



# PREPARING TO CELEBRATE THE ORDER OF CONFIRMATION

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## Resource Booklet

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Updated 17 February 2016



Front cover: Unknown French Goldsmith, *The Pentecost* (1150-1160)



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## INTRODUCTION

“Those who have been baptized continue on the path of Christian Initiation through the Sacrament of Confirmation, by which they receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, whom the Lord sent up on the Apostles at Pentecost. By this gift of the Holy Spirit the faithful are more fully conformed to Christ and are strengthened with the power to bear witness to Christ for the building up of his Body in faith and charity.” (*Order of Confirmation: Introduction*, 1-2).

These words taken from the Introduction of the liturgical text tell us what makes celebrating this event so extraordinary. The celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation stands not merely as the opportunity for candidates to affirm the promises made for them at Baptism or even “graduate” from their religious formation in the Church. Rather, the Sacrament reminds and empowers those being confirmed and the faithful gathered with them in prayer and support that their “path” of Initiation does not end in this one event. The candidates are “more perfectly conformed to Christ” because there is still work for them to do—to “bear witness to Christ for the building up of his Body.” In short, those to be confirmed must “be prepared to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ, both within the ecclesial community and in temporal affairs” (CCC, 1309). Just like our Sunday celebration of the Mass is not meant to be the end of our duty to God and his people for the week, the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation is meant to give us what we need in order to continue to do what it is we are meant to do by virtue of our Baptism, which is to participate in the saving work of Christ.

The purpose of this resource, therefore, is to help parishes to prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation as an important, but not final, event in the life of those to be confirmed as well as the life of the local parish and the universal Church.

“Attention should be paid to giving the liturgical action the festive and solemn character that its significance for the local Church requires...The whole People of God, represented by the families and friends of the candidates for Confirmation and by members of the local community, will be invited to take part in such a celebration and will endeavor to express their faith by means of the fruits the Holy Spirit has produced in them” (*Introduction*, 4).

In preparing candidates to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation, it would be beneficial to look at what the liturgy will ask of them, and what the liturgy will tell them. For example, when it is time for the Renewal of Baptismal Promises, can those candidates truly say “I do” to the questions of the bishop? There are consequences for professing the faith of the Church. Are those to be confirmed ready to continue to bear witness to Christ by participating in his Passion, Death, and Resurrection celebrated in the Eucharist and in turn lived out in their lives day after day? Does the way the parish prepares and celebrates this Sacrament, and even its weekly and daily celebrations of the Mass, stand as a reminder to the newly confirmed and all of the faithful of the liturgy’s ongoing importance in helping them live as disciples and witnesses? May God, who has begun the good work in those to be confirmed and which we celebrate in the Sacrament of Confirmation, bring it to fulfillment!



**For more information on these or any other questions you may have, please contact:**

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**Q.: We will be celebrating Confirmation on (insert date here). What is the color for the Mass?**

**A.:** It depends! On Sundays, Solemnities, and Feasts, you would use the color of the day/season. On other days, it may be red, white, or the seasonal color. See pages 7-8 of this booklet for more details on the color of the day, the Mass of the day, and ritual Masses.

**Q.: Does the bishop actually look at the liturgy preparation form we submit?**

**A.:** Yes! The bishop (and master of ceremonies) uses the information you provide to know how to prepare the homily, what other rituals will be used (incense, sprinkling, etc.), and what else to expect. In addition, the form should also be circulated among those at the parish who will be involved in the celebration, such as deacons, musicians/choir, and other liturgical ministers, to help keep everyone “on the same page.”

**Q.: Why does the bishop need lemon juice?**

**A.:** He’s not making lemonade! Basically, it helps him clean his hands and dissipate some of the odor of the Chrism so he may continue with the Mass.

**Q.: Will the bishop be in our Confirmation group picture?**

**A.:** No, but the bishop will make himself available after the Mass for individual photos with the newly confirmed. If you wish to take a group picture, please plan to do so before the candidates meet with the bishop before the Mass.

