

The Order of Ceremony

Opening Song:

Children and sponsors assemble at the back of the Church and process in and stand together in their seats. The Bishop and servers follow.

Welcome and Introduction

The symbols of Confirmation are presented – the Paschal Candle, the Book of the Gospels, the sacred oil of Chrism and the Water of Baptism.

Opening Prayer

The Liturgy of the Word

The Sacred Scriptures are proclaimed – these are our ancient stories of faith.

The Rite of Confirmation

The calling of the candidates

The name of each **Candidate** for Confirmation is called and each Candidate responds by standing up.

The Instruction of the candidates

The Bishop invites all the Candidates to gather around him at the front of the altar and he speaks to them about the gift they are soon to receive.

Sponsors remain in their seats.

Profession of faith

The Bishop asks the children to profess their faith publically.

Laying on of hands

The Bishop lays his hands over the candidates – a prayer to ask the Holy Spirit to come upon the children. The Candidates then return to their seats.

Anointing with Chrism

1. The ceremony of anointing with the sacred oil is prepared. The Bishop's seat is placed in front and he takes his seat.
2. Candidates and sponsors go to the back of the Church and stand together.
3. The ushers call them forward at an appropriate time to be anointed by the Bishop.
4. The sponsor stands behind the Candidate and places the right hand on the right shoulder.
5. The Bishop says to the candidate:
“Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Peace be with you.”
6. The newly confirmed replies:
And with your spirit.
7. The Sponsor leads the newly confirmed child to his or her seat and offers congratulations.
8. Say a prayer with them as the other candidates are confirmed.

Prayers of Intercession

The Bishop invites the assembly into a time of prayer for the candidates and the world.

Final Blessing

The Bishop blesses the Newly Confirmed and all the people present.

Recessional

The Bishop and servers process out of the Church and the children and sponsors follow.

Photo with Bishop

The Bishop will oblige with any requests for a photo. Please line up and come forward in turn to the Bishop.

A note for Sponsors at Confirmation Time

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you will be my witnesses”
(Acts 1:8)

Dear Sponsor

Congratulations and thank you for being involved in the life of the child about to be confirmed. May you receive a great blessing through this relationship.

The child in your care is about to receive a most precious gift – the gift of God’s Holy Spirit to draw each Christian closer to Jesus Christ. When we think of how the Holy Spirit might work in our life, we look to Jesus and see how he lived his life full of God’s Holy Spirit. This gift can and will make a difference in this child’s life if he or she allows the Holy Spirit to guide their thoughts and actions.

In order to help them appreciate and live out the enormity of this gift, you have been chosen to be their *Sponsor*. If this is your God-child, then you continue a special bond begun at baptism.

The child to be confirmed sees in you a profound faith commitment, finds trust and knows you are someone who will care about them and their faith. It's not all that complicated, but it does take time, a caring heart and a listening ear. The child’s parents are calling you to be someone special for their

child: to set an example, help teach their child about the Catholic faith, have a lifelong relationship of prayer, faith sharing and love. Take some time to pray God’s blessing on your ability to do this.

Another symbolic action of the *Sponsor* is the placing of your right hand on the right shoulder of the child to be confirmed. This is an ancient practice in which the Sponsor symbolically tells everyone that the child is ready in faith to receive this gift and that you are there to support and sustain them in their journey of faith. Your hand is a reassurance, a blessing, a commitment, a faithful relationship, a comfort, a support.

Here are a few suggestions on how to be the best possible sponsor.

• **Be a living model of faith.**

At least a part of what this young person admires in you is your faith! If the way you practice your faith is not what it should be, "get it together," so to speak! Your life doesn't have to become artificially saintly, but your faith should be authentic and sincere.

• **Pray for your candidate and yourself.**

As candidates decide to be confirmed, they need spiritual strength. Your prayers for them are important, but don't forget to pray for yourself also, that you can share why you value and practice your Catholicism. Attend Mass together, or even have the courage to come to Reconciliation together.

• **Give of your time and share your gifts.**

Once confirmed, the child is ready to put his / her faith into action. So help and work on a project together that helps the poor and needy or those less fortunate. Let them see how we choose right from wrong, and how we care. You could also share your own experiences or write a letter of encouragement. Let your unique God-given talents shine!

• **An appropriate Gift**

Offer a gift of spiritual significance —a new Bible, rosary or book about our faith or about the saint the candidate has chosen as a Confirmation name — but *be creative and relevant!*

• **Don't miss the ceremony.**

Participating in the ceremony is the easiest part of being a sponsor. Your basic job will be to place your hand on your candidate's shoulder. You're there to be a support, but your role is only just beginning.

• **Don't forget this newly confirmed Catholic.**

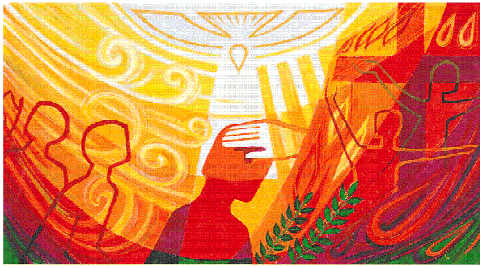
After Confirmation day, remember birthdays and this anniversary. Send a card or make a phone call. Continue to go to Mass together, or from time to time do some service to the community. Put those "Gifts of the Spirit" into practice. Please enjoy this special relationship all life long.

