

# THE SACRAMENT of CONFIRMATION:

## EMPOWERING

Part Vc:  
Confirmation--Empowering



# Confirmation

## 2 Corinthians 1:21-22

But the one who gives us security (Vulgate, *confirmat*, confirms) with you in Christ and who anointed us is God; he has also **put his seal upon us and given the Spirit in our hearts** as a first installment.

In these words, the great Fathers and Doctors of the Church and believers from Apostolic times have seen that sacrament so designated by which the Holy Spirit is confirmed.

From this scripture the sacrament was variously known as “confirmation,” “signing,” “anointing.”

## Acts 8:14-18

Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who went down and prayed for them, that they might receive the holy Spirit, for it had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then **they laid hands on them and they received the holy Spirit**. When Simon saw that **the Spirit was conferred by the laying on of the apostles' hands** ...



## Acts 19:1-6

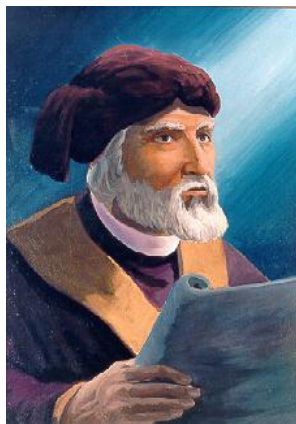
While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior of the country and came (down) to Ephesus where he found some disciples. He said to them, “Did you receive the holy Spirit when you became believers?” They answered him, “We have never even heard that there is a holy Spirit.” He said, “How were you baptized?” They replied, “With the baptism of John.” Paul then said, “John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.” When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul laid (his) hands on them, **the holy Spirit came upon them**, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

The constant faith of the Church attests to the existence and practice of the conferring the Holy Spirit to believers.

**Pope Clement of Rome (92 - 101 AD)** in his Letter to the Corinthians listed among the graces given to the people of Corinth “the fullness of the Holy Spirit.”



**The Apostolic Father of the Church, Hermas (Rome, 140?),** in his writing, *The Shepherd*, also elaborated this.



**Tertullian (Rome, 160 - 220)**

spoke of confirmation at least seven times and most often listed confirmation between baptism and the Eucharist.



## Cyprian (Carthage, 200 - 258)

wrote of the necessity of the sacrament and distinguished it from baptism and spoke of it as a complement to baptism.



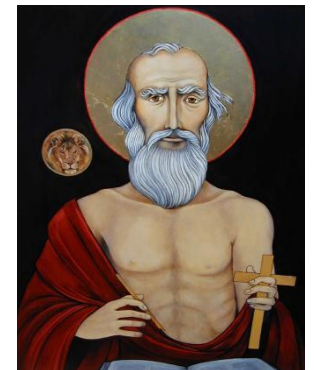
**A local church Council (at Illiberitanum, 300)** stated the rite of administration of confirmation.



**Pope Innocent I (401 - 417)** taught the same rite of confirmation.

## Jerome (Stridon, 345 - 419)

asserted the custom of the Church that priests and deacons baptize; that bishops confer the Holy Spirit.



## **Pope Innocent III (1198 - 1216)**

taught that through the imposition of hands on the head of the person being confirmed the Holy Spirit is conferred in abundance and strength.



## **The Council of Lyons II (1274)**

defined the seven sacraments ... and confirmation which is conferred through the hands of the bishop ...

## **The Council of Trent (1545 - 1563)**

condemned the errors of the Reformers about this sacrament. The council fathers defined that confirmation is a true and proper sacrament of the Church.

It is often objected that with the sacrament of Baptism the Christian already has the Holy Spirit. The Christian certainly receives the Holy Spirit in Baptism. But that presence of the Spirit is not in that perfect state or total empowering which Christ promised. The very practice of Christ Himself distinguishes the degrees with which the Holy Spirit is conferred.



Alabaster window in the apse  
of St. Peter's Basilica,  
Vatican City



On the **evening of Resurrection Sunday**, Jesus conferred the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles.

