and liturgy of the word, including the gospel reading, take place in the usual way.
- After the gospel reading, the bishop, wearing the miter, sits in his usual chair or in the special chair prepared for the occasion.
- The pastor presents the candidates for confirmation.
- The bishop then gives a brief homily.
- After the homily, the bishop, takes the miter and addresses the candidates standing before him with the questions pertaining to the renewal of their baptismal promises. He accepts their profession of faith by proclaiming the faith of the Church, to which all in the assembly respond with some acclamation or song expressing their assent.
- Then, putting aside the miter and pastoral staff, the bishop stands. He faces the people and, with hands joined, gives the invitation *My dear friends.* All pray in silence for a brief period.

The bishop extends hands over all the candidates. The bishop says the prayer *All powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

- Then the bishop takes the miter. The deacon brings the vessel or vessels of chrism to the bishop.
- Each candidate goes to the bishop to be confirmed.

## Appendix #2

### **Bishop's Information Form**

Parish Name \_\_\_\_\_ Confirming Bishop \_\_\_\_\_  
Location \_\_\_\_\_ Confirmation Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Coordinator of Confirmation Preparation Program \_\_\_\_\_  
Person Responsible for Planning the Confirmation Celebration \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of Youth to be Confirmed \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of Adults to be Confirmed \_\_\_\_\_

1. Information you would like the bishop to know about the candidates [Over all assessment of the group, exceptional stories, disabilities/handicaps]

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2. Information you would like the bishop to know about their preparation. [e.g. involvement of parents, sponsors, service, parish involvement]

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3. Names and roles of the key leaders in the Confirmation Preparation Program.

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4. How will those to be confirmed be involved in the Mass. readers, cantors, gift bearers, greeters, special ministers of the Eucharist, and the preparations prior to the service.

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### **LITURGY OF CONFIRMATION**

Readings should be taken from the Lectionary for Mass nos. 763-767.

First Reading \_\_\_\_\_  
Second Reading \_\_\_\_\_  
Gospel Reading \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation of the Candidates:

Will the pastor present the candidates? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

If no, who will the pastor introduce to make the presentations? \_\_\_\_\_

Instruction by the Bishop: [Any particular information to suggest that would be relevant to this celebration for these candidates.]

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Renewal of Baptismal Promises:  
Anointing with Chrism; [how will bishop know the Confirmation name]

Who will provide the chrism? \_\_\_\_\_

General Intercessions: [who will read the general intercessions] \_\_\_\_\_

Eucharist Prayer:

Preface name and number: \_\_\_\_\_

Eucharistic Prayer number: \_\_\_\_\_

Communion: [both species?] \_\_\_\_\_

Concluding Rites: [What blessing? Any acknowledgements that the bishop should make?]

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Arrangements for Reception following the Celebration:

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## APPENDIX #3

### Concerning the Confirmation of Adults

Each year many adult Catholics ask to complete their initiation into the Catholic Church through the Sacrament of Confirmation. There are several factors which determine the appropriate response we take. The parish needs to have in place options to minister effectively to each one who seeks Confirmation.

#### Determining the Preparation Appropriate for Those Seeking Confirmation

A member of the parish staff should respond promptly to a request for information regarding adult Confirmation. Set up a time for an initial interview during which the following will be ascertained:

1. Why is the person seeking to be confirmed at this time?
2. Is this person already an active, involved parishioner?
3. Is he/she catechized in the Catholic faith? Catechized through grade 8?
4. Has s/he received the Sacrament of Eucharist?
5. Has s/he been away from the practice of the Catholic faith for a period of time?
6. Are there marriage issues that need to be addressed?

#### Appropriate Options

1. Those who seek Confirmation who
  - a. regularly attend Mass,
  - b. were catechized through grade 8, and
  - c. may be involved in parish ministries

need only a brief and simple preparation for Confirmation. This involves three or four sessions to provide necessary information and complete required paperwork, discuss the meaning of Confirmation, the challenges of growing in faith and belonging to the Church, and prayer in preparation for the sacrament itself.

2. Some prospective candidates may be in process of returning to active Catholic practice after a period of being away from Church life. They may have simply drifted away or they may have been alienated because of a real or perceived injustice or over a difference with some aspect of Church teaching.
  - a. Those who have been away from the Church for a relatively short time may need only one or two sessions, in addition to those described in #1 above, to deal with their concerns and offer encouragement for their renewed active participation in the parish.
  - b. Those who have been away for many years, or who left with real hurt and return with some bitterness, may need additional support or guidance, so that their return can mark a reconciliation and new beginning and not simply a glossing over of the alienation. They would be candidates for a parish program for reaching out to alienated Catholics. If your parish does not already have such a program, consult the USCC publication, *A Time to Listen, A Time to Heal*, for suggestions and resources
3. The uncatechized candidates who have little or no experience of Catholic parish or sacramental life require more extensive catechesis.
  - a. They were baptized but not receive First Communion.
  - b. They were baptized and perhaps received First Eucharist but were not raised in the faith or catechized beyond First Communion.

- c. These people are probably suitable candidates for the parish RCIA process. See the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, "Preparation of Uncatechized Adults for Confirmation and Eucharist. #400 ff.
  - d. Please note that according to RCIA 402, these adults have special status because they are already baptized and care should be taken to affirm and help them appreciate their role and dignity as baptized Catholic Christians.
4. If the person desiring Confirmation is married outside the Catholic Church, he/she needs guidance in resolving the marriage issues. Those in an invalid marriage may not receive the sacrament until the issues are resolved and the marriage is blessed in the Church.

### **Opportunities for the Reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation**

- 1. Adults may be confirmed by the bishop during the parish celebration of Confirmation.
- 2. Adults may be confirmed at the archdiocesan celebration of Confirmation in the fall or on Pentecost Sunday.
- 3. Adults completing their initiation in the Catholic Church through the RCIA process may be confirmed at the Easter Vigil. The celebrant of the Easter Vigil needs to request delegation to confirm from the archbishop.

### **Three Archdiocesan Celebrations of Confirmation**

All three occasions of the celebration of the conferral of Confirmation are open to adults and youth. However,

- 1. The October and Pentecost celebrations are mainly intended for catechized, unconfirmed adults.
- 2. The March celebration is geared for youth with the liturgy and homily directed toward this age group. The youth are from collective parishes who have small numbers to be confirmed, (See Candidates 3C, p. 8, *The Seal of the Spirit*.) It also includes individual candidates who missed parish celebrations due to extraordinary circumstances.