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## CONFIRMATION

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*"Then they laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit." Acts 8:17 (NABRE)*

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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 1125, citing *Lumen Gentium*, 11). The Sacrament of Confirmation is a spiritual seal of the Holy Spirit that completes the sacramental graces received at Baptism. The effect of Confirmation is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as it was given to the Apostles at Pentecost (CCC 1302–1305).

### **Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit**

In the Gospels, Jesus prepares His disciples for His suffering, death, and resurrection with consoling promises of the Holy Spirit. He assures them that the Spirit will teach them all things, guide them to the truth, and provide divine gifts that no human can give.

### **Scriptural Promises of the Spirit**

During His Last Supper discourse, Jesus promises: *“The Advocate, the Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you”* (John 14:25-26). Further, He says, *“It is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you”* (John 16:7). These passages highlight the Spirit's role in empowering the Church and individuals for their mission in Christ.

### **Conditions for Receiving the Spirit**

Jesus emphasizes that love and obedience to His commandments are essential dispositions for receiving the Holy Spirit. He says, *“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to be with you always”* (John 14:15-16). These words remind us that living as faithful disciples prepares our hearts for the Spirit's transformative power.

### **Pentecost and the Fulfillment of the Promise**

Before His Ascension, Jesus instructs His disciples: *“Stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high”* (Luke 24:49). At Pentecost, the Apostles receive the Holy Spirit in a dramatic outpouring: *“Suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong wind... Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire... And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 2:1-4). This event signifies the beginning of the Church's mission, empowered by the Spirit to proclaim the Gospel.

### **Confirmation in the New Testament**

In Acts 8:14-17, Peter and John lay hands on baptized Samaritans and they receive the Holy Spirit. This account shows that Confirmation is distinct from Baptism and is conferred through the Apostles' authority. It highlights the Sacrament's role in deepening baptismal grace and strengthening believers for mission.

### **Confirmation as a Sacrament of Initiation**

Together with Baptism and Eucharist, Confirmation forms the Sacraments of Initiation. It seals the baptized with the Holy Spirit, equipping them to live as witnesses of Christ. *“By Confirmation, the baptized share more completely in the mission of Christ and the fullness of the Holy Spirit, so that their lives may give off ‘the aroma of Christ’”* (2 Cor. 2:15).

### **The Rite of Confirmation**

The Sacrament is conferred through the anointing with chrism on the forehead, accompanied by the words: *“Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit”* (CCC 1300). Chrism is a sacred oil made from olive oil mixed with a fragrant balsam, consecrated by the bishop during the Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday. It is used in Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders to signify the sanctifying action of the Holy Spirit. The fragrant nature of chrism symbolizes the *“aroma of Christ”* (2 Cor.

2:15), calling the confirmed to live a holy life that radiates Christ to the world. The bishop, as the ordinary minister of Confirmation, represents apostolic succession and unity with the Church. In exceptional cases, priests may administer Confirmation with the Bishop's permission, such as during the Easter Vigil.

### **The Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

The seven gifts bestowed in Confirmation—wisdom, knowledge, understanding, fortitude, counsel, piety, and fear of the Lord—enable believers to live holy lives and deepen their relationship with God.

- **Wisdom:** Enables us to see life from God's viewpoint; to grasp the purpose and plan of God.
- **Knowledge:** Directs us to thoughtful reflection of the mystery of God and the mysteries of the Catholic faith.
- **Understanding:** Knowing ourselves as part of our growth in knowing God.
- **Fortitude:** Courage to stand firm for Christ and his Gospel whenever challenged.
- **Counsel:** Right judgment about our moral lives and training our conscience to follow the Christian teachings.
- **Piety:** Reverence for God who created us, Jesus who saved us, and the Spirit who sanctifies us.
- **Fear of the Lord:** Awe and wonder in God's presence.

### **Fruits of the Spirit**

The Fruits of the Spirit, described by St. Paul in his Letter to the Galatians (5:22-23), are the visible qualities and virtues that grow in our lives when we live according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. These fruits are: *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, and chastity*. They are the outward signs of a life transformed by God's grace and a reflection of our cooperation with the gifts of the Spirit received in Confirmation.

### **An Indelible Mark**

Like Baptism, Confirmation imprints an indelible spiritual mark on the soul, signifying permanent belonging to Christ (CCC 1304). This spiritual seal strengthens believers to boldly live and defend their faith.

### **St. Ambrose's Reflection**

St. Ambrose beautifully explains: "*Recall that you have received the spiritual seal, the spirit of wisdom and understanding... Guard what you have received. God the Father has marked you with His sign; Christ the Lord has confirmed you, and the Spirit has been placed in your hearts*" (*De Mysteriis*, 2, 42).

### **Preparation for Confirmation**

Candidates must be in a state of grace, well-prepared through prayer and catechesis, and committed to the responsibilities of Christian discipleship.

### **Key Points:**

- Confirmation completes Baptism, strengthening the bond with Christ and the Church.
- It imparts the Holy Spirit's gifts and calls believers to courageous witness.
- The Sacrament leaves an indelible mark, equipping the faithful for lifelong service to God and others.