

POLICY BULLETIN

March 8, 1984

Worship & Spiritual Life
Confirmation 3

SPONSORS FOR CONFIRMATION

To the Priests, Religious and People of the Diocese of New Ulm:

According to the 1983 Code of Canon Law, parents are no longer allowed to be sponsors for Confirmation. Here is a recent clarification from the Holy See.

- Q. Has there been a recent change in the discipline regarding parents acting as sponsors at the confirmation of their children?
- R. This question is asked often these days. The present legislation on godparents is found in the General Introduction to Christian Initiation (1973), Nos. 8-10; the Introduction to the Rite of Baptism for Children (1973), No. 6; the Introduction to the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (1972), Nos. 42-43 (which makes a distinction between the roles of sponsor and godparent); the Rite of Confirmation (1971), Nos. 5-6; and the 1983 Code of Canon Law, canons 892 and 893 (with the latter canon referring the reader back to canon 874, No. 5). The recently promulgated Variations to be Introduced into the Liturgical Books contains some modifications to be made in the four liturgical books mentioned above, but it leaves unchanged No. 5 of the Rite of Confirmation, except for the deletion of the reference to the 1917 Code of Canon Law. The following statement has been retained in the third paragraph: "Even the parents themselves may present their children for confirmation."

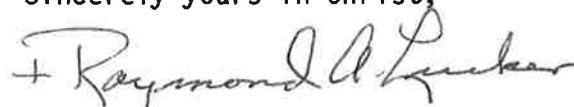
That statement might seem to be in conflict with canon 983 which, when considered together with canon 874, No. 5, of the 1983 Code of Canon Law, would mean that the godparent at confirmation may not be the father or mother of the one being confirmed. A recent response from the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments and Divine Worship concerning this matter provided the following clarification:

1. As far as possible, a candidate for confirmation should have a sponsor (cf. CIC 892; Rite of Confirmation, No. 5).
2. According to the directives in canon 893 (with reference to canon 874, No. 5) neither the father nor the mother of a candidate can be a sponsor.
3. However, even when there is a sponsor, parents may present their children for confirmation. By "present" is meant the simple fact of bringing or accompanying the candidate to the bishop (cf. Rite of Confirmation, No. 21).

4. There would seem to be no contradiction between canon 893 (cf. also canon 874, No. 5) and the Rite of Confirmation, Nos. 5 and 21. Parents and sponsors have different functions. Parents can present their children in the way intended by the Rite, even though they cannot be sponsors.

In light of this clarification, it should be emphasized that, in those cases when no godparent is present, a parent presenting a child for confirmation should not be called a godparent or sponsor, nor be understood as assuming the role of godparent. Perhaps the best designation for the parent would be "presenter."

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Raymond A. Lucker". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name below it.

Most Rev. Raymond A. Lucker
Bishop of New Ulm