



Guidelines for the
Celebration of Confirmation
Easter 2025 to Lent 2026

Introduction:

This booklet is intended to help you to prepare for the forthcoming liturgical celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation in your parish or Local Pastoral Area. Hopefully, it will answer any questions you may have, but if not or you have any other queries, please contact Canon Christopher Matthews, Diocesan Master of Liturgical Ceremonies, (07813 020730 or frchris.matthews@dioceseofshrewsbury.org).

~~~~~

## **The Rite:**

The Mass of Confirmation takes place as follows:

Candidates, their sponsors and families should be in their places prior to the entrance procession beginning.

- **INTRODUCTORY RITES**

- Greeting

- Penitential Act – The Bishop will usually use the ‘I confess’ followed by either a said or sung Kyrie.

- Opening Prayer

- **LITURGY OF THE WORD**

- The Bishop will choose a series of readings at the beginning of each year for use throughout the whole of the Diocese (with the exception of major feasts and solemnities). This year the readings chosen are:

- First Reading :**

- Acts of the Apostles 1:3-8

- Lectionary Volume IV page 122

- Psalm:**

- Psalm 96(95) (Lectionary Volume IV page 132).

- The first reading must be followed by a responsorial psalm, sung if possible.

**Optional Second Reading:**

Ephesians 4:1-6

Lectionary Volume IV page 130

**The Gospel Acclamation** should be sung, if it is not sung it should be omitted. If Confirmation takes place in Lent the Alleluia is not sung so should be replaced with an appropriate Lenten acclamation. Before proclaiming the Gospel the deacon (or in the absence of a deacon the priest) will go to the Bishop to receive the blessing with the words, "Your blessing, Father"

**Gospel:** John 15 :18-21,26-27 Lectionary Volume IV page 143

Following the proclamation of the Gospel the deacon or priest does not venerate the Book, but rather brings it to the Bishop for him to venerate and to Bless the People.

If the presiders chair is not in a convenient place for the Bishop to administer Confirmation from, after the proclamation of the Gospel a chair for the Bishop is moved in front of the altar.

- **LITURGY OF CONFIRMATION**

After the Gospel the Candidates for Confirmation are invited to stand either when called individually by name or if there is a large number of Candidates, the priest presents them collectively to the Bishop without reading their individual names, then they all stand together.

Parish Priest/Deacon/Catechist: "Most Reverend Father on behalf of the parish of ..... I present to you these young people for the Sacrament of Confirmation".

The candidates then sit and the Bishop preaches the homily. After the homily the Bishop invites the candidates to stand and renew their Faith:

Bishop: And now, before you receive the Spirit, call to mind the faith which you professed in Baptism or which your parents and godparents professed with the Church.

Bishop: Do you renounce Satan, and all his works and empty promises?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead, and is seated at the right hand of the Father?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who today through the Sacrament of Confirmation is given to you in a special way just as he was given to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church.

We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

- THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

The Bishop prays, invoking the Holy Spirit:

All pray in silence for a brief period.

The Bishop alone lays hands upon all the candidates by extending his hands over them. The Bishop alone sings or says the prayer:

- ANOINTING WITH CHRISM

The Bishop sits, on a seat which has been placed in front of the altar or at the Sanctuary steps for this purpose. The candidates come

forward and kneel before him, with the sponsor standing behind with their right hand upon the shoulder of the candidate. The Bishop then anoints the candidate on the forehead with Sacred Chrism. Please make sure the candidate kneels close enough to the Bishop that he can reach to anoint the candidate.

The sponsor presents the candidate to the Bishop saying:

Sponsor: "I present, N. (Confirmation Name), for confirmation"

Bishop: "N. (Confirmation Name), be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit."

The newly confirmed responds: "Amen".

Bishop: "Peace be with you."

The newly confirmed responds: "And with your Spirit."

- THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

The text of the Universal Prayer given in the Rite of Confirmation (page 32) must be used *see below*. The Universal Prayer are proclaimed by the Deacon, in his absence they may be read by a Minister of the Word, but please not by the newly Confirmed.

- LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Prayer over the Offerings page 1186

Preface of the Holy Spirit (1) page 1406

Eucharistic Prayer III page 684

Mass continues as usual.

- PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

- Any announcements may now be given.

- SOLEMN BLESSING

The Liturgy Planning form at the back of this booklet needs to be completed and returned to the Diocesan Master of Liturgical Ceremonies *at least three weeks prior* to the Celebration of Confirmation and before the Order of Celebration is printed.

## Universal Prayer for the Rite of Confirmation

*(Taken from the Rite of Confirmation page 46)*

Bishop: My dear brothers and sisters, let us humbly pray to God the almighty Father and be of one mind in our prayer, just as faith, hope and charity, which proceed from his Holy Spirit, are one.

