

## CONFIRMATION

*Those who have been baptized continue on the path of Christian initiation through the Sacrament of confirmation. In this sacrament they receive the Holy Spirit whom the Lord sent upon the apostles on Pentecost.*  
(Rite of Confirmation, #1)

- 1 Pastors are to encourage those in their parish who have not received the sacrament of confirmation to receive it.
- 2 The ordinary age for confirmation in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe is during the High School years.<sup>1</sup> The confirmation name must be the name of a saint. The candidate may choose his/her baptismal name.
- 3 According to Canon 852:1, children with the use of reason who are seeking baptism or full communion have the same rights as adults. Therefore, if children are unbaptized, they are to be fully initiated at the Easter Vigil; that is, they are to celebrate Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. This is required, except for grave reason, by Canon 866 and the National Statutes of the Catechumenate #18 and #35. If children (baptized, non-Catholic) are received into the faith, whether at the Easter Vigil or a Sunday Eucharist, they are to celebrate both Confirmation and Eucharist. No special permission is needed.  
  
However, Archbishop Sheehan wishes to allow pastoral discretion in this regard. If a pastor sees a genuine need to delay confirmation of children with the use of reason until a later time, he may do so. No special permission is needed. There should be no delay in the reception of Holy Communion.
- 4 Request for the sacrament of confirmation to be celebrated in a parish is made through the Archbishop's Office.
  - 4.1 Confirmation is ordinarily to be celebrated during the Easter Season (Easter to Pentecost).
  - 4.2 If the confirmation is to take place during the Easter Season, the request must be presented in writing by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the previous year.
- 5 Pastors and parents are to ascertain that the person to be confirmed has chosen freely to receive this sacrament. In the latter stages of preparation each candidate should indicate by letter to the Archbishop, or his designate, his or her desire to receive the sacrament on the occasion offered.
- 6 Pastors are to make sure that proof of baptism is established for all candidates to be confirmed.
- 7 Pastors shall urge those to be confirmed to approach the sacraments of Penance prior to the celebration of confirmation, unless the candidate is a catechumen.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Archbishop of Santa Fe reserves the right to confirm infants (those under the age of 7) in accord with the centenary and immemorial customs established in New Mexico. (c.26) Requests are to be made directly to the Archbishop.

<sup>2</sup> A catechumen is an unbaptized person. If the person was baptized in another Christian community he/she is not a catechumen.

- 8 Each candidate to be confirmed shall have an individual sponsor. To be admitted as a sponsor the following prescriptions must be met (canons 893; 874, §1):
- 8.1 be designated by the one to be confirmed, by the parents or the one who takes their place of, in their absence, by the pastor or minister and is to have the qualifications and intention of performing this role;
  - 8.2 be at least 16 years of age, unless the pastor or minister judges that an exception is to be made for a just cause;
  - 8.3 be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received the sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken;<sup>3</sup>
  - 8.4 not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared;<sup>4</sup>
  - 8.5 not be the father or the mother of the one to be confirmed.
- 9 It is desirable that the one who undertook the role of sponsor at baptism be sponsor for confirmation. (c. 893, 32)
- 10 A preparation program for candidates for confirmation should ordinarily be offered in parishes each year. A preparation program should be offered at least every second year.
- 11 A pastor may not present a member of another parish for confirmation without the permission of the proper pastor.
- 12 Confirmation preparation is one of many opportunities for ongoing faith formation in the life of young people. It is the obligation of parents to see that their children continue to participate in the catechesis and other faith formation offered by the parish throughout their high school years, even after the celebration of confirmation. Confirmation preparation will include the following:

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<sup>3</sup> Care must be taken in the interpretation of “to live a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertaken.” It should not be interpreted too strictly. Under no circumstances are the ministers to use the celebration of the sacrament of baptism as a means to force the godparents to enter into a sacramental marriage. However, in those cases where their marital status can be rectified, they should be encouraged to do so. Married sponsors should be in a valid marriage. Rare exceptions may be made by the pastor. Use of the form “Affidavit of Eligibility for the Ministry of Baptism or Confirmation Sponsor” on Page 37 of this Handbook assists pastors with their responsibility in this regard.

<sup>4</sup> These are legitimately imposed penalties by a Tribunal of the Church. No one may impose his own penalties. Penalties in the Church must be imposed or declared by a judicial process (e.g. excommunications, suspensions, interdicts).

