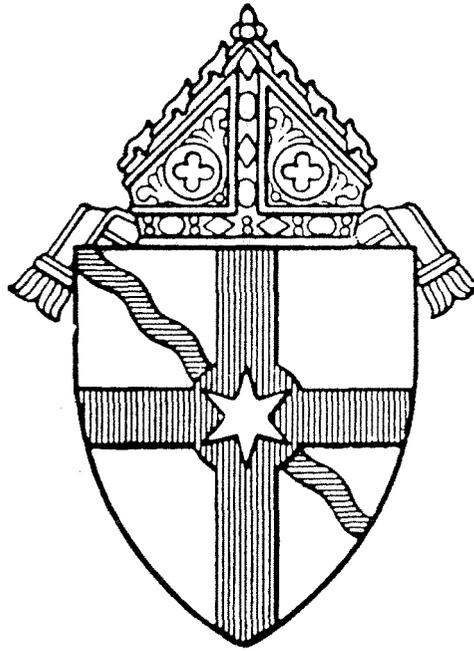


Diocese of Fall River



Confirmation Guidelines & Resources

Office of Religious Education

423 Highland Avenue ·

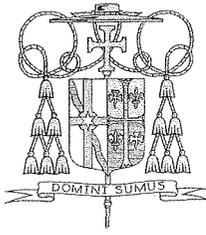
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Issued June, 2005



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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

June 7, 2005

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I am pleased to provide you with a copy of *Preparing for Confirmation: Guidelines and Resources*. It is the result of research, dialogue, deliberation, and prayerful discernment by many individuals.

The guidelines respond to a need expressed by parents and teachers. I believe they will assist parish communities, families and religious educators to fully initiate our young people into the faith.

The objective of Catholic religious education is to develop the gift of faith. It aims at bringing into the fullness of the Christian life those who have been baptized. It seeks to foster a desire to worship God in spirit and in truth, and a longing to share more completely in the life of the Holy Trinity. We must help young people and adults to have a clear and consistent understanding of the faith. Only then will they be able to bear joyful witness to Christ. The purpose of these guidelines is to assist priests, teachers, and catechists in developing the gift of faith for both young people and adults.

I am grateful to all who have contributed to this document – parish directors of religious education, priest consultants, the Office of Religious Education, and many others. They have given invaluable assistance to me in fulfilling my responsibility as chief catechist of the Diocese.

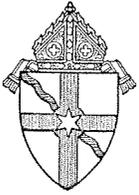
I entrust these guidelines to you for implementation in parish religious education programs and in those ministries involved in the formation of our young people.

Sincerely yours in the Lord,

Bishop of Fall River

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DIOCESE OF FALL RIVER

CATHOLIC EDUCATION CENTER
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
423 Highland Avenue
Fall River, Massachusetts 02720-3791

Office of
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Dear Father, Director or Coordinator of Religious Education, or Principal:

I would take the opportunity of this letter to thank the many people who have assisted the Office of Religious Education in the preparation of these guidelines.

It is with special thanks that I acknowledge the tireless efforts of the following Directors of Religious Education; Jean Kelly, Patricia Pasternak, Margie Copeland, and Jane Ayer whose ideas and experience contributed greatly to this document.

Additionally, I would like to acknowledge the generous assistance of Rev. Msgr. John J. Oliveira, Rev. Msgr. Stephen J. Avila, Rev. Mark R. Hession, Rev. George E. Harrison, and Rev. David A. Pignato who have reviewed and edited this document at various phases of it's development.

I would also thank the Catholic Schools Office, in particular Dr. Donna Boyle, for its cooperation and collaboration in this effort.

Finally, I would extend my deep gratitude to our bishop, Most Reverend George W. Coleman for his continuing support and faith in the Office.

If you should have any questions or need assistance in the implementation of these guidelines please feel free to contact the office.

