



**SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION
SPECIAL CASES OUTSIDE OF
COMPLETION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION**
Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

I. Basic background:

Despite the policies for the restored order of the sacraments of initiation, there may be some need to address special cases of celebrating the sacrament of Confirmation by itself. It may be required for persons coming to the diocese from other dioceses which do not complete the sacraments of initiation at the age of discretion, or persons who for some reason did not complete the sacraments at the age of discretion. These are people who have already received their First Eucharist but have not received the sacrament of Confirmation.

1. One must be baptized to receive the sacrament of Confirmation. In addition outside the danger of death, the baptized person must have the use of reason, be in the state of grace, properly instructed, and be able to renew his or her baptismal promises.
2. The ordinary minister of Confirmation is the bishop; a presbyter who has this faculty by virtue of either the universal law or a special concession of competent authority also confers this sacrament validly. (Canon 882)

The following have the faculty of administering Confirmation by the law itself:

- a. within the limits of their territory, those who are equivalent in law to the diocesan bishop
- b. with regard to the person in question, the presbyter who by reason of office or mandate of the diocesan bishop, given under the 1988 Great Falls-Billings diocesan faculties, baptizes one who is no longer an infant (7 year of age or older) or one already baptized whom he admits into the full communion of the Catholic Church
(**NOTE:** Only the presbyter who has baptized is able to confirm within the same ceremony, unless delegation has been received from the bishop.)
- c. with regard to those in danger of death, the pastor or indeed any presbyter (Canon 883)

3. Adult catechumens and children who are baptized after the age of seven should be admitted to Confirmation and the Eucharist at the same time they receive Baptism. Similarly, those who are being received into the church should, after suitable preparation, receive Confirmation and the Eucharist in a common celebration.

4. Reception by youth:

Age of Reception: Those baptized as infants in the Catholic Church, (Diocese of Great Falls-Billings) are to complete their initiation at or about the age of reason following the Diocesan Guidelines, *Completion of the Sacraments of Initiation*.



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Those who have already received the Eucharist are to join a formation group of peers or those younger or older preparing for initiation; or they may be prepared individually under the auspices of a pastor or director of religious education, RCIA director, or liturgist, with a sponsor and/or mentor (e.g. before marriage or when in the military or when moving to the diocese from a diocese that confirms at a later age). Guidelines for adults below pertain in these instances.

5. Reception of adults into full communion (7 years or older)

a. When receiving adults into full communion with the Church, Confirmation is always administered except to those who were Confirmed in the Orthodox or Eastern Catholic communions. Confirmation administered in other churches is not recognized by the Roman Catholic Church.

b. By law presbyters have the faculty to Confirm in the following instances:

1. adults, including all who are no longer infants and have attained the use of reason, on the occasion and in the rite of their Baptism
2. baptized adults who are admitted into full communion, in the rite of admission

(NOTE: This includes Baptized Catholics who have apostasized from the faith, upon their readmission to full communion and baptized Catholics who have been instructed in or adhered to a non-Catholic religion, without fault of their own, upon readmission to full communion)

3. anyone in danger of death

6. In the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings presbyters also have the faculty to Confirm Baptized Catholics who have not been catechized or previously admitted to Confirmation and the Eucharist, upon their admission to full practice of the faith through the RCIA.

7. Sponsors:

a. There should be one sponsor for each candidate. It is desirable that the sponsor be the same as the godparent/sponsor at Baptism.

b. The Code of Canon Law asks that the sponsor fulfill the following conditions:

1. The sponsor should be present at the celebration of Confirmation to see that the candidate acts as a true witness to Christ and fulfills the obligations of the sacraments (Canon 892)

2. To be a sponsor for Confirmation one must:

- (a) Have the qualifications and intentions of performing the role
- (b) Have completed the sixteenth year
- (c) Have received Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, and live in harmony with the Catholic faith
- (d) Not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared



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Pastorally, the selection of godparents as Confirmation sponsors shows the unity of the sacraments of initiation. Sponsors for Confirmation, like the sponsors of Baptism, should be available to the candidates to assist in ongoing formation and faith sharing.

8. The choice of a special Confirmation name is optional, however, the baptismal name is preferred if it is a saint's name.

9. Confirmation records

a. All names of those Confirmed must be recorded in the sacramental records.

The following must be recorded:

- (1) name of Confirmed
- (2) minister of Confirmation (bishop or his delegate)
- (3) parents and sponsor
- (4) place and date of Baptism
- (5) place and date of Communion

b. The pastor of the parish must contact the pastor of the place of Baptism so that a notation may be made in the baptismal record, in accord with the norm of Canon 535.2.

10. Adult practicing catholics not confirmed:

Adult catholics who are practicing the faith, yet have not been confirmed, are encouraged to receive confirmation when the bishop is next at the parish to celebrate this sacrament. The pastor needs to meet with the person to help discern readiness, understanding, and the desire to receive confirmation.

