

BAPTISM CONFIRMATION



Pastoral Letter 2017-2018

**To all the Catholics of the
Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Arabia**

Bishop Camillo Ballin, mccj

Introduction

Dear brothers, sisters, and fellow priests,

The Peace of Jesus Christ be with you all.

Since my first Pastoral Letter, for the year 2007-2008, it was my intention to explain every year the Sacraments. But, some circumstances (Year of Faith, Year of the Church, Year of Mercy, Consecration of the Vicariate to the Virgin Mary) obliged me to write about those subjects and not about the Sacraments.

From 2007 to 2011 I wrote four Pastoral Letters on the Eucharist. This same subject will be explained again next year because from 2011 the Vicariate has been changed and enlarged.

This year, 2017-2018, I am happy to present to you this Pastoral Letter on Baptism and Confirmation. The purpose of this booklet is to offer a guide for priests and lay people who have to prepare families for Baptism and Confirmation. Baptism is not just a washing; its purpose is not just to cancel the original sin and any other sin. After the priest has said: "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," people think that the Baptism is done. In this case, Baptism will leave us "empty," clean but empty. Meanwhile the cancellation of sin is only a condition in order that God might give us his life! God doesn't just

purify us from our mistakes; his purpose is to give us a new life, his life. This is done through the unction with the sacred chrism that occurs after the outpouring of the water on the head of the child. In Baptism we become children of God because God gives us his Holy Spirit, his life. As you gave life to your children, the same God gives us a new life, makes us participants in his divine nature. The unction with the sacred chrism is the completion of Baptism.

Confirmation gives us again, and in a special way, the gift of the Holy Spirit. Baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity, confirmed by the Holy Spirit, we are able to encounter Jesus in the Eucharist, the last Sacrament of the Christian initiation.

May this booklet help us to understand more the precious gifts of Baptism and of Confirmation.

Your Bishop,

+ Camillo Ballin, mccc

I) BAPTISM: NEW LIFE!

1. The Sacraments of the Christian initiation

In every Church we find the celebration of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. The rites are the same: baptismal bath, ointment with chrism and the laying of the hands, and the Communion in the Eucharistic banquet. There is no Church that doesn't celebrate baptism, confirmation and Eucharist. The external rites can be different in some aspects from one Church to another, and also those who participate can belong to different ages: children or adults. But some elements are immutable. First of all the conviction that we deal with rites and moments of an extreme importance and we cannot neglect them, otherwise we are not Christians. If we are not baptized, we are not Christians; if we don't receive Confirmation, we are Christians but not in a complete way; if we don't participate in the Eucharist, we are not fully disciples of Jesus and don't belong in a complete way to his community, the Church. Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist are the Sacraments of the Christian initiation. The term "Sacraments" means that they are not simply human rites, but "sacred" rites founded by Jesus Christ himself and through which he himself works with his Holy Spirit. The sacraments are not works of the priest but of Jesus

Christ himself, who is present and works personally in every sacrament.

In spite of the variations, they present the same elements. The fundamental elements are the same in every Christian community: water, ointments, bread and wine; also the essential words which accompany the rites are the same, their meaning doesn't change even though the prayers can be different from a Church to another.

2. Jesus Christ, with the gift of his Holy Spirit, at the origin of all the Sacraments

The Church celebrates the Sacraments, makes the baptismal bath, lays the hands, signs the body with ointment and gathers for the Eucharist not for her proper initiative, but by obedience to Jesus Christ. These sacred rites respond to the will of Jesus Christ. God himself is at the origin of these Sacraments. If the Church would neglect the Baptism or the laying of hands or abandon the Eucharistic banquet, she would be unfaithful to Jesus Christ and would not be his Church. Before ascending into heaven and for a period of 40 days, Jesus sent the apostles to all the countries of the world to announce the Gospel, to baptize and to teach being obedient to his word and faithful to his commandments. We read in St. Mathew: *"All power in*

heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age” (Mt 28:18-20).

