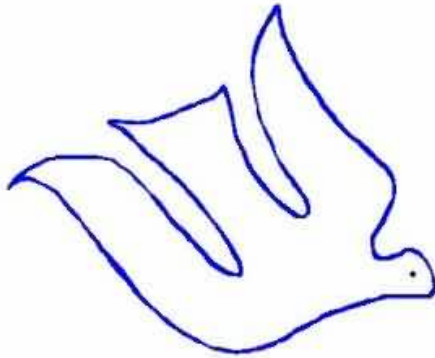


DIOCESE OF GALLUP

CONFIRMATION

A. THEOLOGICAL AND CANONICAL MEANING

By signing with the gift of the Spirit, confirmation enriches the baptized with the Holy Spirit, binding them more perfectly to the Church, and strengthening them in their witness to Christ by word and deed and in their work to bring to its fullness the Body of Christ (Vatican II, *Ad Gentes*. n. 36, and *Lumen Gentium* n. 11; *Christian Initiation*, General Introduction, n. 2; C. 879). Confirmation is conferred through anointing with Chrism with the laying on of hands.



Confirmation is a continuation of the journey of Christian initiation (Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* n. 71). Therefore, unless a serious reason prevents it, an adult who is baptized should be confirmed immediately after this Sacrament. QJJD participate in the celebration of the Eucharist including the reception of Communion (C. 866).

B. AGE FOR CONFIRMATION

The age for Confirmation has changed throughout history to more adequately meet the needs of the Christian community.

The revised Rite of Confirmation permits the Conference of Bishops to designate the age when Confirmation will be celebrated. The USCCB has determined that each Bishop shall establish the age for Confirmation in his diocese. The official policy for the Diocese of Gallup states that Confirmation should not be celebrated before the candidate has reached senior high school age.

There may be adults in the parish who, for whatever reason, have been baptized and have not been confirmed. Regular invitations should be made to them to prepare for Confirmation. Special arrangements or instructions should be the responsibility of the parish.

C. READINESS FOR CONFIRMATION

Readiness for celebrating a Sacrament cannot be determined by the calendar. The meaning of the Rite for those celebrating it, and its total impact on their faith-lives, will be strongly affected by many developmental factors besides age or grade. These factors may include: the psychological maturity of the candidate, the depth of their faith development, the degree of their commitment to Christ and to the faith-community, the level of their awareness of their religious realities, the extent of their involvement in community worship and service, and their knowledge and understanding of the basic teachings of the Church.

Because Confirmation celebrates the response of the individual to the gift of faith, the primary responsibility for determining when the candidate is ready for the sacrament lies within the individual candidate themselves. Because Confirmation is a Sacrament of Initiation, the decision is to be made in dialogue with the representatives of the faith-community into which the candidates are being initiated.

It may well happen that a candidate will not feel ready to be confirmed. It is important that the candidate then does not feel somehow ostracized from the Catholic community or forgotten. That very important moment requires on the part of the community and its representatives understanding and support and continued contact with those making a decision to postpone confirmation.

Parents made decide for their children that they will be instructed for Confirmation; however, the decision to be confirmed rests with the young person.

Confirmation should be celebrated before the sacrament of marriage, if possible (c. 1065.1). If one has not been confirmed and presents himself/herself for marriage, then confirmation should be celebrated if the person can be adequately prepared. The priest who is preparing the candidate for confirmation should apply for delegation to confirm the individual. If it is impossible to prepare someone for confirmation adequately before marriage, then the priest should proceed with the wedding but use every means possible to see that the person is confirmed on the first occasion after the marriage has taken place (Confirmation and the New Code of Canon Law, p. 4).

Personal interviews of confirmation candidates by the pastor, the confirmation coordinator or catechist are helpful in determining readiness. It is important that the interview help the candidates to come to a decision of their motives in accepting the sacrament or delaying it.

Confirmation can be postponed for those who have not reached senior high school age, who are not prepared (cf Preparation section below) or who are not properly disposed (cf c. 889).

It is a Hispanic tradition that confirmation is celebrated at birth. When this has occurred, confirmation may not be repeated. If a young person has already been confirmed and wishes to participate in a parish's confirmation preparation and ceremony he or she may do so. However, at the time- of confirmation, the person would simply be greeted and blessed rather than anointed.

Children who are initiated into the community through Rite of Christian Initiation of Children (RCIC), are to be confirmed at the time of their baptism. When they reach senior high school age, they may participate in confirmation preparation and the confirmation ceremony, but would simply be greeted and blessed rather than anointed at the time of confirmation.

