

# Why Be Confirmed?

**Catechism** *The sacrament of Confirmation completes the baptismal grace by more perfectly binding the baptized person to the Church and strengthening him or her with the gifts of the Holy Spirit (cf. no. 1285).*

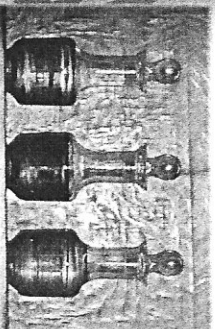
Imagine you are in the upper room on Pentecost morning. You are sitting with Mary and the apostles. Suddenly you hear a noise like a train coming. It's wind roaring throughout the whole house and shaking it. Flames appear in the room. You gasp. The tongues of fire separate and settle, one over each person's head. Everyone starts speaking in different languages. The Holy Spirit has come and filled the Church. (See Acts 2:1-12.)

The same Holy Spirit who came down upon Mary and the apostles in the upper room on Pentecost comes to us in the sacrament of Confirmation. His coming now is not as dramatic as on Pentecost. Instead of in wind and fire, the Holy Spirit comes in the signs of laying on of hands, anointing with oil, and the words, "Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." We already received the Holy Spirit at Baptism. But in this second sacrament of initiation the Spirit comes to "confirm" and

strengthen what Baptism did for us. Confirmation increases and deepens baptismal grace and gifts.

## More Grace, More Responsibility

In Confirmation we are more closely bound to the Church and receive greater strength to live as a Christian. The other side of the coin is that we bear more responsibility for being a witness to Christ. Empowered by the Spirit, the apostles no longer hid in fear but burst forth from the upper room to preach about Jesus. After Confirmation we too have an obligation to spread and defend the faith by word and action.



Why is oil a good sign for Confirmation?

**Background of Confirmation**

Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he promised this Holy Spirit to his Church. After Pentecost, the apostles in turn passed this special gift of the Holy Spirit to the baptized through the laying on of hands. This act was soon combined with the anointing with **chrism** (KRIZ-uhm), a fragrant oil. This sign is related to Christ, who was anointed by the Holy Spirit. Once we are anointed with oil we are consecrated to share more in the mission of Christ.

Oil is a great symbol for Confirmation. It is a sign of abundance and joy. Moreover, oil is used to cleanse and heal, soothe and strengthen, and to make beautiful.

## Did You Know?

Bishops consecrate chrism and the other holy oils for their dioceses at a Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday. There are three holy oils: Holy Chrism, Oil of the Catechumens, and Oil of the Sick. They are kept in a special place in church called an **ambry** (AM-bree).