It is evident here that Baptism corresponds to the will of Jesus Christ. The Church will discover in the words, or the intentions of Jesus, the origin of every Sacrament. However, Jesus Christ is not the one who invented the Sacraments and then he went far away. Jesus is always present, according to the explicit promise to remain with us forever, and he is present through his Holy Spirit. Therefore, we can say that the Sacraments are works made by Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, in order to realize his salvation to humanity to make of us his Church, his brothers, sons and daughters of God. Jesus is the “actor” of the Sacraments: invisible but really and efficaciously present.

3. Pentecost

The apostles started to celebrate the Sacraments after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and after they received the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

Once accomplished the Passover (Easter) and after his ascension into heaven, the Lord sent the Holy Spirit and from that moment the Church started. The small group

of apostles and of other disciples is invested by the power of the Holy Spirit which enlightens them, inflames them and pushes them to speak: their word is the Gospel, the joyful news. It proclaims that Jesus, Son of God, died for our sins, resurrected and all find salvation in him: all those who accept him in faith and repent of their sins.

Faith is the first condition to be saved, follows the conversion, which is the change of the heart and the engagement for a new life. Then, the Baptism. We read in the Acts of the Apostles: *“Those who accepted his message were baptized”* (Acts 2:41). Proclamation of the word, acceptance, conversion, baptism: these are the essential moments of the way to become Christians. Present in every one of these moments are Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit: to give value to the preaching, to enlighten the minds, to incline the will to the acceptance of the word, to transform life. A so simple and common action as a bath, washes sins, transforms the soul, overwhelms of the Holy Spirit and of grace and makes children of God.

This is the Sacrament, an action like many others of our life but, surprisingly, it gives us Jesus Christ and his Spirit. Therefore, we have to look beyond the appearance of water, oil, bread, wine and other signs to which Jesus Christ grants his power.

4. Baptism is the change of life

We have to add something very important. In the Acts of the Apostles St. Luke notices that the new disciples: *“Devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers... All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one’s need”* (Acts 2:42.44-45). An active and concrete fraternity and a life of communion were the signs for the Baptism they received. In fact, the Sacraments transform life.

We have a clear example of this change of life in the conversion and Baptism of St. Paul. He was a persecutor of the Church: *“Now Saul, still breathing murderous threats against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, that, if he should find any men or women who belonged to the Way, he might bring them back to Jerusalem in chains”* (Acts 9:1-2). The Lord, whom he did not know during his life on earth, meets him on the way to Damascus. It is Jesus himself who calls him by his name and asks him: *“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”* and reveals himself to him: *“I am Jesus whom you are persecuting”* (Acts 9:4-5). Saul cannot resist to the call of Christ. *“A light from the sky, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my traveling companions “*

(Acts 26:13) breaks into him, blinds him and overthrows him. The rebel becomes docile to the call. Saul will be baptized by Ananias, his name is changed into Paul. Not only his name, but his entire life is completely changed. With the Baptism, the new life came, till the point that the people were very surprised: *“All who heard him were astounded and said ‘Is not this the man who in Jerusalem ravaged those who call upon this name, and came here expressly to take them back in chains to the chief priests?’”* (Acts 9:21).

The Acts of the Apostles speak to us about another important Baptism, the one of Lydia (Acts 16:14). She was a *“believer in the Lord,”* a dealer in purple cloth, and passes from the listening to the announcement of Jesus. *“The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what Paul was saying”* (Acts 16:14). It is God who opens the heart of Lydia. Without this gift, the Gospel can be announced externally but it does not bring to adhesion and faith.

5. Baptized in Jesus Christ, clothed with Christ

The Christian communities are born with the proclamation of the gospel, the adhesion through faith and the celebration of the Sacraments, starting from Baptism, which gives the Holy Spirit. Thanks to the preaching of Paul, his numerous and adventurous trips,

the communities of Thessalonica, Korinthos and Galatia were born. Meanwhile, through the work of other missionaries the community of Rome was also born, and Paul will visit it and will be killed in Rome, like St. Peter. After he founded them, St. Paul did not abandon his communities but visited them personally to confirm them in their faith, and sent them letters of encouragement, instruction, admonition and even reproach.