D. PLACE OF CONFIRMATION

Confirmation is generally celebrated in the candidate's own parish. When groups are smaller than 15, parishes are asked to consider collaborating with another parish or several parishes. Exceptions can be made in particular situations. If parishes collaborate, consideration should be given to rotating the celebration of confirmation from one parish to the other so that each parish might enjoy the bishop's presence. An option for small groups is to join other groups in the celebration of confirmation within the Deanery. Individuals who are unable to be confirmed at their parish because of a schedule conflict may be confirmed at another parish, if they have their proper pastor's written permission.

Because Confirmation celebrates a person's initiation into the Christian community which gathers as a parish in word, worship, and service, the preparation for and celebration of Confirmation is at the parish rather than at the Catholic High School.

Confirmation is celebrated within the Eucharistic Liturgy to express more clearly the connection of this Sacrament with the other Sacraments of Initiation.

Complete instructions regarding the Liturgy of Confirmation can be obtained by calling the Chancery Office.

E. PREPARATION OF YOUTH FOR CONFIRMATION

Confirmation is most effective in the context of Total Youth Ministry (cf Vision of Youth Ministry, USCC, 1976). The Director of Youth Ministry in collaboration with the pastor, is often responsible for setting up programs and working with parents to help prepare young people for Confirmation.

Parish programs for Confirmation preparation need to include the four catechetical elements:

1. Community: Confirmation preparation takes place in the context of community. "Confirmation candidates need committed adults to lead them to a recognition of and identification with the Christian community and its beliefs.

For this reason it is important that the total parish somehow feels apart of the Confirmation program". This may be achieved by active involvement of Adult Education of parents and sponsors if needed.

2. Worship: The worship component of Confirmation includes opportunities for deepening prayer and faith. Commitment to Eucharist and Eucharistic preparation are central in the life of a fully initiated Catholic Christian. Saying "yes" to Confirmation means saying "yes" to participation in a Eucharistic Community.

3. Service: As part of preparation for Confirmation, the involvement in community service is critical. "The experience of Christian community leads naturally to service". To live as Christ lived is to live a life that responds to the needs of others --at home, in school, in the community, etc. While service is a "requirement" for Confirmation, it should be seen more as constitutive of the Gospel than as a project of hours "that count".

4. Mess32e: Confirmation preparation itself is concerned with the Rite of Confirmation and the signs, symbols, and images related to Confirmation. It focuses on a life of Christian discipleship lived in the context of a Catholic community. Ingredients of the message component of immediate preparation for Confirmation include: the laying on of hand, anointing, sign of the cross,

Baptismal vows, prayer including the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Litany; fasting service, welcoming study of Scripture, contact with the community of believers, discipline, water, oil, candles, gifts of the Holy Spirit, etc.

Remote and Immediate Preparation

Consideration should be "given to the fact that there are two kinds of preparation: remote and immediate preparation. Remote preparation refers to the years of catechesis that have led to this moment. The National Catholic Directory and The Challenge of Adolescent Catechesis provide a framework for the ongoing catechesis of young people. Appropriate themes and topics are delineated in these resources for each grade level. In an ideal situation, young people enter their Confirmation program with the background a well-developed and -attended catechetical program can provide. However, life is often less than ideal. Some young people will enter the Confirmation program with a sketchy background at best. It is the responsibility of the Confirmation Coordinator and the parents to provide any remedial work that is needed on an individual basis. Immediate preparation refers to catechesis for Confirmation specifically, " A parish's Confirmation program should not attempt to provide the more general catechesis of remote preparation, but should focus on Confirmation itself. In effect, Confirmation preparation should try not to do more than is intended. Thus, a one-year program may be feasible; but a three-year program would not be warranted if it were just focused on Confirmation.

Summary of Preparation of the Teen Confirmation Candidates:

The candidate must:

be senior High School age

have at least one (1) school year of formal parish catechetical preparation focused on Confirmation

It is recommended the candidate should:

participate in at least a one (I) full-day retreat focused on Confirmation .

have forty (40) hours of works of mercy .

have an interview with the pastor

write the Bishop a letter of intent

Delaying Confirmation

Because some young people may choose to delay Confirmation, it is important that other catechetical programs be available to them during the immediate preparation for Confirmation. Mini courses, scripture study groups, or faith-sharing groups may meet the needs of a student who has chosen to delay this Sacrament.

Post Confirmation Opportunities

Post-Confirmation catechetical programs are an important bridge to ongoing, life long learning. Confirmation is not a form of graduation. Therefore programs must be provided beyond Confirmation. Contact the Department of Education for suggestions (505-863-3563).

