

Celebrating the gift of the Spirit



Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation

Archdiocese of Perth

CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Confirmation: Perpetuating Pentecost	3
Full Christian Initiation	3
Eastern Rite Catholics	4
i. Symbolic Elements in the Rite	5
The Christian Community	
The Diocesan Bishop	
Candidates for Confirmation	
Confirmation Name	
Sponsors	
Oil of Chrism	
ii. Celebrating the Rite of Confirmation	7
Presentation of Candidates	
Homily	
Renewal of Baptismal Promises	
The Laying on of Hands	
Anointing with Chrism	
Universal Prayer or Prayer of the Faithful	
The Liturgy of the Eucharist	
The Concluding Rite	
iii. Preparing the Ritual Celebration	14
Working Together	
Order of Procession	
Music	
Choice of Mass	
Choice of Readings	
Proclaiming God’s Word	
Presentation of the Gifts	
Eucharistic Prayer	
Vestments	
Servers	
Blessings	
Presentation of Certificates and Saying Thank You	
Confirmation Registration Cards	
Signs of Commitment	
Service Outline	
Parking	
Celebrant’s Stipend	
Appendix 1	19
Biography	20

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Care will be taken that a festive and solemn quality be given to the sacred action which expresses its significance for the local Church. This is achieved especially if all the candidates gather for a communal celebration. Indeed, the entire People of God, represented by the families and friends of those to be confirmed and members of the local community, will be invited to participate in this celebration; and it will strive to manifest its faith by the fruits that the Holy Spirit will produce in it.

(Pope Paul VI and revised at the direction of Pope John Paul II *The Rite of Confirmation*, 8 December, 2011)

These guidelines have been developed as a result of consultation and discussion with representatives of the local Church who are directly involved with the preparation and celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation. This material is offered as support and guidance to those who find themselves in the position of preparing and celebrating this sacrament.

*Approval for use by the Archbishop of Perth, Western Australia, 24 February 2000.
Revised June 2014*

*Archbishop Timothy Costelloe SDB
Archbishop of Perth*

Confirmation: Perpetuating Pentecost

Confirmation as an ongoing celebration of Pentecost perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church. The Rite of Confirmation recalls Pentecost and the Spirit-filled experience of the early Church and affirms the Spirit-filled experience of the Christian community today.

The **Rite of Confirmation** emphasizes that everyone in the community is charged with the responsibility of preparing the baptized for Confirmation in one way or another.

Rite of Confirmation 3

The preparation of the baptized to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation pertains very much to the People of God.

Those who assist in the preparation are expected to participate in the actual celebration of this sacrament.

Rite of Confirmation 4

Care will be taken that a festive and solemn quality be given to the sacred action which expresses its significance for the local Church. This is achieved especially if all the candidates gather for a communal celebration. Indeed, the entire People of God, represented by the families and friends of those to be confirmed and members of the local community, will be invited to participate in this celebration; and it will strive to manifest its faith by the fruits that the Holy Spirit will produce in it.

Full Christian Initiation

The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist together constitute the “Sacraments of Christian initiation”. They complement each other and all three are required for full Christian initiation.

CCL 842

- §1 A person who has not received Baptism cannot validly be admitted to the other sacraments.
- §2 The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Blessed Eucharist so complement one another that all three are required for full Christian initiation.

CCC 1285

Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the “sacraments of Christian initiation,” whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For “by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.”

CCC 1212

The sacraments of Christian initiation – Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist – lay the foundations of every Christian life. “The sharing in the divine nature given to men through the grace of Christ bears a certain likeness to the origin, development, and nourishing of natural life. The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life. By means of these sacraments of Christian initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of the divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity.”

Eastern Rite Catholics

Current Australian Diocesan Eastern Churches:

Melkite Eparchy

Maronite Catholic Church

Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy

Chaldean Catholic Church

Syro-Malabar Eparchy

Members of the above Eastern Churches have been Confirmed at Baptism and are not to be presented again for the sacrament of Confirmation.

The Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of the Southern Cross was established in Australia in 2012. Members of the Ordinariate are full members of the Latin Catholic Church and can receive all the sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church.

Symbolic Elements in the Rite

The liturgical celebration of any sacrament ideally is an external expression of the faith already present within the community celebrating the sacrament.

The following section reflects on some of the signs and symbols that are integral to the Celebration of Confirmation.

The Christian Community

Confirmation is meant to be a celebration that renews the whole community through the revealing and sharing of the gift of the Spirit already manifest in the Christian community. Frequent reference to the event will awaken the wider parish to its significance.

