

CONFIRMED FOR MISSION

A Pastoral Letter on the Sacrament of Confirmation

January 12, 2020
The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

St. John Paul II said, “The Church is missionary by her very nature.”¹ Indeed, she “exists in order to evangelize.”² Confirmation is the sacrament that strengthens each of us in this fundamental identity and mission.

I’d like to offer this pastoral letter on Confirmation in order to highlight the evangelical dimension of this sacrament and to offer a word of exhortation on the vital importance of continuing in the mission of the Church after Confirmation.

In the Sacrament of Confirmation the Holy Spirit deepens the grace of Baptism and orients the confirmed toward evangelization, that is, “...to spread and defend the faith, both by word and by deed, as true witnesses of Christ.”³ The Holy Spirit wants to lead us, not only through the trials and temptations of this life, but also, as Pope Francis exhorts, to the “delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing.”⁴ The deepest grace and the character or indelible mark of Confirmation is missionary, that is, to witness to and “to profess faith in Christ publicly and as it were officially.”⁵ From the Church’s earliest times to today, Confirmation is conferred with the sweet smell of chrism to indicate that this sacrament empowers us to spread the fragrance of Christ, that is, to evangelize.⁶

In view of this evangelical dimension of Confirmation, I exhort all the faithful and especially the parents and sponsors of children who are preparing for Confirmation to continue in the mission of the Church. Confirmation is the occasion of strengthening our commitment to Christ by living and proclaiming the Gospel boldly! This occurs in a privileged way in the home where parents are the first to proclaim the Good News of Christ to their children. When evangelization and continued catechesis occur in the family, it brings joy to home life and missionary zeal to parish life. Thus, Confirmation is a time, not of less, but of increased commitment to evangelization, to catechesis, to regular confession, and, in a special way, to participation in the Eucharist on the Lord’s Day.

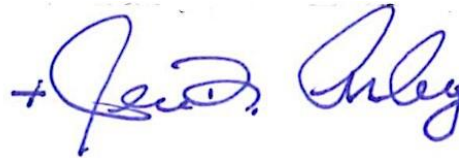
Unfortunately, at times Confirmation is seen as the end of a child’s formation in the Catholic faith, which results in a serious decline in attendance in catechetical programs and sometimes even participation at Sunday Mass. Just the opposite should be true! In Confirmation the Holy Spirit comes to a child in a new way and wants to lead all the Confirmed into a deeper relationship with Christ and guide them to a fuller understanding of the Catholic faith so that they may be empowered to spread and defend it. Of course, continued catechesis and the

collaboration of parents, sponsors, catechists, and pastors are necessary for this to occur. So I urge all parents and sponsors, all pastors and catechists to draw from the strength of the Holy Spirit they have received in their own Confirmation so as to continue the evangelical work of witnessing to Christ and forming the newly Confirmed so that they too may be true witnesses of Christ.

In order to further support this missionary endeavor, the Diocese of Lincoln is publishing a new Little Catechism specifically on the sacrament of Confirmation. Further, the Office of Religious Education has developed a Confirmation curriculum for our Catholic schools and CCD programs titled *Confirmed for Mission: An Evangelical Catechesis on Confirmation*. Moreover, the Offices of Youth Ministry, Evangelization, and Religious Education are offering annual Confirmation retreats for confirmandi and their parents and sponsors which emphasize evangelization, Christian mission, and the power of parents' prayer with their child. My desire is that these endeavors will not only aid in the important work of preparation for Confirmation but also inspire continued growth in the evangelical mission that each one of us has.

Finally, please know of my prayers for all of those preparing for Confirmation and for all who help prepare them; may the Gift of the Holy Spirit with which we are sealed in Confirmation strengthen each of us to continue in the mission of Christ and his Church.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



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¹ John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 5.

² Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 14.

³ *Lumen Gentium*, 11.

⁴ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 10.

⁵ CCC 1305, quoting St. Thomas Aquinas.

⁶ Cf. 2 Cor 2:14-17.

