

Understanding the Sacrament of Confirmation

Confirmation in the Divine Plan of Salvation:

In the Old Testament, prophets foretold that the Spirit of the Lord would rest on the awaited Messiah and on the entire messianic people. Jesus' entire life and mission were carried out in communion with the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost, the apostles received the Holy Spirit and proclaimed "the great works of God" (Acts 2:11). They passed on this Spirit to the newly baptized through the laying on of hands. Throughout history, the Church has continued to live by the Spirit and impart Him to her children.

Why is it Called Chrismation or Confirmation?:

- **Chrismation:** In the Eastern Churches, it is called Chrismation (anointing with holy myron or chrism) because the essential rite involves anointing with chrism.
- **Confirmation:** In the Western Church, it is called Confirmation because it confirms and strengthens the grace received at Baptism.

The Essential Rite of Confirmation:

The essential rite involves anointing with Sacred Chrism (oil mixed with balsam and consecrated by the bishop). In the West, this anointing is done on the forehead with the words, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit." In the Eastern Churches, the anointing is also done on other parts of the body with the words, "The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Effect of Confirmation:

Confirmation brings a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, similar to Pentecost. This outpouring impresses an indelible character on the soul and enhances the grace received at Baptism. It roots the recipient more deeply in divine sonship, binds them more firmly to Christ and the Church, and invigorates the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It provides a special strength to witness to the Christian faith.

Eligibility to Receive Confirmation:

Only those already baptized can and should receive Confirmation, and it can be received only once. To be confirmed, the candidate must be in a state of grace.

Minister of Confirmation:

The primary minister of Confirmation is the bishop, which highlights the connection between the confirmed individual and the Church's apostolic foundation. When a priest administers the sacrament, it is usually in the Eastern Churches or in special cases in the Western Church. The priest represents the bishop and uses Sacred Chrism consecrated by the bishop.