



# Boston Catholic Journal

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## Holy Confirmation



## and the Seven-Fold Gifts of the Holy Ghost

**Wisdom — Understanding — Counsel — Fortitude — Knowledge — Piety —  
Fear of the Lord**

**T**oday many children — and some adults — will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is one of the Seven Sacraments (Baptism, Penance, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, Holy Orders (the Priesthood), Matrimony, and Extreme Unction or Anointing of the Sick).

It is a beautiful and a beautifully memorable day in the life of a Catholic, for under the Bishop's hands, the infusion of the Holy Ghost Himself will come into the souls of those who receive this

Sacrament. As it were, the winds of the Heavens will rush in upon them, bearing the fire and anointing of the Holy Ghost.

## Faithful Sons and Daughters

They will *confirm*, as young adults — and for some who are older and coming into full communion with the Holy Catholic Church — what was pronounced for them by their parents and God-Parents on the day of their Baptism as infants. They will *confirm* all that was said, making it fully their own by an act of free will, ratifying what was spoken for them in the beginning of their life in Christ at Baptism. They will pronounce themselves disciples, followers of Christ who have chosen to "Take up their Cross daily, and to follow in His footsteps of Christ in His Holy Catholic Church. It is a sacrament of great moment, for at this time *they will publicly declare that they belong to Christ and to His One, True, and Holy Catholic Church as faithful sons and daughters*

They will also ... at that moment ... become *Soldiers of Christ*.

How seldom you hear of this, although our parents and all generations before us understood this clearly: that through Holy Confirmation they became Soldiers of Christ: obedient, filled with courage, ready to fight the world, the flesh, and the devil; unflinching in declaring their Faith, and prepared to lay down their lives for Christ and His Church. The Apostles and the Prophets before them knew that life is warfare, an incessant battle against principalities and powers, against things seen and unseen, against evil, the evil one, and sin. It is spiritual warfare. How well St. Paul knew this! And how deftly we forgot ...

**SO ...** as a primer, we present you a teaching ever ancient, ever new, that you may have forgotten — that you *should* have been taught — and probably were not — in your Catechism or CCD classes:

- **Why do we receive the gift of Wisdom?**  
We receive the gift of Wisdom to give us a relish for the things of God, and to direct our whole life and all our actions to His honor and glory.
- **Why do we receive the gift of Understanding?**  
We receive the gift of Understanding to enable us to know more clearly the Mysteries of Faith.

- **Why do we receive the gift of *Counsel*?**  
We receive the gift of Counsel to warn us of the deceits of the devil, and of the dangers to salvation.
- **Why do we receive the gift of *Fortitude*?**  
We receive the gift of Fortitude to strengthen us to do the will of God in all things.
- **Why do we receive the gift of *Knowledge*?**  
We receive the gift of Knowledge to enable us to discover the will of God in all things.
- **Why do we receive the gift of *Piety*?**  
We receive the gift of Piety to make us love God as a Father and obey Him because we love Him.
- **Why do we receive the gift of *Fear of the Lord*?**  
We receive the gift of Fear of the Lord to fill us with a dread of sin.

From the *Baltimore Catechism* (176-184)

## When the Rite is not a Right

It is absolutely vital to understand — and to make your children understand — that this is not a "rite of passage", something perfunctory that is undertaken lightly, and with little or no thought given to the momentous sacramental reality that occurs within the individual. One does not receive the Sacrament of Holy Confirmation simply because "it is what Catholics do", and certainly not for the monetary gifts that most often follow this occasion. One former CCD teacher was very clear about this with his pre-Confirmation students:

*"If this is meaningless to you, if you are studying for Confirmation simply because your parents are compelling you — if you are not fully cognizant and ready and willing to become Soldiers of Christ, to follow Him at all costs and in complete faithfulness to the Church and Her teachings — don't do it! Leave now."*

This advice was well-given. We now find ourselves in a Church, *"that not only does not know the basic aspects of Christian dogma, but in great part has lost even the memory of the cultural elements of Christianity."* in the words of Pope John Paul II. It is now a Church where

fundamental Catholic doctrine is not tolerated even in many Catholic institutions of education.

As recently as April 4, 2014 a habited Nun —Dominican Sister Jane Dominic Laurel — also a scholar and professor, apparently gave a "presentation of social science data about the alleged causes of same-sex attraction" — which was faithful to Church teaching concerning homosexual activity as intrinsically disordered and sinful — was met with open hostility and strident criticism by nearly a thousand *Catholic* parents ... *at a Catholic high school!*<sup>2</sup> The presentation, it appears, conflicted with the burgeoning homosexual agenda that now permeates our schools, politics, and "correct" society at large. But this is not surprising:

According to the extremely liberal National Catholic Reporter (NCR):

"We found that half of adult Catholics (50 percent) know the church's teaching regarding the real presence and half do not. We also found that close to two-thirds of adult Catholics (63 percent) believe that "at the consecration during a Catholic Mass, the bread and wine really become the body and blood of Jesus Christ."<sup>1</sup>

When even the most fundamental, the most basic tenets and teachings of the Catholic Church are largely unknown by its members — *because they have never been taught* to its children (see: <http://www.boston-catholic-journal.com/crisis-in-catholic-doctrine-ccd-the-grave-state-of-religious-education-in-america.htm> ) it is no surprise that the vast majority of candidates for Holy Confirmation cannot coherently state why they wish to receive the sacrament ... or even what the sacrament is that they are about to receive.

As a consequence, we have chosen to tell you as simply as possible — because few, if any, actually will.

Editor  
Boston Catholic Journal

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ncronline.org/news/catholics-america/knowledge-and-belief-about-real-presence>

<sup>2</sup> <http://catholicnewsherald.com/42-news/rokstories/5264-charlotte-catholic-speaker-sparks-student-petition>



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