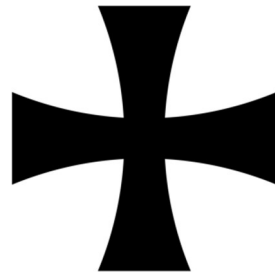


The Sacrament of Confirmation



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Confirmation imparts the following:

- An increase of sanctifying grace which completes the grace received in Baptism.
- The matter is the “sealing with the Holy Spirit” with the oil of chrism (christos/anointed) on the forehead and the laying on of hands by the bishop (or priest with the bishop’s permission). The form is the phrase, “be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
- A special sacramental grace consisting in the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and notably in the strength and courage to confess boldly the name of Christ.

Isaiah 11:1-3 There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of **wisdom** and **understanding**, the spirit of **counsel** and **might**, the spirit of **knowledge** and the **fear of the LORD**. (note: **piety** is not mentioned directly)

- An indelible (permanent) mark by reason of which the sacrament cannot be received again by the same person.
- It completes what baptism begins.

Why the Sacrament of Confirmation?

In the Old Testament, only priests, prophets and kings were anointed with oil. This sacrament confirms and strengthens us to be witnesses to Christ and his Church as priests, prophets and kings in Jesus Christ.

Acts 1:8 “but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.”

CCC 1288, 1289 “From that time on the apostles, in fulfillment of Christ’s will, imparted to the newly baptized by the laying on of hands the gift of the Spirit that completes the grace of Baptism. For this reason in the *Letter to the Hebrews* the doctrine concerning Baptism and the laying on of hands is listed among the first elements of Christian instruction. 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.”⁹⁹ . . . the term *Confirmation* suggests that this sacrament both confirms baptism and strengthens baptismal grace.

Acts 2:1-4 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of

⁹⁹ Paul VI, *Divinae consortium naturae*, 659; cf. *Acts* 8:15–17; 19:5–6; *Heb* 6:2.

them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Mt 10:19-20 When they deliver you up, do not be anxious about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

How is the Sacrament of Confirmation Administered?

Confirmation is usually performed during Mass by the Bishop or a priest that has been given episcopal permission to administer the sacrament.

It is conferred by the laying on of hands and an anointing with chrism on the forehead with the sign of the cross.

The sponsor places their hand on the candidate as a sign of presenting them on behalf of the Christian community.

The Sacrament of Confirmation from Scripture

Acts 8:15-16 they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for the Spirit had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 19:5-6 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

Heb 6:1-2 Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrines of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, with instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1. Wisdom

Wisdom is the first and highest gift of the Holy Spirit, because it is the perfection of faith. Through wisdom, we come to value properly those things which we believe through faith. The truths of Christian belief are more important than the things of this world, and wisdom helps us

to order our relationship to the created world properly, loving Creation for the sake of God, rather than for its own sake.

2. [Understanding](#)

Understanding is the second gift of the Holy Spirit, and people sometimes have a hard time understanding how it differs from wisdom. While wisdom is the desire to contemplate the things of God, understanding allows us grasp, at least in a limited way, the very essence of the truths of the Catholic Faith. Through understanding, we gain a certitude about our beliefs that moves beyond faith.

3. [Counsel](#)

Counsel, the third gift of the Holy Spirit, is the perfection of the [cardinal virtue](#)¹ of [prudence](#). Prudence can be practiced by anyone, but counsel is supernatural. Through this gift of the Holy Spirit, we are able to judge how best to act almost by intuition. Because of the gift of counsel, Christians need not fear to stand up for the truths of the Faith, because the Holy Spirit will guide us in defending those truths.

4. [Fortitude](#)

While counsel is the perfection of a cardinal virtue, fortitude is both a gift of the Holy Spirit and a cardinal virtue. Fortitude is ranked as the fourth gift of the Holy Spirit because it gives us the strength to follow through on the actions suggested by the gift of counsel. While fortitude is sometimes called *courage*, it goes beyond what we normally think of as courage. Fortitude is the virtue of the martyrs that allows them to suffer death rather than to renounce the Christian Faith.

5. [Knowledge](#)

The fifth gift of the Holy Spirit, knowledge, is often confused with both wisdom and understanding. Like wisdom, knowledge is the perfection of faith, but whereas wisdom gives us the desire to judge all things according to the truths of the Catholic Faith, knowledge is the actual ability to do so. Like counsel, it is aimed at our actions in this life. In a limited way, knowledge allows us to see the circumstances of our life the way that God sees them. Through this gift of the Holy Spirit, we can determine God's purpose for our lives and live them accordingly.

6. [Piety](#)

Piety, the sixth gift of the Holy Spirit, is the perfection of the virtue of religion. While we tend to think of religion today as the external elements of our faith, it really means the willingness to

¹ CCC 1805 Four pivotal human virtues (from the Latin *cardo*, “pivot”): prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. The human virtues are stable dispositions of the intellect and will that govern our acts, order our passions, and guide our conduct in accordance with reason and faith.

worship and to serve God. Piety takes that willingness beyond a sense of duty, so that we desire to worship God and to serve Him out of love, the way that we desire to honor our parents and do what they wish.

7. [Fear of the Lord](#)

The seventh and final gift of the Holy Spirit is the fear of the Lord, and perhaps no other gift of the Holy Spirit is so misunderstood. We think of fear and hope as opposites, but the fear of the Lord confirms the [theological virtue](#) of hope. This gift of the Holy Spirit gives us the desire not to offend God, as well as the certainty that God will supply us the grace that we need in order to keep from offending Him. Our desire not to offend God is more than simply a sense of duty; like piety, the fear of the Lord arises out of love.

The 12 Fruits of the Holy Spirit (a product of the 7 Gifts of the Holy Spirit)

CCC 1832 The *fruits* of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church lists twelve of them: “charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity.” [Self-control – Especially in sexual matters; Chastity – excludes or moderates the indulgence of the sexual appetites]

Gal 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control**; against such there is no law.
(Generosity, modesty and chastity are in addition to the list in *Gal 5:22-23*)