**Q.: Will the bishop sign our certificates for the newly confirmed?**

**A.:** Because of the sheer number of signatures that would be required, the bishop prefers that the local pastor be the one who signs any certificates given to the newly confirmed.

**Q.: How many Confirmations does the bishop celebrate every year?**

**A.:** Although it does vary from year to year, the bishop will celebrates around 40 Confirmations over the course of a year.

**Q.: Can we celebrate Confirmation during Lent?**

**A.:** While Confirmations *may* be celebrated in Lent, typically Confirmations are not scheduled during Lent due to the nature of the season. Please contact the bishop’s office to check for available dates.



## FAQS (cont.)

**Q.:** Will the bishop meet with the candidates before the Mass?

**A.:** Yes. The bishop typically meets with the candidates 30 minutes prior to the Mass.

**Q.:** When do the letters to the bishop and Mass preparation form need to be submitted?

**A.:** Please turn letters and prep form into the bishop's office no later than three weeks prior to the date for the celebration of Confirmation.

**Q.:** During the presentation of the candidates at the Mass (just after the Gospel), should the individual names of the candidates be read aloud?

**A.:** No. Since the candidates are presented by name by their sponsors to the bishop individually later in the rite, there is no need to read a list of names at the group presentation. They should be presented as a group to the bishop in words such as: "Bishop I present to you the candidates for Confirmation from N. parish."

**Q.:** How many servers are needed for the Confirmation Mass?

**A.:** Plan for two extra servers above and beyond what you would ordinarily have for a parish Sunday Mass to assist with the bishop's miter and crosier. In addition, if incense is to be used, plan on an extra server to assist with it as well (a total of three extra servers).

**Q.:** Should we use incense for the Mass?

**A.:** The use of incense is entirely up to the parish. On the one hand, incense can help to set off the Confirmation Mass as something special and extraordinary (which it is). On the other hand, there is a growing number of people with a sensitivity to incense, and its use may hamper their ability to be present. If incense is used, there ought to be a server designated to assist with its use.

Therefore, anyone who has found and possesses this heavenly treasure of the Spirit carries out all things—thanks to him—according to the justice and virtue inspired by the commandments, far from all fault and preserved from any reproach, easily and effortlessly. We too therefore implore and beseech the Lord, that he might bestow on us the treasure of the Spirit: indeed, only in this manner will we be able, together with the aid of that heavenly abundance which is Christ himself, to act in accordance with all of God's commandments without stain or reproof, fulfilling with purity and perfection every demand for justice issuing forth from the Spirit...Thus, it is essential that each of us unceasingly ask the Lord to be judged worthy of attaining and finding the heavenly gift of the Spirit.—Pseudo-Macarius, *Spiritual Homilies*, 18, 1-3



## A GUIDE FOR PREPARING THE MASS

### First Things

- ✘ Confirmation is preferably scheduled for Sundays (or Saturday evenings). Call the bishop's office to schedule a date for your parish celebration.
- ✘ Confirmations are scheduled on a yearly basis. Confirmations may not be scheduled more than a year in advance.
- ✘ Confirmations are not ordinarily scheduled in Lent (although sometimes to accommodate schedules this may happen), during Holy Week or on certain feast days (for example, All Souls). Check the *ordo* for more information on your specific date or contact the Office of Worship or the bishop's office if you have a question.
- ✘ A form entitled *Confirmation within Mass* is included with this booklet. It can also be downloaded from the diocesan website, or contact the Office of Worship to have a copy faxed or mailed to you.
- ✘ Complete the form and return via email, fax, or mail to the Office of Worship no less than three weeks before the date of Confirmation. If at all possible, plan on submitting the form for the liturgy and the letters to the bishop at the same time.

### Rehearsal Notes

Dress and décor are primary ways in which we externally express our interior disposition and preparation. Dress should be tasteful and in keeping with the dignity of the celebration. Dress should not be flashy or intended to draw attention to oneself, but should reflect the preparation of the candidate for this tangible encounter with our Lord in the Sacrament.

