
FIRE FALL

An Edge Night on Confirmation in Scripture

LEADER OVERVIEW

Confirmation completes the graces that are received in Baptism. Confirmation also binds the recipient more closely to the life of the Church and he or she is strengthened in the Holy Spirit. This strengthening allows him or her to be a witness to the faith and to bring Christ and the Good News to all the world. (CCC 1285)

Confirmation is one of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church, but the Holy Spirit has been present through all of salvation history strengthening and transforming the people of God. The Holy Spirit has always been at work and the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit was proclaimed by the prophets of old. They spoke of the Holy Spirit coming to rest on the anointed one of Israel - the Messiah. This prophecy was brought to fruition when Jesus was baptized in the Jordan by John the Baptist:

And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3: 16-17)

Jesus' whole life was filled with the Holy Spirit. From the Spirit overshadowing Mary to bring about the conception of Jesus, all the way to His death on the cross. The whole mission of His life was surrounded by the Holy Spirit. (CCC 1286)

Jesus shares the Holy Spirit with the whole Church beginning with Pentecost where the power of the Holy Spirit is poured out upon the apostles (Acts 2:2-4). The same Holy Spirit that filled the life of Jesus Christ and that was outpoured upon the apostles in the upper room was passed on through the apostles' laying on of hands on all the baptized members of the Church. "This imposition of hands is rightly recognized by the Catholic tradition as the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation, which in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church" (CCC 1288).

This tradition of the apostles' laying on of hands has been passed down through the tradition of the Church and is now recognized as the Sacrament of Confirmation. Later on in the Church's history, the scented chrism oil was added to the liturgy of the sacrament to signify the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit who accompanied Jesus in His mission on earth is present to all the baptized members of the Church through this sacrament to guide and strengthen them in their own mission.