

Dear Confirmation Candidate,

As you are making an effort and strive to prepare yourself to become a fully initiated Catholic, hopefully, you will find these questions beneficial as you are preparing for our individual discussion.

With every best wish,

Father Dariusz

CONFIRMATION QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q. What are the Sacraments?

A. The Sacraments are in Catholic life and worship, the seven efficacious signs of God's grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us.

Q. What are the three essential elements to a Sacrament as we understand the word?

A.

1. There must be an outward sign.
2. There must be an inward grace of which this outward sign is the means and the pledge.
3. There must be the appointment of Christ Himself to make the outward sign the means and the pledge of our receiving the inward grace.

The first two, the outward and visible sign, and the inward spiritual grace, are the parts of the Sacrament itself. The third, namely Christ's appointment is that which unites them and makes them of efficacy (power or capacity to produce a desired effect, effectiveness).

Q. How many Sacraments are there?

A. There are seven Sacraments. They were instituted by Christ, three of them (Baptism, Eucharist, and Penance) directly and four of them (Confirmation, Holy Orders, Anointing of the Sick, and Marriage) implicitly, through the Church. They are intended to help us at every phase of our lives.

Sacraments of Initiation

Baptism is the Sacrament that makes us members of the Body of Christ, removes original sin and all personal sins, and is necessary for salvation.

Confirmation is the Sacrament in which through an outpouring of special gifts of the Holy Spirit, Confirmation completes the grace of Baptism by confirming or "sealing" the baptized person's union with Christ and by equipping that person for active participation in the life of the church.

Eucharist is the Sacrament that is the memorial of Jesus' death and Resurrection, instituted by Jesus on the night He was betrayed, and in which the Body and Blood of Jesus is truly and fully present.

Sacraments of Healing

Penance is the Sacrament in which we confess our sins to a priest because we are deeply sorry, and we receive absolution, do acts of penance, and are thus united in love and peace with God and others.

Anointing of the Sick is the Sacrament for those who are in danger of death or seriously ill or infirmed or aged, bestowing on them a special grace of peace, strength, and courage.

Sacraments of Vocation

Holy Orders (Priesthood and Episcopal ordination), is the Sacrament that continues the mission of Jesus Christ entrusted to His Apostles, and that confers a sacred power for the person to be in the service of all the faithful.

Marriage, Matrimony, is an exclusive, permanent, and lifelong contract between a woman and a man in which they commit to care for each other and to procreate and raise children. When the marriage takes place between baptized persons who enter into a covenant modeled on that between Christ and the Church, it is recognized as the Sacrament of Matrimony. The two terms are often interchanged.

The Sacraments of Christ accompany us throughout our lives and even throughout each day, providing that we know how to make use of the Sacramental graces at our disposal, we can convert almost everything into worship of God and into our good for eternity. The Sacraments strengthen, nourish, and express the faith they presuppose by words and objects, consequently they are called *Sacraments of Faith*.

Q. Who can receive the Sacraments of Confirmation?

A. A candidate for confirmation must be at the age of discretion and must meet the following requirements: Be baptized and not previously confirmed, must be Catholic, must be properly instructed, must be capable of renewing his/her Baptismal promises.

Q. What is Confirmation?

A. It is a rite of the Church in which those people, mostly young, who have been baptized, are religiously prepared, and after careful instruction come forward, for the double purpose of “confirming” and “being confirmed,” that is of confirming their baptismal promises and of being confirmed by God in their baptismal privileges. Each one of them confirms his/hers baptismal promises in the words they have to say “I do.”

Do you reject Satan and all his works and all his empty promises? The candidates respond together: I do.

Do you believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth? Candidates: I do.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father? Candidates: I do.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who came upon the apostles at Pentecost and today is given to you sacramentally in confirmation? Candidates: I do.

Do you believe in the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting? Candidates: I do.

