

## WHAT THE CHURCH SAYS ABOUT THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

**CCC 1304** Like Baptism which it completes, Confirmation is given only once, for it too imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual mark, the "character," which is the sign that Jesus Christ has marked a Christian with the seal of his Spirit by clothing him with power from on high so that he may be his witness

**CCC 1308** Although Confirmation is sometimes called the "sacrament of Christian maturity," we must not confuse adult faith with the adult age of natural growth, nor forget that the baptismal grace is a grace of free, unmerited election and does not need "ratification" to become effective. St. Thomas reminds us of this:

Age of body does not determine age of soul. Even in childhood man can attain spiritual maturity: as the book of Wisdom says: "For old age is not honoured for length of time, or measured by number of years. "Many children, through the strength of the Holy Spirit they have received, have bravely fought for Christ even to the shedding of their blood"

**CCC 1309** Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit - his actions, his gifts, and his biddings - in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community. The latter bears special responsibility for the preparation of confirmands

**CCC 1310** To receive Confirmation one must be in a state of grace. One should receive the sacrament of Penance in order to be cleansed for the gift of the Holy Spirit. More intense prayer should prepare one to receive the strength and graces of the Holy Spirit with docility and readiness to act.

**CCC 1313** In the Latin Rite, the ordinary minister of Confirmation is the bishop. If the need arises, the bishop may grant the faculty of administering Confirmation to priests, although it is fitting that he confer it himself, mindful that the celebration of Confirmation has been temporally separated from Baptism for this reason. Bishops are the successors of the apostles. They have received the fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders. The administration of this sacrament by them demonstrates clearly that its effect is to unite those who receive it more closely to the Church, to her apostolic origins, and to her mission of bearing witness to Christ

**CCC 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

### Who Can Receive?

Any baptised Catholic wishing to advance on the path of developing their faith. For adults who were not confirmed as children, it means taking part in the Rite of the Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.) For young people, it is usually part of the 5th/6th class primary school programme. Candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation should not receive this sacrament automatically but should make a definite informed choice to receive it. Like Baptism it is not to be seen as a one day event. We expect young people and adults who wish to receive the sacrament to be actively involved in their local parish and to join their local parish community at Mass each weekend. Confirmation without ongoing commitment and practice of your faith is a contradiction and does not make any sense.

[Sponsor](#)

A sponsor stands behind the candidate for Confirmation at the Confirmation ceremony and places their hand on the shoulder of the candidate as a sign that they will support them in living out their baptismal promises. However, the role of the sponsor is not just for one day. The sponsor undertakes to assist the confirmed person in growing in the fullness of their faith and in their membership of the Catholic Church.

A person qualifies as a sponsor by being a reasonably mature adult, who is at least 16 years old, and has already received the Sacraments of Initiation, (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) themselves. The Confirmation sponsor may be one of the people who was a sponsor at Baptism. The Sponsor should be an exemplary role model for the person to be confirmed and should be an active member of the Church who celebrates with their local parish community each weekend at Mass.

### **Name**

The tradition of taking a new name at Confirmation emphasises the new identity of a Christian being called to witness to their faith. People are encouraged to take the name of a saint or a person from the Bible who inspires them in some way.

### **Oil**

The oil used is called the Oil of Chrism. It is olive oil mixed with balsam that is blessed by the bishop and priests of the diocese in the Cathedral at the 'Chrism Mass' on Holy Thursday. The Sacrament is conferred with the anointing with this 'Oil of Chrism' on the forehead as the Bishop says 'Be sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit'.

### **5th & 6th Class students**

Our local parish schools assist parents of children who wish to receive the sacrament of Confirmation but the parents are the primary educators of their own children in every facet of life including their faith. The faith development of your child should not be left only to the school. To do so would be to place too great a burden on the school. It would also deprive the parents their God-given responsibility in this regard.