

Lesson 18

Confirmation



Confirmation is as simple as the Holy Spirit, who is God, increasing our faith so that we have the certainty that He's with us until we arrive in Heaven, for which He also gives us hope. During this Sacrament, the Holy Spirit strengthens our ability to love Him and others more deeply. The Holy Spirit gives us seven gifts to help us do that.

The Sacrament of Confirmation is like Baptism Part Two. This sacrament gives us the fullness of the Holy Spirit. In Confirmation, as in Baptism, we receive sanctifying grace, which is the gift of God, given to us without our earning it, that unites us with the life of the Trinity and heals our human nature which is wounded by sin. Through Confirmation our relationship with God is strengthened because we are sealed with the gift of the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us the use of His gifts and fruits. These gifts are a permanent willingness that makes it possible for us to do what God asks of us. Through Confirmation, our bond with Jesus is made stronger so that we can better witness to Christ. In Confirmation, the Holy Spirit strengthens our life of faith. Like Baptism, the Sacrament of Confirmation can only be received once because it imparts an indelible mark on one's soul.

Unlike infant Baptism where the parents of the newly baptized take on the responsibility of passing on the gift of faith, the one being confirmed now accepts the faith for himself or herself. With this acceptance of the faith, one becomes fully initiated into the Catholic Church and receives the Gift of the Holy Spirit to fulfill God's mission. As Baptism makes us children of God, so Confirmation makes us Soldiers of Christ. Thus, it is our duty to defend and protect the faith.

The Sacrament of Confirmation produces the following:

1. It imparts an indelible mark on the soul (*making us Soldiers of Christ*).
2. The sacrament roots us in Divine Sonship.
3. Confirmation unites us to Christ.
4. It increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us and gives us the strength of the Spirit to spread the faith



THE FIVE EFFECTS OF CONFIRMATION

	It brings us closer to God, our Father It roots us more deeply as children of God.
	It brings us closer to Christ It unites us more firmly to Jesus Christ.
	We receive the Gifts of the Spirit Increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us: Wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord
	We become fully Catholic It renders our bond with the Church (the Body of Christ) more perfect.
	It inspires us to defend the Faith Gives us a special strength to spread and defend the faith as true witnesses of Christ.

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS  **CatholicLink** SOURCE: THE CATHOLIC COMPANY

The signs of the Sacrament of Confirmation are the laying on of hands by the bishop and the anointing with the Oil of Sacred Chrism. A bishop is the usual celebrant of the Sacrament of Confirmation. When administering the sacrament, the bishop first extends his hands over those to be confirmed and calls on God saying, “Send your Holy Spirit

upon them to be their helper and guide.” The Holy Spirit helps us to believe, pray, love, and perform good deeds. After the bishop calls upon God, each person being confirmed is anointed with the Oil of Sacred Chrism on the forehead by the bishop as he says, “Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Baptism makes you a part of the Church; whereas, Confirmation calls you to take on more responsibility as a Church member. Through Confirmation, you are called to show Jesus’ presence by participating more fully in the mission of the Church and by working for justice and peace (*hence, being a Soldier of Christ*).

Gifts of the Holy Spirit:

Through the Sacrament of Confirmation, we receive His Seven Gifts: wisdom, piety, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, and fear of the Lord. The Holy Spirit gives us these gifts to equip us to glorify God.

THE 7 GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



FORTITUDE

Helps us to overcome difficulties with faith.



PIETY

Moves us to treat God with the trust with which a child treats his Father.



FEAR OF GOD

Compels us to flee from sin and always choose to please God.



COUNSEL

Encourages us to follow the solution that most matches the glory of God and the good of others.



UNDERSTANDING

Helps us understand the Word of God and the doctrines of faith.



WISDOM

Makes us see all things in light of God and impels us to seek Him above all things.



KNOWLEDGE

Helps us see the world from God’s perspective.

Fruits of the Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit gives us twelve fruits through the Sacrament of Confirmation: chastity, faithfulness, peace, goodness, kindness, joy, charity, patience, gentleness, modesty, generosity, and self-control. Living in the fruit of the Spirit means you are aware of the influence of the Holy Spirit. As a child of God, you'll want to shape your life around the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Someone who walks in the Spirit patterns his or her life after Jesus Christ. The best way to bear fruit is to stay connected to the true vine, Jesus Christ. Remember that what you sow, you will reap. Sow to the spirit and you will reap the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Spend time with God and you will grow in your ability to have the mind of Christ.

