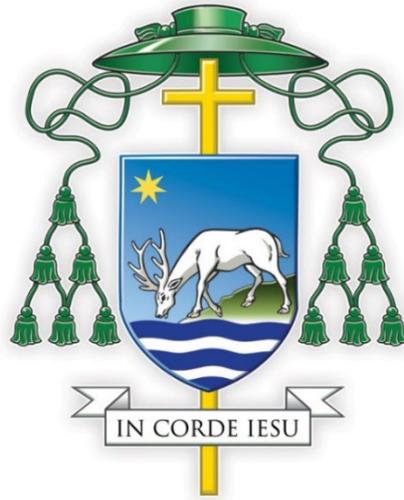


# Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

Bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church



## Sacrament of Confirmation

### Guidelines for a Celebration at the Cathedral 2026

[www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/confirmation](http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/confirmation)



## From Bishop Philip:

Welcome to our Sacrament of Confirmation Guidelines for 2026! I hope your course of preparation with the candidates is going really well. Always remember that the key thing is not how much candidates 'know' but how much they 'love.' May your programme help each candidate to meet the Lord Jesus in a transforming encounter so that their reception of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation may lead them to life-long discipleship.

Dioceses vary as to when, where and how they celebrate Confirmation and there's a lot of discussion about the right age and the right place. As the Shepherd of this Diocese, I have asked that Confirmations should normally take place once every two years for the parishes of each Pastoral Area and that the course lasts two years: one year leading up to the Sacrament and then a follow-on year (*mystagogia*) continuing the fun, formation and prayer, together with a simple work of charity and service, such as visiting a care home. This second year helps deepen the call to discipleship of Christ, by forming a peer support-group that can be linked into our diocesan youth programmes.

The Bishop usually confers Confirmation on the weekends of Eastertide The Sacrament is conferred alternatively in a large church in the Pastoral Area and the next time at the Cathedral. This places the Sacrament within the correct liturgical season around Pentecost.

Visiting the Cathedral to receive this sacrament is a great opportunity for the youngsters to get to know the mother church of the Diocese, the seat of the Bishop, to sense belonging not just to a parish but importantly to the Diocese of Portsmouth, thus strengthening the bonds of communion with the Bishop. Parishes can then organise a 'Going Forth Mass' and celebration for the following weekend, with giving of certificates etc. to the newly confirmed.

I also ask that candidates choose as a Confirmation name a Saint from the current Roman Missal. This ensures that they have a Patron Saint they can readily relate to through an annual celebration with the rest of the diocesan community.

Meanwhile, do read on! I hope everything here will help you prepare for a fantastic celebration of the Sacrament with your candidates and a joyous celebration of the Holy Mass. Thank you for all you are doing to prepare them. God bless you.

In Corde Iesu

+ Philip

Bishop of Portsmouth



## Choosing a Confirmation Name – From the Roman Missal:

This is an important part of the preparation programme, as it enables candidates to learn about the heroic lives of the Saints whom the Church commemorates in her liturgical calendar. They also learn about the liturgical calendar. They need to choose a Saint who will be a good role model for them. This Saint can help them think about their own vocation to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, to identify the gifts and charisms God has given them for mission and service, and to discern the vocation that God wishes them to fulfil. More, taking a new name emphasises the real, sacramental change brought about in the person, not just an outward sign but an inward grace.

**Please encourage each candidate to choose a saint's name from one of the saints found in the Roman Missal: The Universal Calendar, the National Calendar or the Diocesan Calendar. They will henceforth be able to celebrate with the parish community their saint's annual feast day. Saint's names and short biographies can be found on the diocesan Confirmation web page: [www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/confirmation](http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/confirmation)**

## Confirmation Name Cards:

Please print, complete and photocopy one card for each candidate, ensuring they each have completed one. The template for the name card can be found on the diocesan Confirmation webpage. At the Confirmation Mass, each candidate's name card will be handed by the sponsor to one of the Deacons (or Priests) assisting the Bishop, as the candidate is presented to the Bishop for Anointing. After the Confirmation Mass, the name cards will be stored at the Cathedral until the Cathedral Registrar has entered the relevant details in the Cathedral's Register of Confirmation.

