

# Diocese of Stockton Liturgical Guidelines for the Sacrament of Confirmation



The following pages contain detailed information about each element of the celebration of Confirmation. If you have scheduling requests, contact Grace Garza-Ayala at 209-466-0636 or [ggayala@stocktondiocese.org](mailto:ggayala@stocktondiocese.org); questions for schedule changes, contact Alicia Silva at [asilva@stocktondiocese.org](mailto:asilva@stocktondiocese.org); liturgy questions, contact Michael Schmitz at [mschmitz@stocktondiocese.org](mailto:mschmitz@stocktondiocese.org)

## Preparations for the Celebration of Confirmation

1. **Servers:** At least five (5) **experienced** servers are required. There are roles for up to seven (7) servers, and at least six (6) are required if using incense. If the Confirmation is delegated to someone other than the Bishop, there should be (5) five servers.

Servers are to be assembled, properly vested, and ready to rehearse with the Master of Ceremonies at least **thirty (30) minutes** prior to the start of Confirmation. Servers should be appropriately dressed for carrying out their service (dress shoes, no high heels, black/white/neutral-colored pants/skirt/dress). The Master of Ceremonies will assign and review with them their duties prior to the ceremony. Adequate seating is to be reserved for the servers and the Master of Ceremonies. The Master of Ceremonies, miter bearer, crozier bearer, and book bearer should all be seated in proximity to the Bishop.

2. In addition to the vessels and items normally prepared for Mass, the following are also to be prepared:
  - a. Chrism, poured into a bowl/dish adequate for the Bishop to use, and purificator.
  - b. A pitcher of water, a large bowl and **one** lemon cut into quarters in the bowl.
  - c. A couple of hand towels.

Sufficient bread and wine for the assembly are to be prepared in one (1) plate and one (1) or more flagons prior to Mass. (Communion from the Tabernacle during Mass is to be avoided.)

3. *Confirmandi* are to be seated with their sponsors **before the Liturgy is scheduled to begin**. If the *Confirmandi* process in during the Prelude, they are to be in their places **five minutes before** the Mass is scheduled to begin.
4. All *Confirmandi* are to have a nametag (pinned- no lanyards please) with **ONE** name clearly printed & large. The nametag should be visible to the Bishop when they come forward.
5. There should be some basic **announcements** before Mass, to ensure that this is a welcoming experience for those to be confirmed and all their family and guests, as well as the community that gathers with them. The announcements should begin a few minutes before the scheduled start of Mass so that the Mass can begin on time. There are several things that should be particularly pointed out to those who are gathered:
  - a. Welcome! Please use the worship aid to participate fully in the liturgy and the singing, to help make this a vibrant and joyful celebration.
  - b. Please remain standing after the proclamation of the Gospel until the Bishop has blessed the assembly with the Book of the Gospels.
  - c. Confirmation is a solemn rite. We have an official photographer to take pictures of the Confirmations. No one is to use flash photography or move through the Church to get pictures during the Mass. Thank you for your respect of this solemn event.
  - d. We invite you to take a moment of silence in order to prepare your hearts for the celebration

## Introductory Rites

6. Before the procession begins, if incense is to be used, the Thurifer presents the thurible to the Bishop, who places incense in it.
7. The order of the procession is as follows:

Thurifer

Cross-bearer **between** two (2) servers carrying lighted candles

The Deacon (or Lector) carrying the Book of the Gospels

Concelebrating Priests, with the Pastor of the parish at the end

Master of Ceremonies

Bishop

Slightly behind the Bishop, the Deacon(s) assisting him, if any  
Miter and crozier bearers, and the book bearer, if a separate person.

8. The Penitential Act:

- 1) The Bishop leads the Confiteor ("I confess . . .") with the people and the Cantor/Choir then leads the singing of the *Kyrie / Lord, have mercy*.

- or -

- 2) The Sprinkling Rite with appropriate music to accompany.
9. Following the Penitential Act and *Kyrie*, the ***Gloria is sung at most Confirmation Masses***, including those Confirmations that take place on Lenten weekdays. There is no Gloria if the Confirmation takes place on a Sunday of Lent. (Do not sing the Gloria during the Sprinkling; it constitutes a separate element of the rite.)

## Liturgy of the Word

10. Readings may be chosen from the readings of the day or from those given in the Lectionary for the Ritual Mass of Confirmation, when permitted (see GIRM 372). The readings of the day are generally appropriate for Confirmation during the

Easter season. **Note:** If there are more than 100 Confirmandi, only one reading is needed before the Gospel (unless the day is a Sunday or Solemnity).

