



DIOCESE OF AUSTIN

CONFIRMATION



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Policy on Confirmation

Revised June 2011

In order to serve the needs of the people of God in the Diocese of Austin and to be responsible stewards of the gifts given to the diocese, the Diocese of Austin issues the following policy:

- I. Those who have been baptized continue the path of Christian initiation through the sacrament of confirmation.
 - A. In this sacrament they receive the Holy Spirit who was sent upon the Apostles by the Lord on the day of Pentecost.

- II. This gift of the Holy Spirit conforms believers more perfectly 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 of confirmation cannot be repeated (*Rite of Confirmation*¹ 1, 2).

- III. The Minister of Confirmation
 - A. The ordinary minister of confirmation is the Bishop (c. 882).
 - B. All priests (*ipso iure*) may administer the sacrament of confirmation in danger of death (c. 883, 3°).
 - C. Pastors and those priests delegated by the Bishop (c. 883, 2°) also have the faculty to confirm:
 1. In the case of the readmission to Communion of a baptized Catholic who has been an apostate from the faith
 2. In the case of a baptized Catholic who has without fault been instructed in a non-Catholic religion or adhered to a non-Catholic religion

¹ Hereafter RC

3. Not in the case of a baptized Catholic who, though raised in the faith, was never confirmed (NSC² 28)
 4. Not in the case of baptized, uncatechized Catholics
- D. In the instance mentioned in Canon 883, 3°, in order to maintain the inter-relationship and sequence of confirmation and Eucharist as defined in Canon 842, § 2, priests who lack the faculty to confirm should seek it from the diocesan Bishop, who may, in accord with Canon 884, § 1, grant the faculty if he judges it necessary (NSC 29).
- E. Deacons
1. An adult should be immediately confirmed after the reception of baptism by the minister who confers the baptism.
 2. Since a deacon cannot administer confirmation, he cannot baptize an adult except in danger of death.
 3. Deacons may baptize infants and children under the age of seven (7).
 - a. Such children will then be confirmed in the usual way by the Bishop.
 4. Persons seven (7) years old and older are baptized by a priest and confirmed by him as part of the same ceremony (c. 97, § 2; 852; 866; Canon 883, 2°; 891).

IV. Age of Confirmation

The age for the celebration of the sacrament of confirmation will be the early years of high school between fourteen (14) and sixteen (16) years.

V. Diocesan Guidelines For the Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation of Adolescents

- A. Religious education and faith formation is a life-long process.
1. The sacramental preparation process is supplemental to regular participation in the parish or school religious education programs.
 2. It is understood that each parish is responsible for providing the faith formation of the middle-school and high-school age members of the community.
 3. At certain times in the life of the youth, they are more involved in school or other activities.

² RCIA: National Statutes for the Catechumenate

- B. A minimum of two (2) years of formal religious education in a parish or Catholic school program precedes preparation for the celebration of the sacrament of confirmation. Many struggle with the attitude of confirmation being the “graduation” sacrament. Confirmation is part of a four-year high school catechetical program and the celebration of the sacrament can take place anytime within that period for those adequately prepared.
- C. Confirmation preparation does not have to culminate in May.
1. Confirmations may take place from August to May.
 2. Note that confirmations in a particular parish do not necessarily take place every year.
- D. Because the primary faith community is the local parish, preparation for the sacrament of confirmation is to take place in the local parish.
1. Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit—his actions, his gifts, and his biddings—in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end 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).
 2. Home Schooling: For those who choose to home school their children for religious education, please see *Policy on Home Schooling*, p. F-7.
- E. Sacramental preparation for confirmation has a distinct catechesis with its own focus and elements (*Challenge of Adolescent Catechesis*, 1986: 46).
1. This study and preparation should take place within a period not to exceed nine (9) to twelve (12) weeks and include the following:
 - a. The elements of the rite of confirmation
 - b. The meaning of the baptismal promises
 - c. The Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah and Galatians)
 - d. The meaning of “Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit”
 - e. The action of the laying on of hands and anointing with the Sacred Chrism
 - f. The Lord’s Prayer: “because it is the Spirit who prays in us and in the Spirit the Christian says, ‘Abba Father.’” (RC 14)

- g. The rights, responsibilities, duties, and obligations of full initiation in the Catholic community: Word, worship, community, and service
2. All persons involved in the preparation process are required to study the introduction, the full prayer texts and Scriptures of the rite of confirmation, and to understand the theology of Christian initiation, especially the sacrament of confirmation.

