

**AN ORDER OF SERVICE FOR THE RECEPTION OF BAPTIZED
PERSONS INTO THE FULL FELLOWSHIP OF THE CHURCH
COMMONLY CALLED**

CONFIRMATION

INTRODUCTION

If the confirmation is followed by the Lord's Supper, then, the minister may use the preparation from the Order of the Lord's Supper to begin the Confirmation Service, or if there is no celebration of the Lord's Supper, then, a hymn of praise is sung.

The minister says:

Our help is in the name of the Lord:

Who has made heaven and earth.

Let us pray:

The people kneel, and the minister prays in his/her own words:

After the prayer, the minister says:

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully. They will receive blessing from the Lord, and vindication from the God of their salvation. Psalm 24:3-5

Let us examine ourselves in silence.

All are silent for a space. After this, the minister says:

Let us humbly confess our sins to the almighty God:

All: 0 God, our Father, we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed: we have not loved you with all our heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. Have mercy upon us, we ask you; cleanse us from our sins; and help us to overcome our faults; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

The minister says:

May the almighty and merciful Lord grant to us pardon and remission of all our sins, time for amendment of life, and the grace and comfort of the Holy Spirit.

AMEN

Or he/she may say you and your instead of us and our.

All sit.

The minister reads the names of the candidates, who stand up as their names are called and come forward.

EXHORTATION

The minister speaks to the congregation and the confirmation candidates in his/her own words explaining the meaning and significance of confirmation or says:

Beloved in Christ, we have come together today in the presence of God as witnesses to the act of confirmation, wherein these persons standing before us publicly commit themselves to Christ, their Lord and Saviour, and accept for themselves God's promise of salvation in Christ.

As congregation, we are here to support these candidates with prayers. Especially, we shall pray that through the laying on of hands in confirmation each of them may experience the abundant grace and power of the Holy Spirit, and that they may grow in the knowledge of the love of God, and be true and worthy followers of Jesus Christ.

As congregation we welcome them into the fellowship of those who share in the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and share the responsibility of mission entrusted to us; to be the instrument and foretaste of God's reign of love, justice and peace.

Dear confirmation candidates, you have come to declare your faith in Lord Jesus Christ, your acceptance of him as Saviour, and your commitment to him, and the mission entrusted to you to be the ministers of the Gospel of Christ. Those who brought you as a child for baptism made a solemn pledge, that you would be nurtured in the Christian faith, in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. You are here today, in order that you may give your own assent to the pledge that was then made, in your name.

Through baptism you were made the members of the body of Christ and were received into his Church, which is the family and household of God. In the community of the people of God, you have been learning of God's purpose for you and for all creation. You are being nurtured in the faith and are called to-witness to the Gospel of Jesus. You have now come to consecrate yourselves to God of your own choice, and receive the gifts that God wants to bestow on you. You have now come that in accordance with the practice of the apostles, we may lay our hands on you and pray that the Holy Spirit may strengthen you to follow Christ, and to be God's effective and meaningful witness.

The minister and the people pray together:

Almighty and loving God, you have made us your children in Christ through your Holy Spirit in baptism. Grant that, strengthened by your Spirit in confirmation, we may share in the glorious liberty of your people and live as sons and daughters of your kingdom; through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you, Father, and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, world without end. AMEN

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

The Old Testament Reading: Ezekiel 36: 26-28

(Alternative reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34)

Hear, therefore, the Word of God concerning the gift of the Holy Spirit, in the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel:

A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Epistle Reading: Romans 8: 12-17

(Alternative reading: Galatians 5: 22-25)

In the letter of the Apostle Paul to the Church in Rome:

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh - for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ - if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

Gospel Reading: John 14: 15-17

(Alternative reading: Matthew 16: 24-27)

In the words of our Lord Jesus Christ:

If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever.

This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

Or the minister may choose other passages.

The Sermon is preached

A hymn may be sung

THE PROFESSION OF FAITH

The candidates stand, and the minister says:

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, who created you, and all the world?

Yes, I do.

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ, who has redeemed you, and all people?

Yes, I do.

Do you believe and trust in his Holy Spirit, who renews and transforms you, and the whole creation?

Yes, I do.

Let us therefore together profess our faith:

The Apostles' Creed is said or sung by all:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.* On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. AMEN

THE PROMISES

The minister continues:

The sincerity of our faith is proved when it is active in love. I therefore urge you to make your daily life worthy of our Lord God who loves you, and has made you his children; worthy of his Son, who died for you, and worthy of his Spirit, who dwells in you.

