



**ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT PAUL AND MINNEAPOLIS**  
**CLERGY BULLETIN**

**November 10, 2011**

**Volume III, Number 58, Revised**

**THE CELEBRATION OF CONFIRMATION**

Reverend and dear Fathers,

In 1987, my predecessor, the Most Reverend John R. Roach, issued Guidelines for the Sacraments of Initiation. This document has been a helpful tool for many of our parishes, schools, and consolidated faith formation programs since that time. However, changes in canon law and pastoral practice led me to conclude that the time had come for these Guidelines to be revised.

What follows are regulations for the celebration of confirmation in the parishes and institutions of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. These regulations were developed in consultation with the Office of Worship, the Archdiocesan Schools Office, and the Presbyteral Council. In presenting these regulations, I acknowledge that there may be a need for pastoral adaptation. However, there are also pastoral norms that need to be honored to reflect the vision of this Archdiocese and the theology of the Catholic Church. It is my hope that these regulations will encourage a consistent practice reflective of true *communio*. Therefore, no adaptation at the parish level is permitted without first referring the matter to the Archbishop or his delegate.

Parishes and institutions are encouraged to follow these regulations as soon as they are able, but in order to give parishes and institutions sufficient time to prepare, the effective date of this policy will be August 1, 2012. Following that date, all previous policies and guidelines are abrogated.

Given at Saint Paul, Minnesota, this 10<sup>th</sup> day of November, in the year of Our Lord 2011. All things to the contrary notwithstanding.



The Most Reverend John C. Nienstedt  
Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis



Jennifer Haselberger  
Chancellor for Canonical Affairs

## NORMS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF CONFIRMATION

1. Priests who receive non-Catholic Christians above the age of seven into full communion with the Catholic Church are also to confirm them. Unless a grave reason prevents it, the sacrament of Confirmation must be conferred immediately following baptism or at the reception of a baptized adult Christian into full communion with the Church. If Confirmation is delayed, the pastor is to refer the matter to the Archbishop for an individual priest does not then possess the faculty to confirm outside of the provisions outlined below.
2. Priests with the faculties of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, and who have pastoral care of a group of the faithful by means of a parish assignment, are granted the delegation to confirm Catholics aged eighteen or older who have been in the RCIA program at their parish. This faculty may be used only if the Catholic seeking Confirmation is properly disposed, not bound by any canonical impediments, and has had an extensive course of preparation through RCIA or another approved program. Such Catholics may be confirmed at a ceremony distinct from the Easter Vigil.
3. Priests with the faculties of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis, and who have pastoral care of a group of the faithful by means of a parish assignment, are granted the delegation to confirm Catholics preparing for marriage, provided that the instruction is properly and fully completed and the sacrament of Confirmation is administered prior to the wedding taking place.
4. When confronted with a pastoral situation in which a priest does not have the faculty to confirm by the law or grant of faculties, the priest has the option of applying directly to the Archbishop for the delegated faculty to confirm in that particular instance. Only after discussion with the individual and with a serious reason interfering with the person's ability to be confirmed by the Archbishop may a pastor request delegation from the Archbishop to confirm a baptized Catholic.
5. The practice of the Archdiocese is to confirm youth between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades. Legitimate exceptions are given in canon 891.
6. Candidates are encouraged to follow the tradition of the Church and select a name to be imposed by the Archbishop or Bishop during the sacrament of Confirmation. This may be the candidate's baptismal name or it may be another Christian name, such as the name of a saint, blessed, or a name from the Old Testament. When selecting a name, the candidate should be encouraged to learn about the relationship of the name to the Christian tradition, and in particular to study the virtues of their patron and consider the means in which they might emulate him or her.

7. All Catholic youth who are candidates for the sacrament of Confirmation, even those who are home-schooled, must be enrolled in a parish process of preparation for the reception of the sacrament. They must participate in all of its communal dimensions (ritual, prayer services, etc.) and any other requirements determined by the parish. Adult candidates are to be prepared according to the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults or a similar program.
8. It is desirable that the sponsor of the child at baptism is also the sponsor at Confirmation, although another person, of either sex, may fulfill this function, providing that the individual fulfills the following requirements.
9. The sponsor must have completed the sixteenth year of age, unless the pastor or minister has granted an exception for a just cause<sup>1</sup>, and must be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has already received their First Holy Communion and who leads a life of faith in keeping with the function to be taken on. This means a sponsor may not be bound by any canonical penalty legitimately imposed or declared or be the father or mother of the one to be confirmed (canon 874, §1).
10. The parish which prepares the individual for the sacrament of Confirmation, whether or not the individual receives the sacrament at the parish church, must record the administration of the sacrament in the parish's confirmation register.
11. The parish which prepares the individual for the sacrament of Confirmation must also add the notation of Confirmation in the baptismal register if the person who has been confirmed was also baptized in the parish church. If the person who has been confirmed was baptized at another parish, the parish of preparation must notify the parish of baptism about the conferral of Confirmation so that a notation is made in the baptismal register.
12. An individual who desires to receive the sacrament of Confirmation through the use of the Extraordinary Form must fulfill all of the previously stated requirements and must
  - a. be a resident of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis or have a letter of permission from their proper bishop giving permission for them to receive the sacrament in this Archdiocese according to the Extraordinary Form. These letters should be sent directly to the Office of Worship.
  - b. Must present a letter from his or her pastor attesting that the requirements of this policy have been met. Again, this letter should be sent to the Office of Worship.

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<sup>1</sup> An example of a 'just cause' for permitting someone under the age of sixteen would be that the person will be turning sixteen in a matter of days or weeks, and he or she is known to demonstrate an extraordinary piety and level of maturity.