

## Confirmation and the Holy Spirit

The sacrament of Confirmation establishes young adults as full-fledged members of the faith. The focus is on the Holy Spirit who, by his grace, makes those confirmed soldiers of Christ and witnesses of his gospel to the world. Along with baptism and the Eucharist, it is considered one of the three “sacraments of initiation.” Confirmation is an important component of our faith and therefore one we should fully understand. However, our memory of the day and what took place may be hazy. We may not have comprehended the importance of this sacrament at that time.



To better understand why this might be the case, let's start with a few questions. How old were you when confirmed? \_\_\_\_\_ What do you remember about the day you were confirmed? \_\_\_\_\_

During Confirmation, the bishop extends his hands over the whole group of the confirmands, signifying the gift of the Holy Spirit. The bishop invokes the outpouring of the Spirit in these words: *“All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their helper and guide. Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord”.* {CCC 1299}

Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace through the Holy Spirit. It also 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. {CCC 1303}

The challenges of spreading and defending the faith are twofold. First, you need to be able to listen to the gentle nudges of the Holy Spirit. Second, you need to be knowledgeable regarding God's Word.

Before looking at how well we listen to God's nudges, let's see how well you listen to others. Great ... average ... poor? Now, let's think about how well you listen to God. Is it better than how you listen to others? \_\_\_\_\_ If you're not happy with this answer, consider what you need to do to improve listening and responding to God's voice through the Holy Spirit.

Regarding the second challenge, do you think you are knowledgeable of God's Word. So many people have a knowledge of the Word of God, but don't have enough understanding to cause it to produce in your life. The enemy, Satan, can try to talk you out of it just like he tried to talk Jesus to submit to him. Has your knowledge of the Bible and Church doctrine helped you live like Christ, spreading and defending the basic principles of Christian faith?

If you feel a need to strengthen your faith, consider St. Paul's guidance, as a soldier of Christ, to "Put on the whole armor of God." He said you need "To stand against the wiles of the devil by fastening the belt of truth around your waist, and putting on the breastplate of righteousness so you will be ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. Then take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." {Ephesians 6:10–18}

As baptized and confirmed Christians, we want to respond to the subtle nudges of the Holy Spirit. After all, it is the Lord's will that we learn to respond to His guidance, being witnesses to His Love. But God can't work in us if we're not expecting Him to communicate with us and are not familiar with His written Word. God has done His part. We need to do ours.

### **Reflective Questions:**

1. What daily habits do you practice in listening to the Holy spirit?

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2. If you are trying to follow Jesus' example of living a life of faith, how would you like the Holy Spirit to assist you? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. As a soldier of Christ, what armor of God do you most need? (For example, to fight temptation; to hear the truth; to believe in God's presence in all men; to obey and be humble; to respond in love to those who are different from me; etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

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4. How will you learn to listen to the Holy Spirit and acquire the knowledge you need to be a beneficial soldier of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_

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