

CONFIRMATION

The Holy Spirit is received in Baptism to give us new life, so that we are born again as God's children. The Holy Spirit is received again in the sacrament of Confirmation to empower us to become faithful witnesses to Jesus Christ our Savior, and to enable us to live a truly Christian life of faith, hope, and love. The sacrament of Confirmation joins us more closely to the church and the mission entrusted to her by Jesus Christ; this mission is His own mission.

Luke 4:18-21 gives us an account of Jesus teaching in the Temple. "The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." The mission of Jesus is now entrusted to us. Confirmation binds us more closely to the teachings of our Church, to her sacramental and liturgical life, to the hierarchy, and to all Christians throughout the world and across time who have professed the Catholic faith.

Many people have the impression that Confirmation is a sort of graduation from religious instruction. But a true disciple of Jesus continues to learn more about the faith during his entire life. Confirmation is not graduation, but rather, the full initiation of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Communion. Initiation is not the end of the Christian journey, but the beginning. The sacrament of Confirmation (with Baptism and Communion) equips us fully for the Christian life, to witness to Jesus with our lives, and to follow Him unto eternal life.

See how St. Paul describes the Christian life in Ephesians 4:25-32.

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

For this purpose the Holy Spirit, which you will receive in this sacrament, will equip you with the various gifts you need for completing our Christian mission.

How is this sacrament celebrated?

To show that Confirmation joins a person more closely to the Catholic (meaning "universal") Church, it is normally celebrated by the bishop or his representative. In ancient times the bishop would slap the face of the one being confirmed, just as soldiers in old times were commissioned by their generals. The idea was this: "Be tough now as a soldier for Christ!" Today, the slap has been replaced by an embrace. The sacrament is celebrated by the bishop's hand being placed on the candidate's head, while applying sacred chrism in the sign of the cross with his thumb on the

candidate's forehead, while saying, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit." Like Baptism, Confirmation imprints God's seal on the soul of the person who is confirmed.

The sacrament of Confirmation also has an "eschatological" dimension, meaning that it directs us toward the fulfillment of God's Kingdom in Heaven.

Ephesians 1:13-14

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

So, what is the definition of Confirmation? It is:

1. A sacrament of initiation,
2. in which the Holy Spirit is received,
3. for the living of a truly Christian life in testimony to Jesus Christ.