F. PREPARATION OF YOUNG ADULTS

Young adulthood brings with it its own developmental tasks and stages of growth. It is important to recognize that different approaches are needed to be sensitive to the life pattern of young adults. Young adults searching for intellectual and ethical independence must be listened to and welcomed by the faith community. Similarly, a young adult's encounter with the authority of the Church should be receptive and supportive, as well as challenging and enriching. Young adulthood is a significant time for internalizing beliefs and values and acting on them. Due to their involvement in other aspects of life, young adults may not be significantly involved in the parish. The key for the Christian community here is to pay close attention to the moments in young adults' lives when their readiness rides high: times of search, of marriage, challenges by others, parenthood, etc. These are moments when the invitation to grow in faith and to make a commitment to live a Christian lifestyle are most appropriate. These are also the moments when parish priests, campus ministers, young adult ministers, and family friends will need to be prepared to assist the young adult to grow in faith. Just how the minister will do that will depend to a large extent on individual circumstances. As with any catechetical program, the inclusion of all four elements of catechesis (Message, Community, Worship, Service) is essential. Generally, individual instruction and small group discussions are the most conducive to young adult learning. With either of these a variety of models may be used. Because a group retreat may not be available or appropriate, one-to-one encounters with a facilitator/mentor, sponsor, or some other significant role model may be beneficial for the young adult.

G. PREPARATION OF ADULTS

There may be adults in the parish who have been baptized and for

whatever reason have not been confirmed. Pastors are encouraged to make regular invitations to them to prepare for Confirmation. Special arrangements or instructions should be made by the parish, or several parishes may wish to collaborate on Adult Confirmation preparation.

H. PREPARATION FOR PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Persons with developmental disabilities should be included in the celebration of Confirmation with other parishioners receiving the Sacrament. While the celebration of the Sacraments normally takes place in the context of the large parish community, there may be exceptions. The length of the Eucharistic Liturgy and the excitement connected with this event combined with the developmental disability of some persons may limit appropriate and meaningful participation of the part of those to be confirmed and their parents and families. In such situations, it may be preferable to celebrate this Sacrament in the context of a brief service with family, friends, catechists and those in the parish who have been community to this person.

I. SPONSORS AND NAMES

Sponsors

To be admitted to the role of sponsor, a person must

be designated by the one to be confirmed .

be at least 16 years old ,

be a fully initiated Catholic; that is, one who has been baptized, confirmed, and already received the sacrament of the Eucharist

leads a life in harmony with the faith and the role to be undertake

not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared .may not be the father or mother of the one to be confirmed (C. 874)

it is most suitable that baptismal sponsors be the sponsors for Confirmation

While parents are not to serve as sponsors, their role in the faith development of their children is not to be underplayed or minimized.

The sponsor is seen as someone who assists parents in their obligation to bring up their child in the faith -especially in the event the parents are unable to perform this function. The sponsor represents the larger Church- the entire community of believers.

"As far as possible a sponsor for the one to be confirmed should be present," it is for the sponsor to see that the confirmed person acts as a true witness to Christ and faithfully fulfills the obligations connected with this sacrament' (c. 893).

Candidates may have more than one sponsor, however only one should be designated as the liturgical sponsor who will present the candidate for confirmation.

It is recommended that someone nearby be chosen as the sponsor so that she or he can become more intimately involved in the candidate's preparation. Someone from along distance away may be a sponsor, though this is not ideal. A proxy may fill in for a sponsor who is unable to attend confirmation.

Priests, religious sisters and brothers may be sponsors. Religious brothers and sisters need permission from the immediate superior to act as sponsor.

Confirmation Names

As greater emphasis is placed on the intimate connection between confirmation and baptism, the baptismal name is seen as having greater significance. Candidates may choose a confirmation name if they desire but they are not encouraged to do so.

J. MINISTERS OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

The ordinary minister of confirmation is a bishop. A priest also validly confirms if he has this faculty by virtue of the law itself or by delegation from the bishop (c. 882). The law itself grants the faculty to confirm to a pastor or associate pastor who baptizes an adult or who receives a person baptized in another religion into full communion in the Catholic Church. Those same priests may also confirm a previously baptized Catholic who has formally left the Church and now wishes to return, or a person who was baptized Catholic but raised in another religion. 'In all of the cases mentioned, these persons will usually be part of the RCIA or related programs. It is not appropriate to delay confirmation or incorporate these individuals into the youth confirmation class or celebration. In those situations in which a person

was baptized and raised Catholic but for some reason was never confirmed, or was baptized Catholic but raised in no religion, priests do not have the faculty by law to confirm. However, they may apply for delegation in each instance in order to act as a minister of confirmation.

