



Diocese of Springfield

A Guide for Mass with the Bishop



We read in the Ceremonial of Bishops: “The Bishop himself is the chief steward of the mysteries of God and the overseer, promoter, and guardian of all liturgical life in the particular church entrusted to his care.” Therefore, the preeminent manifestation of the local Church is present when the Bishop celebrates the Eucharist, surrounded by his presbyters and ministers, and with the full, active participation of all God’s holy people. Thus a Eucharistic liturgy at which the Bishop is the principal celebrant takes on a special character and dignity. The following guide is offered to assist those planning a Mass with the Bishop.

Communities are encouraged to contact the Office of the Bishop as soon as possible once a date of a special celebration (excluding Confirmations) is anticipated in order to avoid scheduling conflicts. The Office of the Bishop can be contacted by phone (413-452-0803) and email (bishopsoffice@diospringfield.org). Once a celebration has been scheduled, and the community prepares to celebrate with the Bishop, the “Liturgical Planning Form”, which can be found at www.diospringfield.org/administration/bo.html is to be completed and returned no later than two weeks prior to the date of the scheduled event. If there is also a program for the liturgy please attach a copy with the “Liturgical Planning Form”. It is the role of bishop’s Master of Ceremonies to assist the local coordinator and approve the final plans for the liturgy.

General

It is strongly encouraged that those responsible for preparing the liturgy complete the “Liturgical Planning Form” and return it to the Office of the Bishop as soon as possible.

Please reserve a parking space for the Bishop near the Church.

The Bishop will bring his own ritual book if needed (for example, the Confirmation Ritual) but the parish is to provide the Roman Missal, lectionary, and Book of the Gospels (if applicable).

Ministers

In order to express the full sacramentality of the Church, it is encouraged that at least one Deacon be present to assist the Bishop. This should be the Deacon assigned to the parish. If he is not available, or if the parish does not have a Deacon, one will be provided by Permanent Diaconate office.

The parish should provide 3 to 5 altar servers to assist at Mass.

Lectors are required for the first reading and the second reading (if there is one). The Deacon offers the Prayer of the Faithful and lectors only do so in the absence of a Deacon. The readings are to be taken from the readings of the day. A second reading ought not to be added if it is not part of the readings of the day. The lector should be provided with a copy of the readings well in advance of the Mass for their preparation.

Introductory Rites

It is preferred that the procession keep moving. As each member of the liturgical procession reaches the foot of the sanctuary, they are to bow and go directly to their place in the sanctuary, rather than “lining up” in front and bowing together.

The entrance hymn should conclude when the Bishop reaches the presidential chair. Once the Bishop has reached his chair no additional verses should be sung.

Liturgy of the Word

The readings are to be taken from the readings of the day. A second reading ought not to be added if it is not part of the readings of the day. The first reader should not begin the reading until the Bishop has put on his Miter.

It is always preferable to sing the responsorial psalm.

The Gospel Acclamation / Alleluia begins as the reader reaches their place in the assembly. Do not wait for the Bishop to move to begin the Acclamation. If a Deacon is present, he will proclaim the gospel. In the absence of a Deacon, it is preferable that the Pastor read the gospel. The one who is to read the gospel, either a Deacon or Priest, goes to the Bishop to ask and receive his blessing. He then proceeds to the Ambo to proclaim the gospel.

The Deacon is to offer the Prayer of the Faithful. If no Deacon is present, only one lector should offer the intercessions. In preparing the intercessions the Parish should follow the examples provided in the Roman Missal and Appendix A and B of this guide.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

The offertory procession is to take place in as simple a manner as possible. Those presenting gifts are to walk down the center aisle to the Bishop. The gifts presented should be the bread and wine needed for the celebration of the Eucharist. Extra symbols should not be added.

Concelebrants approach the altar after the Prayer over the Gifts (not after the Preface).

There is to be no instrumental music during the Eucharistic prayer.

Sufficient bread and wine should be consecrated so that all may receive Communion from what is consecrated at that Mass. Recourse to the reserved Sacrament should take place only in an emergency.

Communion is to be distributed in as timely a manner as possible. The Bishop will give communion to the Deacons and the servers. He will then distribute the Eucharist in the center aisle, usually with the Pastor. All the other Concelebrants, Deacons, and, if needed, Extra – Ordinary ministers of the Eucharist should immediately distribute the Eucharist to the rest of the congregation.

Communion and meditation songs should be long enough to cover the time needed to distribute the Eucharist, wash the Bishop's hands, and return the Blessed Sacrament to the tabernacle. The music should not extend beyond that.

