



DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

Guidelines for Confirmation Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge

Confirmation Liturgy Form

1. The Liturgy Preparation Form, completed with the aid of these guidelines, should be submitted to the Office of Divine Worship for approval by the **1st of the month in the month prior to** the scheduled Confirmation (forms for September Confirmations are due on August 1st, for October Confirmations on September 1st, etc.). The form is available from the Office of Divine Worship and can also be found as a PDF on the diocesan website. Bishop Burbidge always prefers Confirmation to take place within Mass.

Program

1. Parishes are asked to provide a draft of their program to the Office of Divine Worship for review and approval by the **15th of the month in the month prior to** the scheduled Confirmation (i.e. programs for September Confirmations are due on August 15th, for October Confirmations on September 15th, etc.). The full text of the readings should be included in the program. All music should be contained in the program; that is, words and music should be provided in the program rather than the program referring to a hymnal. Bilingual program templates in English and Spanish as well as English only templates are available by request to the Office of Divine Worship. The program should be bilingual if there are Hispanic candidates being Confirmed.
2. Approximately 5 minutes before the start of the liturgy, a cantor or parish representative should draw the assembly's attention to the program and encourage its use as a means of active participation in the liturgy. These remarks are brief with no further comments added.

On the Day of Confirmation

1. Please reserve a parking spot for Bishop Burbidge. The parking space is not to be a handicapped spot. Also, please prepare a separate room at the parish where Bishop Burbidge may vest for Mass.
2. Timeline on the day of Confirmation:

30 minutes before the start of Confirmation

- Bishop Burbidge meets with Candidates. (Catechists may remain if they desire)
- The Master of Ceremonies meets with the Sponsors in the Church. (please provide a translator as necessary)

25 minutes before the start of Confirmation

- Altar servers are to be vested and ready to meet with the Master of Ceremonies in the sacristy.

10 minutes before the start of Confirmation

- Final preparations are completed.

3. *The liturgy is to start promptly at the scheduled time.* The Candidates are to be in place before the liturgical procession begins. If the Candidates will process into the Church, the procession of Candidates, **which is not part of the liturgical procession**, is to be completed before the scheduled time for the liturgy. Usually ten to fifteen minutes is required to seat the Candidates. For example, if the Mass time is at 5:30pm, the procession of the candidates is to begin no later than 5:20pm.

Meeting with the Candidates

1. Bishop Burbidge will meet with the Confirmation Candidates as a group 30 minutes prior to the start of Mass. The Director of Religious Education or another parish catechist introduces Bishop Burbidge. The meeting space must accommodate seating for all of the Candidates that will be confirmed at the liturgy. If necessary, a microphone is to be provided for large groups.

Reception

1. A reception of light refreshments is to be provided following the Confirmation Mass. After the recessional, Bishop Burbidge will proceed directly to the reception in his vestments for pictures. The newly Confirmed with their sponsor are to process out of the Church behind the liturgical procession, immediately behind Bishop Burbidge. The newly Confirmed process walking next to their sponsor, directly to the reception.

Pictures

1. Professional Photographers and Fees for Pictures: Professional photographers are permitted at the liturgy **only**. Bishop Burbidge asks that **there is to be no professional photographer at the reception** in order to ensure the efficiency of movement in the line for photographs with the Bishop. There is to be no fee for photos of the newly Confirmed.
2. At the Liturgy: Photographers should not distract, obstruct or interfere with the liturgy or with those who are participating in the liturgy. Photographers should maintain a respectful distance, and no photography should be taken from the center aisle. Still photography is not to be taken during the Readings, the Homily, or the Consecration of the Eucharist.
3. Group Picture: A group picture with the Bishop may be taken when the group of newly Confirmed numbers 40 or less. The picture should be organized in advance and be taken following the liturgy in the church.
 - a. At the conclusion of the liturgy, the liturgical ministers, including the Bishop, recess in the usual way; immediately after the recessional hymn, the newly Confirmed should be directed to the place in the church designated for the group photo; after the recessional, the Bishop will return to the main body of the church to join the newly Confirmed for the group photo; following the group photo, all go to the reception for individual photos with the newly Confirmed and their family. The newly Confirmed walk with their sponsor to the reception.
5. At the Reception: Bishop Burbidge will be available for individual pictures at the reception. Please prepare a location where the Bishop can easily greet the newly Confirmed and their families and pose for pictures with them. This is a time of casual greetings and is not a formal occasion.

