

reached adolescence. In line with the more ancient practice, adults who are baptised are also confirmed at the same time.

The Church's Liturgy

'In ministering Confirmation the Church doth follow the example of the Apostles of Christ ... a special gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed through laying on of hands with prayer ... this gift cometh from God alone [to] strengthen with his Holy Spirit in Confirmation those who in Baptism were made his children ... [who] must openly acknowledge [themselves] bound to fulfil the Christian duties [of their baptism].' (1928 Prayer Book)

Biblical Quote

"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 he 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

What a Theologian Says

"Remember, then, that you received a spiritual seal, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of knowledge and reverence, the spirit of holy fear. Keep safe what you received. God the Father sealed you, Christ the Lord strengthened you and sent the Spirit into your hearts as the pledge of what is to come."
Saint Ambrose

What is a Sacrament?

A Sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. What Jesus did on earth he still does through his seven sacraments: Baptism, the Eucharist, Confirmation, Reconciliation (Confession), Anointing of the Sick, Marriage, and Holy Orders. Each of these sacraments enable us to have a personal encounter with Jesus our risen Lord. The sacraments are God's gifts to equip us to lead a full and holy life.



THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION



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What can I do next? How does it apply to me?

Whatever age you are, Confirmation is an amazing opportunity to renew your relationship with God. Confirmation also often marks our admission to Holy Communion, the receiving of Christ's Body and Blood in the Mass.

If you have been confirmed, then cherish your role as a missionary Christian, called to bring people into the life of the Church through the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. To learn more about receiving this Sacrament, speak to your Parish Priest who will be delighted to talk with you.

Prayer

Almighty and ever-living God, you have given your servants new birth in baptism by water and the Spirit, and have forgiven them all their sins. Let your Holy Spirit rest upon them: the Spirit of wisdom and understanding; the Spirit of counsel and inward strength; the Spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and let their delight be in the fear of the Lord. Amen. From the Rite of Confirmation

The Sacrament of Confirmation

The Sacrament of Confirmation is closely linked to Baptism. Through it we are bound more closely to Christ and his Church, and strengthened to proclaim the Christian faith. Like Baptism, Confirmation is received only once.

The Bible is rich in references to the Holy Spirit, whom the prophets foretold would rest on the promised Messiah, Jesus Christ; he was conceived by the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit descended upon him at his Baptism; his mission is fulfilled in communion with the Holy Spirit.

But more wonderful still, the Holy Spirit was to be shared with all of God's people. Jesus promised the outpouring of the Spirit on his followers, and fulfilled this first at Easter and then at Pentecost. Having received the Holy Spirit, the apostles were empowered to share the good news of Christ's victory. Those who believed were baptised and also received the gift of the Holy Spirit.



Soon, an anointing with Chrism, beautifully-perfumed oil consecrated by the Bishop during Holy Week, was often added to the laying on of hands, giving us the rite of Confirmation we recognise today. Our anointing with Chrism associates Christians with the Lord's own name, Christ, whom God the Father anointed with the Holy Spirit.

Outward Sign

Confirmation takes place in the context of the Mass. The promises made at Baptism having been renewed, the Bishop lays his hands upon the head of the candidate and prays. He may then anoint the candidate on the forehead with the Oil of Chrism. If not already a communicant, the newly-Confirmed receives Holy Communion for the first time at this Mass.

Inward Grace

Confirmation brings an outpouring of the Holy Spirit like that received by the Apostles at Pentecost. It strengthens the grace received at baptism. It binds us to Christ and his Church. It increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, fortitude, piety and fear of the Lord. It encourages us to proclaim the Christian faith by word and deed.

Development/History of the Sacrament

In the early Church Confirmation was celebrated together with Baptism by the Bishop. Although the growth of the Church meant that the Bishop could not always be present at baptisms, the Church desired to maintain the visible relationship between the new Christian and the Bishop, who is a successor of the Apostles and sign of the Church's unity. For this reason Baptism and Confirmation were separated, and Confirmation by the Bishop followed later. In time Confirmation would take place once a child had