VI. Qualifications of Candidates

- A. Each baptized Catholic has the right and the obligation to receive the sacrament of confirmation, but the candidate has the personal responsibility to choose to complete initiation into the faith life of the Church.
- B. Candidates may request the sacrament if they:
 1. Are baptized and able to renew baptismal promises, unless a grave reason suggests otherwise
 2. Exhibit an active faith life and knowledge of the Church
 3. Participate in the sacramental life of the Church, especially the Mass
 4. Are willing to commit to active involvement in the parish confirmation catechesis
 5. Are willing to respond to the call to active participation in the Church
 6. Are willing to continue to learn and grow in faith following confirmation and throughout their lifetime

VII. Confirmation Sponsors

- A. The sponsor represents in a personal way the witness and support of the parish community.
- B. Opportunities for catechesis should be offered to the sponsors in order to assist them in fully understanding their role in the ongoing formation of the candidates.
- C. The sponsor should participate with the candidates in their preparation as well as the celebration.
- D. To perform the role of sponsor, it is necessary that a person:
 1. Be designated by the one to be confirmed, by the parents or the one who takes their place, or, in their absence, by the pastor or minister and is to have the qualifications and intention of performing the role

2. Have completed the sixteenth (16) year, unless a different age has been established by the diocesan Bishop or it seems to the pastor or minister that an exception is to be made for a just cause
 3. Be a practicing Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the sacrament of the Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with faith and the role to be undertaken
 4. Not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared
 5. Not be the father or the mother of the one to be confirmed (c. 874)
- E. A spouse may not serve as a sponsor for their spouse.

F. Sponsor-Proxy

A proxy may be used, but it is recommended that someone nearby be chosen to sponsor so that they can become more involved in the candidate's preparation.

G. Parents of Adolescents

1. For the sacrament of confirmation, like that of all the sacraments, the parental role is one of spiritual companion and adviser.
2. As part of their continuing support and witness, parents should attend catechetical sessions provided by the parish for their own faith formation and to assist and encourage their child.

H. Consult the *Religious Education Guidelines for Parishes and Schools* for a detailed description of the catechesis for the sacrament of confirmation.

I. For baptized Catholics who seek confirmation as adults, consult Section III, *The Minister of Confirmation* (Page O-2).

J. Celebration

1. The celebration of confirmation should be carefully prepared and well executed following the norms of the rite of confirmation.
 - a. The ceremony should normally be celebrated within the Eucharistic Liturgy.
 1. The sacrament of confirmation should be held at a time when the parish community can witness and participate in this celebration of the growth of their parish family.

b. Use of Stoles

The USCCB Committee on the Liturgy has deemed this an inappropriate symbol and practice for confirmation because of its association with the sacrament of Holy Orders.

VIII. Special Circumstances

A. Confirmation and Matrimony

1. If they can do so without serious inconvenience, Catholics who have not yet received the sacrament of confirmation are to receive it before being admitted to marriage (c. 1065).

B. Taking Another Name

1. The selection of the name of a saint as a confirmation name is not required by the rite of confirmation.
2. In order to recognize the connection between baptism and confirmation, it is recommended that the baptismal name is used, however, candidates may choose a confirmation name, if they so desire.
 - a. They are to choose the name of a saint, not a blessed or venerable nor the name of a place (i.e. "Lourdes," "Fatima," etc.).

NOTE: There is no documentation regarding the confirmation name. These notes are drawn more from custom, not any liturgical or canonical source.