In order to receive this delegation to confirm an originally baptized Catholic in either of these situations, the priest involved with the person's instruction should send a letter requesting delegation to the Chancery Office. The following information should be included:

- the full name of the person(s) to be confirmed;
- the date, church, and place of the Catholic baptism
- a summary of the circumstances surrounding the case; -a brief explanation of the instruction program;

- the date and church where the confirmation will occur; -the name of the sponsor.

The Chancery will send a rescript of delegation to the priest. Instructions regarding the recording of the confirmation will be included. It is suggested that the priest who is instructing a baptized Catholic apply for this faculty and confirm the person rather than have the individual wait for one of the bishops at the scheduled confirmation time of the parish.

To arrange for a bishop to confirm candidates at your parish, contact the Office of the Bishop (505-863-4406). If the bishop is not available, an appointed priest may serve as an extraordinary minister of confirmation.

K. PROOF AND REGISTRATION OF CONFIRMATION

v After confirmation has been celebrated; the pastor is to record in the confirmation register the names of those confirmed; the minister, the parents and sponsors and the date and place of confirmation. The pastor of the place of confirmation is also to advise the pastors of the places of baptism of each one confirmed so at proper notation can be made in the baptismal registers (c. 895). When more than one parish joins together for the celebration of confirmation, the pastor of each of the parishes involved is responsible to see to the recording of the confirmations of his parishioners in his own parish and to notify the places of baptism.

When priests are delegated to confirm, instructions regarding the recording of the confirmation will be sent from the Chancery.

L. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. May a candidate have more than one sponsor?

Yes, however, only one should be designated as the liturgical sponsor who will present the candidate for confirmation.

2. May parents be sponsors?

Parents may not act as sponsors (c. 874). While parents are not to serve as sponsors, their role in the faith development of their children is not to be underplayed or minimized.

3. May someone who cannot be present be a sponsor and someone else fill in as proxy?

Yes. However, it is recommended that someone nearby be chosen as the sponsor so that she or he can become more intimately involved in the candidate's preparation.

4. May a priest or a professed religious be a sponsor?

The former prohibition against priests or religious acting as sponsors has been eliminated 1983 code. Therefore, a priest may act as either a baptismal or confirmation sponsor. Religious are also free to undertake this role unless there is a specific restriction in their own Constitutions.

5. What qualifies an individual as a sponsor?

To be admitted to the role of sponsor, a person must: -be designated by the one to be confirmed; -be 16 years old;

-be a Catholic who has been confirmed and who has received the sacrament of Eucharist and leads a life in harmony with the faith and role to undertaken,.

-not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared; -not be the father or mother of the one to be confirmed(c. 874).

5A. May a male be a Confirmation Sponsor for a female candidate and/or may a female candidate be a sponsor for a male candidate?

Yes, this practice is permissible in the Diocese of Gallup. Sponsors must comply with Canons 873 & 874 neither of which make any restriction to the gender of Confirmation Sponsors.

6. Do candidates need a confirmation name?

As greater emphasis is placed on intimate connection between confirmation and baptism, the baptismal name is seen as having greater significance. Candidates may choose a confirmation name if they desire, but are not encouraged to do so.

7. To whom should the letter of intent be written?

Letters of intent should be written to the confirming bishop or extraordinary minister assigned to your parish. They should be mailed directly in one packet to the confirming bishop or extraordinary minister of confirmation. Addresses of extraordinary ministers can be obtained from the Office of the Bishop (505-863-4406).

8. What should be included in a letter of intent? Letters of intent might include:

- the confirmand's desire to be confirmed;
- a statement or two about their faith growth--past, present, future;
- a description of their service endeavors and the effect of these on their life.

9. What might be included in the confirmation interview?

Interviews that precede confirmation might include: the candidate's expectations, a description of their faith journey, personal goals for the program, choice of sponsor, individual's intent to be confirmed, program expectations, involvement of sponsors and parents, service experiences. Follow-up interviews at the end of the program might include: the development of the faith/prayer life, whether the program met their expectations, what was most/least helpful, what some unanswered questions are, what their next steps in faith formation might be, whether and why they want to be confirmed, service outcomes.

10. Is a confirmation retreat required?

Since the retreat is integral to a candidate's preparation, a confirmation retreat is recommended.

11. How do I go about planning a confirmation retreat?

A number of resources are available from the Department of Education. The Youth Ministry Office can also be of assistance.

12. Do I have to plan my own confirmation retreat?

No. Sacred Heart Retreat Center in Gallup assists in confirmation retreats. To schedule a retreat, call 505-863-8887.