Perhaps from Ephesus or from Macedonia, at around 56-57 A.D., he sent a letter to the Galatians, an area of the Asia Minor which corresponds today to the area around Ankara. That Church was in danger to lose its Christian identity. Some people had gone to them and defamed Paul as if he was not a true Apostle, and taught that they have to become first of all Jews, to obey the law of Moses, then they can become Christians. Paul reacted with an extreme vigor: "*O stupid Galatians, who has fascinated you...?*" (Gal 3:1) and affirmed that it is not from the law of Moses that the Holy Spirit is given but from faith in Jesus Christ: "*For through faith you are children of God in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ*" (Gal 3:26-27). Therefore any distinction disappeared and "*There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free person; there is neither male nor female; For you are all one in Christ*

Jesus" (Gal 3:28). This is what Baptism, with the gift of the Holy Spirit, has produced.

But it is not enough to receive the Holy Spirit, we have to *"live by the Spirit"* (Gal 5:16). This means that we have to live in purity, bounty, joy and peace.

To the Christians of Rome, whom he had not yet known, St. Paul wrote from Korinthos in the winter between 56-57 an important letter where he confirms that only faith in Jesus Christ can bring salvation and a new life. So, he explains what baptism is: a very close communion with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Sin is therefore dead, resurrection took over, thanks to the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit makes us really children of God, whom we can call now *"Father,"* and makes us heirs together with Jesus of the eternal life, provided we don't go back to sin: *"Or are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life"* (Rom 6:3-4).

II) **THE HOLY SIGNS OF THE CHRISTIAN INITIATION**

In the sacraments the Lord acts with gestures and words: his Spirit passes and reaches us through the

sensible matters. Thus we have the signs of the Christian initiation.

1. Water

Baptism is a washing having as its sign, water—matter by which we are regenerated thanks to the Holy Spirit. Plain water is enough: the Ethiopian functionary of Queen Candace was baptized at a stream found along the way (Acts 8:36). Later, with the construction of baptisteries and baptismal fonts, the water for baptism was consecrated, especially during the Easter vigil. The water was then conserved to be used for the entire year. With the liturgical reform of the Second Vatican Council, now the water is consecrated at the moment of each baptism during those times outside of the Easter season.

The water is collected in a container or allowed to flow freely. The ideal would be to have a beautiful and splendid baptismal font in a chapel either inside or outside of the church and visible to the faithful, in order to allow for common participation.

2. The Anointments

In baptism two anointments take place. The first is the anointment with the oil of catechumens. St. Cyril of Jerusalem explained the meaning of this anointment: It

is a preparation for the struggle that the Christian will have to endure against evil. Ancient wrestlers also prepared themselves for combat by anointing themselves with oil. The oil must be that of the olive or from another kind of vegetable. The second anointment, which occurs in Confirmation, is that of the chrism, which is oil mixed with perfumes (balsam).

3. The Easter Candle

This is a sign of baptism that remains lit during the whole rite and from whose flame the candle of the newly baptized is lit. The candle represents Christ, the light of the world, who shines in the conscience and in the life of the new children of God.

4. The white garment

This is another meaningful sign in which the newly baptized are dressed to signify the purity of their souls washed from all guilt and to symbolize their commitment to preserve the innocence they have received as the gift from water and the Spirit.

The water, the oil, the candle, the garment, alone, however, are not enough: these elements acquire their meaning if they are joined to words. The words —the “form”— give a meaning and value to the material signs. The words render them truly signs of Christ, who

in them acts and produces such marvelous effects as the rebirth by water, perfect conformity to Christ with the anointing with chrism. We are dealing here with sacred signs, which amid the signs of everyday life are inserted into the mysterious and stupendous reality of the divine world, the world of grace.

