

Guidance for Resuming Confirmation Masses

June 11, 2020

As of Thursday, June 4, the *Catholic Comeback* has allowed for parishes to begin planning Confirmation celebrations that were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This document seeks to guide parishes as they plan not only the liturgy, but the continued formation of their candidates as well. Should you have any questions after reading the suggestions below, please contact Doug Ulaszek at ulaszekd@archmil.org or 414-758-2211.

Scheduling Confirmation

As you choose a date, please consider the following:

- Confirmation Masses are not to be celebrated until after June 28, 2020.
- This pertains to the Confirmation of Youth only. For Adult Confirmation, please consult the most recent version of the *Catholic Comeback Matrix* or contact the Chancery Office.
- All Confirmation Masses must still abide by the most current maximum capacity directive from the *Catholic Comeback Matrix* for Confirmation Masses (as of June 4, this is 25% of the church's occupancy limit). This capacity affects all Confirmation Masses, regardless of which day of the week they are celebrated.
 - If you have a large amount of candidates, you may need to schedule multiple Masses. Candidates and sponsors may sit together, but there should still be social distance between candidates.
- Parishes who were scheduled to celebrate Confirmation with another parish may choose to schedule individual Masses for their separate parishes. They are also free to continue planning together. In either case, please be in communication with the parish(es) with which you were previously planning.
- Plan enough time to gather your candidates (again, according to the most current *Catholic Comeback* guidelines) for a refresher and rehearsal. More details below.

Parishes have two options for rescheduling their Confirmation Mass:

- **Celebrated by a Bishop:** our bishops are happy to celebrate Confirmation with your parish. If you would like to schedule a bishop, please contact Nancy Kerns in the Bishops Office at (414) 769-3594 to choose a date. A few notes on this:
 - Keep in mind how many dates you need to schedule and make your requests all at once.
 - Be prepared to ask for a specific date (i.e. “August 15” instead of “Sometime this summer”).
 - Please do not request to have Mass before July 15.

- **Celebrated by your pastor or assisting priest:** Any parish may choose to have their pastor/assisting priest confirm their candidates. In order to do so, please submit a letter requesting faculties to Confirm to the Chancery Office with the date(s) of Confirmation and the request to confirm the youth of the parish Confirmation program.

Specific Pandemic-Related Planning Items

The Office of Worship is currently developing directives for the celebration of Confirmation for parishes, which will be made available to pastors when it is complete. For all other Mass-related procedures, please consult the most current version of the Archbishop’s Mass directives.

Planning for Confirmation Mass

As you plan, please keep in mind the following:

- **Liturgy Planning Guides:** If you schedule a Confirmation Mass with a bishop, your parish must still complete the appropriate planning guide and submit to the Office of Worship at least one month before your celebration.

- **Bishop Letters:** If you schedule Confirmation with a bishop, please plan to submit letters to the Bishops Office at least one month before your celebration.
 - If your candidates wrote letters to one bishop and you have a different bishop scheduled now, there is no need to rewrite letters.
 - If your candidates wrote letters but you do not have a bishop celebrating Confirmation, there is no need to send in your letters.

- **Rehearsal:** You will certainly want to schedule a rehearsal for candidates and their sponsors to go over the rite of Confirmation, along with any procedures

unique to your parish. The best option for this would be to have candidates and sponsors gather for an hour or so before Mass and go over anything then.

- **Retreat/Formation:** As you plan your parish's Confirmation Mass, please make sure you plan continued formation for your candidates, especially if you have had a significant break in formation due to the pandemic. If your parish retreat was cancelled, you could consider utilizing a virtual retreat option such as **ProjectYM's Greater retreat (greaterretreat.com)**. This is a great tool you could use with candidates who did go on a retreat as well.

Alternatively, you could schedule a session (either in person or virtually, depending on what the current guidelines for meetings allow) for your candidates. Frame your formation around reviewing a relationship with the Holy Spirit, His gifts and fruits, as well as the Rite of Confirmation and its basic symbols: the imposition of hands, the anointing with Sacred Chrism, and the words of the sacramental formula. In addition, you could review the effects of Confirmation found in (see *Catechism* paragraph 1303).

- **Above all, Charity:** As you finalize preparations for your candidates, please exercise charity towards them. You may have candidates who did not complete service hours, did not complete take-home work you assigned this Spring, or missed a make-up retreat that was cancelled. Particularly in these circumstances, it is very possible they are still disposed and instructed sufficiently for Confirmation. If that is the case, they should not be kept from the sacrament.
- **Communicate:** No matter what decisions you make or how you plan Confirmation, please make sure to communicate clearly and often to your parish, neighboring parishes, and families. If you need time to plan effectively, simply communicate that to your families. Many families will begin hearing of neighboring parishes planning Confirmation, and this may cause them anxiety about their celebration.