The Diocesan Bishop

The diocesan bishop is a sign of unity in the local Church. As it is impossible for the Archbishop and the Auxiliary Bishop to attend every parish Confirmation celebration each year, it is customary for him to **delegate authority** to parish priests in the archdiocese to assist him and the auxiliary bishop with this important task.

Candidates for Confirmation

The candidates for Confirmation are signs of the gift of the Spirit working in the life of individual Christians to become witnesses of their faith.

Confirmation Name

Through Baptism our names are made holy but there has been a tradition in the Australian Church that Confirmation candidates choose the name of a saint for Confirmation.

To show the link with Baptism, the candidates are able to use their baptismal name if this is the name of a saint.

Candidates may still choose a Confirmation name particularly if their first name is not that of a saint.

The saint may be male or female for either sex and should be a saint who is an example and inspiration to the candidate.

If choosing a new name for Confirmation, candidates need to choose that of a saint or a blessed (not simply a hero). It should be the name of one who has inspired them.

‘How does this saint inspire me as an example of Christian faith?’

‘What aspect of the saint’s life do I want to imitate?’

Sponsors

The support of the entire community is focused in the sponsors chosen by the candidate to be confirmed. The introduction to the Rite of Confirmation states:

Rite of Confirmation 5

Generally, each one to be confirmed has a sponsor who will lead them to receive the Sacrament.

The sponsor presents the candidate to receive the sacrament by accompanying him or her to the minister of Confirmation for the holy anointing. The sponsor will continue to assist the candidate to fulfill their baptismal promises faithfully under the influence of the Holy Spirit whom they have received.

Rite of Confirmation 6

Pastors of souls will ensure that the sponsor chosen by the one to be Confirmed or their family, is spiritually suitable for the duty they accept and possessed of the qualities:

- a. That they are mature enough to fulfill this office.
- b. That they belong to the Catholic Church and are initiated with the three Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist.
- c. That they are not prohibited by Canon Law from the office of sponsor.

CCL 873

One sponsor, male or female, for any candidate is sufficient; but there may be two.

CCL 874

§1 #2 To be admitted to undertake the office of sponsor, a person must be not less than sixteen years of age unless an exemption can be made for a just reason.

Rite of Confirmation 5, CCL 893 §2, CCL 874 §1 5

In view of the contemporary pastoral circumstances, it is desirable that a godparent at Baptism, if available, also be the sponsor at Confirmation. This expresses more clearly the link between Baptism and Confirmation. Parents may not be sponsors for their child, but may in exceptional circumstances present their child for Confirmation as a proxy for the baptismal godparents or absent sponsors. However, candidates may choose a special sponsor for Confirmation.

Oil of Chrism

The solemnity of the presentation of the Chrism at the beginning of the ceremony is a significant part of this celebration. ***The Oil of Chrism is to be carried in the entrance procession [refer to the Order of Procession p.10]*** and placed on a table in front of the altar or near the lectern. It is not necessary to place candles on the table where the Chrism will be placed.

Celebrating the Rite of Confirmation

Presentation of Candidates

After the Gospel the Parish Priest, Deacon or catechist presents the candidates to the Celebrant for Confirmation, in these or similar words:

Parish Priest: **Would those to be confirmed please stand.**
[The candidates to be confirmed stand in their places in the church.]

Your Grace (My Lord, Father), the parish community of (N) wishes to present to you these candidates who have been prepared to receive the fullness of Christian Initiation in the sacrament of Confirmation. It is my privilege to present them to you.

Celebrant: **Do you judge them to have been prepared to receive the sacrament?**

Parish Priest: **Yes, I believe that with the help of parents and teachers they are suitably prepared.**

Celebrant: **Thanks be to God. I gladly accept these candidates to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.**

Homily

The homily comes immediately after the presentation of candidates. The homily relates to the readings and so leads the candidates, their sponsors and parents, and the whole assembly to a deeper understanding of the mystery of Confirmation.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

This should take place after the homily and be taken from the Rite of Confirmation 23.

Response - can be different and can be sung but needs to express clearly the link with Baptism. [e.g. The response from 'We Believe' by Christopher Walker.]

23. After the Homily the Bishop/celebrant questions those to be confirmed, who stand, as he says:

Bishop/celebrant: Do you renounce Satan,
and all his works and empty promises?

Together Candidates: I do.

Bishop/celebrant: Do you believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop/celebrant: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered death and was buried,
rose again from the dead
and is seated at the right hand of the Father?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop/celebrant: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who today through the Sacrament of Confirmation
is given to you in a special way
just as he was given to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop/celebrant: Do you believe in the holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting?

