

The Sacrament of Confirmation

203 *What is Confirmation?*

→ CONFIRMATION is the → SACRAMENT that completes Baptism; in it the gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon us. Anyone who freely decides to live a life as God's child and asks for God's Spirit under the signs of the imposition of hands and anointing with → CHRISM receives the strength to witness to God's love and might in word and deed. He is now a full-fledged, responsible member of the Catholic → CHURCH. [1285-1314]

When a coach sends a soccer player onto the playing field, he puts his hand on his shoulder and gives him final instructions. We can understand Confirmation in a similar way. A hand is placed upon us. We step out onto the field of life. Through the Holy Spirit we know what we have to do and we have been given the power to do it. He has motivated us. His mission resounds in our ears. We sense his help. We will not betray his trust or disappoint him; we will win the game for him. We just have to want to do it and listen to him. → 119, 120

204 *What does Sacred Scripture say about the sacrament of Confirmation?*

In the → OLD TESTAMENT, the People of God expected the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Messiah. Jesus lived his life in a special Spirit of love and of perfect unity with his Father in heaven. This Spirit of Jesus was the "Holy Spirit" for whom the people of Israel longed; this was the same Spirit whom Jesus promised to his disciples, the same Spirit who descended upon the disciples fifty days after Easter, on the feast of Pentecost. And it is again this same Holy Spirit of Jesus who descends upon everyone who receives the → SACRAMENT of → CONFIRMATION. [1285-1288, 1315]

In the Acts of the Apostles, which were written a few decades after the death of Jesus, we see Peter and John traveling about to confirm new Christians by imposing hands on those who previously "had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus", so that their hearts might be filled with the Holy Spirit.

→ 113-120, 310-311