Office of Worship

Memorandum

Date: May 28, 2020
To: All Clergy and Parishes of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
From: Reverend Tom Margevičius, Director, Office of Worship
Re: Directives for Celebrating Confirmation during the Pandemic

I. Faculty to Confirm

A. Archbishop Hebda’s April 1, 2020 Memo granted permission, as long as the pandemic endures, for parishes to celebrate Confirmation in their own communities. This concession grants the faculty explicitly to Pastors and Parochial Administrators to confirm those who were being prepared by the parish for a Confirmation originally scheduled to be celebrated by a bishop in 2020.

B. The priest granted the faculty must be the main celebrant, though other priests may assist in administering the Sacrament.

C. If there is a need for a priest other than the Pastor or Parochial Administrator to preside at Confirmation (e.g., one who can speak Spanish), the Pastor or Parochial Administrator must request the faculty from the Archbishop, providing him: 1. The name and location of the parish; 2. The name of the priest who would do the confirming; 3. When the Confirmation will occur (be as precise as you can); and 4. How many students are expected to be confirmed.

D. The faculty to confirm is already granted by canon law to all priests in cases of danger of death, and immediately following the baptism or reception into the Church of a person seven years of age or older.

E. Archdiocesan law grants the faculty to priests assigned to a parish to confirm Catholics aged eighteen or older who have been in the RCIA program at their parish, as well as Catholics preparing for marriage. See Archdiocesan policy n. 504: “Confirmation – Priest as Minister” (https://safe-environment.archspm.org/500-sacraments/504-confirmation-priest-minister)

F. The overall RCIA process, as well as individual Rites therein, may need to be adapted because of the pandemic. Please consult that ritual for which adaptations a Pastor can make on his own, and those for which he must request permission of the Ordinary.
II. General Information
A. These Directives on Confirmation replace those of March 18, 2020 and apply only to the Confirmations that had been scheduled for the 2019 – 2020 school year.
B. As always, Confirmations are to be recorded in the sacramental registry of the parish where the Confirmations occur, as well as the parish where each candidate’s original sacramental record is located (if different).

III. Parameters
A. Use the rite as found in the 2016 ritual book Order of Confirmation (Ritual para la confirmación). Contact the Office of Worship if you need a pdf copy.
B. On most days (those listed as V₁, V₂, or V₃ in the Ordo) celebrate the Ritual Mass “For the Conferral of Confirmation,” wearing red and using texts from both the Roman Missal and Lectionary. On feast days not having a V in the Ordo (e.g. Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi, Sacred Heart, Nativity of John the Baptist, Sts. Peter and Paul, Assumption) wear the color of the day and use the Mass of the day (including its Lectionary readings), into which the Rite of Confirmation is inserted after the homily.
C. The qualifications for a candidate’s Confirmation sponsor (can. 872 – 874) still apply. If because of social distancing a sponsor cannot attend in person, the sponsor can be represented by a proxy.
D. Confirmations may occur either within or outside of Mass, at the judgment of the Pastor. Consider confirming out-of-doors where it may be easier to practice greater social distancing.

IV. Procedure
A. The May 26, 2020 restrictions for public liturgy apply to Confirmation liturgies too: a maximum of 25% (or 250 persons) in attendance, wearing facial masks, keeping the 6-foot social distance, etc.
B. Needed items: a vessel with Chrism for each Chrismator; a bottle of hand sanitizer for each Chrismator; clean, unused cotton balls (1 per candidate); plastic or paper bag or receptacle into which used cotton balls will be placed. (That receptacle and its contents must be burned after the liturgy.)
C. The Chrismator, an assistant (a deacon or server), the candidate, and the sponsor are all to wear facial masks throughout the celebration of the Sacrament.
D. All apply hand sanitizer before the candidate nears the Chrismator.
E. If the sponsor is from the same household as the candidate, the sponsor may lay a right hand upon the candidate’s shoulder. If not, no touch, and remain 6 feet behind.
F. The candidate stands barely close enough for the Chrismator to touch the candidate’s forehead.
G. The assistant stands 6 feet from the Chrismator (except when needed), holding a tray with the Chrism, hand sanitizer, cotton balls, and receptacle for disposing the cotton.

H. If necessary, the Chrismator may enquire the candidate’s Confirmation name, but otherwise conversation should be kept to a minimum.

I. Having sanitized his hands, the Chrismator takes a fresh cotton ball with his left hand and dips it into the Chrism.

J. He touches the oiled cotton to his right thumb, then discards the cotton into the receptacle.

K. He touches his oiled thumb to the candidate’s forehead and says the formula: “N., be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.” The candidate answers “Amen.” The Chrismator continues, “Peace be with you” (without touching), and the candidate answers “And with your spirit.” The candidate and sponsor then depart (keeping 6-foot distance).

L. The Chrismator then sanitizes his hands.

M. The procedure repeats for each candidate.

N. After all candidates have been confirmed, the Chrismator washes his hands thoroughly with warm soapy water. If helpful, provide a halved lemon to help remove oil from each Chrismator’s hands.

V. Final Notes

A. The date for this year’s Chrism Mass will depend on when the pandemic eases enough to allow larger gatherings.

B. If a parish runs out of Chrism, contact Laurinda in the Office of Worship irwinl@archspm.org to arrange picking up more.

C. As always, contact Fr. Tom Margevičius margeviciust@archspm.org if you have questions not answered here.