

For more information please call Tom Brown, Coordinator at (860) 512-0366
Classes: are Tuesdays, 6:15 to 7:15 p.m. on the second floor of the school building

* **Confirmation for 2019 will be on March 31st.**

Photo Album -

[Photo Album from a recent Confirmation at St. Joseph's.](#)

For parents, a variety of CDs, DVDs & books, can be found in the parish Book Rack in the main entrance of the church to help them prepare their children for the Sacraments.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. . . . «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. »

- CCC, no. 1285, citing LG, no. 11

[Living The faith Out In Daily Life, - What Does It Look Like ?](#) Sr. Miriam James Heidland,
- Video Clip - 5 minutes

Confirmation

Confirmation, together with *Baptism and Eucharist, from the Sacraments* of Initiation that are all intimately connected. In the Sacrament of Confirmation, the baptized person is "sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit" and is strengthened for service to the Body of Christ.

The prophets of the Old Testament foretold that God's Spirit would rest upon the Messiah to sustain his mission. Their prophecy was fulfilled when *Jesus* the Messiah was conceived by the Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. The Holy Spirit descended on

Jesus

on the occasion of his baptism by

John

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Jesus

' entire mission occurred in communion with the Spirit. Before he died,

Jesus

promised that the Spirit would be given to the Apostles and to the entire Church. After his death, he was raised by the Father in the power of the Spirit.

The New Testament reports many manifestations of the Holy Spirit, two of which we note here. St. John's Gospel describes an outpouring of the Spirit on Easter night when Jesus breathed on the Apostles and said, "Receive the holy Spirit" (Jn 20:22). St. Luke's Acts of the Apostles gives another account of the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, fifty days after the Resurrection of Christ (d. Acts 2). Filled with the Holy Spirit, the Apostles proclaimed God's mighty deeds. Peter preached that this coming of the Spirit fulfilled the prophecy of *Joel*: "In the last days. . . I will pour out a portion of my spirit I upon all flesh" (Acts 2:17; d. Jl 3:1).

Those who believed in the Apostles' preaching were baptized and received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. The Apostles baptized believers in water and the Spirit. Then they imparted the special gift of the Spirit through the laying on of hands. "The imposition of hands is rightly recognized by the Catholic tradition as the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation, which in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church" (CCC, no. 1288, citing Pope Paul VI, *Divinae Consortium Naturae*, no. 659).

By the second century, Confirmation was also conferred by anointing with holy oil, which came to be called sacred Chrism. "This anointing highlights the name 'Christian,' which means 'anointed' and derives from that of Christ himself whom God 'anointed with the Holy Spirit'" (CCC, no. 1289, citing Acts 10:38).

THE LITURGY OF CONFIRMATION

The signs, symbols, ritual acts, and words of the liturgy speak to us of the meaning of a Sacrament and of what Christ enacts in the event through his ministers and the disposition of the candidate. With this in mind, we reflect on the following elements of Confirmation: the anointing with sacred Chrism, the recipient, the essential rite, the ministers, and the effects of the Sacrament.

The Anointing with Sacred Chrism

The post-baptismal anointing with sacred chrism in Confirmation. . . is the sign of consecration. . . those who are anointed, share more completely in the mission of Jesus Christ.

- CCC, no. 1294

In or near Holy Week, the bishop consecrates the sacred Chrism during the course of the Chrism Mass. It is used to anoint the newly baptized, to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation, and to anoint bishops and priests during the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Orders.

Anointing with oil has many meanings such as cleansing as part of a bath, limbering up the muscles of athletes, and healing the wounds of the sick. Two other sacramental celebrations make use of blessed oil: "The pre-baptismal anointing with the oil of catechumens signifies cleansing and strengthening; the anointing of the sick expresses healing and comfort" (CCC, no. 1294). The Oil of Catechumens is used in Baptism. The Oil of the Sick is used for the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

The Recipient of Confirmation Each baptized person not yet confirmed can and should receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. In the Latin Church, it is customary to confirm candidates between the age of discretion, also called the age of reason, and about sixteen years of age. It is not uncommon that Catholics not confirmed during this period of their lives for a variety of reasons are confirmed as adults, often on Pentecost Sunday. The candidate should be in the state of grace (that is, without serious sin), be well prepared by prayer and catechesis, and be committed to the responsibilities entailed by the Sacrament.

