

RCIA HO Class 19 Confirmation

Confirmation is one of the three Sacraments of Initiation into the life of the Church (Baptism and the Eucharist are the other two). As the word “confirmation” comes from the Latin “*confirmare*” meaning “to strengthen”, so the Sacrament of Confirmation is seen as a “strengthening” of the grace of the Holy Spirit received in Baptism. Thus, “the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace.”

“Incorporated into the Church by Baptism, the faithful are appointed by their baptismal character to Christian religious worship.... By the sacrament of Confirmation, they are more perfectly bound to the Church and are endowed with the special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence, they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread the faith by word and deed” (Vatican Council II).

As we have seen, each of the seven sacraments has two parts: the *matter* (the material of the sacrament), and the *form* (the words used). For Baptism, for example, the *matter* is the water while the *form* is the words “N. I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Similarly, for the Sacrament of the Eucharist the *matter* is bread and wine and the *form* is the words of institution, “Take this, all of you, and eat it...” The *matter* of the sacrament of Confirmation is the anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of the hand. (Chrism is oil consecrated by the Bishop during the *Chrism Mass* on Holy Thursday, also used for anointing the hands of priests at their ordination). The *form* of the sacrament is the prayer “N. be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit”. By this anointing the *confirmand* (the one being confirmed) receives the “seal” of the Holy Spirit, marking his total belonging to Christ, enrollment in His service for ever, as well as the promise of divine protection in the struggle against evil. After the anointing and prayer, the bishop says to each *confirmand*, “Peace be with you”, to which the *confirmand* responds, “And with your spirit.” This sign of peace concludes the rite of the sacrament and signifies and demonstrates ecclesial communion with the bishop and with all the faithful.

The effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost. It unites us more firmly to Christ, increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit within us and strengthens us to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Jesus Christ.

RCIA WKSH Class 19 Confirmation (BCL# 25)

- 1) Who is the ordinary minister of Confirmation?
- 2) How old must one be before he receives the Sacrament of Confirmation (barring emergency situations)?
- 3) What is the name of the oil with which one is anointed by the bishop during the Sacrament of Confirmation?
- 4) When is that oil consecrated (blessed) by the bishop?
- 5) As the apostles were strengthened by the Holy Spirit on the Feast of Pentecost, so is the Catholic strengthened by the Holy Spirit by the Sacrament of _____.
6. What are the three sacraments of initiation into the Catholic Church?
7. What is the purpose of the Sacrament of Confirmation?
- 8. Discussion Question.** How can you be a witness to the presence of Christ in the world in your particular life situation, i.e. school, work, family life, etc.?
- 9. Discussion Question.** Why do you think so many people receive the Sacrament of Confirmation and never go to Mass again for the rest of their lives?
10. Can a Catholic get married in the Church without having received the Sacrament of Confirmation?
11. Should a Catholic get married in the Church without having received the Sacrament of Confirmation?
12. Are you going to walk away from the Church after having received the Sacrament of Confirmation?