Will you strive to respond to this great love of God by a life of joyful obedience to him, and of love and care for others?

Yes, I will, God being my helper.

Will you keep God's holy will and commandments and walk in them all the days of your life?

Yes, I will, God being my helper.

Will you be a faithful member of this congregation, share in its worship and ministry through your prayers and gifts, your study of the Bible and service, and so fulfil your calling to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Yes, I will, God being my helper.

Will you devote yourself to the Church's teaching and fellowship, especially to the breaking of bread and the prayers?

Yes, I will, God being my helper.

God calls his Church to share with all people the good news of his love made known in Christ. Will you participate and involve yourself in this mission of the church?

I shall try with God's help to make Christ known, by what I am, by what I say, by what I do for others.

The candidates and congregation kneel.

The minister says:

Beloved, you have affirmed your faith in God through Christ our only Saviour, and expressed your desire to obey him, and live in fellowship with his people. Will you now kneel and pray in silence that the Holy Spirit may enable you to be faithful to your promises?

Silence

Then the candidates led by the minister, say together:

O God, my Lord, I am not my own, but yours; I rely on your grace and the power of your Holy Spirit, and give myself to you as your child, to love and serve you all the days of my life.

THE CONFIRMATION

The minister calls the congregation to pray in silence for the candidates. Silence is kept for a space.

A hymn or lyric praying for the Holy Spirit may be sung kneeling.

The minister says the following prayer alone. Or he/she may invite the congregation to say it with him:

Gracious God, by water and the Spirit you claimed us as your own, cleansing us from sin, and giving us new life. You called us to be your children, and made us members of your body - the Church; and gave us the privilege to be your servants in this world. Renew now, the covenant you have made in the baptism of these your children; continue the good work you have begun in them; grant them now the power of your Holy Spirit; the spirit of wisdom and understanding; spirit of counsel and inward strength; spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. Send them forth in the power of your Holy Spirit to love and serve you with joy and to be a foretaste of your reign of justice and peace. In the name of Jesus Christ Our Lord, we pray. **AMEN**

The minister lays his/her hand upon the head of each of the candidates in turn, saying:

Strengthen O Lord this your child with your heavenly grace, that *he/she* may continue yours forever, and daily increase in your Holy Spirit, until *he/she* comes into your everlasting kingdom.

The people each time say: AMEN

When all have been confirmed, the minister says:

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

Let us pray:

Our Father, who is in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come; your will be done; in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. AMEN

The minister prays:

Almighty and ever-living God, who, according to the promise of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, have ordained your Church to be the temple of the Holy Spirit: mercifully hear our prayers for these your children, upon whom we have laid our hands. Let your protective hand be over them; let your Holy Spirit ever be with them; and so lead them in the knowledge and obedience of your word, that they may serve you all their days and be with you for ever; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, ever one God, world without end. **AMEN**

OR

Almighty and ever-living God, we thank you for the great blessing bestowed on these your children through the laying on of hands. By this sign they are assured of your unfailing goodness towards them. We commit them to your protective care. Grant that they may serve you all the days of their life, and finally know the joy of your eternal presence; through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. To him, to you, Father, and to the Holy Spirit, one God in wisdom, power and love, we offer our thanks and praise, now and for ever. **AMEN**

THE RECEPTION

If the Lord's Supper is celebrated together with the confirmation, the reception takes place after the offertory sentences, and the peace is given first to the newly confirmed and by them to the rest of the congregation.

The newly confirmed persons stand and face the congregation, while the minister and the congregation stand and together say to them:

We, the members of the congregation, welcome you with joy, as you come to share with us at the Lord's Table, and as partners in the common life of the Church. We promise you our friendship and our prayers that you may grow in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. May God grant us all strength and commitment to work together for his reign of justice and wholeness here on earth, and give us grace to experience life in all its fullness, with all the saints now, and in the world to come. AMEN

The newly confirmed persons turn again to the minister.

Each is given a membership card. The Bible or New Testament, or the Book of Common Worship of the Church of South India may also be given.

The minister says to them:

In token of our love in Christ, we give you the greeting of peace.

The peace is given and a hymn is sung, during which the offerings of the newly confirmed, and of the congregation are received.

If there is no celebration of the Lord's Supper, the minister gives this blessing:

Go into the world in peace and the blessings of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you forever. **AMEN**