

## What is Confirmation?

Sacraments in the Catholic faith are ceremonies that point to what is sacred, significant and important for Christians. Sacraments make visible the invisible which helps us to experience God's presence and saving grace in our life. Through the celebration of the seven (7) Sacraments of the Church, the faith community is defined and strengthened so the faith community itself becomes sacrament – a sign of Christ's presence to others.



Confirmation is one of three (3) sacraments of initiation (welcoming) into the Catholic faith, the other two being Baptism and Eucharist. There is a close relationship between Baptism and Confirmation. Confirmation perfects in us what was begun in Baptism. We might say—in a sense—that we are baptized in order to be confirmed.

### **Growing beyond a self-centered spirituality**

In the sacrament of Baptism, we are born spiritually. We become sharers in the divine life of the most Blessed Trinity. We begin to live a supernatural life. As we practice the virtues of faith and hope and love, and as we unite with Christ in His Church in offering worship to God, we grow in grace and goodness.

This stage in our spiritual life is like the life of a child, largely self-centered. We tend to be preoccupied with the needs of our own self, our own soul, focused on an effort to "be good." We cannot be wholly self-centered, of course - not if we understand what it means to be a member of Christ's Mystical Body - and not if we understand the significance of the Mass - but in general, our religious life revolves around self.

### **Living for others**

Then we are confirmed. In celebrating Confirmation, we receive the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, special grace deepening and strengthening our faith, so we will be strong enough not only for our own needs but for the needs of **others** with whom we are now called to share Christ.

With the onset of adolescence a child begins to assume, progressively more and more, the responsibilities of adulthood and begins to see his place in the total family picture and in the community at large.

Similarly, the confirmed Christian begins to see more clearly (or ought to) his responsibility to Christ for his neighbor. He becomes deeply concerned (or ought to) with the welfare of Christ-in-the-world—which is the Church—and the welfare of Christ-in-his-neighbor. It is in this sense that Confirmation is a spiritual "growing up."