In the Lord,

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Preparing for Confirmation: Guidelines &
Resources

DIOCESE OF FALL RIVER

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Part I

The Theology of Confirmation

"Besealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit"

-Rite of Confirmation

A. Sacred Scripture

In the course of God's revelation in the Old Testament, the Hebrew prophets announced that the Spirit of God would rest on the coming Messiah for his saving mission. The New Testament reveals that the descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus at his Baptism signaled his identity as that long-awaited Messiah. Conceived by the Holy Spirit, Christ, in his life and mission, lived in total communion with the Holy Spirit given him by the Father. The fullness of this Spirit was to be communicated to the entire messianic people. Christ often promised the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a promise fulfilled at Easter and Pentecost. The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost brought the paschal Mystery to its completion. ["Filled with the Spirit, the Giver of Life, the apostles proclaimed the Good News; those who believed and were baptized received the gift of the Spirit by the laying on of hands, the beginning of the sacrament of confirmation. "] By the gift of the Holy Spirit, believers are united to the mystery of Christ and experience the saving effects of His Cross and Resurrection.

B. Tradition

"With regard to the fundamental direction of catechesis, catechetical activity is still usually impregnated with the idea of 'Revelation'; however the conciliar concept of 'Tradition' is much less influential as an inspiration for catechesis: in much catechesis, indeed, reference to Sacred Scripture is virtually exclusive and unaccompanied by sufficient reference to the Church's long experience and reflection, acquired in the course of her two-thousand year history. "

General Directory for Catechesis (#30)

Therefore to provide some understanding of the tradition of this Sacrament, a brief history of the development and changes in the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation follows.

From the earliest times, Christians have believed that incorporation into the life of Christ is accomplished through the celebration of three sacraments – Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. In the early Church, these sacraments were celebrated together, once a year, by the bishop who received adults and their families into the Church.

The demands for the Sacraments of Initiation quickly grew beyond the collective capacities of the Bishops to administer them for many reasons. Christianity had become the predominate religion in the western world, the teachings of St. Augustine about original sin and salvation, and the high infant mortality rate prompted many parents to seek Baptism for their

infants.

In the western Church, the bishops delegated to parish priests and deacons the faculty to baptize, while reserving the right to confirm and complete that baptism through the anointing with chrism and the imposition of hands. Annually Bishops would travel through their diocese confirming the baptized, and leading them to the table of the Eucharist, maintaining the original order of the celebration of the sacraments.

The Eastern Church delegated authority to parish priests to baptize and confirm, thus maintaining both the original order and unity of the sacraments. Infants would receive a small portion of "consecrated wine" at this celebration, thus receiving their First Communion as well.

The order of the celebration of these three Sacraments of Initiation (in both the East and the West) was maintained until the twentieth century. Youth, ages 12 -14 often were confirmed on a Saturday, and received First Communion at Sunday Mass the next day. However, in 1910, Pope Pius X was concerned that the youth were not nourished by the Eucharist during their formative years. The decision was made to lower the age for the reception of First Communion to the age of reason (age 7). This was adopted with the stipulation that one be able to distinguish table bread from the consecrated bread and that there be a desire to receive Christ in the Eucharist. The normative age for Confirmation, however, remained as it was – ages 12-14. In granting this great privilege to children, the order of the Sacraments of Initiation changed. The Sacrament of Confirmation came to be seen and understood as the occasion when one professed an adult faith, and then became fully initiated in the Church.

This did not appear to pose a problem until Vatican II when the *Constitution on Divine Liturgy* noted that "[w]ith the passage of time, however, there have crept into the rites of the sacraments and sacramentals certain features which have rendered their nature and purpose far from clear to the people of today. Hence some changes are necessary to adapt them to present day needs". [#62] Regarding initiation, the decree called for a revision of the rite of Confirmation "so that the intimate connection of this sacrament with the whole of Christian initiation may more clearly appear", and also called for the restoration of the catechumenate for adults. By the early 1970's, parishioners were witnessing the celebration of all three sacraments together again and in their original order. In 1988, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults was adopted. Children as young as age seven could now be welcomed into the church along with adults through the celebration of the sacraments of initiation at the Easter Vigil. This created some confusion as to why some children were fully initiated into the Faith as early as age seven, while others were baptized at infancy and later received these sacraments in a different sequence.

