



Media Release

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Bishop Randazzo announces change to the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation

Bishop Anthony Randazzo has made adjustments to the age of children receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Diocese of Broken Bay.

In a letter to clergy of the Diocese last week, Bishop Randazzo acknowledged the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the course of Sacramental Preparation Programmes across all parishes.

“I have been unable to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation in the parishes of the Diocese at all this year,” said Bishop Randazzo, who has decided, due to ongoing uncertainty and for the sake of clarity for parents and families, parishes and personnel involved in preparing children for the Sacraments that he will not celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation at all in 2020.

Formerly, children receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation were seven years old, typically those in Year 2. For the future celebration of the Sacrament, Bishop Randazzo has announced that candidates will be at least eight years old, those who are in Year 3.

The change has been made after Bishop Randazzo consulted and received feedback about the Sacrament of Confirmation and after discussions with the Council of Priests.

“The practice of celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation with those who have reached the age of seven, typically those in Year 2, seems early for the most meaningful reception of the Sacrament,” said Bishop Randazzo.

“Therefore, I wish to use the circumstances afforded us negatively by the pandemic to place our practice of Sacramental preparation, positively, on a new footing going forward.”

The Bishop has not changed the order of the Sacraments of Initiation being Baptism, followed by Confirmation and Eucharist. Under the new program, Reconciliation and Eucharist will therefore be celebrated by those who are aged nine and in Year 4.

“I regard this as the best and most sustainable way forward to address both the suspension of the celebration of Confirmation for the rest of this year, and to engage the unique opportunity with which we are now presented to bring Sacramental Preparation Programmes into the future on a different footing for children who are older and more able to appreciate the significance of their Christian Initiation.”

The letter to clergy announcing the changes, explained some of the implications on Sacramental Preparation Programmes. With the various timings of the programmes across parishes throughout the Diocese taking place either in the first or second halves of the year, it will take the course of 2021 to 2022 to establish the consistent foundation of the preparation programme for children who are aged eight and older.

Bishop Randazzo also explained norms around who has the faculty to Confirm, especially regarding the various circumstances arising for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. With some exceptions, the Bishop clarified particularly regarding the Confirmation of children, “I am the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation and I do not wish this to be compromised by widespread delegation of this faculty”.

The Bishop explained he is aware of the practical implications for parishes during a period of adjustment but looks forward to achieving consistency across the diocese as soon as is practicable.

“We have been through a great disruption that has affected parish communities in numerous ways,” said Bishop Randazzo, “and I acknowledge the many creative and innovative initiatives adopted by our people to keep the faith flourishing”.

“I am grateful for the way in which parishes will bring to completion this year sacramental preparations commenced in 2019, so that in the new year, we can resume the programme for new cohorts on a new premise.”

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