1. CHASTITY

Purity

Abstaining from all sexual activity

2. FAITHFULNESS

Spiritual Devotion

Steadfast in affection: LOYAL

3. PEACE

Spiritual Harmony and Tranquility

Harmony in personal relations

4. GOODNESS

Moral Excellence

The state of being good

5. KINDNESS

Compassion

Treating people with respect

6. JOY

Internal Happiness

The state of happiness

7. CHARITY

Love or Goodwill

Benevolent goodwill toward or love of humanity

8. PATIENCE

Willingness to Endure

The capacity to be calm

9. GENTLENESS

Intentional Mildness

The quality of being gentle with others

10 MODESTY

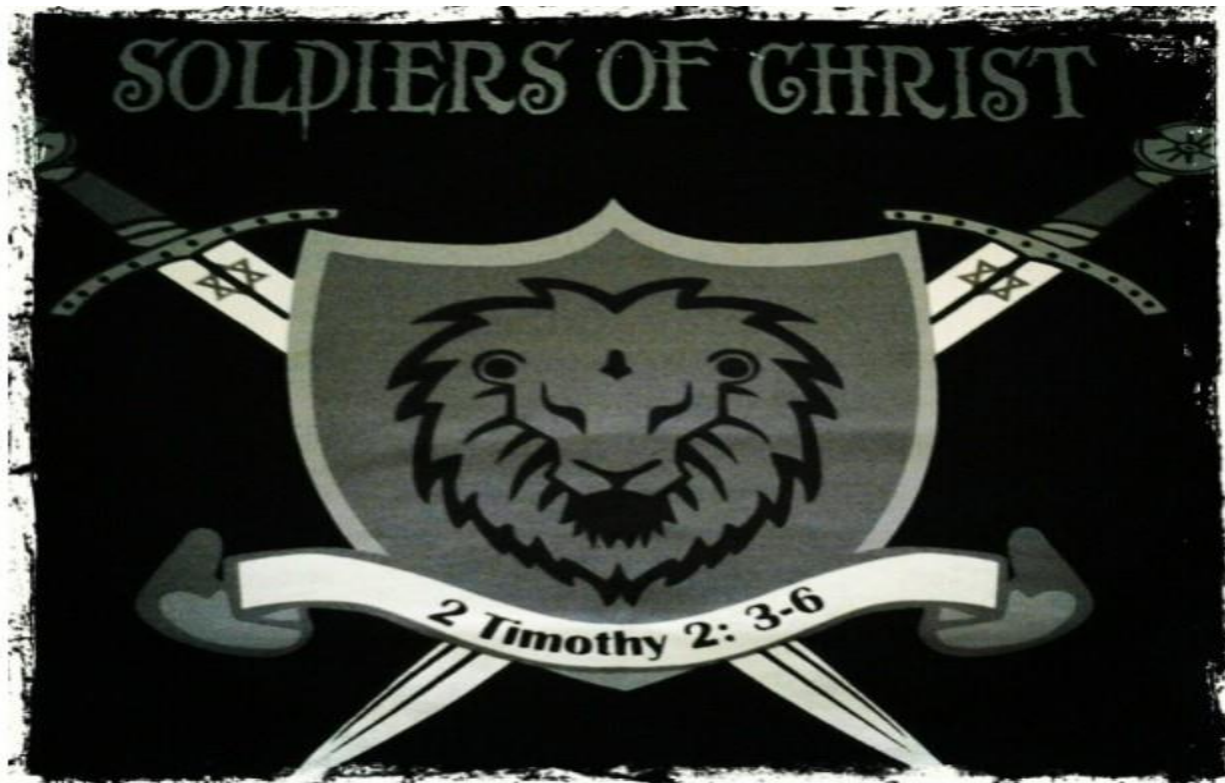
Moderation of our Speech, Dress, and Behavior

11 GENEROSITY

Spirit of Giving Freely
The quality of being generous

12 SELF-CONTROL

Will Power over one's actions
Restraint exercised over one's own impulses, emotions, or desires



Through the Sacrament of Confirmation, we become Soldiers of Christ. The purpose of a soldier is to protect, defend, and serve. Before becoming a soldier, a person needs to be trained and disciplined. After training, the soldier receives a uniform, which is usually comprised of some sort of helmet, armor, boots, weapons, and flag. The soldier is placed in a group of other soldiers who work together to complete missions. Soldiers live by a certain code of conduct and they are expected to display loyalty and obedience to the chain of command.

The same holds true for the Confirmed Catholic who becomes a Soldier of Christ. The main purpose of the Soldier of Christ is to protect, defend, and serve both the Church and the faith. Before one is Confirmed, that person needs to be trained in the faith. This is what religious education, sponsors, and family do for us: they train us in the knowledge and ways of the faith. If we don't know the faith, then how can we possibly live it, protect it, or defend it? Once we become Soldiers of Christ, we are given a spiritual uniform so we can wage war against Satan and the powers of evil. Saint Paul does a fantastic job of outlining the uniform of the Soldier of Christ, which he refers to as the "Armor of God." The following charts illustrate and explain Saint Paul's concept of the Armor of God:



Soldiers of Christ Arise

Ephesians 6:10-17

- ☐ Breastplate - Righteousness
- ☐ Belt - Truth
- ☐ Shoes - Gospel
- ☐ Sword - Word of God
- ☐ Shield - Faith
- ☐ Helmet - Salvation
- ☐ Prayer - God's Help

