



## **CATECHETICAL COMPONENTS**

*"Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for it had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit"*

*Acts 8:14-17*

### **In Brief**

Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which enhances the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.

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. 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" (*United States Catechism for Adults, p.205*).

### **Pentecost and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit**

The seven *gifts* of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. They belong in their fullness to Christ, Son of David. They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them. They make the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations.

### **Choosing a Confirmation Name**

A candidate may choose a Confirmation name or retain a recognized saint's name given at Baptism. In either case it is important to have a saint's name as part of the Confirmation rite. A Confirmation name is

a permanent reminder which links the candidate with the way in which the mission of Jesus lives on in those special persons recognized by the Church as saints or heroic people in its history. The process of researching the life of a saint or non-canonized role model can be an enriching part of the preparation program and can serve as the basis for reflection on the qualities of a present day witness for Christ. Family members and sponsors can assist the candidate in choosing a Confirmation name.

### **Choosing A Sponsor**

Candidates and their families should be given the following information before being asked to choose a Confirmation sponsor.

#### **Requirements of Canon Law**

Canon 893 #1 states that Confirmation sponsors should meet the requirements of baptismal sponsors as stated in Canon 874. Therefore, a sponsor:

- + must be at least sixteen years old, unless another age is set by the bishop of the diocese or an exception, for just reason, is made by the pastor
- + must be a Catholic who has received all three sacraments of initiation and leads a life in harmony with the Catholic faith
- + must not be bound by any penalty of the Church
- + must not be the parent of the person to be confirmed (A parent may, however, for good reason, serve as presenter of the candidate for the Sacrament of Confirmation)

It is desirable that the one who undertook the role of sponsor at baptism be sponsor for Confirmation. Distance and other factors may preclude this recommendation, (Canon 893). While Canon Law provides the basic requirements, the path to a meaningful sponsor-candidate relationship involves several other factors. A sponsor should:

- + be a person of lived faith and a role model for the candidate
- + be available to spend time with the candidate during the preparation process and to take part in the celebration of the sacrament
- + be a person with whom the candidate has a comfortable and ongoing relationship

### **General Guidelines**

Dioceses and parishes should present sacramental catechesis that:

- + Is a comprehensive and systematic formation in the faith, one that integrates knowledge of faith with living the faith
- + Is fundamentally Trinitarian and centers on initiation into the life of the Triune God
- + Presents Christian life as a lifelong journey to the Father in the Son and through the Holy Spirit
- + Is appropriate to the age level, maturity, and circumstances of those being catechized
- + Is intended for all members of the Christian community, takes place within the community, and involves the whole community of faith
- + Involves parents in the preparation of their children for the sacraments
- + Is integrated into a comprehensive catechetical program
- + Focuses primarily on the symbols, rituals, and prayers contained in the rite for each sacrament
- + Enables the believer to reflect on the meaning of the sacrament received by implementing a thorough experience of mytagogia following the celebration

***"Catechesis is a comprehensive and systematic formation in the faith" (NDC 67).***