It is essential that the minister of the Sacrament be able to anoint the candidate on the forehead. It is very helpful if the candidate's hairstyle allows the minister to do this.

The candidates and sponsors are rehearsed in the dialog with the bishop:

**Sponsor: "Bishop, I present N."**

Bishop: "N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit."

**Candidate: "Amen."**

Bishop: "Peace be with you."

**Candidate: "And with your spirit."**

The rehearsal and preparation should also include a clear instruction on the following points:

- ✘ The bishop meets with the candidates and sponsors 30 minutes before Mass;
- ✘ Candidates are to wear a name tag on their left hand side with only their Confirmation name printed in large legible letters for the bishop to read;
- ✘ Candidates are to come forward with their sponsor standing to their left hand side;
- ✘ Sponsors should place their hand on the candidate's shoulder while presenting them to the bishop;
- ✘ Candidates are to move close to the bishop for Confirmation so that he can easily reach the candidate's forehead;
- ✘ Candidates with eye glasses might want to remove them during the anointing with Chrism to avoid getting oil on the lenses;
- ✘ Candidates should be instructed that if a bit of oil runs down their face they should wipe the oil with their hands and rub the oil into their hands.
- ✘ It can be very helpful for a catechist or a properly trained usher to help move the line forward and encourage the candidates to move close to the bishop.

### Preparing the Liturgy

Confirmation is celebrated either in the context of the Mass of the day or a ritual Mass.

- ✘ Mass of the day means using the proper prayers and readings assigned for that day
- ✘ Ritual Mass means using the prayers for the Confirmation ritual Mass as found in the *Roman Missal* and selecting readings from the *Lectionary* for the ritual Mass



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## A GUIDE FOR PREPARING THE MASS (cont.)

Concerning the choice of Mass:

- ✘ Special note should be made of the liturgical season or feast day and what the day and season brings to the celebration of the rite.
- ✘ Sundays take precedence over the ritual Mass. This means that even on Sundays when ritual Masses are permitted, the readings and prayers should be those of the Sunday rather than being chosen from the Order of Confirmation.
- ✘ Solemnities and Feasts take precedence over the ritual Mass. This means Confirmation would be celebrated in the context of the particular Mass for that Solemnity or Feast.
- ✘ On Memorials (both Obligatory and Optional) and the weekdays of Christmas Time, Ordinary Time, and Lent, you may select either the ritual Mass or the Mass of the day.
- ✘ Vestment color corresponds to the Mass being celebrated:
  - If celebrating the Mass of the day (be it Sunday, Solemnity, Feast or Memorial)—the color of the season/day
  - If celebrating the ritual Mass—red or white

### **Choice of Music**

After reviewing the prayers and texts, careful selection of the music for acclamations/dialogs, antiphons and psalms, refrains, and hymns is essential. Criteria that should be used in this decision include:

- ✘ Is the music appropriate for the liturgy, the season of the liturgical year, and any particular feast celebrated that day? Does the music reflect the liturgy being celebrated? How does it express the prayers to be proclaimed, the theology of the Sacrament, or the inspiration of God's Word to be proclaimed during the liturgy? Do the words convey Catholic theology and belief?
- ✘ Is the music of good quality? Will those gathered for the celebration consider the music beautiful? Does the music have a history in the Church's tradition?
- ✘ Is the music "singable" by the faithful who will gather for the celebration? This goes beyond a particular group who may know the hymn or acclamation to ensure that those visitors will be able to sing and participate in the liturgy comfortably. It is important to include traditional hymnody which will be known by all gathered.
- ✘ In selecting the Responsorial Psalm, how is the selection a response to the first reading?
- ✘ There should be singing or instrumental music while the candidates are Confirmed (during the anointing).
  - This music should accompany the rite and not overpower or overwhelm it.
- ✘ Suitable silence is necessary within the celebration of the Mass as well.