III) THE RITE OF BAPTISM OF INFANTS

1. The Welcoming

The rite of baptism for little ones begins with the welcoming of the infants. The priest and the faithful wait at the threshold of the church to receive from the parents and godparents the one to be baptized. This presentation symbolizes the desire of the parents and godparents to celebrate the sacrament of their own free will. This is an invitation to offer the greatest gift you can to a person, not taking children away from their families. They are brought to the church, which receives them with immense joy in the persons of the celebrant and the community in attendance. The liturgical reform underlines the value of celebrating baptism as a community suggesting that “for as far as it is possible, all infants born within a certain period of time should be baptized on the same day in one common celebration.”

In this way the ecclesial aspect of the sacrament is manifested.

At the welcoming the priest asks the parents for the name of the child and what it is they want: "**What name do you give each of these children? (or: have you given?)**" They respond: "**Baptism,**" declaring thus their commitment to educate the child "**in the practice of the faith...to keep God's commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor,**" assuming that responsibility which they will share with the godparents. The godparents have a very important duty, especially in cases where the parents may not be so exemplary in their faith. The godparent must be mature enough, one who has already received baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist and affiliated with the Catholic Church.

2. The sign of the cross

The rite proceeds with the sign of the cross on the forehead of the infant, which the minister makes "**with great joy**" in the name of the community. The "**sign of Christ our Savior**" is a first consecration to Jesus, who has redeemed us on the Cross.

Then all are brought to the baptistery. The ideal would be to make a space for baptism available which is large enough to accommodate many people. With a movable

font baptism can be celebrated in view of the faithful, near the main altar of the church.

3. The Liturgy of the Word

After these introductory parts the celebration of the Word of God takes place, which is followed with particular attention. Only such a Word, in fact, is able to teach us what baptism is, what fruit it can bring forth and what kind of commitment is derived from it. The great passages from the New and Old Testaments about baptism are read. It is opportune that the parents or godparents proclaim some of the readings. Some of these passages we know: the discussion of Jesus with Nicodemus, where it is the Savior himself who explains what baptism is (John 3:1-6); the passage where the apostles are sent by Christ to preach and baptize (Matthew 28:18-20); John who baptizes the Lord in the river Jordan (Mark 1:9-11); the affectionate meeting of Jesus with the children (Mark 10:13-16). Recourse is made also to the pages of the Old Testament: the water which springs up in the desert (Exodus 17:3-7); the promise of a new heart (Ezekiel 36:24-28).

After the proclamation of the Word is the homily, which explains the contents of the biblical readings, and the prayer of the faithful with the invocation of the saints—principally the patrons of those to be baptized or of the

local church. Through baptism one is made part of the family of saints who are concrete models of faithfulness to baptismal grace. In fact, faithfulness and the growth of Christian faith are graces that are asked for in the universal prayer, remembering the parents, godparents, the community present and the entire Church.

4. **The pre-baptismal anointment**

Before beginning the liturgy of the sacrament the prayer of exorcism takes place. The celebrant prays that the child may be freed from the “**power of Satan, spirit of evil**”: Christ, in fact, in his death and resurrection has defeated the demon and has released man from his slavery. He prays that the one to be baptized may be strong in the fight against temptation. Baptism is the beginning of a battle and to signify this, the minister anoints the chest of the child with the oil of catechumens saying: “**I anoint you with the oil of salvation in the name of Christ our Savior; may he strengthen you with his power.**”

5. **The invocation over the water**

The liturgy of the sacrament opens with a prayer that the minister says over the water. For baptism any water can be used, but the blessing is of great value because it

brings to light the providential function that water had in the intervention of God for the salvation of man: from the beginning of creation, in the flood, in the flight of the Hebrews through the Red Sea, at the Jordan, at the crucifixion of Jesus. Thus the prayer of the priest goes: ***“We ask you, Father, with your Son to send the Holy Spirit upon the water of this font. May all who are buried with Christ in the death of baptism rise also with him to newness of life.”***

6. Renunciation of Satan

The renunciation of Satan is done by the parents and godparents on behalf of the infants, but with the commitment to take ***“constant care to bring them up in the practice of the faith”*** so that ***“the divine life which God gives them is kept safe from the poison of sin, to grow always stronger in their hearts.”*** The renunciation to Satan is made three times to all his works and to all his seductions.