The Essential Rite of Confirmation

In continuity with the New Testament custom of laying hands on those who would receive the gift of the Spirit, the bishop extends his two hands over all those to be confirmed. He recites a prayer that begs the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and for the seven gifts traditionally associated with the Spirit. These gifts are permanent dispositions that move us to respond to the guidance of the Spirit. The traditional list of the gifts is based on Isaiah 11: 1-3: wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, fortitude, piety (reverence), and fear of the Lord (wonder and awe in God's presence).

The essential rite then follows. In the Latin Rite, "the Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred through the anointing with Chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of hands, and through the words, 'Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (Introduction to the

Rite of Confirmation

, no. 9). In the Eastern Churches, after a prayer for the presence and action of the Holy Spirit, the priest anoints the forehead, eyes, nose, ears, lips, chest, back, hands, and feet of the candidate with

Myron

(holy oil). With each anointing he says, "The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit." The Eastern Churches call Confirmation "Chrismation."

When Confirmation is celebrated separately from Baptism, its connection with Baptism is

expressed, among other ways, by the renewal of baptismal promises. The celebration of Confirmation during the Eucharist helps underline the unity of the sacraments of Christian initiation. (CCC, no. 1321)

The connection between Confirmation and Baptism is also reflected in the choosing of a name by which the candidate will be confirmed, especially when the chosen name is one of the names by which the candidate was baptized. **The Minister of Confirmation** In the early Church, sacramental initiation always involved the bishop; the bishop was the ordinary minister of both Baptism and Confirmation. However, pastoral practice changed as the Church expanded rapidly. When bishops could no longer be present at all celebrations of Baptism, they chose to retain a role in the process of initiation by continuing to be the ordinary minister of Confirmation.

In the Latin Church, with the bishop as the minister of Confirmation, it is evident how this Sacrament can serve to strengthen the person's bond with the Church and her apostolic origins. However, there are also times when the bishop entrusts the celebration of the rite of Confirmation to a priest, such as in the case of the Baptism of an adult or the reception of an adult from another Christian community into full communion with the Church. Bishops may also give this permission in other cases.

In the Eastern Churches, Confirmation is conferred by a priest at the time of Baptism, and in some of these Churches, it is followed by the reception of the Eucharist. This practice underlines the unity of the three Sacraments of Initiation. The priest confirms with the Myron or oil consecrated by the bishop. This expresses the apostolic unity of the Church.

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The Effects of Confirmation

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Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace:

-it roots us more deeply in the divine filiation [becoming adopted sons and daughters of God] which makes us cry, "Abba! Father!";

-it unites us more firmly to Christ;

-it increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us;

-it renders our bond with the Church more perfect;

-it gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross. - CCC, no. 1303 As the words of the liturgy indicate, the person being confirmed is sealed with the Holy Spirit. This seal is called a *character*

, marking the person forever as called to fulfill the Church's mission in all the circumstances of life.

The one who gives us security with you in Christ and who anointed us is God; he has also put his seal upon us and given the Spirit in our hearts as a first installment. (2 Cor 1:21-22) **THE MISSION AND WITNESS OF THE CONFIRMED**

Confirmation deepens our baptismal life that calls us to be missionary witnesses of Jesus Christ in our families, neighborhoods, society, and the world. Through Confirmation, our personal relationship with Christ is strengthened. We receive the message of faith in a deeper and more intensive manner with great emphasis given to the person of Jesus Christ, who asked the Father to give the Holy Spirit to the Church for building up the community in loving service.

The Holy Spirit bestows seven gifts-wisdom, understanding, knowledge, fortitude, counsel, piety, and fear of the Lord-to assist us in our mission and witness. The impact of these gifts accompanies us in the various stages of our spiritual development.

FROM THE CATECHISM

1. Who may receive Confirmation?

Every baptized person not yet confirmed can and should receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Since Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist form a unity, it follows that “the faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the appropriate time.” (CCC, no. 1306, citing CIC, can. 890)

2. How should candidates for Confirmation be prepared?

Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit—his actions, his gifts, and his biddings—in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community. The latter bears special responsibility for the preparation of confirmands. (CCC, no. 1309)

3. Why do we not receive Confirmation more than once?

Confirmation, like Baptism, imprints a spiritual mark, or indelible character on the Christian’s soul; for this reason one can receive this Sacrament only once in one’s life. (CCC, no. 1317)