Confirmed for Mission



***Curriculum for an Evangelical Catechesis
on The Sacrament of Confirmation***

*For Catholic Elementary School and CCD
Confirmation Programs*

Lincoln Diocese—Religious Education Office—2020

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Introductory Notes for Teachers

- This curriculum has been developed around a central truth, namely, that in the Sacrament of Confirmation the Holy Spirit orients the confirmed toward evangelization.
 - The essential points for teaching each chapter, in the outline format of the curriculum, include those indicated by the first three divisions:
 - A. Main theme
 - 1. Important aspect of the theme
 - a. Important sub-point of this aspect
- The fourth division, indicated by i., ii., iii., etc., is further developments of the sub-points. You may choose to only teach on a few of them directly, just touch upon them or use them for your own background reference without explicitly going into each one. This distinction should make the curriculum significantly shorter and thus more attainable.
- The Three Units are divided by topic focus and are not intended to represent an equal amount of teaching time in the classroom. In a similar manner, the various Chapters are not designed to represent a specific amount of teaching time but reflect the content necessary for the Chapter topic. Thus, if a teacher realizes that more than one Chapter can be taught in a week, he/she is free to do so. On the other hand, if a Chapter seems to need more than a week, then the necessary time may be taken.
 - Ideally, the amount of time needed to teach the curriculum to the students would be in the range of 7-10 weeks, with potentially another week or so spent on Unit 3.

Unit I: The Holy Spirit and the Mission of Jesus, the Early Church, and Confirmation

The focus of this unit is to share with students the manner in which the Holy Spirit worked in the life of Jesus, the life of the Apostolic Church and in the lives of those who receive Confirmation. It identifies the paradigm by which the Holy Spirit empowers one to carry out the mission of evangelization. It will be essential for the teacher to communicate to the students that the same Holy Spirit who animated the life and ministry of Jesus, empowered the apostles and the Apostolic Church, and will empower confirmandi to boldly proclaim Christ in their own lives.

Chapter 1 The Mission of Jesus Christ through the Power of the Holy Spirit

A. Jesus always carried out his mission to proclaim the Gospel (Good News) in the power of the Holy Spirit.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NB1cFgqq6A>

1. Baptism of Jesus: At Jesus' Baptism, after He rose from the waters, the Holy Spirit came upon Him in visible form ("and while He was praying, heaven was opened" Lk 3:21).
 - a. At his baptism Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit.
 - i. Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, the Christ or "Anointed One."
 - ii. Anointing had long been a sign of the Holy Spirit's presence and activity, especially upon the leaders and kings of Israel (Lev 8:12, Num 11:24-26, I Sam 9:27-10:1, I Sam 16:12-13) and was prophesied as the sign of the Messiah (Is 61:1-3).
 - iii. Jesus of Nazareth was anointed with the Holy Spirit in a singular way at His baptism, that is, He has the Spirit without limit (cf. Acts 10:38 and Jn. 3:34).
 - iv. The anointing of the Spirit at Jesus' baptism was the beginning of His public ministry (Luke 3:21-23).

- b. Jesus' entire life, especially, His public mission, was carried out in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- i. After His baptism, the Spirit then led Him into the desert and gave Him strength to defeat the temptations of the devil, (Lk 4:1-13) and to teach in the power of the Spirit (Lk 4:14-21).
 - ii. Essential to His public ministry was healing and casting out demons by the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Mt 12:28, Acts 10:38).
 - iii. Jesus "rejoiced in the Holy Spirit" (Lk 10:21).
 - iv. Even on the cross Jesus offered His life through the Holy Spirit, "...Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God" (Heb 9:14).
 - v. Jesus' whole life and all of His deeds and teachings are the proclamation of the Gospel.
2. Proclaiming the Gospel: As Jesus fulfilled His mission of proclaiming the Gospel, it was always in union with the Holy Spirit and with the Spirit's power:
- a. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to *preach good news* to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed..." (Lk 4:18).
 - b. At the center of the Gospel is the proclamation of the Kingdom of God.
 - i. It includes two main parts: a call to repentance (sincere change of heart away from sin) and a call to faith (sincere change of heart toward Jesus and the good news of salvation):
 - ii. Jesus' first words in Mark's gospel are, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mk 1:15).
 - iii. In Matthew he says, "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 4:17).
 - iv. The Kingdom of God is Jesus' living, acting and reigning in the Church, in our own souls, and advancing in the world (cf. Lk 17:21).
- B. Jesus promised to give the Holy Spirit who was upon Him to His disciples
1. Jesus said, "And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth..." (Jn 14:16-17).
 - a. Paraclete or advocate: literally means "he who is called to one's side."
 - b. The Spirit is a Person: Jesus continues to refer to the Holy Spirit as a Person, e.g., "He" (not it) will be with you, "He" will take what is mine and declare it to you (cf. Jn 14:16, 16:14).
 - c. Person-Love: The Holy Spirit is the communion of love between the Father and the Son; the love of the Father for the Son and of the Son for the Father is so powerful