7. The profession of faith

This is another moment which is very important in the celebration, the triple profession of faith: in God the Father; in Jesus Christ and his work of salvation; in the Holy Spirit, principle of the Catholic Church, of the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the

resurrection of the body and life everlasting—all aspects which make up the Creed. After the parents and godparents have recited the Creed, the celebrant concludes with the words: ***“This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus our Lord.”***

8. The washing

Then occurs the triple immersion of the child in the baptismal font or the triple pouring of the water on the child’s head. However, the celebrant first asks the parents and godparents: ***“Is it your will that N. (the name of the child is said) should be baptized in the faith of the Church, which we have all professed with you?”*** And they respond: ***“It is.”*** He then baptizes the child with the words: ***“I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”*** Although no external change is noted as a result of such an immersion, or of the pouring of the water on the child’s head, the child is born from on high, becoming a child of God, a temple of the Holy Spirit and a member of the Church.

9. The anointment with chrism

The rite proceeds with a very significant gesture: the minister anoints the head of the baptized with chrism, a mix of oil and perfume. This anointing is the sign of the royal priesthood of the baptized and the assimilation

into the community of the people of God. Every baptized individual is consecrated into the likeness of Christ, priest, king and prophet. The Christian participates in the state and mission of Christ. Baptism confers a character, that is, an indelible imprint of this conformity to Jesus Christ. In fact, neither baptism nor confirmation can be conferred a second time. Thus follows the beautiful prayer with the chrism: ***“The God of power and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people. He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life.”***

10. The white garment

Immediately afterwards every child is given a white garment. The meaning of this rite is expressed with the prayer that accompanies the conferral of the garment: ***“N. (the name of the child is said) has become a new creation, and has clothed yourself in Christ. See in this white garment the outward sign of your Christian dignity. With your family and friends to help you by word and example, bring that dignity unstained into the everlasting life of heaven”***. The gospel speaks of the man found in the banquet without the prescribed wedding garment, who is thrown out (Mt 22, 11-14).

The rite is an exhortation to conserve the gift of baptismal grace and to live without sin until the coming of the Lord.

11. The lighted candle and the Easter candle

Having the coming of the Lord always in mind, the priest presents the Easter candle saying: ***“Receive the light of Christ.”*** A member of the family, or the godfather, lights the candle of the baptized accompanied by the words: ***“Parents and godparents, this light is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly. This child of yours has been enlightened by Christ. He (she) is to walk always as a child of the light. May he (she) keep the flame of faith alive in his (her) heart. When the Lord comes, may he (she) go out to meet him with all the saints in the heavenly kingdom”.***

12. The Ephatha or Prayer over Ears and Mouth

Then follows the rite of the “Ephatha” (a word which means: “Be opened”). With his thumb the celebrant touches the ears and lips of the child, repeating the gesture of Jesus towards the deaf and mute man (Mc 7:31-35), saying: ***“The Lord Jesus made the deaf hear and the dumb speak. May he soon touch your ears to***

receive his word, and your mouth to proclaim his faith, to the praise and glory of God the Father” .

13. The dismissal

At the end all move from the baptistery to the altar, unless they have been there from the beginning. There the celebrant invites all to pray the Our Father together, the prayer of the children of God, of which are now included the baptized children, who one day in Confirmation will receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit and take part at the table of the Lord.

Various blessings conclude the baptismal liturgy.

