

RCIA – Symbolon Lesson 11: The Sacraments: Baptism, and Confirmation

- **Opening 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.

- **Song:** Come Holy Spirit Come

- **Catechism References for Further Reflection:**

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

✠ **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

- 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)

- **Baptism:**

By God’s grace any human being can be born to a new life that will never end. That birth is Baptism, the Sacrament which unites us to the life of Christ Himself and opens for us the pathway to the other Sacraments and to eternal life. (We Believe, pg 89) As defined in the Catechism, *to Baptize means to “plunge” or “immerse; the plunge into the water symbolizes the catechumen’s burial into Christ’s death, from which he rises up by resurrection with Him,*

as a new creature.”

The first mention of Baptism in the New Testament comes to us from the Gospel of Matthew (3:1-17), Jesus did not need to be Baptized by John; in John Baptizing Jesus it shows His oneness with all humanity.

Jesus goes on to tell us, “*No one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit.*” (John 3:5)

- **Effects of Baptism** (We Believe, Pg. 90)

- 1) Forgiveness of sins: both original and personal sins are forgiven.
- 2) New life as God’s Children through Sanctifying Grace.
- 3) Union with God: God wants to be close to us, and joins us with the Father, Son, and holy Spirit.
- 4) Membership in the Church, that “one Body” is the Body of Christ on earth, the Church.

- **Baptism and Salvation:**

As Catholics, we believe that through the Sacrament of Baptism we are cleansed of both original and personal sin. We are incorporated into the church, and we are set on the road to salvation. Baptism is a gift from God that invites a response from us, it is not yet salvation fully completed in heaven. Simply said, Baptism puts us on the road to salvation, but to complete our salvation, we must strive actively towards it throughout life. “**Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in Heaven.**” 9Matthew 7:21)

- **Confirmation:**

“...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.

• **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. Sponsors and Team Members – 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: The Epiphany of the Lord (Mt: 2:1-12)**

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea,
in the days of King Herod,
behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,
“Where is the newborn king of the Jews?
We saw his star at its rising
and have come to do him homage.”
When King Herod heard this,
he was greatly troubled,
and all Jerusalem with him.
Assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people,
He inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.
They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea,
for thus it has been written through the prophet:
*And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
since from you shall come a ruler,
who is to shepherd my people Israel.*”
Then Herod called the magi secretly
and ascertained from them the time of the star’s appearance.
He sent them to Bethlehem and said,
“Go and search diligently for the child.
When you have found him, bring me word,
that I too may go and do him homage.”
After their audience with the king they set out.
And behold, the star that they had seen at its rising preceded them,
until it came and stopped over the place where the child was.
They were overjoyed at seeing the star,
and on entering the house
they saw the child with Mary his mother.
They prostrated themselves and did him homage.
Then they opened their treasures
and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod,
they departed for their country by another way.”

- **Closing Prayer**