

The Sacrament of Confirmation

1. *What does it mean if something is “confirmed” (an appointment, etc.)?*
2. The Sacrament of Confirmation is essential for the completion of baptismal grace.
3. The Movement of the Holy Spirit in the World and in Time
 - a. The Spirit at Creation
 - b. The Trinitarian visit to Abraham
 - c. The Holy Spirit among the Jewish people.
 - d. The Holy Spirit in the Public Life of Jesus
 - e. The Pentecost Experience
 - f. The Early Church
 - i. The title Christian means “anointed”
 - ii. Chrismation (East) vs. Confirmation (West)
 - iii. The role of the Bishop in Confirmation begins early and Rome and by the 9th Century spreads throughout the West. It symbolizes the unity of the Christian with the universal Church.
4. ***A Sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace:***
 - a. The Outward Sign:
 - b. Instituted by Christ:
 - c. The Grace Given:
5. The Sign of the Anointing
 - a. Anointing symbolizes abundance, joy, cleanliness and healing.
 - b. The Chrism is perfumed olive oil.
6. The Rite of Confirmation
 - a. Usually celebrated within Mass (following the Gospel).
 - b. Presentation of Candidates by the Pastor (they are ready).
 - c. Bishop offers an Instruction and leads Renewal of Baptismal Promises
 - d. The Bishop extends his hands and prays the prayer of consecration
 - e. The Bishop lays hands on them and anoints them saying: Be Sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit
 - i. Why the forehead?
 - ii. Why the cross?
 - iii. Why the “new name”?
 - f. The Exchange of Peace
7. Effects of Confirmation
 - a. Pentecost happens again!
 - b. Deepening of Baptismal Graces
 - c. The Grace to spread and defend the Catholic faith by word and action.
8. Who can receive Confirmation?
 - a. Anyone who is baptized but not already confirmed
 - b. The person must have reached the “age of discretion”
 - c. The Goal of Preparation? “Suitably instructed, properly disposed and able to renew their baptismal promises” (a desire for Christ, not lots of information)
 - d. A sponsor serves as a “help” in the person’s longing for holiness.

9. The Minister of the Sacrament
 - a. Ordinarily it is the Bishop
 - b. The priest has the “power” and ordinarily does it with RCIA and in danger of death (in some dioceses he is the ordinary minister)

Guidelines to assess suitability for the role of a godparent at Baptism or a Sponsor at Confirmation. These guidelines are based on Canons # 872-874 and # 892-893 of *The Code of Canon Law*.

GODPARENTS FOR BAPTISM

1. A person who is to be baptized is given a godparent to help the baptized lead a good Christian life. However, it is in our tradition to have two godparents, although one may be accepted now. No more than two are permitted, and the two may not be of the same sex.
2. A Godparent must be Catholic, and completed sixteen years of age, unless the bishop, pastor or minister of the Sacrament grants an exception for a lower age for a just cause.
3. A Godparent should already have received the Sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Eucharist and live a life in harmony with the Catholic faith.
4. A priest or deacon may be a godparent, but is not to be a sponsor and minister of Baptism in the same ceremony. A member of an Institute of Consecrated Life or Society of Apostolic Life may be a sponsor.
5. A Catholic who has formally left the Catholic Church is not permitted to be a godparent.
6. The father and mother are not permitted to also be godparents.
7. A baptized person from another Christian denomination is permitted to be only a witness to Baptism along with the Catholic godparent. A non-Catholic cannot be a godparent.
8. A member of the Eastern Orthodox Church may be admitted as a godparent for Baptism but only together with Catholic godparents for a just cause, as long as there is provision for the Catholic education of the person to be baptized. Similarly, a Catholic is not forbidden to stand as sponsor in an Eastern Orthodox church, if he/she is so invited.

SPONSORS FOR CONFIRMATION

1. It is desirable that the godparent for Baptism also stands as a sponsor for Confirmation.
2. The requirements to be a godparent for Baptism # 2,3,5,6 above are also applied to sponsors for Confirmation.
3. It is for the sponsor to see that the confirmed person acts as a true witness to Christ and faithfully fulfill the obligations connected to the sacrament of Confirmation.