This is the solemn rite of baptism. It should also be remembered that a lay person, in the danger of imminent death when a priest or deacon is not present, can and must confer baptism. It is enough that the person have the intention to carry out that act by which is conferred Christian faith.

Note

Eucharist is *“the source and summit of the Christian life”* (Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 47); it is the completion of the way to the belonging to the

Church, so it should be received after the Confirmation. But in our Vicariate, and perhaps in the most Parishes of the world, it is given before Confirmation. The Oriental Churches have kept together the three Sacraments of the Christian initiation, so they give Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist all together even to the new born children. Even the Roman (Latin) Rite had this use in the past. Then, other criteria prevailed. Confirmation was separated from Baptism; the Eucharist separated from Baptism and Confirmation and given before the Confirmation. This use influenced very much especially the Catholic Oriental Churches who, giving the three Sacraments all together at the Baptism, later they celebrate the “Solemn Communion.”

IV) THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION FOR CHILDREN

1. The effusion of the Spirit of Pentecost

“In the sacrament of Confirmation the Apostles and the Bishops, who are their successors, hand on to the baptized the special gift of the Holy Spirit, promised by Christ the Lord and poured out upon the Apostles at Pentecost. The believers are strengthened by power from heaven, made true witnesses of Christ in word and

deed, and bound more closely to the Church.” This is stated by the Congregation for Divine Worship in its introduction to the renewed Rite of Confirmation.

The preparation for this sacrament, as with the Eucharist, is the special duty of the parents—the first teachers of the faith for the children, in collaboration with the Christian community and its catechists.

Normally the one to be confirmed must also have his/her sponsor, who will present him/her to this sacred anointing and will help him/her to faithfully observe the promises of baptism. Obviously such a sponsor must have already received the three sacraments of Christian initiation, be mature for such an undertaking and live as a believer.

2. The minister

The ordinary minister of confirmation is the Bishop, successor of the Apostles, who after having received the Holy Spirit in its fullness on Pentecost, transmits it to the faithful with the imposition of hands. It is significant that the chrism for anointing is consecrated precisely by the Bishop in the mass of Holy Thursday, the “Chrism Mass.”

3. The celebration

The celebration of Confirmation must have a solemn character, festive and communitarian, in the presence

of parents, godparents and the people of God, as in the most important moments in the life of a community. Moreover, so that the intimate link between this sacrament and the whole of the Christian initiation may be better shown. Confirmation normally takes place within the mass.

4. The Liturgy of the Word

The proclamation of the biblical texts on the Holy Spirit effused by the Father and the risen Christ will enlighten the deep meaning of this second sacrament. There are pages and pages in the Old and New Testaments which dwell on and thus illustrate the gift of the Spirit. Afterwards, a homily is given on the mystery of Pentecost which renews and completes the likeness of Christ begun in baptism. The minister gives the invitation for the renunciation of Satan and the profession of faith, which recognizes and confirms the promises made by the parents and godparents on the day of baptism.

5. The imposition of the hands and the invocation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit

The Bishop, and those who will assist him, impose their hands on all those to be confirmed. It is an ancient and meaningful gesture of invocation of the Holy Spirit, accompanied by this prayer: ***“All-powerful God, Father***

of our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them a new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their helper and guide. Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgement and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence.”

6. Anointing with Chrism

The one to be confirmed, assisted by the sponsor, approaches the Bishop. The Bishop traces the sign of the cross on the person’s forehead with the perfumed oil (the chrism), saying: **“Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.”** The person responds: **“Amen.”** As a word of congratulations the celebrant says: **“Peace be with you”** and the person responds: **“And with your spirit.”** In this way the baptized individual has received the indelible sign of membership with the Lord and the grace to diffuse among all mankind the “sweet perfume” of Christ.

7. The universal prayer and dismissal

The universal prayer entrusts the newly confirmed to the Lord and asks for all who have participated, that

they may be faithful to the witness of Christ. When Confirmation takes place during the mass the liturgy of the Eucharist follows.