## Registering the Confirmation:

Once the Cathedral Register has recorded the details, name cards will be returned to the parishes for onward transmission to the parishes of baptism. It is the responsibility of each parish to ensure this happens for their candidates as Confirmation needs to be recorded in the Baptismal Register of each candidate. As the Sacrament is conferred in the Cathedral, and a record of Confirmation recorded there, there is no need to make an entry into your parish Register of Confirmation.

## Certificates:

Each Parish/Pastoral Area should issue the newly Confirmed with a Certificate of Confirmation. Ideally this should be done at the Parish/Pastoral Area Celebration Mass the following weekend. The Bishop has delegated Parish Priests to sign the certificates on his behalf.

## Stewards:

Each Pastoral Area should provide 6 ushers/stewards for its Confirmation Mass and visiting stewards should make themselves known to the Cathedral Steward at the rear of the cathedral at least 30 minutes before Mass. Steward's duties include distributing Orders of Service and assisting those participating in the Confirmation Mass. Stewards should ensure that the aisles are kept completely clear. During the Mass, they direct the candidates and sponsors to where they need to be, under the guidance of the Cathedral Steward. Visiting stewards are asked to assist after the Mass with housekeeping, e.g., collecting service booklets, lost property, etc.

## Seating:

**The Cathedral Plan.** The Cathedral seating capacity is about 490 people. A seating plan is available on the Confirmation webpage. Pastoral Areas may wish to organise seats for candidates and sponsors. Please note: the front pew **must** be kept free and reserved for the sick and disabled candidates and sponsors and is not to be used for general seating.

**Seating for Candidate and Sponsor.** Candidates, sponsors and families should be in their places 15 minutes before the Mass begins. The candidate and their sponsor should sit at the end of the pew next to the central aisle, candidate at the end, sponsor next to them. If you have more than 38 candidates, this will need to be replicated at the outer aisle end of the pew.

## Photographer:

Ideally, each Pastoral Area should organise an 'official' photographer, responsible for taking photographs during the Mass. The photographer may wish to take individual photographs at the point of Anointing. There will also be the opportunity for a group photograph with the Bishop immediately after Mass. If you are unable to arrange a photographer, contact Bishop's Office ([confirmation@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:confirmation@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)) at least two months before your Confirmation Mass. The Pastoral Area is responsible for covering the costs of the photographer. At the end of the Mass there will be an opportunity to take photographs, this will include a group photo of all the children with the Bishop. If you have any parents who do not consent to their child being in any photos (which may be publicised in the future) please ensure the child returns to the parent before the group photo. Similarly, if you have any parents who do not wish their child to appear in any photographs, please ensure they make themselves known to the Photographer before the Mass begins. This is the responsibility of the Liturgy Co-ordinator who should make an announcement before Mass about those not wishing to be in photographs and the arrangements for the group photograph/s will be taken after Mass.

## Altar Servers:

Please encourage your altar servers to be involved. Ideally, 6 servers are needed. There will be a brief practice before the Mass. Servers should report to the Master of Ceremonies in the Cathedral Sacristy at least 30 minutes before Mass.

**Altar Servers: Please bring your own albs, or cassocks and cottas**

## Priests / Deacons:

All priests are encouraged to concelebrate. Regarding Deacons, ideally there need to be two or three to assist the Bishop. Direction will be given by the MC on the roles of the assistants to the Bishop during the Confirmation Mass. Please notify us of the expected numbers of servers and clergy. Clergy should bring their own Alb – other vestments will be provided. If your Pastoral Area / Parish does not have sufficient deacons, please contact Deacon Craig Aburn who will seek assistance from the other Deacons of the Diocese.

## Liturgy Planning Form:

A Liturgy Planning Form will need to be downloaded from the diocesan website, completed and returned at least six weeks before the Mass to Bishop's Office ([confirmation@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:confirmation@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)). The Liturgy Planning Form must be used as it includes much important information.