11. Lectors are to be assigned to proclaim the readings before the Gospel. *Confirmandi*, as a rule, should not exercise this, or other liturgical ministries at their Confirmation (including announcing the petitions for the Prayer of the Faithful).
12. A Deacon, if present, proclaims the Gospel; otherwise a concelebrant proclaims the Gospel, both after receiving a blessing from the Bishop. After the proclamation, the Book of the Gospels is taken to the Bishop for veneration and blessing the people.
13. The worship aid must indicate that people are to remain standing until the Bishop has blessed the assembly with the Book of the Gospels. (*See Paragraph 41 for further information*)

### **Rite of Confirmation**

14. After the proclamation of the Gospel, the Pastor presents the *Confirmandi* to the Bishop in the following manner:
  - a. The Pastor asks the *Confirmandi* to ***stand***
  - b. The Pastor indicates to the Bishop that the *Confirmandi* are well prepared.
  - c. The Pastor then presents the *Confirmandi*. If they number fewer than twelve (12), their names should be called individually; otherwise, they are presented as a group
  - d. The Bishop will say a few words
  - e. All will be invited to be seated

A sample script is available on the diocesan website.

15. The Bishop will preach the Homily.
16. After the Homily, the *Confirmandi* stand and renew their Baptismal promises. They should be instructed to respond as a group to the Bishop's question with an **enthusiastic** "I do."

17. If there are more than 100 Confirmandi, the Bishop may ask the Pastor to assist with Confirmation. When this occurs, the parish needs to coordinate so that the proper minister can be recorded for each candidate in the sacramental record (the minister who anoints the candidate is recorded as the minister in the record). Following the renewal of Baptismal promises, **only Priests who are assisting with Confirmation stand near the Bishop.** Other priests remain seated. The Bishop, along with the assisting Priests, extends hands or lays hands on (if the number is fewer than 12) the *Confirmandi*. The Bishop alone says the prayer, “*All Powerful God...*”
18. The Bishop stands during the anointing of the *Confirmandi*.

The anointing may take place at the front of the center aisle, or, alternatively, the candidates could line up in front of the sanctuary, and the Bishop would go individually to each one.

Whichever method is chosen, please practice this with every *Confirmand* and sponsor.

Candidates and sponsors need to be ready to step forward, and stand close enough to the Bishop that he does not have to move to reach the candidate. The Sponsor is to keep their hand on the RIGHT shoulder of the Candidate, stand close to the Candidate, and present the Candidate to the Bishop. They present the Candidate by saying, “*Bishop, I present N. (Señor Obispo, le presento N).*” **The name used is the Candidate’s Baptismal name or the name of a chosen Saint** and should be spoken **loudly and clearly**, and should match the nametag, which is printed with the one chosen name (baptismal or patron saint) only. **Note:** Use only the name of the Saint without adding St. or Saint.

**IMPORTANT REMINDER:** Soft instrumental music should be played during the anointing of the Candidates. There is to be no singing at this time. Please remind the Music Director, DRE, and Sacristan of this custom.

The *Confirmandi* are to be instructed on their parts of the ritual dialogue with the Bishop. They are to respond with a *confident* “**Amen**” and “**And with your spirit**”.

As they step away, the next Candidate and Sponsor IMMEDIATELY step forward and continue the process. Catechists should be helping this to go smoothly. Only one Candidate and sponsor should be directly in front of the Bishop at any point in time. **Note on Bowing:** If bowing as they approach to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, they are to do so in anticipation. (Bow as the Candidate ahead is being Confirmed).

19. Only the official parish photographer may take photos. No other photographs or videos are to be taken during the Mass, including during the actual Confirmation. There is to be only one professional or semi-professional photographer. There should be no more than one person moving around to take pictures. Having the official photographer allows those participating in the celebration to focus on the prayer instead of capturing memories of the moment.

While the Bishop is anointing the *Confirmandi*, the official photographer may take one picture of each person being confirmed. The photographer should NOT ask the Sponsors to step back or stay out of the picture. The photographer should never be in the Bishop's way.

Photos are to be made available to all participants, regardless of ability to pay, and the expense is to be absorbed by parish in the upfront cost of the program. Photographers who require those confirmed to buy photo packages after Confirmation are not appropriate.

The Bishop encourages a Group Photo before or after the Confirmation Mass but it must be rehearsed and organized beforehand.

20. After the anointing, the Bishop will return to the credence table or the chair, where servers with pitcher, bowl, lemon, and towels will assist him with washing his hands.
21. The General Intercessions are announced by the Deacon or a Lector. In composing the intercessions, the *Order of Confirmation* or the model provided in the *General Instruction to the Roman Missal*, 69-71, are to be followed. If the parish uses their own

petitions, the Bishop will still use the introduction and conclusion from the *Order of Confirmation*. The prayers should include intercessions for the increase of vocations in our Diocese; for the Church; civil authorities; those in need and the needs of the local community related to the celebration. It is recommended that there be no more than six (6) petitions. **NOTE: At this point, the *Confirmandi* (those to be confirmed) are now the *Confirmati* (the confirmed). They should NOT be referred to as *Confirmandi* in the Intercessions.** Examples of formularies can be found in Appendix V of the *Roman Missal, Third Edition*.