At the end of the rite the Bishop dismisses the assembly with the prayer: ***“Confirm, O God, what you have brought about in us, and in the hearts of your faithful the gifts of the Holy Spirit: may they never be ashamed to confess Christ crucified before the world and by devoted charity may they ever fulfill his commands.”***

Note

Candidates should be confirmed with the same name, which appears on the Baptism Certificate. This is because Confirmation is the completion of the Christian Initiation, which started with Baptism.

Another Christian name may be used additionally for the confirmation only, especially if the baptismal name has no connotation to the Christian tradition.

The candidates should know the relationship of the name to the Christian tradition and is encouraged to learn about it as part of their preparation for the sacrament.

In order to avoid confusion, the Confirmation Certificate is to be issued with the name as found on the Baptismal

Certificate. The same rule is to be applied to the Confirmation register.

(From the *Pastoral Guide Book* of the Apostolic Vicariate of Northern Arabia, 2017)

+ Camillo Ballin, mccj

**Awali, Kingdom of Bahrain, 02 September 2017,
The Twelfth Anniversary of my
Episcopal Ordination**

REGULATIONS ON FASTING, ABSTINENCE, AND FEASTS

1. **Fasting and abstinence** are prescribed for Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, limited to the ages of 21 to 60.
2. **Abstinence** is prescribed as a general rule for every Friday in Lent, applicable to those 14 and above. But for particular circumstances in the Vicariate of Northern Arabia, abstinence is to be observed on the Wednesdays of Lent. Out of devotion, abstinence may be observed every Wednesday during the year.
3. **Eucharistic Fast:** The faithful must abstain from solids and liquids for one hour before receiving Holy Communion. This regulation is applicable to Masses celebrated in the morning, afternoon, evening or at midnight. Water does not break the fast. Those who are sick, even though not confined to bed, may take any liquid or food as well as medicines at any time before Holy Communion.
4. **Feasts of Obligation:**
 - a. Sundays or Fridays or Saturday evenings
 - b. Christmas (25th December)
 - c. Solemnity of Mary Mother of God (January 1st)
 - d. **Solemnity of Our Lady of Arabia, Patroness of both the Vicariates in the Gulf** (Second Sunday of Ordinary Time)

- e. Feast of St. Thomas, 3rd July (obligation is only for the Syro-Malabar Rite)
- f. Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 15th August
- g. Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 8th September (obligation is only for the Syro-Malankara Rite)

5. Feasts of Devotion:

- a. St. Joseph, 19th March
- b. St. Mark the Evangelist, 25th April (for the Coptic Rite)
- c. Saints Peter and Paul, 29th June
- d. All Saints Day, 1st November
- e. All Souls Day, 2nd November
- f. Immaculate Conception, 8th December

6. Feasts transferred to the following Friday or Sunday:

- a. Epiphany
- b. Corpus Christi
- c. Ascension
- d. St. Maroun, 9th February

7. Feasts of the Parishes

- a. Holy Family Cathedral, Kuwait: Sunday after Christmas
- b. Parish of Our Lady of Arabia, Ahmadi, Kuwait: Second Sunday of Ordinary Time
- c. Parish of Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus, Salmiya, Kuwait: 01 October
- d. Parish of Saint Daniel Comboni, Jleeb al-Shuyoukh, Kuwait: 10 October

- e. Mission of Saint John Bosco Mission, Jahra, Kuwait: 31 January (this Mission is temporarily closed.)
- f. Parish of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, Qatar: 07 October
- g. Parish of Sacred Heart of Jesus, Bahrain: Friday following the Solemnity of Corpus Christi.
- h. Mission of Our Lady of the Visitation, Awali, Bahrain: 31 May
- i. Parish of Saint Arethas: 24 October
- j. Parish of St. Joseph: 19 March
- k. Parish of Our Lady of Fatima: 13 May
- l. Parish of Our Lady of Arabia: Second Sunday of Ordinary Time.

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