## Music:

It is best to provide your own music, musicians and cantor. In selecting music for the Mass, please incorporate a variety of styles of music. The Liturgy Planning Form recalls the different styles of music available and where in the Mass they might effectively be used. Organists from around the diocese are welcomed and encouraged to play at the Cathedral, but we must know in advance please. If you do not have musicians available and require an organist, please contact Bishop's Office ([confirmation@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:confirmation@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)) at least two months before your Confirmation Mass.

The Pastoral Area is responsible for covering the organist's fee.

## Preparing an Order of Service:

A template 'order of service' is available on the diocesan Confirmation webpage. Please ensure this template is used so that all the required texts are included in the booklet. If you wish, you can personalise this with your own choice of images along with the hymns and music you have chosen. Please send a draft copy to Bishop's Office ([confirmation@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:confirmation@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)), for approval no less than four weeks before the Confirmation Mass. Each Pastoral Area should prepare and print sufficient copies of the Order of Service. **Booklets must not be printed until approval has been received from Bishop's Office.**

## Liturgical Notes for an Order of Service:

### Introductory Rites:

**Penitential Rite.** At a Confirmation Mass, this always takes the form of a blessing and sprinkling with Holy Water and Salt. Please ensure you choose some suitable music for this. The *Kyrie* is omitted.

**Gloria** – the Gloria is prescribed as part of the Confirmation Liturgy

**Opening Prayer** – Mass for the Conferral of Confirmation 4C (Missal page 1190)

### Liturgy of the Word:

**Readers.** When selecting readers – preferably not a Confirmation Candidate – please remember that the reader will need to receive careful preparation.

**The Readings for the Confirmation Mass will be:**

**First Reading:** Acts 2: 1-11

**Psalm:** Ps 103:1,24, 29-31, 34. R/. cf v.30.

**Response:** *'Send forth your Spirit O Lord and renew the face of the earth'.*

**Second Reading:** 1 Cor 12: 3-7, 12-13

**Gospel Acclamation:** (sung) *Alleluia! Alleluia! Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of Your love, Alleluia!.*

**Gospel:** John 20: 19-23

**The Gospel.** The Gospel acclamation should be sung. Before proclaiming the Gospel, the deacon (or, in the absence of a deacon, a priest) goes to the Bishop to request a blessing. He uses the words: "Your blessing, Father." Please ensure the following text is included in the Order of Service: **After the Gospel: All remain standing. Following the proclamation of the Gospel, the deacon (or priest) does not venerate the book, but brings it to the Bishop for him to venerate and to bless the people. Once complete, all sit.**

## Liturgy of Confirmation:

**Presentation of Candidates.** After the Bishop has blessed the faithful with the Book of the Gospels, the Coordinating Pastor or a Catechist presents the candidates for Confirmation. S/he says: "Would the candidates for Confirmation please stand." S/he then continues: "Most Reverend Father, on behalf of the parish / Pastoral Area of ... I present to you these Candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation". The Catechist may, if desired, read out the list of individual names, but should do so expeditiously in order to avoid undue delay. The Bishop then approaches the lectern and greets the candidates. He will invite them to sit for the homily.

**Renewal of Baptismal Promises.** After the homily, the Bishop invites the candidates to stand and renew their baptismal promises.

**Laying on of Hands.** After the renewal of baptismal promises, the Bishop will invite the candidates to come forward to stand (in rows) at the foot of the sanctuary. The stewards will need to be on-hand to make sure this happens smoothly. The concelebrating priests join the Bishop at the front of the sanctuary and when all is ready extend their hands with the Bishop as he prays over the candidates.

**Return to Places.** After the prayer over the candidates, they return to their places. The priests return to their places. The Bishop returns to the *cathedra* for the anointing.

**Anointing With Chrism.** In what follows, the stewards need to work hard to expedite matters but also to maintain dignity. The stewards direct the candidates to move towards the Bishop at the *cathedra*. Each candidate kneels before the Bishop on the top step. The sponsor gives the name card to the Deacon (or Priest) assisting the Bishop, and then stands behind the candidate, with their right hand on the candidate's right shoulder. The assisting Deacon (or Priest) shows the Bishop the name card: please mark the Confirmation name on the card clearly for the Bishop to read. The Bishop anoints the candidate on the forehead with Sacred Chrism saying "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit". The candidate responds: "Amen". The Bishop then says "Peace be with you". And the candidate responds, "And with your spirit". During your Confirmation rehearsal, please ensure your candidates know how to respond. The newly confirmed candidate and their sponsor return to their places via the south aisle (Blessed Sacrament Chapel side of the Cathedral).