The servers should once again wash the Bishop's hands after he distributes the Eucharist.

Closing Rites

Any announcements should be brief, and given after the Prayer after Communion.

Concelebrants do not kiss the altar at the conclusion Mass, but rather venerate the altar through a common bow with the Bishop before the recessional.

If there had been a pre-liturgical procession (of confirmandi, graduates, etc.), they should stay in their places or walk out behind the liturgical procession.

Photography

The Bishop will make himself available for individual or group photographs after mass. Individual and group photographs are not to be taken during Mass. A staff person should be present to facilitate both group and individual photographs.

Attendance in Choir

There are various occasions when it is more appropriate that a Priest be the Principal Celebrant of a Eucharistic Liturgy while the Bishop presides “in choir.” Funerals may be one such occurrence. In these cases the following norms are to be followed:

- a) The Bishop takes his place in the entrance procession behind the Principal Celebrant.
- b) The Bishop is seated in some visible place in the sanctuary, but not with the Principal Celebrant or Concelebrants. A kneeler is to be provided at the Bishop’s place as well as a seat for his Master of Ceremonies.
- c) The Bishop does not approach the Altar as a Concelebrant. He is not brought the Eucharist at the Fraction Rite; rather, the Principal Celebrant brings him the Eucharist after he has communicated himself – presenting the host and chalice to the Bishop as he would to others in the liturgical assembly. The Bishop wears a stole for the communion Rite.
- d) It is customary and appropriate for the Bishop to offer some words/ remarks immediately following the Prayer after Communion. If others are to speak, the Bishop speaks last.
- e) In the case of a funeral, the Bishop is willing to preside over the Final Commendation if invited.
- f) In the recessional procession, the Bishop again follows the Principal Celebrant.

CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION WITH THE BISHOP

General

Twice each year, in April for the Fall and in October for the Spring, the Office of the Vicar General will send a Confirmation Request to each Parish. In completing this form, the Parish is to provide the Office of the Vicar General with three possible dates for the liturgy. Scheduling for Confirmations is done through the Office of the Vicar General and not through the Office of the Bishop. Once a celebration has been scheduled, and the community prepares to celebrate with the Bishop, the “Liturgical Planning Form”, which can be found at www.diospringfield.org/fillinlater, is to be completed and returned to the Office of the Bishop no later than two weeks prior to the date of the scheduled event. If there is a program for the liturgy, please enclose a copy with the “Liturgical Planning Form”. It is the role of Bishop’s Master of Ceremonies to assist the local coordinator and approve the final plans for the liturgy.

Letters from the Candidates requesting Confirmation should be sent to the Pastor and not the Bishop. In turn, it is the Pastor who should present the Candidates during the rite. Candidates should be presented to the Bishop as a group and should not be named individually.

The Bishop will meet with the Candidates and their sponsors before the liturgy. Please do not line them up or seat them until the Bishop has had an opportunity to speak with them.

The Bishop will bring his own Chrism. Please have a small table in the Sanctuary in front of the Altar on which the Chrism and Ritual may be placed.

There should be sufficient seating in the sanctuary for Bishop, the Pastor, the Deacon, and other Priests who concelebrate.

In selecting music, it is important to remember that many visitors and guest will be present and the music should be accessible and familiar.

The Candidates and their sponsors should be seated together in the first few pews, so that the Bishop can speak to them during his homily.

The Ritual for Confirmation includes suggestions for the Prayers of the Faithful. Please consult Appendix A and B of this document in your preparation.

Under no circumstances are the Confirmandi to wear stoles. The stole is a symbol of ordained ministry, not of Confirmation. The Confirmandi should not wear special garments, but rather appropriate “dressed-up” attire.

If the Confirmation occurs on a Sunday or Solemnity the readings and prayers for the Mass are taken from the Mass of the Day, not from the Mass of Confirmation.

Ministers

It is appropriate to invite your most skilled cantors, lectors, and altar servers to participate in the liturgy. All ministers should take special care to wear appropriate “dressed – up” attire. Hospitality ministers can be especially helpful to welcome and guide visitors and guests.

Choice of Mass/ Liturgical Texts

All presidential texts must come from the Roman Missal or Rite of Confirmation. The readings must come from the Lectionary approved for use in the United States.

Either the Ritual Mass of Confirmation or the Mass of the Day is celebrated. Sundays and Solemnities always take precedence.