C. Confirming Those Entering Full Communion

1. All baptized persons who have not been confirmed are capable of receiving confirmation (c. 889).
2. In the Eastern Orthodox churches, the sacrament of confirmation (chrismation) is always lawfully administered by the priest at the same time as baptism.
 - a. Even though no mention is made of the confirmation in the canonical testimony of baptism, this does not give grounds for doubting that the sacrament was conferred (DCE³ 12).
 - b. Therefore, a member of an Eastern church who enters full Communion in the Roman Catholic Church is not re-confirmed.

3. Candidates for full Communion who were confirmed in a non-Eastern church (e.g. Protestant), like Episcopalians and Lutherans, are confirmed upon initiation due to the invalidity of their previous confirmation (DCE 48; RC 6).

D. One Confirmed at Birth or at an Early Age

1. Confirmation may not be repeated.
 - a. The young person should be encouraged to participate in the preparation and celebration.
 - b. At the time of confirmation, they would simply be greeted and blessed rather than anointed.

IX. Sacramental Recording of Confirmation

- A. The pastor should record the names of the minister, those confirmed, parents, sponsors, and the date and place of baptism in the confirmation book.
- B. In addition, a notice is sent to the church of baptism.

CONFIRMATION SPONSOR COVENANT

As a Confirmation sponsor, your role is to encourage the faith of your candidate and be an “example” to your Confirmation candidate and to reflect with the candidate on the meaning of a life of Catholic discipleship.

The Code of Canon Law (Church Law) specifies the requirements for serving as a sponsor at Confirmation (Canon 893) are the same as those for godparents at Baptism (Canon 874): You may not be the parent of the person being confirmed; you must be at least 16 years old; you must be fully initiated (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist); if married, be in valid Catholic marriage; and live a life of active faith in the Catholic Church.

I understand the requirements of being a Confirmation sponsor and I state that I received the **Sacrament of Baptism**

at _____ Church in _____ (City and State)

I received the **Sacrament of Confirmation**

at _____ Catholic Church in _____ (City and State)

(And if married) celebrated the **Sacrament of Marriage**

at _____ in _____ (City and State)

My candidate’s name is: _____

Name of parish and city where the **Sacrament of Confirmation** is to take place:

Parish _____ City _____

I am active in the Catholic Church, fully initiated into the Catholic Church, regularly attend Mass on Sunday and strive to live my faith.

Please print your

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

CONVENIO PADRINO DE CONFIRMACION

Como padrino de Confirmación, su papel es motivar la fe y ser un “ejemplo” para su candidato, así como reflexionar con él sobre el significado de la vida como discípulo católico.

El Código de la Ley Canónica (Ley de la Iglesia) especifica que los requerimientos para servir como padrino de Confirmación (Ley 893) son los mismos que para los padrinos de Bautismo (Ley 874): Usted no puede ser el padre de la persona que será confirmada; debe tener al menos 16 años de edad y estar completamente iniciado en la Iglesia (Bautizo, Confirmación y Primera Comunión). Sí está casado, debe haber contraído matrimonio católico válido y haber vivido activamente su fe en la Iglesia Católica.

Entiendo los requerimientos para ser padrino de Confirmación y declaro haber recibido el **Sacramento del Bautismo**

En la Iglesia _____ de _____ (Ciudad y Estado)

Haber recibido el **Sacramento de la Confirmación**

En la Iglesia Católica _____ (Ciudad y Estado).

(En el caso de estar casado) haber celebrado el **Sacramento del Matrimonio**

En la Iglesia _____ (Ciudad y Estado).

El nombre de mi candidato es:

Nombre de la parroquia y ciudad donde se celebrará el **Sacramento de la Confirmación:**

Parroquia _____ Ciudad _____

Estoy activo en la Iglesia Católica, regularmente acudo a Misa los domingos y me esfuerzo por vivir mi fe.

Por favor escriba su

Nombre _____

Firma _____ Fecha _____