

CONFIRMATION PROTOCOLS
During the Coronavirus Pandemic
Diocese of San Angelo
June 12, 2020

- A. Pastors and parochial vicars are granted the faculty to confirm candidates during the time of the coronavirus protocols, until this faculty is withdrawn.
- B. Confirmations that have been postponed because of the coronavirus may be rescheduled and administered either by the bishop or by the delegated priest. Planning should carefully take into account the number of candidates, the size of the crowd, and the size of the church. Confirmations may be spread out among numerous liturgies, if needed.
- C. The Sacrament of Confirmation could be administered outside of Mass, but the ideal setting for this sacrament is within the Mass.
- D. Confirmation liturgies are subject to the same social distancing and spacing requirements as other liturgies in the Church. This includes the wearing of face masks or cloth face coverings. Please exercise caution and avoid situations that involve large gatherings or lengthy travel.
- E. Confirmation liturgies for large groups should be postponed until a phase when sufficient crowds are allowed inside church buildings to accommodate the group safely, or you may wish to divide the group into smaller groups for more than one ceremony.

Confirmation liturgies for small groups may be celebrated if the number of people will fit into the church under current spacing requirements.

- F. If the bishop celebrates the Confirmation, his standard practice is to meet with the candidates in a large meeting room one hour before the starting time of the liturgy. Sponsors are welcome to that meeting. All should wear masks and maintain social distancing for that meeting.
- G. Social distancing guidelines should be explained to the candidates and their godparents/sponsors to allow them to make the decision of how they will sit in a pew and whether the sponsor should place their right hand on the shoulder of the candidate during the anointing. The basic rule of thumb is the following:
 - 1. If the sponsor and candidate already have regular close contact with one another, then they can sit side by side and the sponsor can place the right hand on the shoulder.
 - 2. If the sponsor and candidate do not already have regular close contact with one another, then they should maintain a distance of 6 feet throughout the liturgy, and the sponsor should not place the right hand on the shoulder. Instead, the sponsor simply prays for the candidate in their heart with folded hands.

- H. For the laying on of hands, hands are outstretched over the entire group, without touching them. Concelebrating priests can extend hands from their place.
- I. For the administration of the sacrament, candidates should approach one by one, keeping at least 6 feet of distance between them.
- J. Please do not hand a name card to the priest/bishop at the time of the anointing. The name of the chosen saint's name and the name of the candidate should be worn on a name tag instead.
- K. A small table should be set up near the place where the anointing will take place. A sufficient amount of the Chrism should be placed on that table before the liturgy begins, in an open bowl, along with the other materials needed to administer the anointing safely.
- L. The anointing with Chrism:
 - 1. There are two options for the anointing with Chrism:
 - a. The Chrism may be administered with the thumb of the priest/bishop directly applying it to the forehead of the candidate. In this case, the priest/bishop is to clean and disinfect his thumb after anointing each person. We recommend the use of disposable disinfecting wipes, using one wipe to clean the thumb after each anointing. All of these used wipes are to be burned or buried at a later time. Another good option would be to dip the thumb in a bowl of alcohol to disinfect it after each anointing.
 - b. The Chrism may be administered by the use of an instrument, such as a cotton swab or cotton ball. This does not impede the validity of the sacrament. In this case, each person is anointed with a new, clean instrument, and all of these instruments are burned or buried at a later time.
 - 2. Carefully avoid cross-contamination of the Chrism. Care must be taken not to place contaminated oil back into the parish oil supply. Clean Chrism must be used for each candidate. After the liturgy, the leftover Chrism from the open bowl should be either burned or buried.
 - 3. The dialogue "Peace be with you" is utilized, but handshaking is to be omitted. An otherwise appropriate gesture could be a simple bow.
- M. Offertory: There should not be a procession with gifts of bread and wine. Those gifts should be placed on the credence table before the liturgy.
- N. For Restored-Order Parishes that celebrate First Communion during this liturgy, keep in mind that, as a temporary measure, the Precious Blood is not to be distributed, not even to the First Communicants.

O. Regarding photographs after the liturgy:

1. If some of the candidates would like to take individual photographs with the bishop or priest, they should maintain a 6-foot distance.
2. If a group picture is taken after the liturgy, the people should maintain a 6-foot distance. In some cases, this picture could be taken outdoors for better air circulation.
3. People may remove their masks briefly while pictures are being taken.

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