Deacon: for these his servants, whom the gift of the Holy Spirit has confirmed: that, planted in faith and grounded in love, they may bear witness to Christ the Lord by their way of life, let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Deacon: For their parents and sponsors: that by word and example they may continue to encourage those whom they have sponsored in the faith to follow in the footsteps of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Deacon: For the holy Church of God together with **Francis** our Pope, **Mark** our Bishops and all the bishops: that, gathered by the Holy Spirit, the Church may grow an increase in unity of faith and love until the coming of the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Deacon: For the whole world: that all people, who have one Maker and Father, may acknowledge one another as brothers and sisters, without discrimination of race or nation, and with sincere hearts seek the Kingdom of God, which is peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord.

Response: Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.

Bishop: O God, who gave the Holy Spirit to your Apostles and willed that through them and their successors the same Spirit be handed on to the rest of the faithful, listen favourable to our prayer, and grant that your divine grace, which was at work when the Gospel was first proclaimed, may now spread through the hearts of those who believe in you. Through Christ our Lord.

Response: Amen

---

## **Other things to consider:**

---

**Altar Breads:** Please ensure enough altar breads are prepared for those expected to receive Holy Communion. Ideally only those Hosts consecrated at the Mass should be distributed at Holy Communion. Please do not rely on the Blessed Sacrament reserved in the tabernacle.

**Altar Servers:** If at all possible five (5) servers are required: crossbearer, two to carry the candles and two vimps (mitre and crosier bearers). Additional servers will be needed if incense is used, however this is not the norm for Masses of Confirmation in Shrewsbury Diocese. Servers are asked to arrive 30 minutes before the Mass, so that the Master of Ceremonies can guide them through the Rite.

**Bread or lemon?** Following the anointing, the Bishop will need to wash his hands. Please provide a bowl of warm water, several wedges of lemon and a normal hand towel (preferably white). There is no need to provide bread crumbs. This is in addition to the usual jug and bowl used during Mass.

**Certificates and Gifts:** If the parish is giving the newly confirmed a certificate and/or a gift, it is preferred that this happens in the reception following the Mass by either the Parish Priest or one of the catechists.

**Extra-Ordinary Ministers of Holy Communion:** ExtraOrdinary Ministers of Holy Communion should only minister if there are insufficient clergy to distribute Holy Communion to the faithful gathered. Please don't include the Master of Ceremonies in the number of clergy.

**Ministers:** The Bishop will ordinarily be the sole minister of the sacrament. Therefore, he alone extends his hands over the candidates and says the prayer before anointing. However, if the number of those to be confirmed is very large, *another priest may be delegated, by the Bishop*, to assist in administering the sacrament, that is, anointing the candidates. If that is the case, then he joins the Bishop in extending his hands over the candidates, while the Bishop alone says the prayer.

The priests of the parish or Local Missionary Area should concelebrate the Mass of Confirmation with the Bishop. If there is not a deacon to proclaim the Gospel, one of the priests should do so, requesting and receiving the Bishop's blessing beforehand, by saying 'Your blessing, Father.'

If a Deacon is present he proclaims the Gospel, reads the Universal Prayer, assists the Bishop by holding the Chrism during the anointing, assists during the preparation of the gifts and serves as a minister of the Chalice at communion.

**Master of Ceremonies:** One of the team of Confirmation Masters of Ceremonies will be allocated to your Confirmation celebration. They will contact you directly to talk through any local and particular needs.

**Music:** Music is an integral part of the Confirmation Mass, it should encourage an atmosphere of prayer and reflection, and enable the candidates, their families and friends, and the whole gathering to participate as fully as possible.

The following parts of the Mass should be sung if at all possible:

- Entrance Hymn
- Gloria (if used and must be the full text of the Gloria)
- Responsorial Psalm
- Gospel Acclamation (if not sung should be omitted)
- Holy Holy
- Memorial Acclamation
- Great Amen
- Lamb of God
- Communion Processional Song
- Hymn of Thanksgiving (optional and not always necessary)
- Recessional Hymn

It often helps to have some simple instrumental music played before Mass begins to settle the congregation into an atmosphere of prayer. Care should be taken that the music, either sung by the choir or played instrumentally, ends a couple minutes before the Mass begins so that the assembly has a few moments of silence before the celebration.

The Laying on of Hands *should not* be accompanied by music, as this important action in the Rite should take place in silence. A suitable hymn or piece of music may be played during the anointing, care should be taken that the music remains a supportive background for the action and never overshadows it.

If confirmation is celebrated on a Sunday or feast day, music should be chosen that reflects the character of that day as well as the occasion of Confirmation.

Don't forget that if you are printing an Order of Celebration copyright permissions are required from the publishers whose words and/or music are being used, and credit must be given in the printed booklet.

