

**RCIA – Symbolon Lesson 11: The Sacraments, Baptism, and Confirmation
We Believe, Chapter 8 - Christ in His Sacraments –
Baptism and Confirmation (pgs. 87-101)**

- **Opening Prayer:** Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created,
and you shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray.

O God, who have taught the hearts of the faithful
by the light of the Holy Spirit,
grant that in the same Spirit we may be truly wise
and ever rejoice in his consolation.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

- **Song:** Come Thou Long Expected Jesus

✠ **Sacraments:** An efficacious sign of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us through the work of the Holy Spirit (CCC 1131)

✠ Seven Sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders

- **Confirmation:**

The **Catechism of the Catholic Church** (CCC) states:

“The sacraments of Christian initiation – Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist – lay the *foundation* of every Christian life. ‘The sharing in the divine nature given to men through the grace of Christ bears a certain likeness to the origin, development, and nourishing of natural life. The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life. By means of these sacraments of Christian initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of the divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity.’” (CCC 1212)

“...the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For ‘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. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.’” (CCC 1285)

✠ **Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit.** The Bishop or Priest will proclaim, “Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

✧ **Wisdom** – detaches us from the world in order to make the soul more responsive to the things of God.

- ✚ **Understanding** – helps us to grasp more clearly what the truths of our faith really mean to us and our salvation
- ✚ **Judgment (Counsel)** – helps our conscience distinguish what good to do and what evil to avoid and helps us to choose the good
- ✚ **Fortitude** – courage to seek God and reject everything that stands in our way, including ridicule, malice, and outright persecution (to include death)
- ✚ **Knowledge** – tells us the path of virtue and warns us of the dangers we face in seeking Heaven
- ✚ **Piety** – confidence in God that a child feels for a loving parent so we can serve God with joy
- ✚ **Fear of the Lord** – solemn respect of God that fills us with a horror and dread of offending Him, not because He is a God who will punish us with wrath, but because we would never desire to hurt the one who loves us so completely

† **Fruits of the Holy Spirit.** What we cannot achieve with our own efforts, we can achieve with God's help.

- ✚ Charity
- ✚ Joy
- ✚ Peace
- ✚ Patience
- ✚ Kindness
- ✚ Goodness
- ✚ Generosity
- ✚ Faithfulness
- ✚ Gentleness
- ✚ Self-Control
- ✚ Modesty
- ✚ Chastity
- ✚ Faithfulness

- **What is the Sacrament of Confirmation?**

† **Who?** Every person who has been baptized can and should be confirmed in order to effect a completion of baptismal grace. Ideally, adults receive the three sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist) at the same celebration. In the case of a baptized infant, Confirmation may be received by a child when he or she reaches the age of discretion or when there is a danger of death. The ordinary minister of Confirmation is the bishop, who is a direct successor to the 12 apostles. A priest may also confirm, and ordinarily does so on the night of the Easter Vigil or at certain other times.

- † **What?** The candidate must profess his or her faith, be in a state of grace (free of mortal sin), and intend to receive the sacrament. Candidates must be prepared to be Christian disciples and witness with their lives.
- † **Where?** The candidates who are to receive the sacraments during the Easter Vigil will receive them in our local parish on Holy Saturday. Those who have previously been baptized into the Catholic Church will normally be confirmed by Archbishop Naumann at a time and location to be announced in a ceremony for the archdiocese.
- † **When?** When Confirmation is celebrated at the Easter Vigil, it immediately follows Baptism when the bishop or priest invites the faithful to pray, “*Let us pray to God our Father, that he will pour out the Holy Spirit on these candidates for Confirmation to strengthen them with his gifts and anoint them to be more like Christ, the Son of God.*” When Confirmation is celebrated at a different time than Baptism, the Rite begins with a renewal of the Baptismal vows to show its connection to Baptism.

In the Latin Rite, Confirmation is separated from Baptism when a child is Baptized as an infant and normally follows the Eucharist. Our diocese normally confers the sacrament of Confirmation on 8-9th graders. The timing/age varies by diocese. In the Eastern Rite, it is customary to administer all three Sacraments of Initiation to infants/young children.

- † **Why?** We are confirmed to complete the Baptismal grace by strengthening us in the Holy Spirit and our bond with the Church so we will be true witnesses of Christ through our lives. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit imparts an indelible mark which, like Baptism, can never be erased from our soul – we are “sealed with the Holy Spirit.” For this reason, like Baptism, Confirmation is only received once – it can never be repeated.
- † **How?** (CCC 1300) “The Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred through the *anointing with chrism on the forehead*, which is done by the *laying on of the hand*, and through the words: ‘*Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.*’”
- ✠ (CCC 1301) The sign of peace that concludes the rite of the sacrament signifies and demonstrates ecclesial communion with the bishop and all the faithful.

Sacred chrism is used during Confirmation as a sign of consecration to God. Those who are anointed share more completely in the mission of Jesus Christ. The seal of the Holy Spirit marks our total belonging to Christ, our enrollment in his service forever, as well as the promise of divine protection.

• **Catechism References for Further Reflection:**

- The Sacraments: CCC 1210-1211
- Baptism: CCC 1214-1284
- Confirmation: CCC 1285-1321

- **Questions for Discussion:**

1. Where did the Catholic Church get the seven Sacraments? What is the purpose of the Sacraments and why do each of the Sacraments have physical signs associated with them?
2. If the Sacrament of Baptism brings us into the Church (God's family), why do we need Confirmation? How is the Sacrament of Confirmation different from the Sacrament of Baptism?
3. How has Confirmation made a difference in your life? Do you feel it has strengthened you in your mission as Priest, Prophet, and King?
4. What are some ways you can/will nurture the gifts of the Holy Spirit to help you to grow in your relationship with God and in holiness?
5. Is there anything you are looking forward to most about receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation?

- **Weekly Gospel Reading: Third Sunday of Advent (Lk 3:10-18)**

The crowds asked John the Baptist, "What should we do?" He said to them in reply, "Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized and they said to him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He answered them, "Stop collecting more than what is prescribed." Soldiers also asked him, "And what is it that we should do?" He told them, "Do not practice extortion, do not falsely accuse anyone, and be satisfied with your wages."

Now the people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ. John answered them all, saying, "I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." Exhorting them in many other ways, he preached good news to the people.

- **Closing Prayer**

Prayer of Saint Augustine

Breathe into me, Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.
Move in me, Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.
Attract my heart, Holy Spirit, that I may love only what is holy.
Strengthen me, Holy Spirit, that I may defend all that is holy.
Protect me, Holy Spirit, that I may always be holy.