

Parish Confirmation Preparation

April 2024

What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is a sacrament of initiation into the Catholic Church. During Confirmation, a person is 'marked' with the seal of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands and anointing with the oil of Chrism. This anointing strengthens the grace that was first received in Baptism. In Confirmation, we are confirmed with the "special strength of the Holy Spirit (CCC #1215).

During Confirmation, the Bishop will invite the candidates to renew their baptismal promises. Then he will stretch out his hands over the candidate(s) in silence before anointing the candidate's head with the oil of Chrism. As each candidate is anointed, the Bishop will say, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit". This anointing with Chrism signifies the gifts of the Holy Spirit which they are called to use in the life and mission of the Christian community.

Anyone who has been baptised in the Catholic Church is eligible to be confirmed. A Catholic can only be confirmed once.

The Symbolic Actions of Confirmation

Laying on of Hands



The Laying on of hands signifies the coming of the Holy Spirit through which God makes us His own and transforms us by the power of love. The Bishop, who is a successor to the apostles, follows the example of the apostles: "Peter and John laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." (Acts 8:17)

Anointing with Oil

During the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation, candidates are anointed with the oil of Chrism. Those who are anointed are set apart and strengthened through the Holy Spirit to "share more completely in the mission of Jesus Christ. The oil symbolises strength, the fragrant balsam represents the "aroma of Christ". (2 Cor. 2:15). Through the example of their lives, they are called to give off 'the aroma of Christ'. (CCC #1294) Because Chrism is blessed by the bishop, its use is a sign of the spiritual connection between the faithful and their bishop.



The Sign of Peace

At the end of the Rite of Confirmation, the Bishop shakes the candidate's hand and says 'Peace be with you', and the candidate replies, 'And with your spirit', as a sign of their unity with the people of God, the one body of Christ. When the Bishop says, 'Peace be with you', he is saying it on behalf of the community. In addition, it symbolises the presence of the Holy Spirit as a unifying presence in the Church.



Giving Thanks

What is Gratitude?

The word 'gratitude' comes from the Latin word *gratus*, meaning pleasing or thankful.

Being grateful is a sense of **appreciating how much we have**: having a place to live, food, clean water, friends, faith, or family; **what others have done for us**: a kind word, advice, encouragement, compassion, a listening ear, a kind deed; **and never taking our blessings or others for granted**.

We can use lots of words to describe feelings of gratitude: thankful, fortunate, humbled, appreciative, and blessed.

Read the scripture passage below.

On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, they called out, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!' When he saw them, he said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' And as they went, they were made clean. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus asked, 'Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?' Then he said to him, 'Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.' (Luke 17:11-19)

Jesus reminds us of the many blessings we all receive in life. We have received the beautiful gift of the Sacrament of Confirmation. How have we given thanks?

At the end of each day, we should think of and give thanks for the many blessings we are grateful for.



For Reflection

Can you identify five people who were influential and supportive of your preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, and for whom you are thankful?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

List five things in your life you are grateful for?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

In what way do you normally show gratitude?

Having received the Sacrament of Confirmation, in what way do you hope to grow in your faith as a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

During the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Bishop prays the following prayer invoking the Holy Spirit on those to be Confirmed:

"All-powerful God, by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin, and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their helper and guide. Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgement and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord."
Amen.