



**THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESE OF PORT OF SPAIN**
Health, Safety and Environment Team
c/o Archbishop's House, 27 Maraval Road, Port of Spain

Bulletin # 9

**Guidelines for Conferral of the Sacrament of
Confirmation during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Date of Issue: November 25, 2020

Conferral of the Sacrament of Confirmation during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Introduction

During this period of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, special health protocols must be put in place to ensure that all stakeholders are protected from the risk of being infected with the virus. This means that several procedures must be done in a manner that differs from those to which we have become accustomed. We must emphasize that it is very important to follow the new protocols issued by the Ministry of Health and by the Archdiocesan Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) Team that was appointed earlier this year by His Grace, the Archbishop of Port of Spain.

Preparation

1. Each confirmand is allowed a maximum of two guests, inclusive of parents/sponsor/proxy to attend the ceremony. If an individual who is selected as the sponsor cannot be accommodated, one of the confirmand's parents in attendance can be a proxy for the sponsor
2. The temperature of each person seeking to enter the church should be tested by using a contactless thermometer. The temperature should not exceed 37.5°C.
3. Immediately before entering the church, all attendees must thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water, which if not available, should be substituted by hand sanitizer of at least 60% alcohol content.
4. Persons with flu-like symptoms should not attend any church ceremonies. As with all services, there must be registration of ALL attendees by way of name and telephone number to assist with Contact Tracing should this become necessary.
5. The floor of the church should have tape markings indicating where participants should process and stand during the confirmation ceremony, observing the required physical distancing from the Archbishop and from one another.

6. One marking should be placed in front of the Archbishop indicating where the confirmand stands, and another six (6) feet away, indicating where the sponsor stands.
7. The pews should be marked for seating for all confirmands and guests. Markings should be placed at least six feet apart indicating where individuals may sit. Further, there needs to be a six-foot distance in all directions between marked seats. (*Confirmands and parent/sponsor/proxy who live in the same household may sit immediately next to one another*).
8. Until further notice, the Parish Priest must submit to the HSE Team, at least two weeks in advance of the date for the Confirmation ceremony, a draft layout of the seating arrangements for the service. This is to allow the HSE Team to review the draft layout and be satisfied that it meets all Health requirements.
9. Face masks must be worn for the entire service by all who are in attendance. A face shield shall not be worn in place of a face mask but a face shield may be worn together with a face mask.
10. A table should be set up near the sanctuary to hold needed supplies, including,
 - a. *The chrism, which should be prepared in a separate vessel.*
 - b. *Sufficient cotton swabs or Q-tips – **one for each confirmand***
 - c. *Hand sanitizer for the Archbishop and others*
11. Arrangements must be made in advance for proper disposal of the cotton swabs or Q-tips immediately after the service, either by being burnt or buried.
12. All confirmands, sponsors and guests should be asked to check themselves for symptoms on the day of the confirmation and alert the Parish Priest if they have become symptomatic. Those who are symptomatic should not attend the service.
13. The parish should appoint a sufficient number of greeters and ushers to help direct and manage the flow of confirmands and guests entering and throughout the service.
14. A greeter(s) is to meet all attendees at the door or in the vestibule, ensure that they have suitable face masks and offer hand sanitizer to each person. The greeter(s) should also advise all attendees that if they are ill, they should not

enter the church. One of the greeters must take the temperature of each attendee before he/she is allowed to enter the church

Rites of the Confirmation Ceremony

1. All attendees must wear face masks covering nose and mouth for the duration of the service.
2. All participants, including the Archbishop should have sanitized their hands.
3. The Parish Priest should remind all present to please follow the precautions that are in place, including keeping on the mask; sitting in designated pews at designated markers, etc.
4. In the procession to the Archbishop for confirmation, candidates and sponsor/proxy must remain six feet apart from one another at all times. Masks are still to be worn. The sponsor/proxy should remain six feet from the confirmand, and not place a hand on the shoulder during confirmation. However, he/she may extend his/her right hand towards the candidate while the Archbishop performs the anointing.
5. The Archbishop must keep his mask on during the anointing because of proximity to participants.
6. For each anointing, the Archbishop shall use a fresh cotton ball/swab. Every used cotton ball/swab is to be retained for proper disposal after the celebration (burned and the ashes buried or buried without being burned).
7. For the exchange of peace after the anointing, there should be no physical contact between the Archbishop and the newly confirmed. A simple nod, head bow or some other simple sign is sufficient.
8. After the anointing, the newly confirmed and sponsor/proxy return to their designated pew.
9. There should be no congratulatory physical contact as they return to their places.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

1. The Liturgy of the Eucharist is to follow guidelines issued by the HSE Team for the celebration of Mass
2. **Under no circumstances is the Precious Blood to be distributed**

Post Rite and Cleaning

1. Cotton balls/swabs with chrism should be disposed of properly, either by being buried or burnt. Gloves should be worn during the disposal.

Reference: Sacramental Guidelines for Reopening - Adolescent and Adult Confirmation from the Archdiocese of Chicago, USA
(<https://www.archchicago.org/documents/70111/2833001/Sacramental+Guidelines+for+Reopening+Adolescent+and+Adult+Confirmation.pdf/1bd51879-a37e-4ff6-a22f-c77c932c00cd>) (last accessed 25/11/2020)