

Archbishop's Guidelines Confirmation

Last Modified 12 December 2017

General

While Baptism is clearly the primary rite of Christian initiation, Confirmation remains very important. There is now wide agreement that we have made a mistake in playing down the importance of Confirmation as an opportunity for personal commitment and growth. Young people need the concrete challenge of a public moment when they can make their public confession of faith and "turn to Christ".

Without returning to the days of the confirmation "roundup", we do need to maximise the power and energy of this sacramental rite.

Preparation

There are as many courses for preparation as there are groups in preparation. The content is important, but so is the learning environment. It should be one in which the candidates can take the initiative for their own exploration. The process of preparation and the sacrament itself should strengthen the relationship between the candidates and the community of faith.

If at all possible the confirming bishop should meet the candidates sometime prior to the service, preferably in an informal context. This could be weeks before, the day before, or on the day itself.

The Service

The service will be the appropriate liturgy from an approved rite. The text, with additional rubrics that reflect the way the Bishop conducts a Confirmation, is available by email from the Registry. The liturgical colour usually will be white. The lections should be checked with the Bishop at least two weeks prior to the service. The readings for the day are normally followed. The Bishop likes to see a draft of the service about a week in advance.

The names of those being confirmed should be recorded in the Parish Confirmation Register and a copy given to the Bishop 2 weeks prior to the day of the Confirmation. It is appropriate for the candidates to receive a confirmation card signed by the Bishop. Confirmation certificates are available from Church Office.

The service should provide as much personal involvement as possible:

- A statement of faith could be made by one or more of the candidates.
- A dialogue between the Bishop and one or more of the candidates could take place at a point in the sermon.
- Family and friends of the candidate may like to come and pray with him/her at the time of the laying on of hands.
- A lighted candle may be presented to candidates when they renew their baptismal promises.

- Candidates may contribute to the service through prayer, bible reading, music, statement of faith, etc.

Confirmation in our schools

Where possible young people should be confirmed in their own community of faith. Most often this should be their parish church. However, we also recognise that for some young people their place of spiritual belonging is within the school.

Where a confirmation is conducted within the school, please ensure that the parish priest at the church where they attend (or would attend) is aware and given the opportunity to be involved during preparation at in the liturgy. The parish should seek to make contact with the young person following the confirmation.

Likewise, where a young person attends a church school but is confirmed in his or her parish, it is always a good idea to advise the school chaplain, who can provide support and encouragement to the newly confirmed.