- a. Parish staff is asked to facilitate the taking of photos in an efficient manner. Recruiting several volunteers to alternate taking family photos is the best way to accomplish it. Volunteers may easily receive the phone or camera of those waiting in line then, as the photos finish for the previous family, the staff or volunteer is ready with camera in hand to take the photo of the next family, and so on.
 - b. Out of respect for those waiting in line, the Bishop **will take one picture with the newly Confirmed and their entire family**. After each of the newly Confirmed have had the opportunity for a picture with Bishop Burbidge, the Bishop will remain for any additional pictures requested.
 - c. **It is essential** that a representative (bilingual when necessary) from the parish is available to facilitate the flow of the line for the pictures.
6. Holy Cards: Bishop Burbidge has holy cards to be distributed at the reception. This may be done by the parish representative organizing the line for the pictures or the parish coordinators may provide a more efficient way. The holy cards are given to each of the newly Confirmed after the photo is taken.

Preparation of the Candidates and of the Church

1. The Candidates are to wear Confirmation robes at the ceremony and at the reception for photos. Robes are **to be worn properly and are to be zipped at all times** until the candidates leave the parish.
2. Seating for the Candidates should be reserved in the front pews on both sides of the center aisle. The Candidates are seated as a group in the front pews on both sides of the center aisle. The Sponsors are seated as a group behind all of the Candidates.
3. The Master of Ceremonies, who is provided by the Office of Divine Worship, will arrange for the Bishop's vestments, the Chrism vessel, and the ritual text.
4. The Roman Missal is to be set to the appropriate prayers.
5. The celebrant's chair should be appropriately arranged with the Deacon(s) beside the Bishop. If there are no Deacons, the Bishop sits alone at the celebrant's chair. The concelebrating priests are to be seated together in the Sanctuary.
6. At the beginning of the liturgy, the altar should be clear except for an altar cloth and the necessary candles (GIRM nos. 304 and 307).

7. In addition to other appropriate items needed for the liturgy, the credence table should have the following for the Rite of Confirmation, in particular: a place ready for the Chrism vessel (brought by the Bishop), two clean purificators, a water pitcher, a basin, a hand towel, and one lemon cut in quarters in a bowl.
8. The gifts for the offertory procession should be both bread and wine, but only bread and wine. Four newly Confirmed should bring up the gifts (e.g., one cruet of wine and three ciboria with bread). Please prepare **for all four gift bearers to have an item to bring forward. No one is to come forward "empty-handed."** The gifts should be placed on a table in the church.
9. A checklist to assist with preparations is available from the Office of Divine Worship.

Music

1. Norms set down in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, the Order of Confirmation, and the USCCB's *Sing to the Lord* are to be followed. The Responsorial Psalm is sung from the Ambo from an appropriate book. Loose sheets of paper are not to be carried to the Ambo.
2. Music chosen for the liturgy should represent the cultures present and foster **full participation** by all present, especially the Confirmation Candidates. Candidates should be **familiar** with the music chosen and the music should be part of the rehearsal for Confirmation. As a general principle, the music chosen for the Mass is to be "**participatory**" and "**joyful**," as is fitting for the occasion. When choosing music, musicians will also want to consider that there will be visitors from different parishes and dioceses present for the Mass.
3. The following are ordinarily sung: the Gloria, the Responsorial Psalm, the Gospel Acclamation, the Sanctus, the Memorial Acclamation, the Great Amen, and the Lamb of God. In accordance with the Roman Missal, the Gloria is to be sung at celebrations of Confirmation except on the Sundays of Lent. The Lord's Prayer is ordinarily not sung at a Confirmation Mass with Bishop Burbidge.
 - a. NB: The parts of the Mass, i.e. the Gloria and the Memorial Acclamation, are to be sung without repeating texts. There are to be **no refrain style** settings for these parts of the Mass.