### **When to Use the Rite for the Blessing and Sprinkling of Water**

- ✘ The connection between Baptism and Confirmation is best seen through the Renewal of Baptismal Promises.
- ✘ The Rite of Sprinkling is only used only on Sundays (and Saturday evenings)
- ✘ The Rite is especially fitting during the Easter Season.
- ✘ If the Rite of Sprinkling is used, the act of sprinkling should be accompanied by the singing of an appropriate antiphon or hymn.
- ✘ The Rite of Sprinkling is always a separate act from the singing of the *Gloria*.

### **When to Sing the Gloria**

The *Gloria* should be sung at the following times:

- ✘ Sundays of Ordinary Time
- ✘ Sundays of Easter Time
- ✘ Sundays of Christmas Time
- ✘ Proper ritual Mass for Confirmation (see "Ritual Masses" in the *Roman Missal*)

The *Gloria* is not used on Sundays of Lent and Advent.



## A GUIDE FOR PREPARING THE MASS (cont.)

### When to Use Incense

- ✘ Incense may be used in this Mass at four times:
  - Entrance procession/incensing of altar;
  - Gospel;
  - Preparation of Gifts/incensing of altar, gifts, and people;
  - At the elevations during the Eucharistic Prayer.
- ✘ For the incense at the Entrance and the Preparation of the Gifts, please plan on the music accompanying the incensing until it is complete.
- ✘ If there is a specific reason that incense should not be used (severe allergy by a candidate, for example), please make a note of this on the form.

### Other Needs

- ✘ Please have the following available for the washing of hands after the anointing portion of the rite:
  - One large bowl with warm, soapy water;
  - One large pitcher with warm water;
  - One large towel;
  - Lemon juice in an appropriate container (cruet or small pitcher).

### Presentation of Candidates for Confirmation

- ✘ After the Gospel and just prior to the homily is the Presentation of the Candidates. The candidates may be presented by the pastor, the person in charge of their formation or another catechist. The candidates should be presented to the bishop as a group. There is no need to present them individually or read a list of names.
- ✘ If there are adults who will be Confirmed please notify the bishop in advance so that he may appropriately prepare his homily.

### Ministers during the Rite of Confirmation

- ✘ The pastor, a concelebrant (such as an associate pastor), a deacon or altar server should be at the bishop's right holding the vessel with the Sacred Chrism.
- ✘ Plan for two extra servers above and beyond what you would ordinarily have for a parish Mass to assist with the bishop's miter and crosier. In addition, if incense is to be used, plan on an extra server to assist with it as well (a total of three extra servers).
- ✘ Altar servers should be rehearsed and familiar with their responsibilities. The servers assigned to assist with miter and crosier should keep their attention to the bishop and MC in order to present the miter and crosier at the proper time.
- ✘ Deacons should be aware of their role in the liturgy before the date of the celebration and how they will assist.
- ✘ The readers must be able to proclaim the Word of God assigned to them well, not only being able to be understood, but also to understand the reading they proclaim. They do not necessarily need to be candidates for Confirmation.
- ✘ Use the *Lectionary* for the readings instead of loose pieces of paper.
- ✘ The deacon, when present, should typically read the Prayer of the Faithful. Multiple readers of the Prayer of the Faithful should be avoided.
- ✘ Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should know the location of their assigned station. There may also be more ordinary ministers of Communion than usual. Extraordinary Ministers should be instructed appropriately.
- ✘ Sacristans should be aware of the color of vestments to prepare. Sufficient amounts of bread and wine should be prepared for Communion of the faithful.
- ✘ Cantors should be well prepared and know how they are to assist the community as a leader of song.

### Photographers

- ✘ Group photographs are to be taken prior to the Mass. The bishop will make himself available for individual photos following the Mass.



