

CONFIRMATION

While Baptism is clearly the primary rite of Christian initiation, Confirmation remains a very important sacrament. There is now wide agreement that we have made a big mistake in down playing the importance of the sacrament as an opportunity for personal commitment and growth. While not suggesting that we should attempt to return to the days of a round up, we should maximise the power and energy of confirmation. From a pastoral point of view it is a significant rite of passage, especially in rural parishes.

Preparation: There are as many courses of preparation as there are groups in preparation. While not understating the importance of content, it is even more important to create an environment in which the candidates take the initiative for their own exploration. The process of preparation and the sacrament itself should strengthen the relationship between the candidates and the community of faith. If at all possible the Bishop should meet the candidates sometime prior to the service. This could be weeks before, the day before, or on the day itself.

The Service: If there is to be a baptism with the confirmation, the service will commence on p51 of APBA otherwise the rite will commence on p51 of APBA. The liturgical colour will normally be white. The lections should be checked with the Bishop at least a week prior to the service. The names of those being confirmed should be recorded in the Parish Confirmation Register and a copy given to the Bishop on the day of the Confirmation. It is appropriate for the candidates to receive a confirmation card which will be signed by the Bishop. The cash collection on the day is made for training of candidates for the ministry. The service should provide as much personal involvement as possible.

- * A statement of faith could be made by one or more of the candidates.
- * A dialogue between the Bishop and one or more of the candidates could take place at the point of the sermon.
- * The decision and the statement of faith can be made by the candidates in front of the congregation.
- * Family and friends of the candidate may like to come and pray with him/her at the time of the laying on of hands.
- * A lighted candle may be presented to the candidates when they renew their baptismal promises.
- * Candidates may contribute to the service through prayer, bible reading, music, statement of faith etc.