4. Music during the Anointing with Chrism, **is to be soft instrumental music** that accompanies the entire ritual action of anointing and it **must never overwhelm**. The music should end as the Bishop finishes washing his hands and before he is ready to introduce the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful).
5. During the procession with the gifts, *a hymn is used that is familiar and that everyone can sing*. This is a moment of joy, the choice of the hymn ought to reflect the moment.
6. Please observe the following:
 - a. no verses of the Entrance Hymn are to begin once the Bishop has taken his place at the presider's chair or immediately thereafter. When he arrives at the chair, the hymn is brought to a conclusion but not abruptly;
 - b. a maximum of three verses of the Responsorial Psalm are to be sung or read;
 - c. the Offertory Hymn should come to an end at the same time as or before the Bishop has finished washing his hands at the altar during the preparation;
 - d. the final Communion Hymn is to be finished before the altar is cleared after Holy Communion in order to allow for a period of silence.

Ministries

1. Candidates: The role of the Candidates is the reception of the Sacrament. Therefore, Candidates should not be chosen for liturgical ministries such as serving as altar servers, proclaiming Scripture, reading the petitions of the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful), cantoring, etc.
2. Servers: Five servers are needed for Confirmation with Bishop Burbidge. The servers should be experienced and should be dressed appropriately. The servers should be assigned the following roles by the parish: cross bearer (who will also serve as book bearer), two candle bearers, miter bearer, and crosier bearer. The Master of Ceremonies will meet with the servers 25 minutes prior to the liturgy. Servers should already be vested at this time.
3. Readers: Readers, for both Scripture readings and for the petitions, should not be chosen from among the Candidates. The Gospel is proclaimed by a Deacon or, in the absence of a Deacon, the Pastor or Parish Administrator. A Deacon, if present, ordinarily reads the petitions of the Universal Prayer (Prayer of the

Faithful). If no Deacon is present, a reader offers the petitions. Parishes may wish to consider those Confirmed in previous years as the readers for the Mass.

4. Ministers of Holy Communion: As Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Bishop Burbidge along with the concelebrating Priests and assisting Deacons will distribute Communion. *The pastor is to be stationed next to the Bishop at the center aisle.* If needed, the Ordinary Ministers may be assisted by Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Extraordinary Ministers should be dressed appropriately and not selected from among the Candidates. If Holy Communion is to be distributed under both kinds, then there are to be two stations with the chalice for every one station of the hosts.
5. Ushers: Ushers should be available to welcome and direct people in the Church prior to the start of the liturgy, especially for those who may be visiting from other parishes. During the Anointing, Ushers are to assist the Candidates and their sponsors as they approach the Bishop to ensure efficient movement. As on Sunday, Ushers direct the normal flow of people for Communion. Ushers are to be discreet in their actions during the Liturgy so as to not take attention away from the sacredness of the Mass or of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Ushers do not walk around during the recitation of the prayers of the Mass, the homily, or during the Eucharistic Prayer.

Confirmation Liturgy

1. *Prayers*

- a. For Confirmation within Mass, the Ritual Mass for Confirmation is used, *except* on the following days: solemnities of precept, Sundays of Advent, Sundays of Lent, Sundays of Easter, Holy Thursday, the Easter Triduum, solemnities not of precept, All Souls, Ash Wednesday, weekdays of Holy Week, and the days within the Octave of Easter.