## LETTER TO THE BISHOP

As part of the candidates' preparations for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation, the bishop requests that each candidate submit a letter to him. This letter is meant to be more than just a statement from the young person asking for the Sacrament. Since he cannot be a part of each and every formation program, the letter helps the bishop to see how the young people have been preparing for the celebration, as well as for life strengthened by the Holy Spirit after the celebration. In addition, so many of the letters stand as a testament to the faith and devotion of the young Church, a sign of hope for us all.

Since it is meant to address each young person's own journey and preparation, the letter should not be a "form letter." While some guidance may be given, it needs to stand as a composition of that individual.

The letters need to be submitted to the bishop's office no later than three weeks prior to the date of your Confirmation. They may always be submitted earlier. The letters should be submitted electronically as a group by the PCL or Confirmation leader. The candidates should note in the letter to which parish they belong, since many times the bishop is preparing for multiples celebrations in the same week.

The letter should answer the following questions:

1. What does Confirmation mean to me? Why am I choosing to be confirmed?
2. What saint's name did I choose and why?
3. Whom did I choose for my sponsor and why?
4. What did I do for my service hours? What did I learn/gain from the experience?

The bishop uses the information in the letters as part of his homily, enabling him to speak to the experiences and needs of the candidates more intimately. The bishop does not use names from the letters in his homily so as not to embarrass anyone, aside from speaking about the selection of the saint name and why.

Therefore, you who are already baptized will now receive the power of his Spirit and be signed with his Cross on your foreheads. And so, you must always bear witness to his Passion and Resurrection before the world, so that your manner of life, as the Apostle says, may be in every place the pleasing fragrance of Christ. His Mystical Body, which is the Church, the People of God, receives from him diverse graces, which the same Holy Spirit distributes to individuals for the building-up of that Body in unity and love.

Be living members of this Church, therefore, and, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, seek to serve all people like Christ, who came not to be served but to serve.—*The Order of Confirmation* , 22

# THE ORDER FOR THE CONFERRAL OF CONFIRMATION WITHIN MASS<sup>1</sup>

## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

20. The Liturgy of the Word is celebrated in accordance with the rubrics...

## SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

### PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

21. After the Gospel the Bishop (as do the Priests who are associated with him) take their seats. The candidates for Confirmation are presented by the Pastor or another Priest, or by a Deacon, or even by a catechist, in accordance with the custom of the region...they are not called by name, but they are assigned a suitable place before the Bishop.

*\*Typically, the bishop will ask some questions of the presenter and the faithful at this time as well.*

### THE HOMILY OR ADDRESS

22. The Bishop then gives a brief homily, by which, shedding light on the readings, he leads, as if by hand, those to be confirmed, their sponsors and parents, and the whole gathering of the faithful to a deeper understanding of the mystery of Confirmation.

### THE RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

23. After the Homily the Bishop questions those to be confirmed, who stand, as he says:

Bishop:

Do you renounce Satan  
and all his works and empty promises?

Together, all those to be confirmed reply:

**I do.**

1. Text is taken from *The Order of Confirmation; Chapter I: The Order for the Conferral of Confirmation within Mass* (2015)

**Bishop:**

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

**Those to be confirmed:**

**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?

**Those to be confirmed:**

**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?

**Those to be confirmed:**

**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?

Those to be confirmed:

**I do.**

The Bishop gives his assent to the profession by proclaiming the faith of the Church:

This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church.  
We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The gathering of the faithful gives its assent by replying:

**Amen.**

### THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

24. Then the Bishop (while the Priests associated with him remain by his side) standing, facing the people, with hands joined, says:

Dearly beloved,  
let us pray to God the almighty Father,  
for these, his adopted sons and daughters,  
already born again to eternal life in Baptism,  
that he will graciously pour out the Holy Spirit upon them  
to confirm them with his abundant gifts,  
and through his anointing  
conform them more fully to Christ, the Son of God.

And all pray in silence for a while.