- 12.1 Prior to entrance into the final preparation period for confirmation, young people should have recently completed at least one year of catechesis or religious formation at the parish or be enrolled in a Catholic high school where they participate in daily theology classes.
- 12.2 A final period of four to six months of confirmation preparation is held at the local parish for all candidates, including those attending Catholic high schools. This period of preparation is required and is to include orientation, catechesis on the sacrament of confirmation, spiritual and community outreach activities, retreats, and the practical and liturgical arrangements for the celebration.
- 12.3 Catechesis for high school age Catholics is to include: basic knowledge of the Scriptures and how to use them; an understanding of the sacramental life of the Church; principles of making decisions based on Christian morality; prayer; spiritual enrichment; service to the community, etc.
- 12.4 The four to six month period of proximate preparation for confirmation will include a number of sessions for parents and sponsors to aid them in their mentoring roles.
- 13 Whenever possible a parish community is to have a program coordinator who assists the pastor and others on the parish staff in designing and coordinating the program. Proper selection of catechists and other adult leaders is of importance.
- 14 Those entering into full communion with the Catholic Church, who have been validly confirmed in their church are not to be confirmed again.<sup>5</sup>
- 15 No fee or offering in connection with the administration of confirmation may be required from those who are to be confirmed or from their parents or sponsors.
- 16 The following norms apply to the faculty of the pastor, parochial vicar or the presbyter who legitimately takes their place, to confirm.<sup>6</sup>
- 16.1 The minister described above who baptizes one who is no longer an infant, has by universal law the faculty to confirm. (cf. cc, 852, 866, 883, 2°)
- 16.2 The minister described above who receives into full communion one who is no longer an infant and was baptized in a non-Catholic community, employs by universal law the faculty to confirm (c. 883, 2°).

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<sup>5</sup> At this time we recognize as valid the confirmation administered by presbyters or bishops of the Orthodox Churches. Anglican, Episcopalian, Lutheran, or other non-Orthodox confirmations are not recognized as valid. When in doubt call the Catholic Center.

<sup>6</sup> Other presbyters need explicit delegation from the Archbishop for the validity of the sacrament. Please note that the same priest who baptizes, or welcomes someone into full communion with the Church, is the one that enjoys the faculty to confirm. The two actions must be celebrated by the same priest; otherwise the confirmation is invalid.

- 163 The minister described above who readmits to full communion with the Catholic Church, baptized Catholics who have apostasized from the faith and are not confirmed, enjoys by universal law the faculty to confirm. (c. 883, 2°, and Pontifical Commission for the Interpretation of the Decrees of Vatican Council II, reply of April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1975: AAS67(1075), 348.)
- 164 The minister described above who readmits to full communion a baptized Catholic who has been instructed in or adhered to a non-Catholic religion, without fault of their own, enjoys by universal law the faculty to confirm (cf. c. 883, 2°; and Pontifical Commission for the Interpretation of the Decrees of the Vatican Council II, reply of December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1979: AAS72(1980), 105).
- 17 Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan has given delegation for uncatechized Catholics, after proper formation, to complete their initiation at the Easter Vigil. The presider needs no special delegation to confirm and share first Eucharist with them at the Easter Vigil.
- 17.1 However, in this Archdiocese, uncatechized Catholics may not complete their initiation through Confirmation and Eucharist together, except for the Easter Vigil. Outside the Easter Vigil, uncatechized Catholics may share in first Eucharist at any Sunday Eucharistic liturgy with the assembly, but must wait to be confirmed until the Archbishop or his delegate comes to celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation at the parish. So the permission to complete the initiation (Confirmation and Eucharist) of uncatechized Catholics is only given when celebrated at the Easter Vigil. Of course, in extreme cases, special delegation may be sought from the Archbishop.
- 18 Any presbyter may confirm in case of danger of death. (c. 883, 3°)
- 19 Deacons may not confirm under any circumstances.
- 20 In preparing the liturgical celebration the directives of the liturgical books are to be followed.
- 21 As soon as possible the pastor is to see that the proper information is entered into the parish register of confirmation. The following information must be entered:
- 21.1 Name of the confirmed.
- 21.2 Name of parents.
- 21.3 Name of sponsors.
- 21.4 Name of the minister.
- 21.5 Date and place of conferral of confirmation.
- 22 The pastor is also to see that the proper information is sent to the parish of baptism so that the proper entry be made in the baptismal register in accord with the norms of canon 535, §2. (cf. c. 895)