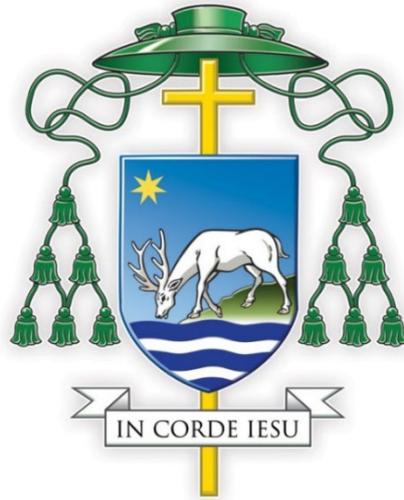


# Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

Bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church



## Sacrament of Confirmation

### Guidelines for Celebration in the Pastoral Area 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 then 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.

## Registering The Confirmation:

After the Confirmation Mass, the names of the candidates will be recorded in the parish register of the parish where the Confirmations took place. The name cards will then be returned to the candidates' home parish, so that the certificates can be produced and for notifying the parish 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.

## Certificates:

Each Parish should issue the newly Confirmed with a Certificate of Confirmation. Ideally this should be done at the Parish Celebration Mass the following weekend. Due to the large numbers of candidates, the Bishop has delegated the Coordinating Pastor to sign each certificate on his behalf.

## Stewards:

Each Pastoral Area should appoint a Chief Steward to oversee the stewarding and provide 6 ushers/stewards for its Confirmation Mass who should make themselves known to the Chief Steward, at the rear of the church at least 30 minutes before Mass. Stewards 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 Chief Steward. Visiting stewards are asked to assist after the Mass with housekeeping, e.g., collecting service booklets, lost property, etc.

## Seating:

Pastoral Areas may wish to organise seats for candidates and sponsors.

**Seating for Candidate and Sponsor.** Candidates, sponsors and families should be in their places 15 minutes before 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 candidates than pews, 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. 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.

## Liturgical Preparation:

Please ensure that your sacristan makes the following preparations:

- Red vestments for Priests and Deacons (or ask the clergy to bring vestments with them)
- Book of the Gospels
- Sufficient chairs for concelebrants
- Salt and Holy Water bucket with fresh water
- Soap, lemon slices, sliced bread
- Bowl of warm water
- Vessel of Chrism and purificators / lavabo towels
- Order of Confirmation Liturgical book
- Bread and wine prepared at the back of the Church
- Sufficient chalices and ciboria
- Sufficient copies of the Orders of Service for concelebrants

## Altar Servers:

Please encourage your altar servers from the various churches in the Pastoral Area 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 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 and red vestment. Deacons from the Pastoral Area should assist, but if your Pastoral Area / Parish does not have sufficient deacons, please contact Deacon Craig Aburn who will seek assistance from 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:

Please 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.

## 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

**Psalms:** 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.

**Anointing With Chrism.** In what follows, the stewards need to work hard to expedite matters but also to maintain dignity. The stewards need to usher the candidates and their sponsors to the altar steps, in a line across the front of the sanctuary, facing the altar. The Bishop will go along the line to each candidate in turn. The sponsor stands behind the candidate, holding the candidate's name card in their left hand, clearly visible to the Bishop (please ensure the Confirmation name on the card is clear) and with their right hand on the candidate's right shoulder. 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 shakes the candidate's hand and 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 and their sponsor return to their places via the side aisle.

**Only the candidate and his/her sponsor should approach the Bishop. They do so by walking up the central aisle of the church, 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 his seat. There will be a collection, for which four newly Confirmed will be required to assist. These six people need to report to the stewards at the back of the Church immediately after anointing. The 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."





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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