**John 20:22**

He breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the holy Spirit.”



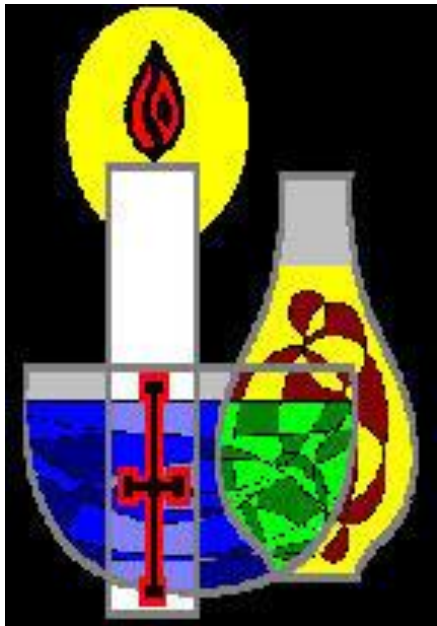
**Fifty days later, on the Jewish feast of Pentecost**, the Apostles received the presence of the Holy Spirit and a greater empowering as promised by Christ (John 15:26 and 16:7).

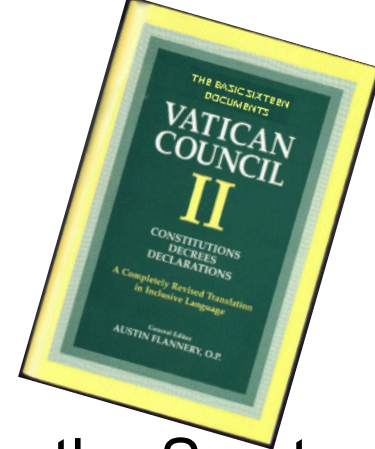
**Acts 2:4**

And they were all filled with the holy Spirit ...

# Baptism and Confirmation and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Catholic Christians look to the teaching authority of the Church as the sure guide to belief on matters of faith and morals. The latest teaching Council of the Church was Vatican Council II.





## **Vatican Council II *On the Church, 4***

“When the work which the Father had given the Son to do on earth was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in order that He might forever sanctify the Church. All believers have access to the Father through Christ in the one Spirit (Ephesians 2:18). He is the Spirit of life, a fountain of water springing up to life eternal (John 4:14; 7:38-39). Through him the Father gives life to men who are dead from sin, till at last he revives in Christ even their mortal bodies (Romans 8:10-11).

The Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful as in a temple (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19). In them he prays and bears witness to the fact that they are adopted sons (Galatians 4:6; Romans 8:15-16, 26).”

“The Spirit guides the Church into the fullness of truth (John 16:13) and gives her a unity of fellowship and service. He furnishes and directs her with various gifts, both hierarchical and charismatic, and adorns her with the fruits of his grace (Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Corinthians 12:4; Galatians 5:22). By the power of the gospel, he makes the Church grow, perpetually renews her, and leads her to perfect union with her Spouse. The Spirit and the Bride both say to the Lord Jesus, “Come!” (Revelation 22:17).

Thus the Church shines forth as “a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”



The Church emphasizes that a person becomes a Christian and first receives the Holy Spirit through faith and Baptism.

Paul's teaching implies that the Holy Spirit is normally first given or conferred to individuals through belief and water baptism.

### **Ephesians 1:13**

In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised holy Spirit

### **1 Corinthians 12:13**

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body ...

