

Prayer

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Enlighten our understanding that we may know you. May we come to understand and appreciate your gift of confirmation and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit given us: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety & fear of the Lord, amen.

Introductory Question

Be aware of your own attitudes & understanding. What is your present understanding of and attitudes toward confirmation?

Overview: Rites of Initiation – Confirmation in its proper, sacramental context

- * Baptism – (1) Ephphetha (opening); Renunciation of sin (called & set apart); (3) Anointing with oil (release from the power of the devil); (4) Washing (washes sins away); (5) Chrism (share in Jesus' messianic anointing) (6) Baptismal garment (represents actual purity, "you have been renewed"); (7) Lighted candle (received the light of Christ)
- * Confirmation – (1) Confirmed & Strengthened; (2) Anointing with oil (commissioned); (3) Are sealed; (4) Receive a fuller measure of the Holy Spirit; (5) Spirit's guarantee; (6) Conferred Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands
- * Eucharist – Receive the living Jesus sacramentally into your body and be filled with the Holy Spirit and God's grace to live the life

Confirmation

- * Bishop is the proper minister, but can give permission to a priest in his absence (Fr. Bryant will confirm you)
- * What happens? Spirit received initially in Baptism; confirmation is a fuller measure or portion of His Spirit
- * Anointing commission as David & Jesus were called to fulfill the role God chose for them
- * Seal – Holy Spirit seals (marks) us for the day of redemption; the mark of the beast (Revelation) is a cheap imitation
- * Instill in us a sensitivity to spiritual things, help us to know God's will & arm us against the devil
- * This sensitivity has to be nourished by the sacraments, meditation on Scripture & Church teaching and prayer
- * Bishop lays his hands conferring the Holy Spirit; adult call of person already made a child of God in Baptism

Catechism Summary (7 Sacraments 1210-1211, Sacraments of Initiation 1212, Confirmation 1285-1314)

1315 Acts 8:14-17 *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 it 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.*

1316 *Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace*; gives the Holy Spirit in order to 1. Root us more deeply in the divine filiation, 2. Incorporate us more firmly into Christ, 3. Strengthen our bond with the Church, 4. Associate us more closely with her mission, and 5. Help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.

1317 *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.

1318 In the East this sacrament is administered immediately after Baptism and is followed by participation in the Eucharist; this tradition highlights the unity of the three sacraments of Christian initiation. In the Latin Church this sacrament is administered when the age of reason has been reached, and its *celebration is ordinarily reserved to the bishop, thus signifying that this sacrament strengthens the ecclesial bond.*

1319 A candidate for Confirmation of the age of reason must 1. Profess the faith, 2. Be in the state of grace, 3. Have the intention of receiving the sacrament, and 4. Be prepared to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ, both within the ecclesial (Church) community and in temporal affairs.

1320 The essential rite of Confirmation is *anointing the forehead of the baptized with sacred chrism* (in the East other sense-organs as well), *together with the laying on of the minister's hand and the words*: "Accipe signaculum doni Spiritus Sancti" (*Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit*) in the Roman Rite, or "The seal of the gift that is the Holy Spirit" in the Byzantine rite.

1321 When Confirmation is celebrated separately from Baptism, its connection with Baptism is expressed, among other ways, by the renewal of baptismal promises. The celebration of Confirmation during the Eucharist helps underline the unity of the sacraments of Christian initiation.

Scripture

Ezekiel 11:14-21 Foretelling of the giving of the Spirit

And the word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, your brethren, even your brethren, your fellow exiles, the whole house of Israel, all of them, are those of whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, 'They have gone far from the LORD; to us this land is given for a possession.' Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: Though I removed them far off among the nations, and though I scattered them among the countries, yet I have been a sanctuary to them for a while in the countries where they have gone.' Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: I will gather you from the peoples, and assemble you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.' And when they come there, they will remove from it all its detestable things and all its abominations. And I will give them one heart, and put a new spirit within them; I will take the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my ordinances and obey them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. But as for those whose heart goes after their detestable things and their abominations, I will requite their deeds upon their own heads, says the Lord GOD."

Ezekiel 37:1-14 Foretelling of the giving of the Spirit

The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; it was full of bones. And he led me round among them; and behold, there were very many upon the valley; and lo, they were very dry. And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord GOD, thou knowest." Again he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD." So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold, a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And as I looked, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great host. Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off.' Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you home into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken, and I have done it, says the LORD."

Numbers (RSV) 11:24-29 Giving of the Holy Spirit to the 70 Elders

So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD; and he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people, and placed them round about the tent. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was upon him and put it upon the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did so no more. Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the spirit rested upon them; they were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." And Joshua the son of Nun, the minister of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, "My lord Moses, forbid them." But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!"

Exodus 31:1-5 Filling with the Spirit

The LORD said to Moses, "See, I have called by name Bezalel...and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, for work in every craft."

Exodus 35: 21 The Lord prompts by His spirit

And they came, every one whose heart stirred him, and every one whose spirit moved him, and brought the LORD's offering to be used for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the holy garments.

1 Sam 10:6 Spirit of God rushes upon people to renew them

Then the spirit of the LORD will come mightily upon you, and you shall prophesy with them and be turned into another man.

1 Sam 16:12b-13 David is anointed and the Spirit comes upon him

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.

2 Chron 15:1 God will be with us in His Spirit unless we abandon Him

The Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded

2 Chron 20:13 God is in charge

And the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly.

Micah 3:8 The Spirit gives us power to live holy lives & judge correctly

But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.

Acts 2:1-8, 11b-13 Giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

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. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. And they were amazed and wondered, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ... we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

I Cor 2:10-16 Hidden Wisdom: God in you, the hope of glory

God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what person knows a man's thoughts except the spirit of the man which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit. The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Wisdom (light from God), Understanding (supernatural intelligence), Knowledge (know true value of creation in relation to God), Counsel (enlightened conscience in moral choices), Fortitude (virtue to not compromise in doing your duty), Piety (holiness & opening of our hearts to tenderness so God can heal us – this is fostered in liturgy), Fear of the Lord (reverence for God)

Papal Writings on Confirmation

Apostolic Constitution on Confirmation 1971 - Paul VI

Confirmation Perfects Baptismal Grace 1998- John Paul II

Confirmation Seals Us with Gift of the Spirit 1998 - John Paul II

Canon Law

840 – 848 & 879 – 896

Discussion & Questions about the Sacrament of Confirmation

It's important to integrate and not reject Church teaching on this sacrament.

References

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