

What is Confirmation in the Catholic Religion?



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Confirming your faith brings you closer to God.

The Roman Catholic Catechism teaches that confirmation enables Catholics to profess their faith as "strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ." It is the sacrament that roots Catholics more firmly to Jesus Christ, strengthens their ties to the church, and helps them stand firm in their faith when facing life's challenges and while serving others. Although it is not necessary that all baptized Catholics be confirmed, it is considered the completion of the baptism ritual.

1. History

- The Bible says that Jesus promised the gift of the Holy Ghost to all who followed him. In the Acts of the Apostles and several of the Epistles Catholics learn that after they were baptized, converts received the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands by apostles. While there is no biblical reference to the use of chrism (a mixture olive oil and balsam that has been blessed by a bishop), it is commonly used in modern day confirmation ceremonies.

Preparation

- The prerequisites for confirmation are that candidates already be baptized, regularly go to confession and have received the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. While these basic requirements remain constant throughout the Catholic Church, various dioceses and archdioceses have different processes for preparation to receive the sacrament. Some dioceses require that candidates for confirmation go through two years of intense courses and training before being confirmed. Others require one year's training or a combination of Mass attendance and participation in weekly discussion groups. One final requirement for confirmation is that the candidate has a sponsor.

Sponsors

- As with the basic requirements for confirmation, sponsor qualifications differ from diocese to diocese. The most common requirements are that the sponsor be: an adult who has received the sacraments of baptism, Holy Eucharist and confirmation, faithfully practices the rituals of Roman Catholic Church, and regularly attends Mass and participates in other Catholic worship activities; a good listener with a good [relationship](#) with the candidate; able and willing to participate in the confirmation process, including attending Mass and other activities with the candidate; and willing to openly share and discuss his own faith practice, understanding and experience. The ideal confirmation sponsor is the same person who served as the confirmation candidate's baptismal sponsor.

Candidates

- Having been baptized as babies, candidates for confirmation must be old enough to clearly understand the commitment they are making. Most confirmation candidates are usually high school freshmen or sophomores. However, in some dioceses, confirmation is offered to candidates while they are still in middle school. People who convert to Catholicism later in life may be confirmed at any time after being baptized and receiving the Holy Eucharist.

The Process

- The sacrament is administered by the bishop or archbishop. During the confirmation ceremony, the bishop lays on hands and anoints each candidate with chrism while praying. It begins with the bishop laying on hands while praying that the Holy Spirit come down upon each of the candidates, using the words "send forth upon them thy sevenfold Spirit the Holy Paraclete." The next step is to anoint the candidate's forehead with chrism while praying, "I sign thee with the sign of the cross and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." The final step is to touch the candidate's cheek and say, "peace be with thee." The bishop closes the ceremony with a prayer for of all those who were confirmed and a final blessing.

Ref.: http://www.ehow.com/about_6080135_confirmation-catholic-religion_.html