

Parent Sessions

Parent Session I: Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Crisis of Confirmation

If there was ever a time when the Sacrament of Confirmation needed to be explained carefully, that time is now. All too many members of the Church neglect it altogether; and those who have received it or who plan to receive it, see it as something minor in their lives... Confirmation must be restored to the reverence and devotion it deserves. (Catechism of the Council of Trent, II, 2.1)¹

The Sacrament of Confirmation

Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; *it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit* in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds. (Catechism of the Catholic Church §1316)

The Holy Spirit at Creation

In the beginning *God* created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and *the Spirit* (Hebrew *ruach*) of *God* was moving over the face of the waters. And *God* said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. (Genesis 1:1-3)

The Holy Spirit at Mount Sinai

Then Moses brought the people out of the camp *to meet God*; and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. And Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because *the LORD* descended upon it in fire... (Exodus 19:17-18)

The Holy Spirit and King David

And the *LORD* said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and *the Spirit of the LORD* came mightily upon David from that day forward. (1 Samuel 16:12-13)

¹ *The Roman Catechism* (trans. Robert I Bradley, S.J. and Eugene Kevane; Boston, Mass.: Daughters of St. Paul, 1985), 198.

Jesus and the Holy Spirit

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you *another Counselor* (Greek *paraklētos*), to be with you for ever, even *the Spirit of truth*... you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you. (John 14:16-17)

The Effect of Confirmation

It is evident from its celebration that the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is *the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost*. (Catechism of the Catholic Church §1302)

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it important to you that your child receives the Sacrament of Confirmation?
2. How have you experienced the presence of the Holy Spirit in your life?
3. What are some ways that you can grow closer to the Holy Spirit?

Parent Session 2: The Grace of Pentecost

Confirmation and Pentecost

It is evident from its celebration that the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is *the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost*. (Catechism of the Catholic Church §1302)

Pentecost in Jewish Scripture

And you shall count... *fifty days* [Greek *pentēkontē*] to the day after the seventh sabbath; then you shall present a cereal offering of new grain to the LORD. (Leviticus 23:15-16)

Pentecost in Jewish Tradition

And Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because *the LORD descended upon it in fire*... *And the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai*, to the top of the mountain; and the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. (Exodus 19:18, 20)

The Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you*; and *you shall be my witnesses* (Greek *martyres*) in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight... When *the day of Pentecost* had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound

came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them *tongues as of fire*, distributed and resting on each one of them. *And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit* and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 1:7-9; 2:1-4)

How Pentecost Changed the Apostles

Before and during the Passion the Apostles were so weak and remiss that as soon as our Lord was arrested they all deserted him (see Mt 26:56; Jn 16:32)... Even after the Resurrection they remained, through fear of the Jews, shut up in a house (Jn 20:19). *But then, how sudden and complete a change! On the day of Pentecost, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles fearlessly defied all danger and set out to proclaim the Gospel*, not only through Judea but throughout the whole world (see Acts 2:14). It was now their greatest happiness to be thought worthy to suffer contempt, imprisonment, torture and crucifixion itself for the name of Christ (see Acts 5:41). (*Catechism of the Council of Trent*, II, 2.22)²

The Sacrament of Evangelization

The sacrament of Confirmation... in a certain way *perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church*... It gives us *a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ*, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* §1288, 1303)

Discussion Questions:

1. How did Pentecost change the Apostles?
2. How does Confirmation change us?
3. What are some ways that we can live the mission of evangelization in our lives today?

Parent Session 3: The Rite of Confirmation

The Essential Rite

The essential rite of Confirmation is [1] anointing the forehead of the baptized with sacred chrism..., together with [2] the laying on of the minister's hand and [3] the words: "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* §1320)

² *The Roman Catechism*, 208.

1. Anointed with the Spirit

He opened the book and found the place where it was written, "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.*" (Luke 4:18)

By Confirmation Christians, that is, *those who are anointed*, share more completely in *the mission of Jesus Christ and the fullness of the Holy Spirit* with which he is filled, so that their lives may give off "the aroma of Christ" [2 Cor 2:15]. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* §1294)

2. The Laying on of Hands

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, *they sent to them Peter and John*, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for the Spirit had not yet fallen on any of them, *but they had only been baptized* in the name of the Lord Jesus. *Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.* (Acts 8:14-17)

The imposition of hands is rightly recognized by the Catholic tradition as *the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation...* (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* §1288)

3. Sealed on the Forehead

And the LORD said to him [the angel], "Pass through the city, through Jerusalem, and *put a mark* (Hebrew *taw* = +) *on the foreheads* of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it." (Ezekiel 9:4)

Confirmation, like Baptism, imprints *a spiritual mark* or indelible character *on the Christian's soul*; for this reason one can receive this sacrament only once in one's life. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* §1317)

4. The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

And the spirit of God shall rest on him [the Messiah],

the spirit of wisdom and understanding,

the spirit of counsel and strength,

the spirit of knowledge and piety.