**Preparation of the Gifts:** *'It is a praiseworthy practice for the bread and wine to be presented by the faithful. They are then accepted at an appropriate place by the Priest or the Deacon to be carried to the altar. Even though the faithful no longer bring from their own possessions the bread and wine intended for the liturgy as was once the case, nevertheless the rite of carrying up the offerings still keeps its spiritual efficacy and significance. Even money or other gifts for the poor or the Church, brought by the faithful or collected in the church, are acceptable; given their purpose they are to be put in a suitable place away from the Eucharistic table.'* (General Instruction to the Roman Missal, 73)

The Bishop will, usually remain seated, at the more solemn celebrations, to receive the gifts. The Deacon (or Priest) will then carry them to the altar. No other gifts or symbols may be presented at this time.

**Photographs:** No photographs should be taken during the Mass of Confirmation. However, the Bishop is very happy to be available immediately after Mass to have pictures taken with the newly confirmed.

**Readings:** Bishop Mark has selected a set of readings to be used for the celebrations of Confirmation throughout the 2025/26 Confirmation Season. These readings are given earlier in this booklet. If your Celebration of Confirmation falls on a Solemnity or an important Feast, then the readings of the day should be used. If you are unsure, please contact the Diocesan Master of Liturgical Ceremonies for clarification.

**Rehearsal:** it is important to have a run through of the celebration prior to the day, so that candidates, sponsors and any stewards are familiar with the layout of the church and the flow of the celebration. The Master of Ceremonies may be able to be present, but not always. Any specific local needs should have been identified before this time and discussed with the

allocated Master of Ceremonies or with the Diocesan Master of Liturgical Ceremonies.

At the rehearsal, please encourage the candidates to respond together to the questions in a clear, loud voice. It is important that the Bishop and the gathered congregation can hear their request to be Confirmed.

**Vestments:** The usual vestment colour for Confirmation is red, unless your celebration falls on a Solemnity or important Feast day. Please have a red chasuble available for the Bishop to wear. Concelebrants, if possible, should also wear a chasuble.

Excerpts from the English translation of The Roman Missal © 2011, International Committee on English in the Liturgy, Inc. All rights reserved.

Excerpts from the English translation of The Order of Confirmation, © 2013, International Committee on English in the Liturgy Corporation (ICEL). All rights reserved.

# DIOCESAN MASTER OF LITURGICAL CEREMONIES



DIOCESE OF  
SHREWSBURY

Curial Offices  
2 Park Road South  
Prenton  
Wirral  
CH43 4UX

Tel: 0151 652 9855

Email: [frchris.matthews@dioceseofshrewsbury.org](mailto:frchris.matthews@dioceseofshrewsbury.org)

## LITURGY PLANNING SHEET FOR MASS OF CONFIRMATION

|                             |                                            |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <b>General Information:</b> |                                            |
| Date:                       | Time:                                      |
| Venue:                      | Contact Person:                            |
| Contact telephone:          | Contact email:                             |
| Number of Candidates:       | Approximate Congregation Numbers Expected? |

|                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Entrance Rites:</b>                                  |
| Entrance Hymn                                           |
| Penitential Rite (usually Option One)                   |
| Kyrie – sung or said?                                   |
| Gloria – sung or omitted? Please indicate which setting |

|                                                  |                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Liturgy of the Word:</b>                      |                                                                                              |
| Are you using the Readings chosen by the Bishop? | Universal Prayers – please ensure you use those given on page 32 of the Rite of Confirmation |

|                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Liturgy of the Eucharist:</b>                                                                                                             |
| Hymn at the Preparation of the Gifts                                                                                                         |
| Only bread, wine, water, and, if desired gifts for the poor may be presented. No other symbols, flowers, pictures, etc. are to be presented. |
| Sanctus setting                                                                                                                              |
| Memorial Acclamation choice and setting                                                                                                      |
| Agnus Dei setting                                                                                                                            |
| Is Communion being distributed under both kinds?                                                                                             |

Hymns during the distribution of Holy Communion

**Concluding Rites:**

Recessional Hymn (*please note an Organ Voluntary is preferred*)

**Other Information:**

Is a reception planned? If so where will it take place?

Any other relevant information:

- Please note photography is not permitted during the liturgy. The Bishop is very happy to be available for photographs with candidates immediately after the Mass of Confirmation.
- If an Order of Celebration is being produced, please include a draft copy.
- Please ensure this form is completed and returned (preferably by email) to the Diocesan Master of Liturgical Ceremonies no later than *twenty one* days before the ceremony is scheduled to take place.

**Privacy Notice:** The information requested is being used in pursuance of the legitimate interests and as required under the Roman Catholic Churches' procedures that apply to the practice of religion. The information requested will be stored securely and not used inappropriately, for example for general marketing purposes and will be retained for an appropriate period in accordance with Canon Law or Civil Law, procedures. You can read the full Privacy Policy at [www.dioceseofshrewsbury.org/about-us/privacy-notice](http://www.dioceseofshrewsbury.org/about-us/privacy-notice).