Best wishes,

Fr John Hodgson CSsR

Parish Priest

**St Mary of the Cross MacKillop,
Warnervale**



A letter for Parents of Confirmation Children

Dear Parents

Congratulations! I am so proud of your commitment and love for your child in that you want them to receive all the spiritual blessings that God gives the Catholic Community in the sacraments.

Thank you for preparing your child through your own example of Christian living - the time spent to go through the lessons, and through your attendance at the information evening, Sunday Mass, the practice and for preparing a sponsor.

There is a letter here addressed to your **child**. I would be very grateful if you could read this letter out loud to him or her – perhaps before the meal Friday evening or just before bed-time. Read slowly, it may help a little to prepare your child for the big event. Please explain to them how much the parish family also values your child as you do.

This year, Bishop David is unable to celebrate the ceremony with us and has asked **Bishop Geoffrey Robinson** to be the celebrant. Please make him very welcome. Bishop Robinson has been an auxiliary

Bishop of Sydney for many years before retiring.

When your child comes to be anointed Bishop Robinson will say: **“Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.”** Could you practice with your child to respond to Bishop Robinson in a strong voice with: **And with your spirit.**

There is also a note for your child’s **Sponsor**. Please feel welcome to give this to him or her well before the ceremony to help in the preparation and the celebration.

Bishop Geoffrey is only too happy to oblige with a **photo** of you and your child, sponsor and family. It is just a matter of lining up in readiness to be next after Confirmation.

Please help your child to keep in touch with his or her **Sponsor**. This relationship can be special, but may need nurturing.

The time **after Confirmation** is very important. It is a time to let your child know of the expectation of God to grow close to Jesus by doing things that help others, especially those less fortunate. Any help to reinforce this message and the Christian value of service will develop your child’s faith enormously.

The **10am Sunday Mass** is now a dedicated family Mass with the involvement of the children, and I would encourage your participation as a family. The Sunday time together will build on all that is happening in confirmation and hopefully allow the children to be more involved.

The task of developing your child’s faith is always a big ask. May you know how much your parish family admires you and how keen we are to support you. We never wish to take this primary responsibility away from you, but we are very willing to offer all the help we can. Our catechists have enjoyed the opportunity to work with you.

If, after the ceremony, there are suggestions you have on how to help next year’s children experience Confirmation better, please let us know. We look forward to your suggestions.

Thank you once again for trusting in God’s love and care for you and your family. Good luck with any of the after Confirmation celebrations!

God bless.

Father John Hodgson CSsR

Ceremony details

1. **Dress:** Predominately white
2. **Start Time:** 9.30am or 11am.
3. **Arrival Time:** 20 mins before.
4. **Where to go:** Sponsors and child, please see Parish Staff.
5. **Before the ceremony:** Children receive their name badge from the parish staff, as well as a Confirmation medallion.
6. **Parents and family** to be seated in the Church. There are no allocated seats.
7. **After ceremony:** Children collect a Certificate

A letter for Children at Confirmation

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes has come upon you. And you will be my witnesses” Acts 1:8

Dear Friend of Jesus,

Confirmation is very near and I hope you feel excited. You will soon receive a most precious gift – the gift of God’s Holy Spirit. Your family and your parish family are so proud of you. This year is a special year, because you will be confirmed just before World Youth Day. I hope that one day soon, you will travel overseas and be part of World Youth Day in another country.

The preparation has been done and Bishop Geoffrey will soon anoint you with the Sacred Oil, confirming and sealing you with God’s Holy Spirit.

Without the **Holy Spirit**, every Christian is like a sailing ship without the wind, a candle without a flame, a body without a breath. Without the Holy Spirit you can look good, but never fulfil your potential to be the good person God created you to be.

God, who created you in love to be a **person of love**, never wants to lose this special

relationship with you given at your Baptism. The Holy Spirit is given as a gift by God to draw you close to Jesus, God’s Son. When you come close to Jesus, then you become the real person of love God created you to be.

To understand how the Holy Spirit might work in your life, look at the **life of Jesus** and see how he lived his life full of God’s Holy Spirit. This gift can and will make a difference in your life if you allow the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts and actions.

Whenever you are in need, please say the prayer: “**Holy Spirit help me!**” The Holy Spirit is not only there to bring you close to Jesus. It also helps you to act like Jesus.

After Confirmation, you will be expected to do things for your family and for your Church family and for the poor and needy to help bring more love to the world.

To help you do this, your family has chosen a **Sponsor** for you, a special family friend who stands with you to support you so that you can live more like Jesus.

Please thank your Sponsor for being there for you on Saturday and every day. When you are anointed with the sacred oil, your **Sponsor** will place his or her right hand on your shoulder.

This is an ancient practice in which the Sponsor symbolically tells everyone you are ready in faith to receive this gift and that they are there to support and sustain you in your journey of faith.

That hand on you is a reassurance, a blessing, a commitment, a faithful relationship, a comfort, and a support.

Please keep in touch with your **Sponsor** and invite him or her to help you do things as Jesus would have done.

When you come to be anointed, Bishop Geoffrey will say to you: “**Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.**” Please respond to Bishop Geoffrey in a strong voice with: **And with your spirit.**

Above all, please be relaxed. Bishop Geoffrey loves being with you. You can ask him any question you like. Please stay behind to have a photo with him too.

Please thank your family for preparing you. They love you very much. Get ready for a wonderful celebration!

God Bless you, and thank you for taking this step.

Father John and all the parish team.