

Appendix 14: Age for Confirmation

USCCB Complementary Norms Regarding Canon 891 – Age for Confirmation

On November 15, 2000, the Latin Rite *de iure* members of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops approved complimentary legislation for canon 801 of the Code of Canon Law for the Latin Rite dioceses of the United States.

The action was granted *recognitio* by the Congregation for Bishops in accord with article 82 of the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* and issued by the Decree of the Congregation for Bishops signed by His Excellency, Most Reverend Francesco Monterisi, Secretary, and dated May 9, 2001.

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, in accord with the prescriptions of canon 891, hereby decrees that the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Latin rite shall be conferred between the age of discretion and about sixteen years of age, within the limits determined by the diocesan bishop and with regard for the legitimate exceptions given in canon 891.

As President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I hereby declare that the effective date of this decree for all the Latin Rite dioceses in the United States will be July 1, 2002.

Given at the offices of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, DC, on August 21, 2001.

Most Reverend Joseph A. Florenza
Bishop of Galveston-Houston
President, USCCB

Reverend Monsignor William P. Fay
General Secretary, USCCB

February 13, 2013

Dear Brother Priests and Devoted Deacons,

After having consulted the members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council over the last several months, and having consulted with the members of the Presbyteral Council during the same period of time, I write to advise you that I have set an upper age limit for the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

It was the considered opinions of the members of both Councils that this would be a help to the priests and deacons and to those who assist them in preparing our young people for this most important Sacrament of Initiation. Knowing what our young people are exposed to in the media it was thought that the wonderful graces of Confirmation would be of great use to them in the present and for the future.

Thus, as of July 1, 2014, all of our young people must receive this Sacrament by no later than the 2nd semester of the sophomore year of high school. While our young people may receive the Sacrament of Confirmation from the age of reason (age 7), I leave to the Pastors to make the needed adjustments, if necessary, to their current preparation programs to accommodate the new and established maximum age for the Sacrament of Confirmation.

While this is a diocesan regulation, it is not of Divine Law and thus, it allows for an exception. However, a Pastor would have to have a most serious reason for seeking, in writing, such an exception.

With gratitude for your continued zeal for souls and pastoral charity and with an assurance of my daily prayers for you, I remain

Fraternally yours in Christ,

Most Reverend David D. Kagan, D.D., P.A., J.C.L.
Bishop of Bismarck
Apostolic Administrator of Fargo