### **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

22. A collection is taken up at the Confirmation Mass. The newly confirmed and their Sponsors are encouraged to contribute to the offering. Envelopes for this purpose should be distributed to the *Confirmandi* and their Sponsors in the weeks prior to the Confirmation Mass.
23. Some of the newly confirmed may present the gifts of bread and wine. The processional cross **does not lead** the gift procession (at this or any other Mass). If desired for the solemnity of the occasion, the MC may accompany one or two of the candle bearers and lead the gift procession forward. The procession begins once the altar has been prepared. Do not wait for the collection to be finished.
24. For Confirmations, the Bishop normally uses Eucharistic Prayer III. The parts for the concelebrants should be assigned beforehand and clearly marked in the Missal and/or in concelebrant books/cards.
25. Communion may be distributed under both kinds, with two (2) ministers of the Precious Blood for each minister of the Body of Christ. Hosts for Communion are always to be consecrated within the Confirmation Mass. No one should approach the tabernacle prior to the distribution of Holy Communion. Communion may only be given from the tabernacle in a situation of necessity.

If there are not sufficient Priests or Deacons available for the distribution of Communion, duly commissioned Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should be ready to serve.

26. Please review with Confirmandi and Sponsors the importance of receiving Holy Communion, including the dispositions required for Communion; except for an instance of breaking the Eucharistic fast, someone who is not able to receive the Eucharist at Confirmation Mass is also not in the proper state to receive Confirmation (see CCC, 1310).

**Note:** While candidates should be *encouraged* to approach the Sacrament of Confession before Confirmation, and given opportunities to do so, this is only *required* when the candidate is conscious of having committed grave sin.

They should also be reminded of the appropriate posture and act of reverence made when receiving Holy Communion, including the “Amen” affirming both the reality of Christ’s Presence in the Eucharist and the reality that we are one Body in Christ. The bow should be made as the person ahead of them is receiving Communion.

### **Concluding Rite**

27. Any brief announcements, if necessary, are to be made following the Prayer after Communion. The Bishop will thank those involved in the preparations of the event.
28. The Recessional follows the same order as at the beginning of the Mass, with the exception of the Deacon of the Gospel who is to follow the Bishop.

### **Varia**

29. **Dress for Confirmandi and Sponsors:** Candidates and sponsors are to dress modestly and appropriately for the nature of the celebration. Shorts, bare midriffs, and plunging necklines are examples of inappropriate dress.

Because the stole is the sign of ministerial office of a Priest or Deacon, it is not permitted for *Confirmandi* to wear any type of stole for Confirmation. Even when not used in the liturgy, 'Confirmation stoles' inappropriately confuse the symbolism of the baptismal and ministerial priesthoods. Robes are discouraged.

30. **Confirmation Names:** Candidates may use their Baptismal name or the name of a Saint as the Confirmation name (see no. 18, above). Candidates whose Baptismal names are not those of Saints are to be encouraged to select a Saint as his or her patron(ess). All *Confirmandi* should then research the life of the chosen patron.
31. **Sponsors:** Insofar as possible, each candidate for Confirmation is to have his or her Sponsor present. It is recommended that one of those who acted as a sponsor at Baptism should also serve as the sponsor at Confirmation. Parents may **not** serve as Confirmation Sponsors for their children. If a sponsor is not able to attend the Mass, a proxy or a parent may **present** the candidate to the Bishop. All sponsors must meet the requirements in the *Code of Canon Law*.<sup>1</sup> Sponsors should not be individuals who are in a romantic relationship with the one being confirmed.
32. **Music:** The music selected should be artistically good, liturgically appropriate, and pastorally suitable. **The music should be well known by the Candidates and their families so that they can fully participate. If a full choir is not available to support and lead the singing, a cantor should lead the assembly in singing so that there is full, active, and conscious participation.**

The importance of the sung participation of the *Confirmandi* and Sponsors cannot be overstated; **the songs to be sung at the Confirmation Mass are to be selected a year in advance** so that all can learn them during their catechetical sessions

---

<sup>1</sup> Can. 874 §1. To be permitted to take on the function of sponsor a person must:

- 1/ be designated by the one to be baptized, by the parents or the person who takes their place, or in their absence by the pastor or minister and have the aptitude and intention of fulfilling this function;
- 2/ have completed the sixteenth year of age, unless the diocesan bishop has established another age, or the pastor or minister has granted an exception for a just cause;
- 3/ be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on;
- 4/ not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;
- 5/ not be the father or mother of the one to be baptized.

throughout the year. At the very least, the *Confirmandi* and their sponsors should know the settings selected for the sung parts of the Ordinary (Gloria, Gospel Acclamation, Sanctus, Memorial Acclamation, Amen, Agnus Dei).

