

A WALKTHROUGH THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

The rite for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation usually takes place at Mass “in order that the fundamental connection of this sacrament with all of Christian initiation may stand out in a clearer light. Christian initiation reaches its culmination in the communion of the Body and Blood of Christ. The newly confirmed therefore participate in the Eucharist, which completes their Christian initiation” (Introduction 13). The bishop is the ordinary minister of Confirmation. For pastoral reasons he may delegate a priest to administer the sacrament.

Sacrament of Confirmation

Presentation of the Candidates

After the Gospel the bishop and the priests who will be ministers of the sacrament with him take their seats. The pastor or another priest, deacon, or catechist presents the candidates for confirmation, according to the custom of the region. If possible, each candidate is called by name and comes individually to the sanctuary. If the candidates are children, they are accompanied by one of their sponsors or parents and stand before the celebrant.

Homily or Instruction

The bishop then gives a brief homily.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

After the homily the candidates stand and the bishop questions them:

Bishop: Do you reject Satan and all his works and all his empty promises?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who came upon the apostles at Pentecost and today is given to you sacramentally in confirmation?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All present: Amen.

The Laying On of Hands

“The laying of hands on the candidates by the bishop and the concelebrating priests represents the biblical gesture by which the gift of the Holy Spirit is invoked” (Introduction 9).

The concelebrating priests stand near the bishop. He faces the people and with hands joined, sings or says:

Bishop: My dear friends, in baptism God our Father gave the new birth of eternal life to his chosen sons and daughters.

Let us pray to our Father that he will pour out the Holy Spirit to strengthen his sons and daughters with his gifts and anoint them to be more like Christ the Son of God.

All pray in silence for a short time.

The bishop and the priests who will administer the sacrament with him lay hands upon all the candidates (by extending their hands over them). The bishop alone sings or says:

All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin
and gave them new life.

Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their Helper and Guide.

Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,

the spirit of right judgment and courage,

the spirit of knowledge and reverence.

Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The Anointing of Chrism

“The anointing with chrism and the accompanying words express clearly the effect of the giving of the Holy Spirit. Signed with the perfumed oil, the baptized receive the indelible character, the seal of the Lord, together with the gift of the Holy Spirit that conforms them more closely to Christ and gives them the grace of spreading ‘the sweet odor of Christ’” (Introduction 9).

The deacon brings the Chrism to the bishop. Each candidate goes to the bishop, or the bishop may go to the individual candidates. The one who presented the candidate places his right hand on the latter’s shoulder and gives the candidate’s name to the bishop; or the candidate may give his own name.

Bishop: Dips his right thumb in the Chrism and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed, as he says: “(Name), be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Newly confirmed: Amen.

Bishop: Peace be with you.

Newly confirmed: And with your spirit.

Universal Prayer

The universal prayer, or prayer of the faithful, follows.

Concluding Rites

Instead of the usual blessing at the end of Mass, the following blessing or prayer over the people is used.

Bishop: God our Father made you his children by water and the Holy Spirit: may he bless you and watch over you with his fatherly love.

All: Amen.

Bishop: Jesus Christ the Son of God promised that the Spirit of truth would be with his Church for ever: may he bless you and give you courage in professing the true faith.

All: Amen.

Bishop: The Holy Spirit came down upon the disciples and set their hearts on fire with love: may he bless you, keep you one in faith and love, and bring you to the joy of God's kingdom.

All: Amen.

Bishop: May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Prayer Over the People

Instead of the preceding blessing, the prayer over the people may be used.

Deacon or other minister: Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing.

Bishop: Extends his hands over the people and sings or says:

God our Father, complete the work you have begun and keep the gifts of your Holy Spirit active in the hearts of your people. Make them ready to live his Gospel and eager to do his will. May they never be ashamed to proclaim to all the world Christ crucified living and reigning for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Bishop: And may the blessing of almighty God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit come upon you and remain with you forever.

All: Amen.