

Breaking open the Ritual

Rite of Confirmation

Sacraments are celebrated by the community. They are the work/prayer of the community. The celebrant and the parish community represents the entire church. Each sacrament has special actions and prayers that make present to us the work of God in our lives. These actions and prayers are called rituals.

***Rituals are symbolic actions, they are powerful signs that make present the Risen Christ working in our lives. In Confirmation the laying on of hands and the anointing with chrism seals the baptized person with the gift of the Holy Spirit. By this action we are made aware that this sealing of the Holy Spirit is taking place.

What is your reason for asking to be confirmed?

Answers may vary – led the candidates to the fact that they have requested to be confirmed. The application for Confirmation makes this very clear. This is not graduation from Religious Education. It is not the end of something – but the church sees it as the beginning of the baptized person taking charge of their own faith life and living it responsibly as followers of Jesus. Thus the individual's initiation into the Catholic Church is completed.

By celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation the baptized person is:

Strengthened by power from heaven

A true witness of Christ in word and action -

(Your life is to reflect the goodness of God)

Is more closely united to His Church -

(You are given gifts and talents to help build up the body of Christ)

Ritual for the Celebration of Confirmation

Presentation of Candidates – called by name.

You have been called by God and over the years have been led to this moment. Because of the large number of candidates, individual names are not called. Fr. John addresses the Celebrant on behalf of your sponsors, catechists and himself. He gives his solemn word that they all believe you are adequately prepared in mind and heart to celebrate this sacrament. Then Fr. John asks the candidates to stand and be recognized by the Celebrant.

After this formal presentation, the Celebrant gives the homily, in which he will ask you to consider what is expected of a confirmed catholic.

Renewal of Baptismal Promises (Ask the students quietly read the promises.) Discuss their connection to Baptism and their renewal each year during the Easter Season. Parents and Godparents first made these promises for you - **now publicly** you are asked to stand and profess them yourself in the presence of our community.

Laying on of Hands

This is an ancient symbol. In ancient times hands were laid on prophets and kings as a sign of God's favor. Laying on of hands is also a symbol of blessing and commissioning. In the early church, the apostles used this ritual as a sign of imparting the gift of the Spirit on the newly baptized. This action is seen as the origin of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

During the Celebration of Confirmation, the Celebrant and all priests present extend their hands in blessing over the entire group of candidates, as the Bishop or presider prays to God to send the Spirit to these candidates as their Helper and Guide. He asks that they be given the gifts of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. And that they be filled with the spirit of wonder and awe in the presence of God.

Anointing with Chrism

Chrism is perfumed oil, it is a mixture of olive oil and balsam. Discuss the many uses of oil (healing, strength, and protection). In ancient times oil was used to anoint kings, soldiers before going into battle, prophets as messengers from God. In the early church the anointing with chrism was added to the laying on of hands as another way to symbolize being sealed with the Spirit.

What does it mean to seal something? To make secure, imprint or embossed. It is a sign that confirms or ratifies. To be seal with the Holy Spirit, the seal of the Lord is imprinted on our souls, with an indelible character (a mark impossible to mark) The Spirit's divine pattern is embossed in our hearts, showing who we are, the children of God, members of the body of Christ.

The Celebrant uses the chrism to trace the sign of the cross on the foreheads of the candidates, as he prays: "Name, be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." This anointing is a sign of our identity as Christians, disciples of Jesus. (The name Christian means anointed.) Immediately following the anointing, the Celebrant offers the sign of peace.

The Rite of Confirmation is completed and the ceremony continues. *Note that this is a ceremony, and not a Mass, so there is no Eucharist during Confirmation.

Rite of Confirmation

Presentation of Candidates

Homily

Renewal of Baptismal Promises

Celebrant: Do you reject Satan and all his works and all his empty promises?

Candidates: I do.

Celebrant: Do you believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

Candidates: I do.

Celebrant: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

Candidates: I do.

Celebrant: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who came upon the apostles at Pentecost and today is given to you sacramentally in confirmation?

Candidates: I do.

Celebrant: Do you believe in the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

Candidates: I do.

Celebrant: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All: Amen.

The Laying of Hands

Celebrant: My dear friends: In baptism God our Father gave the new birth of eternal life to his chosen sons and daughters.
Let us pray to our Father that he will pour out the Holy Spirit to strengthen his sons and daughters with his gifts and anoint them to be more like Christ the Son of God.

Celebrant: All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their Helper and Guide. Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence. We ask this through Christ the Lord.

The Anointing with Chrism

The Celebrant makes the sign of the cross with chrism on the forehead of each one to be confirmed and says:

Celebrant: (Name), be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

Newly Confirmed: Amen.

Celebrant: Peace be with you.

Celebrant: And with your spirit.