In the Diocese of Fall River, the recommended time for conferral for the Sacrament of Confirmation is in ninth or tenth grade. "The confirmation of older adolescents bolsters the pastoral care that the Church offers to its youth through community, catechesis, and sacraments. Placed at this time, Confirmation ritualizes the self-appropriation of faith and the ongoing conversion following a progressive catechesis". (Receive The Gift, USCCB Publishing).

C. Doctrine

"The imposition of hands is rightly recognized by the Catholic tradition as the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation, which in a certain way, perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church."
Catechism of the Catholic Church (#1288)

Confirmation is a Sacrament of Christian Initiation and should be seen in its unity with Baptism and Eucharist. Christian initiation remains incomplete without Confirmation and Eucharist. Confirmation is the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit as Gift.

The Sacrament:

- Brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace
- Grounds us more deeply in our divine adoption
- Unites us more firmly to Christ
- Increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit within us
- Renders more perfect our relationship with the Church, and
- Gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit for spreading and defending the Faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ.

Catechism of the Catholic Church [# 1302-1303]

"Confirmation, is given only once, imprints an indelible spiritual character, signifying that Christ has marked the Christian with the seal of the Holy Spirit, for the sake of Christian witness, and perfecting the common priesthood received in Baptism." CCC[#1304-1305]

Part II Confirmation Catechesis

A. Within the Context of On Going Catechesis and Faith Development

"The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ."

General Directory for Catechesis # 80

Sacramental preparation programs, although separate and distinct from the ongoing catechesis and faith development, need to be seen within the context of the entire life of the parish. Sacramental celebrations are special encounters with Christ and the community, which confesses and lives out these sacramental moments. Therefore, the proper place for the preparation and celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation is in the parish community to which the candidate belongs.

B. Readiness for Confirmation

“‘Conversion ’ to Jesus Christ is a full and sincere adherence to the person of Jesus Christ and the decision to walk in his footsteps.” [GDC #53] “This “Yes” to Jesus Christ, who is the fullness of the revelation of the Father, is twofold: a trustful abandonment to God and a loving assent to all that he has revealed to us. This is possible only by means of the action of the Holy Spirit.” [GDC #54]

“Catechesis is that particular form of the ministry of the word which matures initial **conversion** to make it into a living, explicit and fruitful confession of faith.” [GDC #82] In pastoral practice, however, it often occurs that those who present themselves for catechesis really are lacking that initial **conversion**. Because of this, the Church usually desires that the first stage in the catechetical process be dedicated to ensuring conversion. “Only by starting with conversion can catechesis, strictly speaking, fulfill its proper task of education in the faith.” [GDC #62]

Effectively sharing the Catholic faith may require different strategies, depending upon the needs of the hearers. Often, especially for confirmation-age students, three steps might be necessary: (i) apologetics; (ii) evangelization; (iii) catechesis.

The first step is **apologetics**, or explaining a specific point(s) of faith. In 1 Peter 3:15, we read, “*Always be prepared to offer an explanation or defense (apologia) to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence.*” Using the analogy of a storm, on the morning after a storm, trucks are sent out to clear away the branches and power lines that fell into the road and made it impassible. Apologetics is like the tow truck that removes the obstacles that prevent people from coming closer to Christ. Catechists may need to help answer questions or objections or stumbling blocks (e.g., even something as basic as the existence of God Himself, or the divinity of Christ, or the problem of evil) that might be preventing certain students from being open to the good news. (Having a box for anonymous questions might help surface these questions). Since conversion is an individual experience, the questions or issues that may need to be addressed will differ from student to student. If no serious obstacles exist, or once they are adequately addressed, students

may be ready to move on to the second step of sharing the faith: evangelization.