The Ritual Mass of Confirmation may be used except on Sundays, Solemnities and the Days in the Easter Octave.

If the Ritual Mass is celebrated the vestment color is Red.

If the Mass of the Day is celebrated the vestment color of the day is used.

Introductory Rites

Please note that the Third Edition of the Roman Missal calls for the Gloria when the Ritual Mass of Confirmation is celebrated. It is preferable that the Gloria be sung.

Rite of Confirmation

After the Gospel, candidates are presented by the Pastor to the Bishop. He is to use these or similar words: "Bishop, I wish to present the Confirmation Class of (year) from the Catholic community of (name of parish)." Candidates stand for introduction but are then seated for the homily. Sponsors do not stand for this part.

After the homily the Candidates stand for the Renewal of Baptismal Promises; responding "I do" to each. The Candidates remain standing for the Laying on of Hands, to which they respond "Amen." Each Candidate moves to the Bishop individually for the Anointing with Chrism. The Sponsor places their right hand on the Candidate's right shoulder. The Bishop says, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit", to which the Candidate responds "Amen." The Bishop then says to them, "Peace be with you", to which the Confirmed responds "And with your spirit." Candidates should respond to the Bishop in a clear and committed voice. The Bishop will then exchange the sign of peace with the Confirmed and their sponsor.

The Bishop's voice should be clearly heard during the anointing. Therefore, either there should be no music during the anointing or it should be quiet enough that the Bishop's voice is not obscured.

The Parish should provide a wedge of lemon, a pitcher, a basin, and a towel for the Bishop to wash his hands after the anointing; he will do so prior to removing his Miter and introducing the Prayer of the Faithful.

The Creed is not said, as the renewal of Baptismal promises takes its place.

The Deacon offers the prayer of the faithful. Please see Appendix A and B.

Concluding Rites

If there had been a pre-liturgical procession of confirmandi, they should stay in their places or walk out behind the liturgical procession. This prevents a back-up in the rear of the church as well as ministers processing out in a half – empty church.

Photography

The bishop is willing to take photographs with the Confirmandi after the liturgy. The Bishop will usually return to the sanctuary for pictures unless another suitable place is prepared in the reception area for photography. Please tell the Master of Ceremonies before Mass where photos will take place. A staff person should be present to facilitate both the group and individual photographs.

These guidelines are intended to assist in planning and implementing the celebration of Mass with the Bishop.

If you have any questions please contact Stacy Dibbern, Manager, Bishop's Office. She may be reached by phone at (413) 452-0803 or by E-Mail at bishopsoffice@diospringfield.org.

Appendix A

Preparing the Prayer of the Faithful

In the composition of the Prayer of the Faithful, the following points should be kept in mind:

1. The series of intentions is usually to be for:
 - a. The needs of the Church
 - b. Public authorities and the salvation of the whole world
 - c. People burdened by any kind of difficulty
 - d. The local community
2. It is asked that the final petition be for the dead.
This acts as a signal to the bishop that the intercessions have come to an end.
3. The petitions are not prayers themselves.
4. These are to be “general” intercessions.
 - a. They ought to be petitions that the assembly can, by and large, agree on.
 - b. They ought not become a “mini-homily” or a place to make a particular point.
 - c. They ought not single out individuals.
 - d. They should not be secret (“For a special intention”); otherwise the assembly cannot rightly give its assent. Likewise, the assembly should not be invited to add intercessions.
5. They are petitions, not prayers of thanksgiving; the great prayer of thanksgiving follows shortly.
6. The response by the people should be a general prayer that God would hear the invocation (e.g., “Lord, hear our prayer”) not a separate petition or other statement. If the people are not familiar with the response, it should be announced before the intercessions.

Please note:

If a Deacon is present for Mass he is to offer the Prayer of the Faithful.

Appendix B

Prayer of the Faithful for Confirmations Sample Intercessions

- For these sons and daughters of God, confirmed by the gift of the Spirit, that they give witness to Christ by lives built on faith and love: let us pray to the Lord.
- For their parents and godparents who led them in faith, that by word and example they may always encourage them to follow the way of Jesus Christ: let us pray to the Lord.
- For the holy Church of God, in union with N. our pope, N. our bishop, and all the bishops, that God, who gathers us together by the Holy Spirit, may help us grow in unity of faith and love until his Son returns in glory: let us pray to the Lord.
- For all people, of every race and nation, that they may acknowledge the one God as Father, and in the bond of common brotherhood seek his kingdom, which is peace and joy in the Holy Spirit: let us pray to the Lord.