Candidates: I do.

The Bishop/celebrant gives his assent to the profession by proclaiming the faith of the Church:

This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church.
We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The gathering of the faithfully gives its assent by replying:

Amen.

For the formula This is our faith, it is permitted to substitute, if appropriate, some other formula or even some suitable chant, by which the community is able to express its faith.

The Laying on of Hands

The laying on of hands is an important biblical gesture by which the gift of the Spirit is invoked.

24. Then the Bishop/celebrant (while the Priests associated with him remain by his side) standing, facing the people, with hands joined, says:

Dearly beloved,
let us pray to God the almighty Father,
for these, his adopted sons and daughters,
already born again to eternal life in Baptism,
that he will graciously pour out the Holy Spirit upon them
to confirm them with his abundant gifts,
and through his anointing
conform them more fully to Christ, the Son of God.

And all pray in silence for a while.

25. Then the Bishop/celebrant lays hands over all those to be confirmed (as do the Priests who are associated with him). But the Bishop/celebrant alone says:

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who brought these your servants to new birth
by water and the Holy Spirit,
freeing them from sin:
send upon them, O Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete;
give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and fortitude,
the spirit of knowledge and piety;
fill them with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.
Through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Anointing with Chrism

The procession forward to the celebrant for the anointing should be unhurried yet with no delays.

It is suggested that the candidates and their sponsors approach via the side aisles of the church to the parish priest. They then present the card containing their Confirmation details and stand or kneel in front of the celebrant.

[Check whether the celebrant prefers to sit or stand to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation and whether he prefers the candidates to kneel or stand.]

26. The sponsor who presents the person to be confirmed places his (her) right

hand on his (her) shoulder and says the name of the one to be confirmed to the Bishop; or the one to be confirmed alone says his (her) own name.

27. The Bishop dips the tip of the thumb of his right hand in the Chrism and, with the thumb, makes the Sign of the Cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed, as he says:

N, BE SEALED WITH THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The newly confirmed replies:

Amen.

The celebrant says:

Peace be with you.

The newly confirmed replies:

And with your spirit.

28. If Priests assist the Bishop in conferring the Sacrament, all the vessels of sacred Chrism are brought to the Bishop by the Deacon or by the ministers. As each of the Priests comes to the Bishop, he gives each a vessel of Chrism.

Those to be confirmed go to the Bishop or to the Priests; or, if appropriate, the Bishop and Priests go to those to be confirmed. The anointing is done as described above (no. 27).

29. During the anointing a suitable chant may be sung. After the anointing the Bishop washes his hands (as do the Priests).

To create an atmosphere of reverence and celebration while this part of the celebration is taking place, in consultation with the celebrant, silence may be observed or, alternatively, there may be gentle music or a suitable meditative song.

The Oil of Chrism is not wiped off those confirmed. It should remain on them as a visible sign of the Sacrament.

The celebrant will need to wash his hands after the anointing. For this purpose, the following should be provided:

- * A white hand towel*
- * A few pieces of lemon or soap*
- * Water in a suitable, large dignified vessel.*

Universal Prayer or Prayer of the Faithful

30. The Universal Prayer follows in this or a similar form determined by the competent authority.

These prayers express the needs of the Christian community to the Father through Christ for the gift of the Spirit.

These are suggested prayers from the Rite of Confirmation 30.

Bishop/celebrant: My dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to God the almighty Father
and be of one mind in our prayer,
just as faith, hope and charity,
which proceed from his Holy Spirit, are one.

Deacon or minister: For these his servants,
whom the gift of the Holy Spirit has confirmed:
that, planted in faith and grounded in love,
they may bear witness to Christ the Lord by their way of life,
let us pray to the Lord.

Response: **Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.**

Deacon or minister: For their parents and sponsors:
that by word and example
they may continue to encourage
those whom they have sponsored in the faith
to follow in the footsteps of Christ,
let us pray to the Lord.

Response: **Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.**

Deacon or minister: For the holy Church of God
together with N. our Pope, N. our Bishop, and all Bishops:
that, gathered by the Holy Spirit,
the Church may grow and increase in unity of faith and love
until the coming of the Lord,
let us pray to the Lord.