This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Therefore, in a double sense the rite is called confirmation, expressing alike what we confirm and what God confirms.

It is also called "The laying on of hands." The laying on of hands in an ancient Scriptural custom used to indicate "the conveyance of blessing from God." Confirmation is also called by the Church of Rome a Sacrament. But it is not a Sacrament according to our definition of the word Sacrament, because though an outward sign and an inward grace belong to it, it was not appointed by Christ Himself.

Q. Why, then, does our Church practice this rite of Confirmation?

A. Our Church practices this rite because it is expressed in the service "after the example of the Holy Apostles." It gives a definite opportunity at a most important season of life, for the decided choice, and public confession in Jesus Christ. It is thus the natural complement of Infant Baptism, the spiritual coming of age. "It is by believing with the heart that you are justified, and by making the declaration with your lips that you are saved." (Rom.10:10).

Q. Why is Confirmation necessary?

A. Regarding the obligation of receiving the sacrament, it is admitted that confirmation is not necessary as an indispensable means of salvation. On the other hand, its reception is obligatory. The importance of confirmation as a means of grace is so obvious that no earnest Catholic will neglect it, and in particular the Christian parents will not fail to see that their children are confirmed.

Q. How does the Bishop Confirm?

A. The sponsor stands behind and places a hand on the candidate's shoulder. Then the Bishop extends his hands over the person and anoints each candidate's forehead with the sacred chrism (oil) in the form of a cross while saying: "(Name)...be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit." The person being confirmed answers "Amen," meaning, "Let it be so." Finally the Bishop says, "Peace be with you." The candidate responds, "And with your spirit." This is often followed by a handshake or an embrace with the bishop, welcoming the newly confirmed person into full membership in the Church.

Q. What is Sacred Chrism and why is it used? (CCC 1293-1296)

A. Oil mixed with balsam and consecrated by the Bishop during the Mass of the Chrism on Holy Thursday in a Cathedral Church, and used at liturgical anointing of persons. While reflecting on the rite of Confirmation, it is fitting to consider the sign of anointing and what it signifies and imprints: a spiritual seal. Anointing, in Biblical and other ancient symbolism, is rich in meaning: oil is a sign of abundance and joy; it cleanses and limbers; oil is a sign of healing, since it is soothing to bruises and wounds. In addition, it makes radiant with beauty, health, and strength.

Q. How many Holy Oils are used in the Church what do they stand for and symbolize?

- The Church uses three types of holy oil: (1) "Oil of the Catechumens" at Baptism and Holy Orders; (2) "Holy Chrism" at Baptism, Confirmation, and Episcopal Ordinations; and (3) "Oil of the Sick" at the Anointing of the Sick.

- Holy Oil stands for strength, sweetness, and spiritual activity. Christians are sometimes called "athletes of Christ," and they are anointed with holy oil in order to remain spiritually strong. Holy oil symbolizes Christ's priestly and kingly power in which all who are baptized share His royal priesthood. It also symbolizes the imparting of the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Q. Why does the Bishop anoint in the form of the cross? (CCC 1303)

A. The bishop anoints the forehead in the form of a cross to remind us that we belong to Christ and that we must defend our faith and never be ashamed of the Cross.

Q. How would you define the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and where are they derived from?

A. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are special graces given to us by the Holy Spirit to help us respond to God's call to holiness. The list of seven gifts is derived from Isaiah 11:1-3.

Q. What are the Gifts of the Holy Spirit? Describe briefly.

A. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are: Wisdom, Understanding, Knowledge, Counsel, Fortitude, Piety and Fear of the Lord.

- Wisdom helps us to know God's will for our lives. Understanding enables us to appropriate the faith to make it our own. Knowledge allows us to come to know God better, that we may have a personal relationship with Him. Counsel aids us in making right judgments. Fortitude helps us to be courageous in the defense of our faith. Piety will make us more prayerful, reverent, and holy. Fear of the Lord is a holy and healthy awe and reverence for God, the creator of heaven and earth.

