

GUIDELINES
HIGH SCHOOL BACCALAUREATE
& GRADUATION CELEBRATIONS

DIOCESE OF ORLANDO

Baccalaureate and graduation are two separate events. Baccalaureate is a religious event of the school community; graduation is a civic and academic event of the school community.

I. BACCALAUREATE

- A. The eucharist is the primary reason for gathering.
- B. The eucharist is presided over by the school pastor or by the bishop.
- C. While academic garb is the prescribed dress for the graduates, formal investiture in this garb would be inappropriate at this celebration. The graduates should enter already vested.
- D. Academic regalia for faculty is optional but is strongly encouraged.
- E. The use of the mortar board (headgear) for men is only for processions and recessions. As soon as they reach their seats, the men remove their headgear. Women wearing mortar boards may keep them on for the entire celebration.
- F. All the rules of good liturgy must be observed. The ritual is to be followed. Readings must be taken from Sacred Scripture *only*. Proper liturgical music is to be used. Communion should be offered under both species.
- G. It is advisable to include in the celebration of the eucharist the priests of the parishes served by the high school.
- H. The eucharistic celebration occurs in church.

II. GRADUATION

- A. Since graduation is primarily a civic event, it is an event which occurs in a place other than a church. A civic auditorium or gym is recommended. If graduation does occur in church, see the addendum.
- B. The elements of the graduation ceremony include the following: conferral of diplomas, addresses by the valedictorian and the salutatorian (if not given some other time), a major address by the bishop or the diocesan superintendent of schools and only the major awards to individuals in the class.
- C. The ceremony is presided over by the bishop or, in his absence, by the superintendent of schools.

- D.** The faculty of the school is to be vested in academic garb.
- E.** Elements of music, choral pieces and art are encouraged in the celebration.
- F.** Places of honor should be designated for the bishop, the school pastor, the principal, the superintendent of schools and the assistant. The assistant principal may serve as master of ceremonies, giving all the introductions. Seats should also be provided for faculty and priests.

ADDENDUM

Graduation in Church

1. If graduation occurs in church, utmost care must be given to preserve the sacred surrounding in which the rite will take place. The symbols of altar, ambo and chair must not be obscured.
2. Seating for the graduates is located in the congregation and *not* in the sanctuary.
3. The rite takes the form of a Liturgy of the Word and not the form of a civic observance.

Processional
Greeting and Opening Prayer
First Reading
Responsorial Psalm
(Optional Second Reading)
Gospel Acclamation
Gospel Reading
Homily
Conferral of diplomas
General Intercessions
The Lord's Prayer
Blessing and Dismissal
Recessional

Other musical pieces may be added as appropriate. The use of nonscriptural material may be used following the homily and at other appropriate places.

4. The liturgy is presided over by the bishop or, in his absence, by the school pastor. In the bishop's absence, the diplomas are given out by the superintendent of schools.
5. The bishop *alone* addresses the graduates. All other addresses (valedictorian and/or salutatorian) and awards are to be given at some other suitable time but not as a part of this ceremony or baccalaureate.
6. The faculty is to be attired in academic garb. Places for seating in the congregation should be designated for the faculty, clergy and superintendent's office.