

DIRECTIVES FOR CONFIRMATIONS
SPRING, 2024

Effective: January 1, 2024

The following guidelines will be observed for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Diocese of Bridgeport from January 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024.

GENERAL NORMS

1. The conferral of the Sacrament of Confirmation will be prayed within a Celebration of the Word of God. Mass will not be celebrated.
2. **White** gowns **must** be worn by all Candidates for Confirmation.
3. Each candidate is to **wear a nametag** with his or her **Confirmation name** printed legibly in large script.
4. **Sponsors** ordinarily stand behind their candidate during the rite of Confirmation. However, whether they place their hands on the shoulder of their candidate will be dependent upon the consent of the candidate and his or her parents.
5. The **minimum number of candidates** needed for the celebration of Confirmation in any parish is **40 candidates**. If a parish has fewer than 40 candidates, they may either (1) combine with another parish to reach that number or (2) celebrate Confirmation every other year, combining two classes in the one ceremony. If a parish combines Confirmation classes over a two-year period, there is no minimum number needed to have a parish celebration.

NORMS FOR CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT

6. **Altar servers:** The conferral of Confirmation requires **five** altar servers when a bishop is the celebrant. If this number cannot be met, please inform the bishop's Master of Ceremonies a few days in advance. For a bishop, required servers are a cross bearer, two candle bearers and two insignia bearers (miter and crozier); white gloves are worn by the insignia bearers and are brought to the parish by the Bishop or the Master of Ceremonies. All altar servers should be vested and ready for the rehearsal **30 minutes before** the ceremony begins.
7. All candidates and sponsors must be seated in church **10 minutes before** the start of the ceremony. This will allow the Bishop to address the sponsors and the congregation before the start of Confirmation.
8. **Incense** is not used during the celebration of Confirmation.
9. If available, a **lapel microphone** with fresh batteries should be made available for the Bishop's use.

10. **A stock of Sacred Chrism** is normally brought by the Bishop, but not by a visiting bishop.
11. In the Diocese of Bridgeport, the Bishop will wear a red or white cope for the conferral of confirmation within a Celebration of the Word of God.
12. Since Confirmation is conferred within a Celebration of the Word of God, the *Order for the Conferral of Confirmation without Mass* contained in Chapter Two of the *Order of Confirmation for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America* (2016 edition) is employed.
13. The **readings** for the Service must be indicated on the planning sheet. Since the *Order for the Conferral of Confirmation without Mass* is used, the readings are taken from those found in the *Ritual Mass of Confirmation* as specified above, with the traditional order of readings being followed in choice selection, “that is, from the Old Testament, the Apostle, and the Gospel”¹.
14. After the proclamation of the Gospel, the Pastor/Administrator will go to the ambo and present the candidates to the Bishop **either as a group or by individual name**.
 - a. There will be **no formal response** by the Bishop to the presentation of candidates since the ritual for Confirmation does not envision it.
 - b. The Bishop may ask the congregation to show its approval with a round of applause, followed by an instruction for all to be seated.
15. When the Bishop has finished his homily, he will stand at the chair and invite those to be confirmed to stand for the renewal of baptismal promises.
16. The Bishop will **sit** for the anointing with Chrism (1) at the presider’s chair; (2) in a chair that is placed in front of the altar (if space permits) or (3) in a chair placed in another prominent place in the sanctuary (never in the main aisle). Candidates will kneel before the Bishop to receive the sacrament, using a kneeler that will be placed before the chair. The Pastor will hold the Vessel with the Chrism standing on the Bishop’s right.
17. The Bishop will **not shake hands** with the candidate at the sign of peace. He will simply greet the candidate with “Peace be with you” and the candidate will respond “And with your spirit.” Candidates should be instructed accordingly.
18. The Bishop will **cleanse his hands after Confirmation by using lemon juice, water and a towel**.
19. Music must always be played during the anointing. Appropriate Sacred Music for this particular moment in liturgical ritual is the chant “*Veni, Creator Spiritus*”, or an equivalent.

¹ OC 37.

20. **The Universal Prayer of the Faithful:**

- a. The Universal Prayer of the Faithful follows the *Anointing with Chrism*. The formula contained in the *Order of Confirmation for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America* (2016 edition) is employed.
 - b. After the minister of Confirmation says the invitatory, the individual intercessions are to be proclaimed by the Deacon of the Word, or in his absence, by the Reader.
21. The pastor's remarks should immediately follow the recitation of the Our Father. He is invited to thank all those involved in preparing the candidates for the sacrament and offer instructions regarding photographs.
22. The Bishop will be available for **pictures** immediately after the Ceremony.
- a. The candidates and sponsors should remain in their places at the end of the Ceremony. Photos will be taken in front of the sanctuary, maintaining a line formation.
 - b. Parents and sponsors who wish to be included in photographs should be instructed to wait until all the candidates have been with the Bishop. These photographs will not include the bishop.
23. It is expected that the parish provide a **stipend** for the Bishop and his Master of Ceremonies. These are used for charitable works and business travel. An amount of \$400 per session is suggested for the Bishop and \$100 per session for the Master of Ceremonies. Please make the Bishop's stipend check out to the Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano and please call the office to confirm the name of the Master of Ceremonies a week prior to the celebration.