

Review

Rationale and Background

Christian Initiation is core business for all parish communities. This long-awaited review seeks to hear your voice.

The diocesan document '[Pastoral Guidance for the Preparation and Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation – Guidelines | Procedures | Resources](#)' was finalised and issued by 'Instruction' on 26 May 2017. This followed several rounds of consultation and conversation with parishes.

COVID sidelined the intended three-year review in 2020. Then, with the Vacant See following Bishop Bill Wright's death, the review was put on hold until the appointment of a new Bishop.

Throughout this time parish feedback has been invited and received, and the resources have been updated frequently in light of that feedback. Additional resources have been produced to fill gaps identified by parishes.

During this time, the ministry of Assistant Master of Ceremonies has developed. The Assistant Masters of Ceremonies who minister at most confirmations where the bishop or his delegate preside, have provided another important level of accompaniment and support for parishes.

With the installation of our new bishop and given Bishop Michael Kennedy has presided at many confirmations throughout 2023, it is now appropriate to proceed with a more formal review of the Guidelines, Procedures and Resources.

Context

Any review takes place in a context. There has been significant change and development in our diocesan and parish context since 2017. There is both commonality and diversity in our context across parishes. Following are some aspects of context that inform this review.

Firstly, there is the ongoing impact of COVID on parish life and particularly liturgical ministry. Most parishes continue to experience a significant reduction in the number of liturgical ministers (the term 'liturgical ministers' includes those who exercise any liturgical ministry in the liturgy). This impacts the preparation and celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. For some parishes this has pushed them back to a reliance on school staff.

Secondly, our appreciation and understanding of the ministry of Christian Initiation as an integrated journey continues to grow. We bring new insights and questions to the preparation and celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation when it is understood and celebrated as part of the larger journey of Christian Initiation. This growth was spurred by the October 2019 workshop with Nick Wagner and Diana Macalintal and the invitation we heard to view all Christian Initiation through the lens of the RCIA. Over 80 people participated in that workshop.

Thirdly, significant numbers of those involved in the ministry of Christian Initiation continue to feel frustration about the effectiveness of the process of preparation and celebration of Sacraments of Initiation for children. While families continue to participate in large numbers, with some exceptions, these families do not find a home in the life and worship of the parish community. Forming and sustaining lifelong disciples remains a significant challenge. This challenge is felt across the country and is often the subject of articles in journals such as LiturgyNews and the Australian Pastoral Musicians Network News. Endless resources produced by TeamRCIA and the Christian Initiation Australia Network (CIAN) seek to address this and other issues identified here.

Fourthly, the Christian Initiation Forum has developed a new resource for the ministry of Christian Initiation titled 'Come and See'. This resource extends an invitation to any parish who has discerned a readiness to reimagine the Ministry of Christian Initiation of adults and children through the lens of the RCIA. Parishes discerning a desire for, and readiness to change their pastoral approach to Christian Initiation are offered face-to-face support and accompaniment by members of the Christian Initiation Forum. 'Come and See' resources are available for everyone to view on the diocesan website. [Click on the relevant drop-down menu '+']

The Review Process

Stage One of the process is to gather feedback from a wide range of individuals using the online Review Questionnaire located at the end of this text.

The feedback data will be collated and reviewed by the Diocesan Liturgy Council, the Christian Initiation Forum, the College of Assistant Masters of Ceremonies, the Office Worship and Prayer and Bishop Michael before being made available to the community.

The collated feedback will determine the next stage of the review process. Next stage possibilities might be:

- Focus group conversations to gather further data
- A revision of the primary document 'Pastoral Guidance for the Preparation and Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation – Guidelines | Procedures | Resources'
- A period of community gatherings for conversation and reflection on the redrafted document. This occurred with the development of the current document.
- An update of the current resources.

When the process of community feedback and consultation has reached an appropriate point a revised guidance document will be issued by Bishop Michael.

From there, the process of receiving and living the Guidelines will continue with a date provided for the next formal review.

Resources

Reference and guidance resources

The Order of Confirmation, particularly:

- The Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation
- The Introduction to the Order of Confirmation

The Diocesan Policy '[Becoming Disciples](#)' and the accompanying '[Commentary Document](#)'.

[Sacraments of Initiation: A Fallow Year Resource](#) was developed to support parishes in responding to our late Bishop Bill Wright's 2020 invitation to reflect on current initiation practices during COVID.

Whichever 'program' an individual parish chooses to use.

[Come and See: Reimagining the Ministry of Christian Initiation](#) which includes the foundational document and supporting documents.

[Pastoral Guidance for the Preparation and Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation](#). [DoMN]

Liturgy preparation resources

All resources are available for download from the [diocesan website](#). Click on the drop-down menu '+' for 'Pastoral Guidance for Confirmation'. Links are also provided in this review document as follows:

Confirmation Advice Form – two versions:

- [Version one](#): for use when preparing a Master Order of Service
- [Version two](#): including Liturgy Outlines, for use when not preparing a Master Order of Service.

[Alternative Rites](#): for Presentation of Symbols and Simplified Baptismal Promises.

Master Order of Service templates:

- [Template 1](#): Without Mass Bishop presiding
- [Template 2](#): Within Mass Bishop presiding
- [Template 3](#): Without Mass priest presiding
- [Template 4](#): Within Mass priest presiding

[Pastoral Guidance for preparing liturgy when the Bishop, Vicar General or Bishop's delegate presides](#)

[Checklist: From Master Copy to Celebration](#)

Review Questionnaire

Stage one – gathering feedback.

Individuals who wish to participate in this review can click the link below to start the questionnaire. Time required is approximately 20 minutes. You can save your answers at any time and return later to complete and submit the form. After submission, you'll have the option to start a new questionnaire, which may be helpful if you are connected to multiple parishes.

With thanks

The Office of Worship and Prayer

For the Diocesan Liturgy Council, the Christian Initiation Forum and the College of Assistant Masters of Ceremonies.

December 2023

[CLICK TO START REVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE](#)