

Some Notes on the Theology of Confirmation

What are the parts of Confirmation? (See Paul VI, *Divinae consortium naturae* (1971))

The matter: The anointing of the forehead with chrism, which is done through the laying on of the hand.

The form: “Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

The minister: A bishop or a priest with the faculty either from the law itself or delegated.

The recipient: A baptized person who has not yet been confirmed.

What are the effects of Confirmation? (See CCC, 1302-1305)

- 1) Confirmation increases sanctifying grace.
- 2) Confirmation perfects baptismal grace.
- 3) Confirmation roots us more deeply in our status as adopted children of God.
- 4) Confirmation unites us more firmly to Christ.
- 5) Confirmation increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- 6) Confirmation makes our bond with the Church more perfect.
- 7) Confirmation gives a special grace for bearing witness to the faith courageously in the world.

Confirmation imprints a *character*, a permanent spiritual seal.

Where is Confirmation in the Bible?

Confirmation is alluded to in passages like these:

“Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Sama'ria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for it had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:14-17).

“On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues and prophesied” (Acts 19:5-6).

“Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, with instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment” (Hebrews 6:1-2).