

8 Things You Need to Know About Confirmation

By TRENTON MATTINGLY

Maybe you have recently been dedicating a lot of time preparing and learning about the Sacrament of Confirmation so that, in the next few months, you can count yourself as one of the thousands of Catholics that receive it every year. If this is the case, congratulations! Read on for some crucial facts that everyone preparing for Confirmation should know.

1. Confirmation is the Completion of Baptism

Baptism marked the start of your relationship with Christ. Your soul changed permanently and you were filled with grace from God. Through Confirmation, the Holy Spirit strengthens these graces, gives you more of them, and seals them all inside you – like a carefully wrapped present! This brings you closer to Christ and better prepares you to face the daily challenges of Christian life.

2. Confirmation Increases the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Want to know more about these graces sealed inside of you? They are called the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Pope Francis has actually done a homily on each of them: wisdom, understanding, knowledge, fortitude, piety, counsel, and fear of the Lord. You've had these gifts since your Baptism, but Confirmation deepens and strengthens them since it draws you even closer to Christ and the greater Catholic community. Think about it like a team of basketball players. It's possible to get some good results from a team of players that just met their coach and have only played together a few times, but you'll get great results from a team of close-knit players that have played under the same coach for years. Baptism is like being introduced to the team (the Church) and your coach (Jesus). Confirmation is like the years of practice and team-building that it takes to really bring a team together.

3. A Mission from God: Operation Confirmation

Did you know that when you receive the sacrament of Confirmation you accept a mission from God? In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells His disciples to baptize all nations in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Later on, the Holy Spirit descends upon the disciples at Pentecost and they receive the courage to take on the mission Jesus gave them earlier. Confirmation is your own personal Pentecost. The Holy Spirit descends upon you and you accept the same challenge given by Jesus to the disciples.

4. Chrism is Much More Than a Sweet-Smelling Oil

Chrism, the perfumed oil that the bishops uses to make the sign of the cross on your forehead, signifies a lot more than just a shower in your

future. It helps show a connection to your Baptism – the first time you were anointed with oil. It shows healing and cleansing too. Believe it or not, it also signifies preparation to do spiritual battle with the Devil. Why? Oil is slippery and, in ancient times, warriors would cover themselves in it before battle to make it difficult for their enemies to grab them. In other words, Chrism makes it hard for the Devil to grab you!

5. Why My Forehead?

You probably wondered this as it dripped down your face during your Confirmation. St. Thomas Aquinas explained that this is because your forehead is part of your face – the first thing people see when they talk to you. Having the Chrism spread on your forehead proclaims to the world that the first thing people should notice about you is your faith in Christ.

6. What's in a Name?

Many Catholics adopt the name of a biblical figure or saint that they find inspiring at their Confirmation. This shows your intention to copy their dedication to God. It makes you a heavenly friend who will pray and intercede for you on your Christian journey. Other Catholics choose not to select a new name and stick with the one that they were baptized with to show Confirmation's close connection with Baptism!

7. Confirmation is Ancient

Faithful people have been receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation for almost 2,000 years. There are even examples of it recorded in the Bible! In Acts 19, Paul the Apostle lays his hands (just like the bishop does during Confirmation today) on a group of believers and the Holy Spirit descends upon them. So, when you are Confirmed, you are sharing in an ancient and rich tradition that millions of Catholics have participated in throughout history

8. You Aren't Alone

To be Confirmed, you must select a sponsor to help guide you through the process. This person is a great example of what it means to be a Catholic. They pray for you and provide a support system for your faith. Confirmation certainly makes you better equipped to handle life as a Christian, but that doesn't mean things will always be easy. During these more difficult times, don't forget about your sponsor.