II. CANONICAL REQUIREMENTS:

Canon 889 --

§1. *All Baptized persons who have not been confirmed and only they are capable of receiving Confirmation.*

§2. *Outside the danger of death, to be licitly confirmed it is required, if the person has the use of reason, that one be suitably instructed, properly disposed and able to renew one's baptismal promises.*

Canon 866 --

Unless a grave reason prevents it, an adult who is baptized is to be Confirmed immediately after Baptism and participate in the celebration of the Eucharist, also receiving Communion.

Canon 883 --

The following have the faculty of administering Confirmation by the law itself:

1° within the boundaries of their jurisdiction, those who are equivalent in law to a diocesan bishop;



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- 2° *with regard to the person in question, the presbyter who by reason of office or mandate of the diocesan bishop Baptizes one who is no longer an infant or one already Baptized whom he admits into the full communion of the Catholic Church;*
- 3° *with regard to those in danger of death, the pastor or indeed any presbyter.*

Canon 1065 --

§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.*

Canon 895 --

The names of the Confirmed with mention of the minister, the parents and the sponsors, the place and the date of the conferral of Confirmation are to be noted in the Confirmation register in the diocesan curia, or, where the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop has prescribed it, in a book kept in the parish archive; the pastor must advise the pastor of the place of Baptism about the conferral of Confirmation so that a notation is made in the Baptismal register, according to the norm of canon 535.2.

III. Catechetical guidelines:

1. With regard to adults, the same principles should be followed with suitable adaptations, which are in effect for the admission of catechumens to Baptism and Eucharist. In particular, suitable catechesis consisting of participation usually in a one year formation process based on the RCIA process should precede Confirmation. There should be sufficient preparation to establish a relationship of the candidates with the Christian community and with individual members of the faithful to assist in their formation.
This formation should be directed toward their giving the witness of a Christian life and exercising a Christian apostolate, while developing a genuine desire to participate in the Eucharist.
2. Occasionally the preparation of a baptized adult for Confirmation is part of his/her preparation for marriage. In such cases, if it is foreseen that the conditions for a fruitful reception of both Confirmation and marriage cannot be satisfied, it is better to defer Confirmation until after the marriage.
3. If one who has the use of reason is confirmed in danger of death, he or she should be prepared spiritually, so far as possible, depending upon the circumstances of the individual case.



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IV. Liturgical guidelines:

In preparation for the celebration it is essential to consult the provisions of the *Rite of Confirmation and the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (part II)*. In keeping with the fact that the sacrament being received is a completion of the sacraments of initiation begun at Baptism: The candidates need not take a new name; the saint name given at Baptism is sufficient. (However, if the baptismal name is not a saint's name, choosing a new name is desirable.) The custom of taking the name of a saint who models the Christian life is laudable.

The sponsor or godparent may be the same as in Baptism (Introduction to the *Rite of Confirmation #5*).

The symbols, rituals and gestures incorporated in liturgy are beautiful expressions of our faith. We treat them with love and respect. We are formed by what we see and do.

Setting up for the Liturgy:

Photographs: Please inform people of our diocesan policy: Photos must never distract from the prayerfulness of the sacraments; no flash is to be used for the celebration.

Candidates: anticipate the manner in which the bishop will know the name of each candidate during the rite:

Option: each candidate wears a large name tag displaying the name by which he or she is to be confirmed.

Option: the sponsor hands the bishop a card with the name of the candidate.

Vestments: On Sundays, use the color of the day. On weekdays, use color of the Feast. If the mass for Confirmation is used, vestments may be white or red. Please indicate the color of vestments to be used when there is an option. The Bishop will bring his own vestments and oils.

Other:

- Please indicate the number of priests who will be concelebrating.
- Make sure everything is in place for the Sprinkling Rite. This rite reminds us of our Baptism, the first of the sacraments of initiation. It replaces the penitential rite except during Lent when sprinkling is not used. It is expected that the Sprinkling Rite will be used during the Easter Season.
- Have a bowl of warm, soapy water for the bishop to clean his hands after the rite and a few slices of lemon. Set out a good towel as well. There is no need to put out cotton balls to wipe the oil from the forehead.



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The Rite of Confirmation

1. After the proclamation of the Gospel all are seated. Before the homily, a catechist presents the candidates to the bishop (not to the assembly).
Sample: **Bishop _____, the candidates of the parish community of _____ have been properly prepared to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Our faith community of _____ asks that you confer upon them the seal of the Holy Spirit, and welcome them to the table of the Eucharist.**
2. The name of each candidate is announced. Each stands when his or her name is called out
3. The bishop will ask them to turn and face the assembly, who applaud their welcome. The bishop asks them to be seated
4. Homily
5. Renewal of Baptismal Promises (Replaces the Nicene Creed)
6. Invitation to Prayer (The bishop invites all priests present to join him)
7. Laying on of hands and prayer for the Holy Spirit
8. Anointing with Chrism. The candidates come forward in procession with their sponsors for the chrismation and physical laying on of hands.

General Intercessions. The Ritual provides a standard series of petitions as an example. However, it is preferable that you craft your own. Recommended options include: a petition for good weather that will lead to a bountiful harvest. Include a petition for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life. Include a petition according to the pressing and present needs of the world.

Revised & Promulgated
By Bishop Michael W. Warfel
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