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I. Historical and Theological Orientation for Confirmation

- A. In the first centuries of the Church, there was a well integrated Rite of Christian Initiation. After the baptismal washing there was an anointing of the body with chrism. The completion of the ceremony was the anointing of the forehead by the Bishop, followed by the kiss of peace as the official welcome to the community. The neophytes were then taken by the Bishop to the Christian assembly for their first participation in the Eucharistic celebration. This sequence is still practiced in the Eastern Church today, even in the case of infants.
- B. The Western Church retained the practice of reserving the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation to the Bishop, a practice which led to extended delay in administering the Sacrament to the candidate well into childhood and adolescence. It was thus that Confirmation became pastorally separated from Baptism and Eucharist.
- C. The Second Vatican Council (cf. Sacrosanctum Concilium, #71 and the RCIA, #215) re-emphasized the unity of the Sacraments of Initiation. Our local diocese affirms that:
 - 1. the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist constitute the Rite of Christian Initiation;
 - 2. there is an organic unity among these sacraments;
 - 3. and the normal order of the Sacraments of Initiation is Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist for adults and children in the RCIA process.
- D. The primary goal of the revised rite of Confirmation is to clarify the relationship of Confirmation to initiation into a Eucharistic community. Confirmation furthers the process of initiation begun with the initial anointing of the Holy Spirit at Baptism. It is a sacrament of maturity not in the chronological sense but in the sense of spiritual fullness, since through Confirmation one is fully initiated into the Christian community.
- E. The primary effect of Confirmation is the "confirming" of the gift of faith received in Baptism, and the sealing of the covenant of God with the gift of His Spirit to witness Christ to the ends of the earth. The confirmation ritual emphasizes and dramatizes that we are marked by God as His daughters and sons and now have a continuing claim to His Spirit who will continue in us the process of conversion.
- F. Having received Baptism and Confirmation the candidates

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enter fully into the mystery of the Body of Christ at the Eucharist. All three sacraments insert the neophyte into the Paschal Mystery of dying and rising with Christ and nourish them by means of an ever-increasing relationship of love with the Father, through and ever-increasing responsiveness to the Spirit (cf. Rite of Confirmation #1-2).

- G. Ideally, then, the sacraments of Christian initiation should be received in the sequence: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist. This poses no problem when an adult is to be initiated. For those baptized in infancy, the Roman Church acknowledges the custom of postponing Confirmation for several years after First Communion. Until such time that the theological reality and pastoral practice illuminate each other, these guidelines remain in effect.