



Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough

CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION DURING A PANDEMIC

A decree from +His Excellency Most Reverend Bishop Miehm has granted to the priests of the diocese the delegation to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation from August 6, 2020 to November 20, 2020 and following the liturgical text, *The Order of Confirmation*, CCCB, © 2016.

1. The Sacrament of Confirmation for those baptized Catholic as infants or children whose confirmation was postponed due to the pandemic will be scheduled to take place during the time frame from August 6, 2020 to November 20, 2020.
2. Once the date for the celebration of Confirmation is determined, Pastors/administrators and their pastoral leadership team, should ensure that the planned celebration complies with the health precautions put in place by levels of government and the regional Health Unit.
3. In order to comply with limited capacity and physical distancing, it is recommended that the celebration of Confirmation occur at a designated time outside of the regularly scheduled Sunday Masses. Also, the parish may foresee the need to limit the number of Confirmandi and to schedule more than one celebration of the sacrament.
4. The attendees at the Confirmation may be different than regular parish Mass attendees. Therefore, the priest should arrange for someone to review the health precautions in place at the parish before the start of Mass.
5. Incomplete catechetical programs from 2020 will be left as is. Given the upset that many children and their families have experienced, we trust that the grace of God will suffice for anything which we humanly have been unable to accomplish or finish.
6. Catechetical programs for those preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in 2021 should commence at an appropriate time as advised by the Diocese. Online materials are currently being prepared. Any accommodations for in person sessions that may be arranged for individual needs will respect and comply with health precautions in effect at that time.
7. Confirmation gowns are not permitted during the time of pandemic.

DETAILS

Pastors and administrators are granted the faculty to confirm candidates during the time frame delineated by the Bishop - August 6, 2020 to November 20, 2020.

Confirmations that have been postponed because of the coronavirus may be rescheduled between August 6 and November 20, 2020. Planning should carefully take into account the number of candidates, the size of the crowd, and the size of the church. Confirmations may be spread out among numerous liturgies, if needed.

Confirmations should be scheduled outside of the regular Sunday schedule and could be administered outside of Mass if absolutely necessary for crowd management, noting that the ideal setting for this sacrament is within the Mass.

Confirmation liturgies are subject to the same physical distancing and spacing requirements as other liturgies in the Church. The provisions in place as determined by the Regional Medical Officer of Health pertaining to the wearing of face masks or cloth face coverings must be followed.

The restrictions which are in place for Sunday liturgies at the time of Confirmation will also apply for celebrations of Confirmation.

No booklets or worship aids will be distributed. If certificates are given to the candidates, it is recommended that they be distributed by email or regular mail.

Explain the implications of physical distancing to the candidates and their godparents/sponsors so that decisions about where they will sit in a pew and whether the sponsor will place their right hand on the shoulder of the candidate during the anointing are pre-planned.

There will be no procession into the church. Candidates and their sponsors will be seated prior to the liturgy. Family members will be seated in the same pew. Households will maintain two metres of physical distance between each other.

If the sponsor and candidate are in the same household or the same "bubble", they can sit side by side and the sponsor can place the right hand on the shoulder of the candidate.

If the sponsor and candidate are not in the same household or the same "bubble", they will maintain a physical distance of 2 metres from each other throughout the liturgy, and the sponsor should not place the right hand on the candidate's shoulder. Instead, the sponsor simply prays for the candidate with folded hands.

For the laying on of hands, the priest's hands are outstretched over the entire group, without touching them.

For the administration of the sacrament, candidates will approach the priest one by one, keeping at least 2 metres of distance. The priest, the sponsor, and candidate will wear a face mask.

The candidate will wear a nametag with the baptismal name or the saint's name. This eliminates the need for the candidate to speak the name.

A small table will be set up near the place where the anointing will take place. The Chrism must be placed on that table before the liturgy begins, in an open bowl, along with materials to disinfect the priest's hands in between anointings.

ANOINTING WITH CHRISM

To be clear, the anointing with Chrism may not be done with a glove, cotton swab, or cotton ball.

The priest will clean and sanitize his hands before he begins and thereafter, he will use disposable disinfecting wipes to clean the thumb after each anointing. A disinfecting wipe that is anti-bacterial will suffice. Check this website if you are uncertain about the wipe to sanitize against COVID-19. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>

Carefully avoid cross-contamination of the Chrism. Care must be taken not to place contaminated oil back into the parish oil supply. Clean Chrism must be used for each candidate.

After the liturgy, the leftover Chrism from the open bowl must be either burned or buried.

EXCHANGE OF PEACE AFTER THE ANOINTING

The exchange of peace between the priest and the newly confirmed is maintained. It should be verbal only with no physical contact.

OFFERTORY

There is no procession with the gifts of bread and wine for Eucharist. The gifts are placed on the credence table before the liturgy.

PHOTOGRAPHS AFTER THE LITURGY

If the candidates would like to take individual photographs with the priest, a physical distance of 2 metres or 6 feet is to be maintained.

If a group picture is taken after the liturgy, there must be a physical distance of 2 metres between each person who is not of the same household. Optimally, this picture could be taken outdoors for better air circulation.

People may remove their face coverings/ masks briefly while pictures are being taken.