- that their bond of Love is a third Person, the Holy Spirit (Jn 7:37-39, 14:15-26, 16:12-15, 17:26).
2. What the promised Spirit will do in *all* of Jesus' disciples:
- a. The Holy Spirit will dwell in us.
- i. To His disciples Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, "you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you," (Jn 14:17) and, "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (Jn 14:23).
- ii. Indwelling: The term *indwelling* means that God the Trinity dwells in us; this is what it means to be in a state of grace or friendship with God. When the Holy Spirit dwells in us, He brings with Him the presence of the Father and the Son. The Spirit brings us into loving communion with the whole Trinity.
- b. The Holy Spirit will lead us to Truth.
- i. Jesus said, "...the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name. He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you," (Jn. 14:26) and, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth..." (Jn 16:13).
- ii. Truth: Jesus is the truth (cf. Jn 14:6); The Holy Spirit ultimately leads us to Jesus and all that He taught.
- c. The Holy Spirit will empower us to be witnesses.
- i. "He (the Holy Spirit) will bear witness to me; and you also are witnesses, because you have been with me from the beginning," (Jn 15:26-27) and, "You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high" (Lk 24:48-49).
- ii. Witness: A witness gives testimony to events that he has seen and experienced; he testifies to a truth that he knows. To be a witness is to testify to the Person of Jesus, sometimes to the point of shedding one's blood (martyr, which is the Greek word for witness).

Chapter

2 The Holy Spirit and the Mission of the Apostolic Church

- A. The apostolic Church carried out Her mission to proclaim the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit.
1. Pentecost: At Pentecost the apostles and all the disciples received the Holy Spirit with visible manifestations. Here the entire mission of the Church and the power to carry out that mission began [the Church continues the mission of Christ].
- a. Prayer in Preparation
- i. Jesus told the disciples to wait until they were clothed with power from on high. "And behold, I send the promise of

- my Father upon you; but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high." (Lk 24:49) "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8),
- ii. Jesus said this because without the Spirit no one is able to carry out the mission of evangelization.
- iii. It was not just the twelve apostles, but also the male and female disciples of Jesus who were present to receive the Spirit (about 120 people in all). "All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers" (Acts 1:14). iv. Luke mentions Mary by name. She had an important role in helping the others to pray and be open to receiving the Holy Spirit since she herself had already experienced the Holy Spirit overshadow her at the Annunciation.
- v. This time together in prayer (about 9 days/novena) helped to build their faith, expectation and their unity.
- b. Experience of Receiving the Holy Spirit**
- i. "And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1-3).
- ii. Tangible manifestations: tongues as of fire, sound of rushing wind, speaking in tongues
- iii. Ability to speak new languages for the proclamation of the Gospel (unity that reverses the disunity of Babel – Gen 11:1-9).
- iv. Personal transformation, e.g. prior to receiving the Holy Spirit the apostles locked themselves in the Upper Room for fear of the Jews and now they are empowered boldly to proclaim the death and resurrection of Jesus to thousands of people (Acts 2:14-18, 22-24, 36).
- v. These experiences were given in no small part to empower them to proclaim the Gospel with the power of the Holy Spirit; for example, the apostles were not only able to speak other languages but also spoke in such a way that their hearers could grasp their meaning
- vi. Response of those who believed was repentance, faith and baptism. There were 3000 baptized that day (Acts 2:37-41).
- vii. Pentecost (the feast of weeks) was originally a Jewish feast celebrating the summer grain harvest and the giving of the Law of Moses. The new Pentecost fulfills this event by giving the fruitfulness of the Spirit and the New Law of the Spirit written, not on stone, but in our hearts (cf. Ex 34:22-23; Ezk 36:26).
- 2. Pentecost is the characteristic model for the whole Church and each Christian in regard to evangelization and mission. This 4-step**