Response: **Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.**

Deacon or minister: For the whole world:
that all people, who have one Maker and Father,
may acknowledge one another as brothers and sisters,
without discrimination of race or nation,
and with sincere hearts seek the Kingdom of God,
which is peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,
let us pray to the Lord:

Response: **Lord, we ask you, hear our prayer.**

Bishop/celebrant: O God, who gave the Holy Spirit to your Apostles, and willed that through them and their successors the same Spirit be handed on to the rest of the faithful, listen favourably to our prayer, and grant that your divine grace, which was at work when the Gospel was first proclaimed, may now spread through the hearts of those who believe in you.
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

31. After the Universal Prayer the Liturgy of the Eucharist is celebrated according to the Order of Mass, with these changes:

- a) the Creed is omitted, since the Profession of Faith has already taken place.*
- b) some of the confirmed may join those who bring forward the offerings;*
- c) when the Roman Canon is used, the proper form of the Hanc igitur (Therefore, Lord, we pray) is said, no. 58. When Eucharistic Prayer II or Eucharistic Prayer III is used, the proper forms for these Prayers are said, no. 58.*

32. Adults who are confirmed, and, if appropriate, their sponsors, parents, spouses, and catechists may receive Communion under both kinds.

The Concluding Rite

33. Instead of the usual blessing, the following blessing or Prayer over the People is used at the end of Mass.

Solemn Blessing at the end of Mass

The Deacon or, in his absence, the minister of Confirmation himself, says the invitation:

Bow down for the Blessing

The Bishop/celebrant, with hands extended over the newly confirmed, says:

May God the Father almighty bless you,
whom he has made his adopted sons and daughters
reborn from water and the Holy Spirit,
and may he keep you worthy of his fatherly love.

R. Amen.

May his Only Begotten Son,
who promised that the Spirit of truth would abide in his Church,
bless you and confirm you by his power
in the confession of the true faith.

R. Amen.

May the Holy Spirit,
who kindles the fire of charity in the hearts of disciples,
bless you and lead you blameless and gathered as one
into the joy of the Kingdom of God.

R. Amen.

And he blesses all the people, adding:

And may almighty God bless all of you, who are gathered here,
the Father, + and the Son, + and the Holy + Spirit.

R. Amen.

Prayer over the People

Instead of the preceding formula of blessing, the Prayer over the People may be used.

The Deacon or, in his absence, the minister of Confirmation himself, says the invitation:

Bow down for the blessing.

The Bishop/celebrant, with hands extended over the people, says:

Confirm, O God,
what you have brought about in us,
and preserve 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 fulfil his commands.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

The Bishop/celebrant adds immediately:

And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, + and the Son, + and the Holy + Spirit,
come down on you remain with you for ever.

R. Amen.

Preparing the Ritual Celebration

The Confirmation ceremony is a **community celebration** - it is not a “children’s Mass”. Every effort should be made to involve both the adults present and the children.

It is also important to remember when preparing the Confirmation ritual that this Eucharistic celebration is already extended by the fact that the conferral of the Sacrament of Confirmation takes place during this Mass. A richer celebrating of each part of this ritual is not achieved by adding **unnecessary elements** but by celebrating each aspect in accord with the ritual texts reverently and thoughtfully.

Working Together

The parish is primarily responsible for Confirmation. The Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) and the Parish Catholic School are usually asked to **play a major role** in the Confirmation process.

The Parish Priest in consultation with all those concerned with the preparation of children for the Sacrament of Confirmation - the Parish Religious Education Program Coordinator and the school Assistant Principal Religious Education Coordinator - is to convene a liturgy committee specifically to prepare the Confirmation celebration. Where there is an active parish liturgy committee, members of that committee may be part of the sub-committee for the Confirmation liturgy.

In the case of disagreement, the parish priest has the final say.

Order of Procession

The ministers and servers process according to the following order:

- * Cross bearer
- * Candle bearers
- * The candidates may be part of the procession
- * Acolyte
- * Oil of Chrism
- * Reader
- * Other concelebrating priests
- * Parish priest
- * Confirmation celebrant

Music

Participation is important and so music that enables both children and adults to participate as fully as possible should be chosen.

All those involved in preparing children and parents for the Confirmation ceremony should know what music is going to be sung and use it as part of their preparation where possible.

Parts of the Mass that should be sung if possible are the:

Gloria
Responsorial Psalm
Gospel Acclamation
Holy, Holy, Holy
Memorial Acclamation
Great Amen

Parts of the Mass that may also be sung include the:

Lord, Have Mercy
Our Father
Lamb of God

The Creed is omitted in Masses when the Sacrament of Confirmation is celebrated.

Choice of Mass

The Mass for Confirmation, with its own presidential prayers, is found in the Roman Missal, among the Ritual Masses. P.1186-1190.