Rom. 1:16,17; John 8:32; Heb. 4:12; 11:6; Titus 2:11; Jas. 1:5

What are some of the weapons of the Soldier of Christ? Like a soldier in today's world, the Soldier of Christ has an arsenal of weapons to choose from. The following list provides us with a look at some of the weapons available to us in the war on sin:

Prayer	Rosary	Scriptures
Sacraments	Devotions	Virtues
Fruits of Holy Spirit	Saints	Family
Gifts of Holy Spirit	Works of Mercy	Grace

The flag of the Soldier of Christ is the cross, which Jesus tells us we must carry and follow after him. The Soldier of Christ is called to work in a group of others; this group is the parish community. In other words, through Confirmation, we are called to be a fruitful member of the Church by participating in the ministries of our parish. The Soldier of Christ must also live by a moral code. This moral code is outlined in the teachings of Christ and his Church. In other words, we are obligated to live our lives according to the teachings of the Church. In short, Confirmation inspires us to a life of service. This means we are called to put our faith into action on a daily basis.

Confirmation's Connection to Pentecost:

Pentecost is the birth of the Church. It is also when the Apostles received the gift of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2, Saint Luke recounts the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles 50 days after the Resurrection of Christ (*Pentecost means "fifty"*). He describes the sound of a "violent wind" filling the house in which the Apostles were meeting, followed by "tongues as of fire," which separated and came to rest upon the head of each Apostle. Thus filled with the Holy Spirit, the Apostles were especially equipped to do the work that Jesus had given them to do: to spread the Good News.



When we are confirmed, it is like our Pentecost (*hence, our birthday into the Church*). We, like the Apostles receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. We too are called to continue the mission of the Church: to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ.

7 Things You Need to Know About Confirmation:

1. Confirmation is the Completion of Baptism

Baptism marks the start of your relationship with Christ. Your soul changed permanently and you were filled with grace from God. Through Confirmation, the Holy Spirit strengthens these graces, gives you more of them, and seals them all inside you. This brings you closer to Christ and better prepares you to face the daily challenges of Christian life.

2. Confirmation Increases the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Want to know more about these graces sealed inside of you? They are called the Gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, knowledge, fortitude, piety, counsel, and fear of the Lord. You've had these gifts since your Baptism, but Confirmation deepens and strengthens them since it draws you even closer to Christ and the greater Catholic community. Think about it like a team of basketball players. It's possible to get some good results from a team of players that just met their coach and have only played together a few times, but you'll get great results from a team of close-knit players that have played under the same coach for years. Baptism is like being introduced to the team (*the Church*) and your coach (*Jesus*). Confirmation is like the years of practice and team-building that it takes to really bring a team together.

3. A Mission from God: Operation Confirmation

Did you know that when you receive the sacrament of Confirmation you accept a mission from God? In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells his disciples to baptize all nations in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Later on, the Holy Spirit descends upon the disciples at Pentecost and they receive the courage to take on the mission Jesus gave them earlier. Confirmation is your own personal Pentecost. The Holy Spirit descends upon you and you accept the same challenge given by Jesus to the disciples.

4. Chrism is Much More Than a Sweet-Smelling Oil

Chrism, the perfumed oil that the bishops uses to make the sign of the cross on your forehead, signifies a lot more than just a shower in your future. It helps show a connection to your Baptism – the first time you were anointed with oil. It shows healing and cleansing too. Believe it or not, it also signifies preparation to do spiritual battle with the Devil. Why? Oil is slippery and, in ancient times, warriors would cover themselves in it before battle to make it difficult for their enemies to grab them. In other words, Chrism makes it hard for the devil to grab you.

5. Why My Forehead?

You probably wondered this as it dripped down your face during your Confirmation. St. Thomas Aquinas explained that this is because your forehead is part of your face – the first thing people see when they talk to you. Having the Chrism spread on your forehead proclaims to the world that the first thing people should notice about you is your faith in Christ.

6. What's in a Name?

Many Catholics adopt the name of a biblical figure or saint that they find inspiring at their Confirmation. This shows your intention to copy their dedication to God. It makes you a heavenly friend who will pray and intercede for you on your spiritual journey.

7. You Aren't Alone

To be Confirmed, you must select a sponsor to help guide you through the process. This person is a great example of what it means to be a Catholic. They pray for you and provide a support system for your faith. Confirmation certainly makes you better equipped to handle life as a Christian, but that doesn't mean things will always be easy. During these more difficult times, don't forget about your sponsor.

Requirements Needed to be a Confirmation Sponsor:

1. Must be a minimum of 16 years old.
2. Must be Fully Initiated into the Catholic Church: received Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation.
3. Must be in good standing with the Catholic Church: they must be regularly practicing their faith, especially by Sunday Mass participation.
4. If they are married, then the marriage must be recognized by the Catholic Church.
5. Cannot be your parent.