33. **MC Compensation :** The standard stipend for the MC is \$100 per Mass. Some parishes choose to give more.
34. An appropriate financial offering is presented to the Bishop which he will use for charitable purposes. Checks are to be made payable to **Roman Catholic Bishop of Stockton**. **Note:** Do not make the check out to the Bishop personally.
35. The **Confirmation Liturgy Preparation Form** is to be faxed or emailed to the Pastoral Center no later than one month prior to the date of your Confirmation Mass. **The form is accessible on the diocesan website:**  
<https://stocktondiocese.org/confirmation>  
Email forms to [asilva@stocktondiocese.org](mailto:asilva@stocktondiocese.org) or fax it to 209-464-3775.

**One form** is to be submitted **for each** liturgy.

36. The Bishop only uses the *Order of Confirmation* (which the Bishop will bring) and the *Roman Missal* and/or the *Misal Romano*. Do not prepare a binder with anything other than the intercessions. A copy of the worship aid should be available for the Bishop. Readings are to be proclaimed from the *Lectionary* and, if available, the *Book of the Gospels*. If the Mass will be in both English and Spanish, both Missals are to be available.
37. The Bishop will review all parish **Sacramental registries** on the occasion of Confirmation in a parish. They are to be prepared for the Bishop to review and sign, placed in the Sacristy or Parish office.
38. **Confirmation certificates** are not signed by the Bishop. They are to be signed by the Pastor of the parish. Confirmation certificates are not to be distributed during or after Mass in the church.

39. The custom whereby the Bishop shares a meal with the priests of the parish is encouraged. The Confirmation catechists would be most welcome. Also, the Bishop's Master of Ceremonies should be invited. This meal can be either before or after the Liturgy, depending on the time of the Mass. If it is before the Mass, it should be **2 hours before** the Mass begins. **Note:** Weekday Confirmation Masses are at 6pm only. If serving dinner, it should be served at 4pm. Appetizers may be served or a light meal.
40. **Parking Space for the Bishop:** A place is to be reserved for the Bishop's car near the rectory or the vesting area. \*If possible reserve a parking space for the MC.
41. **Vestments:** The parish provides the chasuble and stole for use by the Bishop. They are to be clean and in good repair.
42. The celebration of Confirmation is not an occasion for witness talks or acknowledgements by the Candidates as if it was a graduation ceremony, or for other non-liturgical rituals, which are best left to Confirmation retreats and preparation programs.
43. Religious articles, rosaries, medals, and similar gifts given to those confirmed will be blessed by the Bishop following the prayer after Communion.
44. It is appropriate for a **worship aid** to be prepared for the celebration to assist with the full and active participation of the faithful who are present. If a parish uses projections, these same principles should be followed as they apply. A sample outline is provided for your reference. Please note the following guidelines for preparing worship aids:
1. Please ensure that all names (including Bishop Myron J. Cotta) are spelled correctly.
  2. All headlines should match the titles given the sections of the Mass in the *Roman Missal*.

3. All reprinting of music and lyrics must be in accord with copyright law: please see the Diocesan website for more information on this.  
<https://stocktondiocese.org/diocesan-departments/liturgy-worship/musical-resources/>
  4. It is the assembly's rightful place to sing during the Liturgy. Music should especially be provided for the Entrance Chant, Gloria, Psalm Response, Gospel Acclamation, Eucharistic Acclamations and Communion Chant.
  5. Readings are only reprinted in the worship aid if a large segment of the assembly does not speak the language in which the reading is proclaimed. Any readings that are reprinted must be official translations and not an individual's translation from one language to another. Proper copyright acknowledgments should be given. Please note that it is not permitted to project the Lectionary texts on a screen.
  6. After the Gospel the following should be included as a note:  
*Please remain standing until the Bishop has blessed the assembly with the Book of the Gospels | Favor de permanecer de pie hasta que el Obispo bendiga la Asamblea con el Evangelario*
  7. If you have questions about what is and is not appropriate for the worship aid, please contact the Liturgy & Worship office for further direction: 209-466-0636 or [mschmitz@stocktondiocese.org](mailto:mschmitz@stocktondiocese.org).
45. If a parish is celebrating Confirmation Mass at another parish's church, it is the responsibility of the visiting parish to contact the hosting parish regarding liturgical ministers (the hosting parish should normally provide the EMHCs, lectors, & Sacristan); to make arrangements for rehearsals; to communicate the anticipated number of participants for wine and hosts. **Sacramental Records:** The parish using the facilities of the hosting parish keeps records in their own Sacramental Registry. The hosting parish does not keep the records. The candidates' home parish records the event in their own registry, noting the location of the Mass: this is the parish that should be contacted for future certificates/records of Confirmation.