Once students are open to hearing the Gospel, they are ready to be **evangelized**. The obstacles are removed, and we are free to share the Gospel message. Pope Paul VI described evangelization as *"bringing the good news of Jesus into every human situation and seeking to convert individuals and society by the divine power of the Gospel itself. Its essence is the proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ and the response of a person in faith, both being the work of the Spirit of God"*. Evangelization is sharing the story of salvation and what God has been doing throughout history. It also includes sharing what God has been doing in certain individuals' lives, and can take the form of faith-sharing and witnessing (by both adults and young people). The goal of evangelization is conversion. It is helping individuals make a decision for Christ. It's helping students move from knowing *about* Christ to *knowing* Christ. (Retreats, prayer experiences, witnessing, and service opportunities are all ways that young people may encounter Christ).

Essential to this process is **catechesis**, which should be understood as ongoing formation in the faith. This process presumes that the person has been evangelized and has put their faith in Christ. Catechesis is very difficult if the first two steps have not adequately happened in a person's life.

While most programs have catechesis as its primary focus and confirmation students are at different levels of faith, it is recommended that programs regularly incorporate opportunities for dialogue on important issues, as well as opportunities for evangelization. These kinds of opportunities will make catechetical ministry more effective and fruitful.

Today's American culture, which emphasizes materialism, secularism, atheism, and consumerism, provides numerous occasions for adolescents to doubt, question and even abandon the practice of their faith. Therefore, it is essential that adolescents stay connected to a faith community that is willing to listen to their questions and understand their struggles which are part of that period of searching. "The process of continuing conversion goes beyond what is provided in basic catechesis. In order to encourage this process, it is necessary to have a Christian community which welcomes the initiated, sustains them and forms them in the faith." [GDC 69]

As with any sacrament, readiness to receive confirmation is determined by demonstrating an understanding of the sacrament through proper catechesis and a desire to receive that sacrament, evidenced by the attitude and interest of the candidate. In the event a candidate should decide to delay the reception of the sacrament, it should be clear to all involved in their formation that the candidate's decision is to be respected and honored. Regular and active participation in the Sunday Eucharist is central in determining a candidate's readiness to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

C. Time and Place for Preparation

The Diocese of Fall River recommends a two-year program for the Sacrament of Confirmation, which is separate and distinct from the regular religious education programs.

Additionally, the Diocese requires that all candidates for the Sacrament be prepared in parish-based programs. Parish programs should extend beyond systematic learning to include parents' evenings, retreats, service projects and other relevant parish and catechetical events for the immediate preparation of the sacrament.

Sacraments are *parish* celebrations and while Catholic school communities are important in the daily sharing of faith and values, it is also necessary for young people to stay connected to their parish communities through the celebration of weekly Eucharist and other parish activities. It is expected that Catholic school students will participate in the parish sacramental program for the immediate preparation of the sacrament.

While we recognize that parents are the primary teachers of the faith, we also entrust the handing on of that faith to ministers of the Church who organize and offer sacramental programs which will reflect the authentic teaching of the faith as promulgated by the bishop of the Diocese. It is therefore the policy of the Diocese of Fall River to require candidates who may have previously been allowed to "home school" be prepared for the sacraments of initiation in the parish based religious education programs.