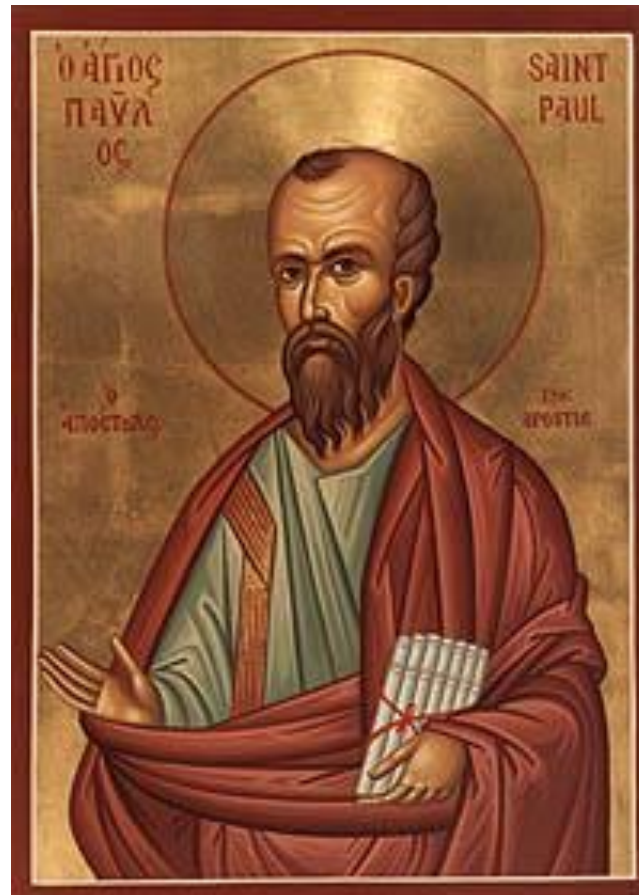
### **Titus 3:5**

He saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the holy Spirit



## Romans 8:9

Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.



The Apostles in the Acts of the Apostles appear to have understood the difference between the presence of the Holy Spirit in Baptism and in a later empowering. If a person were only baptized and did not receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles would pray and lay their hands on them, begging God to send his Holy Spirit in greater measure.

### **Acts 8:14-18**

Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who went down and prayed for them, that they might receive the holy Spirit, for **it had not yet fallen upon any of them**; they had **only been baptized** in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them and they received the holy Spirit. When Simon saw that **the Spirit was conferred by the laying on of the apostles' hands** ...

The Catholic Christian sacrament of Confirmation originates with this practice.

Water Baptism is not the only time or way that the Holy Spirit comes to live in a person; but the New Testament indicates the importance of being baptized into Christ and thus being sealed with the Holy Spirit.

### **Romans 6:3**

Or are you unaware that we who were **baptized into Christ Jesus** were baptized into his death?

### **Ephesians 1:13**

In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were **sealed with the promised holy Spirit**

## John 3:5

Jesus answered (Nicodemus), “Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of **water and Spirit.**”

Catholic Christians believe that they are first born again of water and the Holy Spirit when they receive the sacrament of Baptism. Catholic Christians also believe that Baptism only begins the work of mission of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

The person who is truly “born again” and “Spirit-filled” is not necessarily the one who has had an extraordinary experience of the Holy Spirit at some point (though this is a blessing), but the person who lives and “walks” with the Holy Spirit; who has put to death the “works of the flesh” and manifests the “fruits of the Spirit.” This is what it means to be a “new creation” in Christ Jesus – “the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Much today is heard of being “baptized in the Spirit.” The expression comes from Sacred Scripture.

### **Matthew 3:11**

He (Jesus) will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire.

### **Mark 1:8**

I (John) have baptized you with water; he (Jesus) will baptize you with the holy Spirit.

### **Luke 3:16**

He (Jesus) will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire.

### **John 1:33**

On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the holy Spirit.



The Catholic Church has never claimed that the work of the Holy Spirit is limited exclusively to Baptism.

Confirmation is the Catholic Church's official prayer for the Holy Spirit to empower a person to spread the gospel, to live a fervent Christian life, and share more fully in the mission and ministry of the Church.

Receiving the Holy Spirit in a new way, usually as the result of earnest, expectant prayer, is what many Christians today call being "baptized in the Holy Spirit."

Being "baptized in the Holy Spirit" is actually a "release" or a "coming to consciousness" of the power of the Holy Spirit who already has been given to the believer through the sacraments of the Church.

End of

**The Sacraments: Confirmation--Empowering, Part Vc**

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