**Only the candidate and his/her sponsor should approach the Bishop. They do so by walking up the central aisle of the Cathedral, as guided by the stewards.**

## Liturgy of the Eucharist:

**Preparation of the Gifts.** For the offertory procession, two newly confirmed should be selected in advance. The Gifts are presented to the Bishop at the *cathedra*. There will be a collection, for which 4 newly confirmed will be required to assist. These six people need to report to the stewards at the back of the cathedral immediately after anointing. The visiting stewards will need to be on-hand to co-ordinate this.

**Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.** Usually at a Confirmation Mass, there are enough Priests and Deacons to help with the distribution of Holy Communion. However, if sufficient Ordinary Ministers are not present, it would be helpful if some EMHCs were available should they be needed. They should report to the Sacristy before Mass to make themselves known to the MC, who will advise if they are required.

**Prayer over the Offerings:** Roman Missal page 1190

**Preface** of the Holy Spirit (1), Roman Missal page 1405

**Eucharistic Prayer III.** Roman Missal page 684 with the added petition: "after the words 'the entire people you have gained for your own' the second concelebrant continues:

*'Remember also, Lord, your servants reborn in Baptism, whom you have been pleased to confirm by bestowing the Holy Spirit, and in your mercy, keep safe in them your grace. Listen graciously to the prayers of this family...'*

### **Holy Communion:**

When preparing the Order of Service, please ensure the following note about receiving Holy Communion is included:

*"Communicants are reminded to make an act of reverence before receiving Holy Communion and to consume the Sacred Host immediately upon its reception. Those not in full communion with the Catholic Church – or anyone else not receiving Holy Communion – are invited to make a "Spiritual Communion" (see prayer below). You may wish to complete this by going forward to receive a blessing from the priest. Please indicate that you wish to receive a blessing by crossing your arms over your chest."*

### **Spiritual Communion Prayer:**

"My Jesus, I believe that you are present in this Holy Sacrament of the Altar. I love You above all things and I passionately desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come spiritually into my heart so that I may unite myself wholly to You now and forever. Amen."



### **Cathedral Discovery Centre:**

The Cathedral Shop will be open when the Confirmations are taking place. **If you would like to organise refreshments, please contact the Cathedral Parish Office directly by telephone 02392 008810 or email [cathedral@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:cathedral@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk).** It is recommended that Pastoral Areas include a note within their Confirmation service booklets, about what refreshments, if any, they have organised.

## Directions and Car Parking:

- Portsmouth and Southsea station is within walking distance of the Cathedral.
- Coaches can drop off/pick up on Bishop Crispian Way at the designated bus stops.

If you are coming by car, take care to load in the correct postcode. The postcode for the St. John's Catholic Cathedral is PO1 3HG. The address is: Bishop Crispian Way, Portsmouth. The Cathedral car park entrance is the first opening on the right, just a short way up Bishop Crispian Way near the bus stops. **Be mindful not to drive up Bishop Crispian Way past the Cathedral due to bus lane cameras.**

The Cathedral Car Park is available, although spaces are limited. It needs to be vacated by 5:30pm to ensure access for those attending evening Mass at 6pm. The parking arrangements at the Cathedral have changed. There is a new system in place. Please inform your visitors who will be attending your Confirmation Mass, that car parking is chargeable before exit. Unfortunately, there is no way of reserving car parking spaces. Car parking is on a first come, first serve basis. Other car parks near the Cathedral include Cascades Shopping Centre and Stanhope Road. Or try Portsmouth Park & Ride (£4 per vehicle). The frequent Park & Ride buses stop right outside the Cathedral on Bishop Crispian Way. See <https://parkandride.portsmouth.gov.uk/>



**Please direct all enquiries regarding the Confirmation Liturgy to  
Deacon Craig Aburn: [confirmation@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:confirmation@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)  
Tel: 023 9421 6512**



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