Part III Confirmation Programs

A. Essential Principles of Confirmation Programs

"In general it is observed that the first victims of the spiritual and cultural crisis gripping the world are the young. It is also true that any commitment to the betterment of society finds its hopes in them. This should stimulate the church all the more to proclaim the Gospel to the world of youth with courage and creativity. "
General Directory for Catechesis [# 181]

As one of the three sacraments of initiation, catechesis for Confirmation must be, by its very purpose, systematic. As one prepares to publicly profess their faith and express their willingness to live that faith, there should be an awareness of what it means to be a disciple of Christ. Discipleship requires active participation in the **four-fold mission of the Church:**

- **Message**
- **Worship**
- **Community**
- **Service**

Message means familiarity with the "Good News" of Jesus Christ as proclaimed in Scripture and the teachings of the Catholic Church. While it is important that candidates have a well-developed understanding of the Faith, Confirmation programs should not be seen solely as academic courses in the doctrine of the Faith. Catechists and teachers should also know that it is normal to ask questions and sometimes to doubt beliefs that once seemed so clear. Candidates should be encouraged to ask the questions, but also know that some aspects of Catholicism require age, wisdom and trust in the mystery of faith.

Faith development is a life-long process that includes questioning, searching, and maturing, which are normal and healthy. Faith development should include the following elements:

- **an understanding of the meaning of Confirmation as a sacrament of initiation and its relationship to Baptism and Eucharist**
- **an understanding of the sacramental life of the Church and, in particular, the Eucharist as the center and source of the parish's faith life**
- **an acceptance of the Scriptures (both Old and New Testaments) as the Inspired Word of God, and a practical familiarity with using the Bible for prayer and study**
- **an acceptance of the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes (both found in Scripture) as the guides for Christian moral living**

- **An understanding of the various elements of the Apostles' Creed - the Church's traditional profession of faith.**
- **A realization that faith, as the human response to God's free offer of grace, requires of the believer a personal commitment to Christ and to the faith of the Church.**
- **Awareness that this personal commitment, which faith requires, is concretely deepened by prayer and expressed through personal and social moral living.**

Worship is the public, communal prayer life of the Church. "In the Christian community the disciples of Jesus Christ are nourished at a twofold table: that of the word of God and that of the Body, of Christ." [GDC #70] As mentioned previously, regular active participation in the Sunday Eucharist is a central element in determining a candidate's readiness for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Programs should offer age-appropriate catechesis on the Mass and foster a proper attitude while participating in the Eucharistic celebration.

Furthermore, a program should assist the candidate in becoming a person of prayer. To that end, a retreat experience should be included as part of the program. Other models and opportunities for prayer should be provided during the program, exposing the candidates to different ways of prayer and worship.

Community means participation in the life of Church. In Confirmation programs, it is important that the candidates develop their sense of belonging to the Catholic Church, in general, and in their parish faith community, in particular. Some familiarity with the 2000-year history and traditions of the Church universal is needed so that candidates can recognize the uniqueness of the Catholic Church among the other Christian traditions. They should also be familiar with their own parish family and be actively involved in some area of parish life. This commitment is manifested most concretely through their regular participation in Mass. Similarly, members of the parish should express their interest in the candidates and support their desire for full initiation into the Church.

Service is an essential component to authentic discipleship. Candidates should demonstrate their understanding of Jesus' life of service by participating in meaningful Christian ministry. Service should be concrete and truly assist those in need. It is important that candidates understand that service is not simply a requirement for Confirmation, but an expression of faith, which is essential to the ongoing life of every Christian. For this reason, time should be spent in discussing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy as a means of directing candidates to use their particular gifts and talents in choosing an area of service.

B. Essential Elements of the Curriculum

Year One

Using the model described above, sessions should be planned that include:

1. Community-building activities (i.e. group dynamics, icebreakers) to help the students to get to know one another better; involvement in parish liturgies and activities to help connect and integrate them into the entire parish community.
2. Review the basic teachings of the faith; use of creative and varied ways should be considered; as well as allotting time for questions, discussion, and reflection.
3. Teachings and discussions on the moral dimension of the faith are important. Time should be given for peer debating as an effective way to help young people to be involved in learning how to gather information and use critical thinking and logic in reaching conclusions. [see GDC #148]
4. During either Year I or Year 2, there should be at least one specific session devoted to the principles of Catholic social teachings, Respect Life issues, proper use of the gift of sexuality, and the vocations to Christian marriage, religious life and the priesthood.
5. Resources to teach healthy relationships are found in the Safe Environment Curriculum that has been given to each parish. These resources can be found in both the Video series and Basal Text series.

