

Sacrament of Confirmation:

In the Sacrament of Confirmation the candidate receives the seven fold gift of the Holy Spirit; wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord.

The New Testament shows how the Holy Spirit was with Christ to bring the Messiah's mission to fulfillment. On receiving the baptism of John, Jesus saw the Spirit descend on Him (see Mk 1:10), and remain with Him. He was led by the Spirit to undertake His public ministry as the Messiah, relying on the Spirit's presence and assistance. He later promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit would help them to bear fearless witness to their faith, even before persecutors (see Luke 4:17-21).

The day before Jesus suffered, He assured His apostles that He would send them the Spirit of truth from His Father (see John 15:26) to stay with them "forever" (see John 14:16) and help them to be His witnesses (see John 15:26). On the feast of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit did indeed come down in an extraordinary way on the apostles as they were gathered together with Mary the mother of Jesus and the group of disciples. They were so "filled with" the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4) that by divine inspiration they began to proclaim "the mighty works of God."

From that time on, the apostles, in fulfillment of Christ's wish, imparted to the newly baptized by the laying of hands, the gift of the spirit that completes the grace of baptism. This laying of hands is rightly recognized by reason of Catholic tradition as the beginning of the Sacrament of Confirmation, which in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church.

Through the Sacrament of Confirmation, those who have been born anew in baptism receive unto strength the inexpressible Gift, the Holy Spirit Himself, "by whom they are endowed... with special strength." Moreover, having been signed with the character of this Sacrament, they are "more closely bound to the Church" and they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith, both by word and by deed, as a true witness of Christ.

From ancient times, the conferring of the gift of the Holy Spirit has been carried out in the Church through various rites. These rites have gone through many adaptations in the East and West, but always keeping as their meaning the conferring of the Holy Spirit unto strength. The Western Church retained the practice of reserving the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation to the Bishop. This led to extended delay in administering of the Sacrament to the candidate well into childhood and adolescence. Thus, Confirmation became pastorally separated from Baptism and the Eucharist.

In 1971, Blessed Pope Paul VI implemented the revision of the Confirmation Rite that was requested by the bishops of Vatican II. With this revision, he desired that "the

intimate connection of the Sacrament with the whole of Christian initiation may stand out more clearly.”

Since then the Latin Church uses the following formula to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation: “The Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred through the anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of the hand, and through the words: Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Objectives and Standards for Confirmation

A. Objectives

A good preparation for Confirmation should facilitate a continual process of conversion and enable full and active participation in the life of the Church with ever-growing depth. Therefore, the Confirmation Guidelines were developed to:

- Help youth recognize their dignity as sons and daughters of God, and develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ by meeting Christ in the Scriptures, in the life teachings of the Catholic Church, in the Sacraments, and in their own prayer lives.
- Assist youth in hearing God’s call to holiness, and guide them toward a generous response to that call.
- Assist and challenge youth to become living saints as they strive to become more like Christ, living the virtues of faith, hope and love.
- Nurture a desire for active and habitual participation in the sacramental life of the Church, especially Confession and Mass.
- Enable youth to embrace the theological and moral virtues and exercise them in their daily lives and decision making.
- Empower youth to respond courageously to the challenges of life by relying on the gifts and guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- Help youth develop a life of Christian service modeled on the life of Jesus and the Saints.
- Encourage youth to embrace the authentic richness of diversity among their brothers and sisters inspiring them to seek and find Christ in all things and persons.
- Equip youth to discern their gifts and talents and use them for the greater glory of God and the good of the Catholic Church throughout the world.
- Provide moments of silence and prayer to listen to the voice of God.
- Help youth begin a life-long task of developing well-formed consciences to equip them to address moral challenges and choices throughout their lives and to become familiar with and appreciate the gift of Sacred Scripture,

the divinely inspired Word of God, where God speaks to men, women and children in a human way.

B. Standards

Knowledge of Christ. The candidate should recognize the importance of Jesus Christ, the only Savior of the world.

Interview. The readiness of the candidate should be discerned through interviews with either Father William or his chosen delegates prior to reception of the Sacrament.

Confirmation age. The Diocese of Madison prescribes that the Sacrament should be received by age 16. Saint Clement has opted to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Spring of freshman year (9th grade).

Knowledge of Faith. The candidate should demonstrate an understanding of the principle elements of the Catholic Faith according to his/her age and ability and be committed to ongoing learning of the faith. Two assessments will be given to evaluate each Candidate and the Confirmation class to assure we are meeting objectives.

Retreat. The candidate is required to attend a Confirmation retreat. A goal of the retreat is to deepen our prayer life, our communion with God to personally encounter Christ in His Sacraments away from normal classroom catechesis.

Sacramental Life. The candidate should participate in the sacramental liturgical life of the parish by attending Mass every Sunday (Saturday Vigil), receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation frequently, and intending to live a sacramental life until death.

Service Hours. Candidates are required to incorporate 10 hours of a Christian service component into Confirmation preparation.

Confirmation Name. The candidate will choose a name for Confirmation that the Bishop will call you; the name will be noted in the parish record of Sacraments. It can be one of your given names at Baptism or most often it can be the name of a Saint you admire or would like to imitate. A brief written explanation of the name will be required.

Confession before Confirmation. “To receive Confirmation one must be in a state of grace.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1310). The Sacrament of Reconciliation must be made available to the candidates (within one month prior to the Confirmation Rite) in order to be prepared to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit unto strength.