

Confirmation

Overview

Confirmation is generally the final sacrament of the Sacraments of Initiation – following Baptism and Holy Eucharist.

What is the history?

In the early church persons interested in the Catholic Church were invited by the community to be a part of them. The candidates were called Catechumens and began a step by step process of learning about the church and finally receiving the Sacraments of Initiation. This continues now and is called the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). Typically Confirmation is conferred when the person is mature enough to make a conscientious decision.



In scriptures we find several references to Confirmation. One of these comes from Acts 8:14-17 – *“Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who went down and prayed for them, that they might receive the holy Spirit, for it had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.”* Also see Acts 9:17, 19:6 and 9:17.

What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is a visible sign of the presence of God as initiated by Jesus Christ. It consists of three essentially visible and necessary acts:

1. The person is anointed with the ***Oil of Chrism*** which is where Chrism Mass gets its name. This Holy Oil is used in the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation including priestly ordination and is the most sacred of all of them. The Oil of Chrism is mixed with perfume during the mass such that the aroma reminds us of the presence of the Holy Spirit as one is anointed.
2. The minister (Priest or Bishop) lays his hands on the person and says...
3. The words of *“N, be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

What happens?

There are several effects of Confirmation:

1. It increases the grace of the Holy Spirit as received from Baptism. It does not mean that the act of Baptism was not adequate – rather that its effect is now increased in intensity.
2. It gives one an indelible spiritual mark – which cannot ever be taken away – characterized by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
3. It confirms what the person has been taught and strengthens them to profess their faith openly and to fight against temptations and difficulties.
4. It fulfills the promise of Jesus to send the ***Paraclete*** as did occur on the day of Pentecost. In some special way Confirmation is a personal Pentecost for each and every recipient.