Year Two

1. Early in the year there should be a teaching about the qualifications and role of sponsors. Parishes should make qualified sponsors available.
2. Prayer is an essential part of each and every session so that candidates become familiar with the various styles and types of prayer. Retreats may be scheduled in either the first or second year or both, and should be considered as essential components and unique opportunities to deepen Faith. **[Some parishes plan a day of reflection for the first year and a two or three day retreat for the second year.]** It is recommended that the Sacrament of Reconciliation be celebrated during these days.
3. The immediate preparation for Confirmation should begin 6 - 8 sessions prior to rehearsals, the following topics are usually found in most texts preparing students for this sacrament:
 - **Discipleship / Growth in Faith / On-going Conversion**
 - **The Mission of the Church**
 - **Prayer & Spirituality**
 - **Sacraments of Initiation**
 - **Confirmation: Its Gifts and Challenges**
 - **Celebrating the Liturgy of Confirmation**

B. Roles of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and Sponsors

The role of parent(s) or guardian(s) continues to be that of primary educator of and witness to the faith. As spiritual and moral supporter(s) of their son or daughter, it is important that they be aware that this is the age of adolescent searching, and questioning is normal. They can support and encourage their child by regularly participating at Sunday Mass as a family and

by loving and nourishing one another in faith, especially through example. Parent(s) or guardian(s) should take an active interest in the parish program by attending all meetings and other events that may be scheduled in the program. A schedule detailing dates, times and places

of events for the year should be provided at a parents meeting prior to the start of classes. Parents should give participation in the program priority in the family schedule and if possible, offer their time and/or talents to those involved in the program. Parents should not, however, serve as a sponsor, since this is a distinct role.

In today's culture, the larger community is not supportive of the spiritual and moral dimensions of life. It is therefore important to have additional "companions" to affirm us and help us see the multi-dimensional aspects of life. The sponsor should be someone the candidate knows and respects and is capable of being a companion on the spiritual journey of the candidate.

Additionally, the sponsor should be a practicing Catholic, a responsible member of the church community, to whom the candidate can look to for support and guidance. The sponsor must be a fully initiated Catholic who is at least 16 years of age. If married, the sponsor's marriage must be in conformity with the regulations of the Church.

To emphasize the unity of the two sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation it is appropriate, where possible, to choose one of the baptismal godparents to again serve as sponsor. It is important though, that this person be someone who is still in close contact with the candidate so that he or she can truly be a "companion."

Part IV GUIDELINES FOR THE LITURGICAL CELEBRATION OF CONFIRMATION

PREPARATION

1. The Ritual Mass of Confirmation and readings proper to Confirmation are to be used except on the Sundays of Lent and Easter, Easter Octave, or Solemnities. (Roman Missal, page 977 ff.; Preface of the Holy Spirit, page 1184, 1187 ff; Lectionary, page 915 ff). The Gloria is not recited or sung unless the Mass is celebrated on a Sunday or solemnity.
2. If a special booklet is prepared, copyright permission for text and/or music is to be secured.
3. When the Bishop is the Minister of Confirmation, six servers should be prepared to be the Minor Ministers. (Cross Bearer, Acolytes (2), Miter, Crozier and Book bearer).
4. The Parish Chrism stock should be readily available to the Minister of Confirmation.
5. Lemon, bread, water and sufficient linens should be available to the Minister of Confirmation.
6. Clergy from neighboring parishes should be invited to concelebrate the Confirmation Mass.

