

## THE CHRISTIAN MYSTERY

### THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

#### Biblical Reflection: Jn 16:1-16

Baptism and Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the “sacraments of Christian initiation”... It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For “by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.” (LG 11) (CCC 1285)

... the ordinary minister of Confirmation is the bishop.

Although the bishop may for grave reasons concede to priests the faculty of administering Confirmation, it is appropriate from the very meaning of the sacrament that he should confer it himself, mindful that the celebration of Confirmation has been temporally separated from Baptism for this reason... The administration of this sacrament by them demonstrates clearly that its effects is to unite those who receive it more closely in the Church, to her apostolic origins, and to her mission of bearing witness to Christ. (CCC 1313)

The essential rite of Confirmation is anointing the forehead of the baptized with sacred chrism..., together with the laying on of the minister’s hand and the words: ...Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit... (CCC 1320)

The sign of peace that concludes the rite of the sacrament signifies and demonstrates ecclesial communion with the bishop and with all the faithful. (CCC 1301)

*“Recall then that you have received the spiritual seal, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence, the spirit of holy fear in God’s presence. Guard what you have received. God the Father has marked you with his sign; Christ the Lord has confirmed you and has placed his pledge, the Spirit, in your hearts” St. Ambrose (CCC 1303)*

#### Questions for discussion:

- Do you feel the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in your life? Expand on this idea.
- What memories do you have of your Confirmation day?
- St. Ambrose’s words above (CCC 1303) mention the gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence, holy fear in God’s presence. Which of these gifts do you see present in your life?
- In the previous Why Catholic circle of sessions, we asked that, in response to the Holy Spirit call to be holy, “how could you be holier?” How would you answer that same question today?

**Further reading:** Catechism of the Catholic Church, numbers 1285-1321