2. *Introductory Rites*

- a. Penitential Act: Bishop Burbidge uses the first form (the *Confiteor* with a sung *Kyrie*).
- b. Gloria: The Gloria is sung when Confirmation is celebrated, *except* on the following days: Sundays of Advent, Sundays of Lent, the Easter Triduum, All Souls, Ash Wednesday, and the weekdays of Holy Week.

- i. NB: Musicians are asked to choose a music setting for the Gloria that **does not repeat verses**. The Gloria should be sung “straight through,” as it appears in the Roman Missal, with no repetition.

3. *Liturgy of the Word*

a. Choice of Readings:

- i. The following are the preferred readings whenever the Ritual Mass is celebrated. Please choose a First Reading, the Responsorial Psalm, a Second Reading, and the Gospel.
- ii. It is fitting that a passage from the Old Testament is used for the First Reading during the Lenten Season, and that, a reading from the Acts of the Apostles be chosen as the First Reading for Masses during the Easter Season. Any of the preferred options below may be chosen for Masses celebrated during Ordinary Time in 2025.
 1. First Reading -- Isaiah 32:15-18 -or- Isaiah 58:6-11
(Acts 8:1bc, 4, 14-17 during the Easter Season)
 2. Responsorial Psalm -- 85 or 100 (with three verses selected)
 3. Second Reading -- Ephesians 4:1-6 -or- Colossians 3:12-17
 4. Gospel -- John 15:1-11 -or- John 15:9-12
- iii. Notes on the Responsorial Psalm: The number of verses in the Psalm is not to exceed three. The Psalm must be a translation from either the Grail or the New American Bible. Songs or hymns may not be used in place of the Responsorial Psalm (GIRM no. 61). The Psalm is sung or recited from the ambo.
- iv. Proclamation: The readings are to be proclaimed from the Lectionary and, if possible, the Book of the Gospels. Binders are not to be used. Loose sheets of paper are not to be carried to the Ambo by the reader. If necessary, the text of the readings may be inserted into the Lectionary or the Book of the Gospels. The readings should be clearly marked so that the reader will be able to find them readily.

4. *Rite of Confirmation*

- a. Presentation of the Candidates: The Pastor or Parish Administrator presents the Candidates to the Bishop and the Assembly with the following words.

“Let all to be confirmed please stand. Bishop Burbidge, I present to you our sons and daughters who are candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Under the guidance of their parents, catechists and sponsors and with the prayerful support and encouragement of this parish, they have been prepared to continue their initiation into the Body of Christ, the Church, which was begun at their Baptism. I ask that you lay hands upon them and anoint them with the Sacred Chrism, sealing them with the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

“And now, I ask you, the community gathered here, to show your support and acceptance of these candidates with your applause.”

- b. Homily: Bishop Burbidge ordinarily preaches in the center aisle. A wireless microphone should be provided where the Bishop is vesting. Please make sure that the wireless microphone is in good working order, has been tested, and has fresh batteries.
- c. Renewal of Baptismal Promises: The Candidates alone stand for the renewal of their Baptismal Promises. All others remain seated. It is helpful to include a notation in the program.
- d. Laying on of Hands: The Bishop prays the ritual prayer and lays hands on the Candidates by extending his hands over them as a group.
- e. Anointing with Chrism: The designated place for the Anointing should allow the Bishop, Candidates, and Sponsors to stand on the same level. The Deacon, or in his absence another minister, should hold the Chrism and a purificator for the Bishop. The procedure for the anointing is as follows:
 - i. **NEW FOR 2026** – Bishop Burbidge will anoint the students on one side of the aisle at a time. When one side of the aisle is completed, Bishop Burbidge will move to the other side to continue anointing the remaining students. Please practice this at the rehearsal.

