

Confirmation

Introduction

- I. Confirmation is one of the three Sacraments of Initiation (with Baptism and Holy Communion)
- II. **John 20:19-23** On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.” And when he had said this he breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”
 - a. **John 16:7-8, 12-13** “Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment...I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth.”
 - b. Participation in the mission of Jesus Christ

Effects of Confirmation

- I. **CCC 1303**
 - a. -it roots us more deeply in the divine filiation which makes us cry, “Abba! Father!”
 - b. -it unites us more firmly to Christ
 - c. -it increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us
 - d. -it renders our bond with the Church more perfect
 - e. -it gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross.
 - i. **Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, 60** The perfection of spiritual strength consists properly in a man’s daring to confess the faith of Christ in the presence of anyone at all, and in a man’s being not withdrawn therefrom either by confusion or by terror, for strength drives out inordinate terror. Therefore, the sacrament by which spiritual strength is conferred on the one born again makes him in some sense a front-line fighter for the faith of Christ. And because fighters under a prince carry his insignia, they who receive the sacrament of confirmation are signed with the sign of Christ; this is the sign of the cross by which He fought and conquered. This sign they receive on the forehead as a sign that without a blush they publicly confess the faith of Christ.

Confirmation prefigured the Old Testament

- I. Holy Spirit is sent forth only for particular people
- II. **Genesis 1:26-28** Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."
- III. **Exodus 29:1, 4-7** "Now this is what you shall do to them to consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests...You shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tent of meeting, and wash them with water. And you shall take the garments, and put on Aaron the coat and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastpiece, and belt him with the skillfully woven band of the ephod; and you shall set the turban on his head, and put the holy crown upon the turban. And you shall take the anointing oil, and pour it on his head and anoint him."
- IV. **1 Samuel 16:13** 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.
- V. **Isaiah 61:1-2** The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.
- VI. **Leviticus 24:13-14** And the Lord said to Moses, "Bring out of the camp him who [blasphemed the Name and] cursed; and let all who heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him."
- VII. **Exodus 29:10-12** "Then you shall bring the bull before the tent of meeting. Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands upon the head of the bull, and you shall kill the bull before the Lord, at the door of the tent of meeting, and shall take part of the blood of the bull and put it upon the horns of the altar with your finger, and the rest of the blood you shall pour out at the base of the altar."
- VIII. **Number 27:18-20** And the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand upon him; cause him to stand before Eleazar the priest and all the congregation, and you shall commission him in their sight. You shall invest him with some of your authority, that all the congregation of the sons of Israel may obey.
- IX. **Song of Solomon 8:6** Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave.
- X. **Ezekiel 9:4-6** And the Lord said to him, "Go through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark upon the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations that are committed in it."

Confirmation in the New Testament

I. Jesus and the Holy Spirit

- a. **Luke 3:21-22** ...when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form, as a dove...
- b. **Luke 4:1-2** And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit for forty days in the wilderness, tempted by the devil.
- c. **Luke 4:14-15** And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee...And he taught in their synagogues being glorified by all.
- d. **Luke 4:16-22** And he stood up to read; and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke well of him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.
- e. **Luke 4:28-30** When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. And they rose up and put him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. But passing through the midst of them he went away.
- f. **Matthew 10:16-20** "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men; for they will deliver you up to councils, and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you up, do not be anxious about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you."

II. Holy Spirit and the death of Jesus

- a. **Mark 14:3** And while he was at Bethany...as he sat at table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the jar and poured it over his head...Jesus said, "She has done a beautiful thing to me...She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burying."
- b. **Matthew 27:50** And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his Spirit.
- c. **Luke 23:46** Then Jesus said, "Father, into your hands I commit my Spirit!"
- d. **John 19:30** He said, "It is finished"; and he bowed his head and gave up his Spirit.

- e. **John 7:37-39** Jesus stood up and proclaimed, “If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.’” Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believe in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.
- f. **John 19:34-35** But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness - his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth - that you also may believe.

Confirmation in the Early Church in Scripture

- I. **Acts of the Apostles 8:5-6, 8, 12, 14-17** Philip went down to a city of Samaria, and proclaimed to them the Christ. And the multitudes with one accord gave heed to what was said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs which he did...So there was much joy in that city...But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women...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 the Spirit 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.
- II. **Acts of the Apostles 19:1-6** While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. And he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, “No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” They said, “Into John’s baptism.” And Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.” On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them.”

Form, Matter, and Minister of Confirmation

- I. Form - “Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit”
- II. Matter - Anointing with Chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of hands
- III. Minister - Normally Bishop, but also priests who are granted the faculty by the Bishop
 - a. Any priest can administer Confirmation in danger of death

Special Strength of Confirmation

- I. **Mark 14:27-31** And Jesus said to them, “You will all fall away; for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.” Peter said to him, “Even though they all fall away, I will not.” And Jesus said to him, “Truly, I say to you, this very night, before the cock

crows twice, you will deny me three times.” But he said vehemently, “If I must die with you, I will not deny you.”

- II. **Mark 14:66-72** And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the maids of the high priest came; and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him, and said, “You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus.” But he denied it, saying, “I neither know nor understand what you mean.” And he went out into the gateway. And the maid saw him, and began again to say to the bystanders, “This man is one of them.” But again he denied it. And after a little while again the bystanders said to Peter, “Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean.” But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know this man of whom you speak.” And immediately the cock crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, “Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.” And he broke down and wept.
- III. **John 20:19** On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews,
- IV. **Acts of the Apostles 2:1-4** 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.
- V. **Acts of the Apostles 2:22-23** “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know - this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.”