CANDIDATES

1. Candidates should be well prepared to make the responses during the Confirmation ceremony, especially at the moment of anointing.
2. The candidates may choose any name for Confirmation that is recognized in the Church's calendar. In preparation, it could be suggested that the Baptismal name be used to highlight Confirmation as a part of Christian Initiation. Sponsors should be aware of the Confirmation name chosen by the candidate.
3. Those to be confirmed should sit together as a group. Sponsors are to be seated as a group in rows behind those to be confirmed. Rows are not to be altered between candidates and sponsors.
4. Confirmation robes **must** be used by the candidates as a sign to the community of those receiving the Holy Spirit in a special manner. Robes also help solve the practical problem of appropriate dress for the ceremony.
5. Each candidate is to carry a card with his/her confirmation name printed on it. Each candidate presents himself/herself to the Minister of Confirmation by handing the card to the chaplain who will announce the chosen name to the Minister of Confirmation.

6. Confirmands should be prepared to meet the Bishop or Minister of Confirmation to introduce themselves as they leave church.

MUSIC

1. The regulations for music during the Liturgy apply.
2. During the Anointing, soft background music is to be played. It is not appropriate to have choral or congregational singing at this time.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

The reading of the Word of God is to take place from one ambo from the Lectionary. Those chosen to read should be well trained and prepared for this Liturgical role.

RITE OF CONFIRMATION

1. Confirmation will be administered according to the "Rite of Confirmation within Mass."
2. After the Gospel, members of the Confirmation class are asked to stand and while they are standing the pastor presents them as a group to the Minister of Confirmation. The suggested formula is: **(Name of the Minister of Confirmation), the parish community of (Name the Parish) wishes to present to you its young men and women who have been prepared and are ready to receive the fullness of Christian Initiation in the Sacrament of Confirmation. Each candidate is well prepared and is accompanied by a sponsor. It is my privilege to present them to you at this time.**
3. The traditional manner for reception of the Sacrament is as follows:

Candidates should come forward for the anointing forming a single line along the edge of the sanctuary or altar rail. They should stand close to each other at their place.

If there is a desire to adapt this manner, please consult the Minister of Confirmation, or in the case of the Bishop, his secretary, **in advance** of the scheduled date of Confirmation.
4. Sponsors stand behind their candidate and place their right hand on the right shoulder of the candidate as the Minister of Confirmation approaches. Each candidate is to have one sponsor.
5. The formula for the Anointing is: **N, be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.**
6. Stoles/scarves, certificates, etc. are not to be presented at the time of Confirmation nor at any time during the ceremony itself.
7. It is not appropriate for messages of thanksgiving to be given during the ceremony. Other gatherings of candidates, teachers, and parents are more appropriate times for this gesture.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Bishop Coleman has requested that priests and others involved in the planning of liturgical celebrations observe the following liturgical/pastoral norms regarding "dance."

While it may be true that in certain circumstances the use of dance may enhance a prayerful mood in a para-liturgical service, dance has never been a part of the liturgical rite in the Latin and more Eastern Churches. Recent clarifications from the Congregation for Divine Worship in Rome have been quite explicit; the use of "liturgical dance" is never appropriate in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

The movement, which is appropriate, is that of procession, symbolizing the pilgrim journey of the People of God. These various opportunities, (e.g. entrance, Gospel, Offertory, Communion, departure) may well be enhanced through the use of candles, incense or cross, and may involve members of the congregation whose involvement is paramount in all liturgical celebrations. This involvement is reduced when the congregation becomes spectators of movement and activity, which is not a part of our liturgical tradition. Please refrain from any form of "liturgical dance" during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

The gifts to be presented at the Offertory should consist of the elements of bread and wine-those used by Our Lord at the Last Supper. These symbols of food for our journey to Christ which are transformed through the Holy Eucharist into the Body and Blood of Christ Himself, can tend to be trivialized when included among a number of other, more mundane signs of a local community or event.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Due care is to be taken that the taking of pictures does not impede the ceremony. In no case is the photographer allowed to stand neither in back of the sponsor nor in the sanctuary to photograph the exact moment of anointing. This can be distracting to all. Parish ushers can be helpful in this regard.