- ii. Immediately following the prayer for the Laying on of Hands, it is best to have a staff member or volunteer stationed in front of the section of pews with the students who are to remain seated, while the others are being anointed. This staff member may also facilitate the flow of the line for those coming forward to ensure that there are no gaps between the students.
- iii. Candidates approach Bishop Burbidge with their sponsor. Once the candidate in front of them is anointed and begins to return to their seat, the next candidate immediately walks forward to Bishop Burbidge to be anointed themselves. There should be no hesitation to step forward, one right after another. This order ensures a continuous flow of candidates without delay.
- iv. The Sponsor stands immediately behind the Candidate. The Sponsor places his or her right hand on the Candidate's left shoulder. The Sponsor holds in his or her left hand a card with the Candidate's Confirmation **name printed in large font (at least 50 pt. font size and bolded type)**; the Sponsor holds the card so that the Bishop can read it.
- v. The Sponsor does not say the Candidate's Confirmation name.
- vi. This card with the Confirmation name is collected **at a later time**, not at the time of the anointing in the center aisle.
- vii. After the anointing and the Bishop's words, "N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit," the Candidate responds, "Amen."
- viii. The Bishop then adds, "Peace be with you," and the Candidate responds, "And with your spirit." The Bishop and the Candidate do not shake hands at this exchange of peace.
- ix. As the newly Confirmed steps away, the Bishop will begin anointing the next Candidate (as noted above). Please have multiple Candidates and their Sponsors in the aisle in order to facilitate the efficient flow of the Candidates. Every effort should be taken, aided by Ushers, to make sure that there are no gaps in the line.

- x. After the Candidate is anointed, he or she returns to their place and is seated. The newly Confirmed do not remain standing, so as to not block the view of those seated behind them.
 - xi. When Bishop Burbidge finishes anointing the students on one side, he will move to the other side of the aisle to anoint the remaining students.
- f. Creed: The Profession of Faith is omitted since the renewal of Baptismal Promises has taken place, to which the Bishop has given the assent of the Church.
- g. Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful): The Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful) provided by the Office of Divine Worship is to be used.

5. *Liturgy of the Eucharist*

- a. Procession with the Gifts: Four of the newly Confirmed each carry a gift in the offertory procession. The gifts should be both bread and wine, but only bread and wine (e.g. one cruet of wine and three ciboria with bread). **Please prepare for all four gift bearers to have an item to bring forward. No one is to come forward "empty-handed."**
- b. The Eucharistic Prayer: For Confirmation, Bishop Burbidge prefers to use Eucharistic Prayer III.

6. *Communion Rite*

- a. Distribution of Holy Communion: The parish determines the procedure for the distribution of Communion, including the location of stations. The pastor is to be stationed next to the Bishop at the center aisle. If Communion is to be distributed under both kinds, there are to be two stations for the chalice for every one station of the hosts.
- b. If there are enough Priests to distribute the hosts, the Deacon will either distribute the chalice (if both species are distributed) or will remain in the sanctuary. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should assist only if there are not enough ordinary ministers (Bishops, Priests, and Deacons) for the distribution of Communion.
- c. Ushers should be prepared to direct and assist the flow of people at Communion.

- d. Period of Thanksgiving: There should be a period of silence after Communion. Thus, the final Communion Hymn should end when the Bishop is seated after Holy Communion. No additional music should begin after the Bishop is seated.
- e. Announcement: Following the Prayer after Communion, the Pastor or Parish Administrator offers thanks for the Bishop's visit and announces the reception. Please include the following in the closing remarks.

Bishop Burbidge will be at the reception and is available for photographs. To assist with the process, **there will be one photo with the newly confirmed and their family**. When that line is completed, Bishop Burbidge will remain for any additional photos requested.

7. Concluding Rites

- a. Recessional: Please arrange for the newly Confirmed and their sponsor to process out immediately following the liturgical procession, behind Bishop Burbidge. The newly Confirmed are to process next to their sponsor and follow the liturgical procession to the reception area so that photos may begin promptly and efficiently.
- b. NB: Parishes may wish to arrange ahead of time for the families of the first few newly Confirmed to exit easily to the reception so that photos may begin promptly upon Bishop Burbidge's arrival.