



August 31, 2022

Dear Monsignor or Father:

I am sending this letter as a reminder that on March 14, 2022, I issued a decree promulgating the *Revised Norms for Confirmation in the Diocese of Erie*. These norms are not optional. They involve several changes for the youth in grades 6-12 – specifically, a change to the age for the sacrament of Confirmation as well as new elements of catechesis for both middle and high school youth. With that in mind, I want to address two issues that have come to my attention:

1. Parishes, pastors and/or faith formation leaders seemingly unaware of the changes.
2. Parishes, pastors and/or faith formation leaders who are not implementing the mandated process as expected.

As pastor, you are responsible to ensure that the parish implements the diocesan norms regarding faith formation as mandated. If you are unfamiliar with this promulgation or need clarification about its implications for your faith community, please immediately review the *Revised Norms* which are attached.

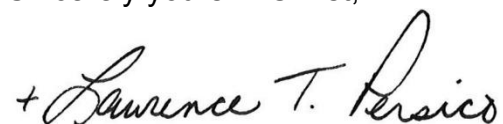
These norms, including the provision changing the age for Confirmation, took effect on June 5, 2022. Throughout the diocese, the following is in force: the normative age for already-baptized Catholics to receive Confirmation in the Diocese of Erie is the spring of ninth grade. However, the implementation of this will be gradual. **All students currently in grades 10 and 11 should now be enrolled in this fall's Confirmation preparation classes to receive the sacrament of Confirmation in the spring of 2023.**

In addition, any curriculum or program used in the new 6th-12th grade faith formation process should be utilized as developed by the publisher or creator. These programs should not be taught in an arbitrary manner. I expect all faith formation leaders and catechists involved in leading these programs to present them as designed.

Our ultimate concern is for the benefit of our young people. This is our way forward. For you or your staff simply to be unwilling to implement these changes is not an option. On the other hand, if you and your parish are genuinely unable to implement the faith formation process as outlined, you may be asked to join another parish's faith formation program. The decision about how your parish implements the process is to be made in conjunction with your Faith Formation Leader and can be discussed with your dean and/or the Faith Formation Department. It is imperative that you communicate clearly with the Faith Formation Department regarding the rollout plan so they can best support you.

With every best wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lawrence T. Persico". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross symbol at the beginning.

The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL
Bishop of Erie



DECREE

PROMULGATING THE REVISED NORMS FOR CONFIRMATION IN THE DIOCESE OF ERIE

The following general norms are to be implemented in accord with the more detailed policies and procedures issued by the Faith Formation Office of the Diocese of Erie.

In accord with the norm of canon 889 §2 of the *Code of Canon Law*, those to be confirmed must be suitably instructed, properly disposed, and able to renew their baptismal promises.

Suitable instruction is to include the following components:

- Three (3) full years of catechesis, normally understood to include grades 7, 8 and 9.
- A basic understanding of the theological and spiritual realities related to Confirmation as identified in the guidelines issued by the Faith Formation Department.
- Participation in Christian service integrated into the Confirmation preparation program.
- Participation in an approved pre-Confirmation retreat.
- Completion of an interview with one's proper pastor or his delegate.

A candidate's proper disposition is to include the following components:

- The candidate's free and personal decision to be confirmed.
- The candidate's written request to the Bishop to receive Confirmation.
- Active involvement in the Confirmation program in at least 80% of required sessions.

The authority competent to assess a candidate's readiness to receive the sacrament is the candidate's proper pastor or the pastor of the parish where the candidate has enrolled in the preparation program. In the latter case, the proper pastor is to be consulted before a determination is made (cf. can. 890).

The normative age for already-baptized Catholics to receive Confirmation in the Diocese of Erie is in the spring of ninth grade. Parishes are to implement this transition gradually according to the attached schedule, using either a five (5) or six (6) year plan.

A special adaptation for small parishes, only with prior approval, is intended for those parishes unable to conduct a full grade 6-12 program by themselves and unable to join with another parish to do so. Prior approval will be communicated by the Faith Formation Director who must first consult with the Diocesan Bishop and the Dean.



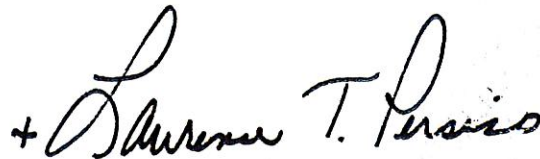
Parishes already implementing these revised norms since 2021 on an *ad experimentum* basis are permitted to employ a four (4) year plan; no new parishes will be added to their number.

Sponsors for Confirmation are to meet the qualification given in canons 874, 892, and 893, namely:

- be designated by the one to be confirmed
- be at least 16 years old
- be a regularly practicing Catholic in good standing
- be fully initiated in the Catholic faith by having already received the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist
- be neither the father nor mother of the one to be confirmed

These norms take effect on Pentecost Sunday, June 5, 2022, all things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at the Chancery
of the Diocese of Erie
on this 6th day of April, 2022

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lawrence T. Persico", preceded by a cross symbol (+).

The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL
Bishop of Erie

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Christopher J. Singer".

The Reverend Christopher J. Singer, JCL
Chancellor