Q. What is sanctifying grace?

A. Sanctifying grace is a supernatural gift of God by which our sins are forgiven and we are made holy. It restores our friendship with God.

Q. What is mortal sin? (CCC 1855, 1857) What is venial sin? (CCC 1862)

A. A grave infraction of the law of God that destroys the divine life in the soul of the sinner (sanctifying grace), constituting a turning away from God. For a sin to be mortal, three conditions must be present: a grave matter, full knowledge, and full consent of the will. One commits a venial sin, which is essentially different from a mortal sin, when the matter involved is less serious or, even if it is grave, when full knowledge or complete consent are absent.

Q. What are the effects of the Sacrament of Confirmation?

A. Confirmation imparts the following:

- an increase of sanctifying grace,

- a special sacramental grace consisting in the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and notably in the strength and courage to confess boldly the name of Christ,

- an indelible character by reason of which the sacrament cannot be received again by the same person.

Q. Which Sacraments can only be received once?

A. The Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders may be received only once because they imprint on the soul an indelible mark or character that lasts forever.

Q. Why is Confirmation so called?

A. Confirmation is so called from its chief effect, which is to strengthen or render us more firm in our faith and religious duties.

Q. What special preparation should be made to receive Confirmation?

A. As candidates who are preparing themselves to become fully initiated Catholics, they should learn and know the chief mysteries of faith, the duties of a Catholic, and be instructed in the nature and effects of this Sacrament.

Q. Why should we know the chief mysteries of faith and the duties of a Catholic before receiving Confirmation?

A. We should know the chief mysteries of the faith and the duties of a Catholic before receiving Confirmation because one cannot be a good Christian without knowing the laws of the Church and understanding the commands of Christ.

Q. Are sponsors necessary in Confirmation?

A. Sponsors are necessary in Confirmation, and they must be of the same good character as those required at Baptism, for they take upon themselves the same duties and responsibilities.

Q. What is conscience? How do we develop a well-informed conscience? (CCC 1776-1780, 1783-1788, 1795-1797, 1799-1800)

A. A conscience is our God-given capacity to understand the law of God written on the heart of every human being. In building our relationship with God, we form our conscience in harmony with the teachings of Christ through the Church and through fervent prayer.

An upright and true moral conscience is formed by education and by assimilating the Word of God and the teaching of the Church. It is supported by the gifts of the Holy Spirit and helped by the advice of wise people. Prayer and an examination of conscience can also greatly assist one's moral formation. (CCC Compendium #374)

Q. What are the Ten Commandments?

A.

1. I am the Lord your God: you shall not have strange Gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.
4. Honor your father and mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

Q. What are the seven corporal works of mercy?

A.

1. Feed the hungry.
2. Give drink to the thirsty.
3. Clothe the naked.
4. Shelter the homeless.
5. Visit the imprisoned.
6. Visit the sick.
7. Bury the dead.

Q. Define Virtues, list the four Cardinal Virtues and three Theological Virtues.

A.

- Virtues are the power from God to accomplish some kind of moral good.
- the four Cardinal Virtues are prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.
- the three Theological Virtues are faith, hope and charity (love).

Q. What is the Sermon on the Mount? Where is it found in Sacred Scripture? What are the Beatitudes?
(CCC 1716-1719)

A.

- the Sermon on the Mount is the first public “homily” or sermon given by Jesus Christ. It begins with the Beatitudes but contains many other exhortations on the life lived according to the will of God.

- the Sermon on the Mount is found in the Gospel of Matthew, Chapters 5-7

- the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount are the way to true happiness. These teachings reflect the promises made to the chosen people since Abraham. They portray the countenance of Christ and describe his charity. Moreover, by shedding light on the actions and attitudes of the Christian life, they describe the vocation of all the faithful.

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
2. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.
3. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.
4. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.
5. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
6. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
8. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.