25. Then the Bishop lays hands upon all those to be confirmed (as do the Priests who are associated with him). But the Bishop alone says:

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who brought these your servants to new birth  
by water and the Holy Spirit,  
freeing them from sin:  
send upon them, O Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete;  
give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and fortitude,

the spirit of knowledge and piety;  
fill them with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**R/. Amen.**

#### THE ANOINTING WITH CHRISM

26. The sacred Chrism is brought ... to the Bishop. Each of those to be confirmed goes to the Bishop... The sponsor who presents the person to be confirmed places his (her) right hand on his (her) shoulder and says the name of the one to be confirmed to the Bishop...

27. The Bishop dips the tip of the thumb of his right-hand in the Chrism and, with the thumb, makes the Sign of the Cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed, as he says:

**N. BE SEALED WITH THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

The newly confirmed replies:

**Amen.**

The Bishop adds:

Peace be with you.

The newly confirmed:

**And with your spirit.**

29. During the anointing a suitable chant may be sung. After the anointing the Bishop washes his hands...

#### THE UNIVERSAL PRAYER

30. The Universal Prayer follows...

### THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

31. After the Universal Prayer the Liturgy of the Eucharist is celebrated according to the Order of Mass, with these changes:

- a) the Creed is omitted, since the Profession of Faith has already taken place.
- b) some of the confirmed may join those who bring forward the offerings...

# CONFIRMATION WITHIN MASS

Parish(es): \_\_\_\_\_ Day/Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Candidates: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes/No Adults: \_\_\_\_\_ Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Vesting Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes/No Reception Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Concelebrant(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Deacon(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Form prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mass of the Day OR Ritual Mass (circle one)

### Introductory Rites

Yes/No Welcome by: \_\_\_\_\_

Before Entrance OR After Entrance (circle one)

Penitential Act OR Sprinkling Rite (circle one)

Penitential Act led by: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes/No Gloria (circle one)

### Liturgy of the Word

Yes/No Readings of the Day (circle one)

If "No" list below:

#1: \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm: \_\_\_\_\_

#2: \_\_\_\_\_

Gospel: \_\_\_\_\_

### Confirmation

Candidates presented by: \_\_\_\_\_

### Liturgy of the Eucharist

Recited/Sung Lord's Prayer (circle one)

# of Communion Stations

Body: \_\_\_\_\_ Blood: \_\_\_\_\_

### Concluding Rites

Yes/No Announcements (circle one)

By: \_\_\_\_\_

## PREPARATION NOTES

### Introductory Rites

1. Music should accompany the entire Entrance, through the incensing of the altar (if incense is used).
2. Welcome may take place before Mass or just after Bishop's greeting.
3. The Deacon may lead the Penitential Act.
4. The Rite of Sprinkling replaces the Penitential Act, but is only used on Sundays, especially in the Easter season.
5. Music should accompany the Rite of Sprinkling, and it should be separate from the *Gloria*.
6. The *Gloria* is sung on Sundays in Ordinary Time, Christmastime, and Easter, on Solemnities and Feasts, as well as during the ritual Mass for Confirmation.

### Liturgy of the Word

1. Sundays, Solemnities, and Feasts should always use the prayers and readings of the day.
2. Other Masses may use the readings of the day or the ritual Mass readings – check the *ordo*.

### Rite of Confirmation

1. Presentation of candidates takes place right after the Gospel and before the homily.
2. Candidates should wear name tags with Confirmation name on left side.
3. Music should accompany the anointing of the candidates.
4. For the washing of hands – 1 large bowl w/ warm soapy water, 1 pitcher of warm clean water for rinsing, lemon juice in an appropriate container (cruet, etc.), one large towel.

### Prayer of the Faithful

1. Only one person (usually the deacon) reads the intercessions.

### Liturgy of the Eucharist

1. Only the bread and wine are carried in procession (and collection basket/gifts for the poor, if customary).
2. The bishop will come down front to receive the gifts.
3. A song or instrumental music should accompany the incensation of the altar, gifts and people.
4. Communion should be distributed under both kinds.

### Concluding Rites

1. Any announcements should be made after the Prayer after Communion.

### Notes for the Bishop

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