This Mass may be used for all Confirmations except on the Sundays of Advent, Lent, the Easter season and Solemnities, when these days take precedence. [GIRM 355]
(See Appendix 1)

Choice of Readings

Scripture readings are chosen from Lectionary III pp.86ff "Readings for Confirmation". Readings and Presidential Prayers are not to be changed on the Sundays of Advent, Lent, the Easter Season and Solemnities [See Appendix 1, p.15]

"At parish Masses on Sundays, the Mass of the day is normally used and the Sunday readings respected, though the ritual Mass with its readings may be used on the Sundays of Christmas and Ordinary Time. On days when ritual Masses are not allowed, one of the readings may still be taken from those provided for the celebrations of sacrament, except Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, Corpus Christi and Assumption."

("Ordo" published for the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference for use in Australia and New Zealand.)

Proclaiming God's Word

Those who will proclaim the Word of God need to be well prepared. Children as well as adults may take part in reading the Scriptures for this celebration, but younger persons must have the maturity and confidence appropriate to the task.

Presentation of the Gifts

The bread and the wine only are to be brought forward in procession.

There are no candles required for this procession but the servers can lead the procession of the bread and wine to the sanctuary.

Eucharistic Prayer

The Eucharist Prayer to be used will be chosen by the main celebrant.

Vestments

The vestment colour for the ritual celebration of Confirmation is red. Where the Sundays of Advent, Lent, the Easter season and solemnities take precedence, the vestments are those of the Sunday or solemnity. Refer to the "Ordo" published for the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference for use in Australia and New Zealand.

Servers

Three altar servers are required for the Confirmation ritual:

- Cross bearer
- Two candle bearers

Bishops require **two extra servers** for the

- Mitre
- Crozier

One Acolyte is also required.

A brief rehearsal may be necessary for the altar ministers so that everything runs smoothly.

Blessings

Parents, family, friends or students from other Christian denominations can be invited to participate in the Communion procession and receive a blessing.

Presentation of Certificates and Saying Thank You

Certificates may be distributed in consultation with the celebrant:

- * After the final hymn, if numbers are not too large.
- * At Parish Masses the following weekend.
- * At a PREP or Parish School assembly.

For very large numbers certificates may be distributed by a teacher as students walk back to their seats after the anointing.

Saying Thank you

It is important to acknowledge all those who were involved in preparing both the candidates for Confirmation and the Confirmation celebration.

This should be done before the final blessing and kept brief.

[Check with the celebrant about his preference with regard to the distribution of certificates and saying 'thank you'.]

Confirmation Registration Card

The Confirmation Registration Card is to be completed and presented at the Confirmation Ceremony when the candidate approaches the celebrant to receive the Oil of Chrism.

These cards are necessary for the keeping of proper records.

Signs of Commitment

A custom of wearing an item of clothing that distinguishes those to be confirmed has become part of the Confirmation celebration in the Archdiocese of Perth. Such a custom has its merits but care needs to be taken with regard to the symbol used.

Possibilities include:

- * a name stole
- * a red sash or scarf
- * a medal

[Note: A priestly stole is reserved for those in Holy Orders]

Service Outline

Please submit an outline of the order of service, music, readings and anything else that may be happening in the Confirmation celebration directly to the celebrant, i.e. Catholic Church Office for the Archbishop, Assistant Bishop and Vicar General, three weeks before the celebration for approval.

Parking

Please make sure there is a reserved parking place, clearly marked and close to the church, for the Archbishop or Bishop.

Celebrant's Stipend

In the Archdiocese of Perth celebrants of Confirmation, other than the Archbishop, Assistant Bishop and Vicar General should be offered a stipend.

If you have further inquiries about the Confirmation ceremony please contact the Centre for Liturgy.

Centre for Liturgy

Archdiocese of Perth

28 Marda Way

NOLLAMARA WA 6061

Telephone: [08] 9207 3350

Fax: [08] 9349 0362

Email: cfl@perthcatholic.org.au

Website: liturgy.perthcatholic.org.au

Appendix 1

Solemnities

Mary, Mother of God	Nativity of John the Baptist
Epiphany of the Lord	The Body and Blood of Christ
Joseph, Husband of Mary	St Peter and Paul
St Patrick, Bishop	Sacred Heart
Annunciation of the Lord	St Mary of the Cross
Easter Sunday	Assumption of the Virgin Mary
Mary, Help of Christians	All Saints
Ascension of the Lord	Christ the King
Pentecost Sunday	Immaculate Conception of The Blessed Virgin Mary
Trinity Sunday	Christmas

As the dates for Solemnities will change each year you will need to check the Ordo.

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Ordo

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General Instruction of the Roman Missal. [GIRM]

Final Text with Applications for Australia 2012

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Lectionary for Mass: Introduction.

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Roman Missal

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