13. What if our group is too small to have its own retreat?

You may be able to link with another parish(es) which also has a small group making retreat. Call the Retreat Center to inquire.

14. How many hours of service are recommended?

Forty (40) hours of service are recommended. However, no standard number of hours has been officially set by the bishop. Emphasis needs to be placed' on developing an attitude of service rather than on the number of hours,

15. Can parents demand that their children be confirmed?

No. Confirmation must be the free choice of the individual. Parents may, however, require children to attend the confirmation preparation sessions.

16. If young people were confirmed at birth, as is the Hispanic tradition, or were confirmed through the RCIC process, may they be confirmed again in adolescence?

No. confirmation may not be repeated. If young people have already been confirmed and wish to participate in a parish's confirmation preparation and celebration, they may do so.

However, at the time of confirmation, they would simply be greeted and blessed rather than anointed.

17. If a candidate is unable to be confirmed at his/her parish on the date that is scheduled, may she or he be confirmed at another parish?

Yes, this should be worked out between the pastors of both parishes.

18. What is the age for confirmation?

The diocese has established that one needs to be at least senior high age for the celebration of confirmation.

19. Can confirmation be postponed for those who request it?

Confirmation can be postponed for those who are not at least senior high school age and who are not prepared or who are not properly disposed(cfc.889).

20. Why isn't confirmation celebrated at the Catholic high schools instead of at the parish?

The parish is the center for initiation and is the place where adult faith is lived out.

21. What about the young people who don't participate in any religious

education program high school and then want to be confirmed?
Confirmation is always a possibility. Situations such as these need to be dealt with on an individual basis.

22. How long should a confirmation program be? Generally a one-year program is sufficient.

23. To what extent do Catholic high school students need to be involved in their parish confirmation program?

Catholic high school students should be encouraged to share the gift of their Catholic education with others, and they need to be included as part of the confirmation group. However, they are not expected to repeat everything they have learned in their daily religion classes. With the approval of a pastor, retreats and service projects offered by Catholic high schools can fulfill the confirmation requirements.

24. When may/should pastors or confirmation coordinators prepare candidates individually?

Because the community building elements of catechesis are so important, individual preparations should be a last resort. It may be necessary under certain circumstances (e.g. the candidate has moved and is, therefore, not in sync with the group, or an individual did not participate in catechetical programs until now and thus needs to catch up). However, individual preparation should not become a common alternative for a chosen few.

25. Are confirmation candidates permitted to do the readings or distribute communion at their confirmation ceremony?

Youth should be encouraged to participate in liturgical ministries on a regular basis in their parish. They should be part of a training program just as any other minister. At the confirmation ceremony itself, confirmandi are already participating as ministers by virtue of the fact that they are celebrating the sacrament. It would be best if other youth who are trained as lectors and Eucharistic ministers participate in these particular ministries at the confirmation ceremony. If no youth have been trained in either of these ministries, regular parish ministers should fulfill these roles at the confirmation ceremony.

26. Does one need to be confirmed prior to marriage?

Confirmation should be celebrated before the sacrament of marriage, if possible. If one has not been confirmed and presents himself/herself for marriage, then confirmation should be celebrated if the person can be adequately prepared. The priest who is preparing a candidate for

confirmation should apply for delegation to confirm the individual. If it is impossible to prepare someone adequately before marriage, then the priest should proceed with the wedding but use every means possible to see that the person is confirmed on the first occasion after the marriage has taken place.

27. When can a priest confirm?

A priest may confirm by the law itself when:

-he baptizes an adult or child of catechetical age or receives a person baptized in another religion into full communion in the Catholic Church;

-he receives a previously baptized Catholic who has formally left the Church and now wishes to return;

-he receives a person who was baptized Catholic but raised in another religion

In all of these cases, these persons will usually be part of the RCIA or related programs. Special delegation by the bishop is needed in those situations in which a person was baptized and raised Catholic but for some reason was never confirmed or was baptized Catholic but for some reason was never confirmed or was baptized Catholic but raised in no religion.

28. What kind of stipend should be given to the confirming bishop?

The Presbyteral Council set the stipend for Confirmation at \$25.00

29. What office should be contacted to schedule confirmation? Contact the Office of the Bishop (505-863-4406)

30. Whom do I call when I have a problem in implementing the Confirmation Guidelines ?

Call the Department of Education (505-863-3563).

31. Whom do I call when I have questions regarding the celebration of confirmation? Contact the Chancery Office~505-863-4406).

32. Who can help me find the resources I need for the confirmation program? Contact the Department of Education (505-863-3563).

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