

103 Confirmation

103 CONFIRMATION

103.1. CANDIDATES FOR CONFIRMATION

**“Those who have been baptized continue on the path of Christian initiation through the sacrament of Confirmation”
Rite of Confirmation, Introduction, no.1**

Only those persons who have been baptized can receive confirmation. CIC, 889.1

103.1.1 Reception of the Sacraments of Initiation at One Celebration and In Proper Order (Adult catechumens and children catechumens)

103.1.1.

Policy:

Catechumens, whether they be adult or children of catechetical age, will receive the three sacraments of initiation in the proper order -baptism, confirmation, and Eucharist at ONE celebration in accord with the ancient practice and as established in CIC, Canon Law and in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. This practice assures the unity of the Sacraments of Initiation. Rite of Confirmation, no.11; CIC, 866; Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, nos. 215, 305; National Statutes for the Catechumenate, nos. 18-19.

Procedures:

Adult catechumens will be baptized and receive confirmation immediately afterwards in the same celebration. The newly baptized will complete their initiation at their first sharing of the Eucharist, also at the same celebration.

a.Children who are baptized after reaching the age when catechesis is possible (also known as the age of reason) should receive confirmation immediate after baptism, at the celebration. As it is the case with the adult catechumens, the children catechumens will culminate their initiation with the reception of their first Eucharist, also at the same celebration. The proper order of reception of the sacraments for these children remains:

(1)baptism,

(2)confirmation,

(3)Eucharist.

103.1.2 Adolescent Candidates Baptized in the Catholic Church as Infants

103.1.1.2

Policy:

Canon Law permits the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation “at about the age of discretion”. The USCCB permits each Bishop to determine the age for Confirmation.

In the Archdiocese of Baltimore, adolescents baptized in infancy are ordinarily confirmed in the eighth through tenth grade levels.

CIC, Canons 889 §2, 891

Procedures:

a.It is the responsibility of parish leaders to explain to parents and adolescent candidates the different practices concerning the celebration of Confirmation with children catechumens -RCIA process- and those who have been baptized as infants. As the need arises, pastoral leaders should explain the differences between these two practices.

b.It is important to explain to all concerned that there is not a dogmatic difference in the two practices, but rather a pastoral preference, and that the most important point is to remind all that it is the Eucharist which is the summit of initiation. Sacramentum Caritatis, no. 18.

c.Pastoral leaders and catechists should be mindful not to attach the meaning of Christian maturity to Confirmation. This distorts the meaning of the sacrament. Additionally a prudential pastoral approach is necessary such that confirmation does not appear to be a reward or graduation after having completed certain requirements. Confirmation is not something that someone achieves or earns, but rather is a gift of God, as are all the sacraments. More emphasis should be placed on the Eucharist as the repeatable sacrament of initiation.

d.Adolescent candidates must be suitably instructed, properly disposed, and able to renew the baptismal promises. CIC, no. 889.2

103.1.3 Adult Candidates Baptized in the Catholic Church as Infants

103.3.1.3

Policy:

Baptized and catechized Roman Catholics who, for whatever reason, have not had the opportunity to be confirmed, are invited to complete their initiation after a period of immediate preparation. CIC, 889.2, 890

Procedures:

a. Adult candidates must be suitably instructed, properly disposed, and able to renew the baptismal promises. CIC, no. 889.2

b. If the preparation of adult candidates coincides with preparation for marriage, it is important to encourage a disposition to receive the sacrament of confirmation for its own sake, not as a requirement for marriage. It might be the case that for pastoral reasons it is better to defer confirmation until after the marriage. Rite of Confirmation, no.12

c. Adult Catholic candidates should receive confirmation before marriage unless this would pose a grave inconvenience. CIC, Canon 1065 §1.

103.1.4 Candidates with disabilities

103.3.1.4

Policy:

The Archdiocese will assist pastors and pastoral leaders with resources and guidance to ensure that evangelization, catechesis, and sacramental formation is available to those who suffer from physical or mental disabilities, as encouraged in Canon Law. CIC, Canon 777 §4

Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacraments with Persons with

Disabilities, nos. 5, 6

a. A baptized candidate with a physical or mental disability cannot be denied confirmation as long as he/she desires the sacrament;

b. The celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation for an adult candidate with mental disabilities should be age appropriate and should be sensitive to any emotional needs of the candidate; and

c. In some cases it may be appropriate for the parish priest to seek delegation to confirm individuals with disabilities during the Easter season. Generally, the candidate will be more at ease around those known to him or her.

103.2. SPONSORS

The Canon Law Society of America translates the Latin terms *patrinus* and *matrina* with the English term *sponsor*. In the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, *sponsor* is the person who presents an inquirer to the Order of Catechumens at the Rite of Acceptance. This person may or may not be the same person chosen to be the godparent at the Rite of Election. However, when it concerns to the celebration of confirmation by the baptized candidate, the term used is *sponsor*.

103.2.1

Policy:

The sponsor has the responsibility to witness Christ to the candidate and to accompany the candidate in the fulfillment

of Christian discipleship. CIC, Canon 892

103.2.2

Policy:

When possible, the sponsor for the candidate to be confirmed should be the same person who served as the sponsor for baptism. CIC, Canon 893 §2

103.2.3

Policy:

In order to be a sponsor, the person must fulfill the conditions specified for baptismal sponsors, namely

- a. Must have completed his or her 16th year unless, for just cause, the pastor or minister of the sacrament makes an exception;**
- b. Must be a confirmed Catholic who has also received first communion and is leading a life in harmony with the Catholic faith and the role of a sponsor;**
- c. Must not be bound by any canonical penalty;**
- d. Must not be the parent of the catechumen;**
- e. The spouse/fiancé of the candidate may serve as sponsor;**
- f. A parent may not serve as a sponsor (the Rite of Confirmation, no.5 states, "Even the parents themselves may present their children for Confirmation - a proposed amendment to the canon was rejected, and thus parents cannot serve as a sponsor); and**

g. A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic Christian ecclesial community may not serve as a sponsor. CIC, Canons 874, 893

103.3. MINISTER OF CONFIRMATION

103.3.1

Policy:

The Bishop is the ordinary minister of confirmation. CIC, Canon 882

103.3.2

Policy:

A priest is the special minister of confirmation in the following cases, by virtue of universal law:

- a. When baptizing (and confirming) an adult catechumen or a child catechumen of catechetical age;**
- b. When receiving a non-Catholic Christian candidate into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church; and**
- c. When confirming anyone (already baptized) in danger of death. In these cases, the presbyter does not need special delegation. CIC, Canons 883 §2, 883 §3; Rite of Confirmation no. 7b; Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, no. 14; National Statutes for the Catechumenate, nos. 28, 29**

103.3.1

Policy:

A priest who possesses the faculty as stated in policy 103.3.2 must use it for the sake of the faithful. CIC, Canon 885 §2

103.3.1

Policy:

The priest may be the special minister of confirmation only after obtaining delegation from the Office of the Chancellor in the following case:

·When confirming a Catholic candidate who was baptized as an infant. CIC, Canon 882, 883.2, 883.3, 884