The spirit of the fear of God will fill him. (Isaiah 11:2 LXX)³

Confirmation...increases *the gifts of the Holy Spirit* in us. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* §1303)

³ In *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (eds. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright; New York, N.Y.: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 833 (adapted). Cf. Latin Vulgate Isa 11:1-3.

Preparation for and Consequences of Confirmation

A candidate for Confirmation who has attained the age of reason must *profess the faith, be in the state of grace, have the intention of receiving the sacrament, and be prepared to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ*, both within the ecclesial community and in temporal affairs. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* §1319)

The Confirmation of St. Thérèse

A short time after my First Communion, I entered upon another retreat for my Confirmation, I was prepared with great care to receive the visit of the Holy Spirit, and I did not understand why greater attention was not paid to the reception of this sacrament of *Love*... Ah! How happy my soul was! Like the Apostles, I awaited the Holy Spirit's visit with great happiness in my soul. I rejoiced at the thought of soon being a perfect Christian and especially at that of having eternally on my forehead the mysterious cross the Bishop marks when conferring this sacrament. Finally, the happy moment arrived, and I did not experience an impetuous wind at the moment of the Holy Spirit's descent but rather this *light breeze* which the prophet Elias heard on Mount Horeb. [1 Kings 19:12-13]. *On that day, I received the strength to suffer, for soon afterward the martyrdom of my soul was about to commence.* (Thérèse of Lisieux, *Story of a Soul*, Chapter IV)⁴

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the anointing with Sacred Chrism and the laying on of hands in Confirmation?
2. What is the mission that Confirmation gives us?
3. Which of the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit do you experience in your life? Which of the gifts can we ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen in your life?

⁴ John Clarke, O.C.D., *Story of a Soul: The Autobiography of St. Thérèse of Lisieux* (3rd ed.; Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1996), 80.

Virtues and the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit

When we use the gifts of the Holy Spirit by acting virtuously, the fruits of the Holy Spirit flow from us.

Virtues

The habitual and firm disposition to do the good and give the best of ourselves. Virtues need to be practiced. They can be lost if they are neglected.

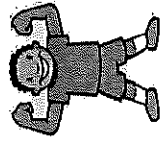
Theological - come from God and (unite us) lead us to God - they are conferred at Baptism with sanctifying grace.
Cardinal - are acquired by human effort: education, deliberate acts & perseverance in struggle.

Gifts

Permanent dispositions which make man docile in following the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Gifts complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them (CCC 1831).

Fruits

Dispositions other people see in us. When we use the gifts by acting virtuously, the fruits flow from us.



Virtues

1 Cor 13, Wisdom 8:7,
CCC 1803,31



+

Gifts

Isaiah 11:1-2;
CCC 1830,31

= Fruits

Gallatians 5:22-23;
CCC 1832

Theological	Cardinal
LOVE	WISDOM
To love God above all things and to love our neighbor as ourselves.	To see everything from God's perspective - including ourselves - and to love him above all else for his own sake, as we are created to do.
FAITH	UNDERSTANDING
We believe in God and believe what he has revealed to us.	To know God better.
HOPE	COUNSEL
To confidently pursue our sanctification with our sights set firmly on Heaven.	To follow God's direction in knowing the right thing to do and the right way to do it.
FORTITUDE	FORTITUDE
To be firm in difficulty.	To avoid sin, and to have the courage to bear witness to Christ no matter what.
PRUDENCE	KNOWLEDGE
Knowing what is good in every situation & choosing the right means to achieve it.	To know how we should act based on what we believe.
JUSTICE	PIETY
To give each person what is due to them.	To worship & serve God as our Father & to love & serve one another out of love for God.
TEMPERANCE	FEAR OF THE LORD
To use the goods of creation in a balanced way & to only desire what & <i>how much</i> is good.	The reverence for God which makes us careful to avoid sin.
	Charity
	Joy
	Peace
	Patience
	Kindness
	Goodness
	Generosity
	Faithfulness
	Gentleness
	Modesty
	Self-Control
	Chastity

These connections between virtues and gifts were drawn from the works of St. Bonaventure. St. Thomas Aquinas' connections are slightly different.