- paradigm remain the same in every age of the Church: **a. Prayer**
in preparation
- b. Anticipation** of the coming of the Spirit and His empowering gifts
- c.** The *experience* of the receiving the Holy Spirit
- d.** The Spirit's empowerment to *proclaim* the Gospel to others **B. How**
the early church carried out the mission to evangelize:
1. The apostles and disciples evangelized by *preaching* (Greek: *kérugma*) the Gospel.
 - a.** The Gospel is "the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Rom 1:16).
 - b.** The kerygma is proclamation if this good news of salvation in Jesus Christ
 - c.** The kerygma is the heart of Gospel and of first importance in evangelization: "Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand, by which you are saved, if you hold it fast—unless you believed in vain. *For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received,* that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve" (1 Cor 15:1-5).
 - d.** The essential content of the kerygma is: God loves us. He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins so that we can be forgiven and to rise from the dead so that we can have eternal life when He returns to judge the living and the dead.
 2. The manner in which the early Church, especially the apostles, preached the kerygma:
 - a.** With a renewed prayer to the Holy Spirit
 - b.** With a new empowerment from the Holy Spirit, resulting in boldness of speech
 - c.** Always focusing on the Person of Jesus, especially His death and resurrection
 - d.** With accompanying signs, wonders, and miracles
 - e.** Always oriented toward faith, repentance and baptism
 - f.** "And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31).
 3. The apostles and others who came to know Jesus preached the kerygma wherever they went by word and action with signs and wonders, and baptized those who had faith in Jesus.
 - a.** Examples of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and preaching the kerygma
 - i.** Paul's conversion, reception of the Holy Spirit, and preaching, "And in the synagogues immediately he proclaimed Jesus, saying, 'He is the Son of God'" (Acts 9:17-20).

- ii. Paul and Barnabas are prayed over to receive the Holy Spirit for the sake of mission (Acts 13:2-5).
- iii. Philip is directed by the Spirit to preach to and baptize the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39).

Chapter

3 The Holy Spirit and the Call to Mission in the Sacrament of Confirmation

- A.** In Confirmation the power of what occurred at Jesus' baptism is extended to the one being confirmed.
1. Parallels between Jesus' baptism and those to be confirmed:
 - a. Just as Jesus was at prayer before His baptism, so must we pray before we receive the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Just as Jesus' baptism was completed by the descending of the Holy Spirit, so our baptism is completed by the anointing of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation.
 - c. Just as Jesus was empowered by the Holy Spirit to endure temptation, so in Confirmation the Spirit strengthens us to endure temptation without sin.
 - d. Just as Jesus' baptism was the beginning of His public ministry, where He went forth to in the power of the Spirit, so Confirmation is the beginning of our mission to publicly proclaim the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit.
 2. Since Jesus' mission was carried out in the power of the Holy Spirit, which came to Him in a new way at His baptism, so our mission must be carried out in the power of the Holy Spirit, which comes to us in a new way in Confirmation.
- B.** In Confirmation the power of what occurred at Pentecost is continued in the one being confirmed.
1. Parallels between Pentecost and those to be confirmed:
 - a. Just as the disciples devoted themselves to prayer in the Upper Room, anticipating the coming of the Holy Spirit, so we must devote ourselves to prayer with expectant faith before Confirmation.
 - b. Just as Mary prepared the disciples' hearts to be open to the Holy Spirit, so Mary prepares our hearts to be open to receiving the Holy Spirit.
 - c. Just as all those in the upper room experienced the Holy Spirit in diverse ways, so we will experience the Holy Spirit in diverse ways when we're confirmed.
 - d. Just as the disciples were empowered with the gifts of the Spirit at Pentecost, so we are empowered with the gifts of the Spirit at Confirmation.
 - e. Just as the apostles fruitfully proclaimed the kerygma after the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, so those who are confirmed are enabled to boldly proclaim the kerygma.

- f. Just as the preaching of the apostles reached the hearts of people of different backgrounds, so our sharing of the Gospel will have power to reach the hearts of the diverse people we encounter.
- g. Just as some people rejected the preaching of the apostles, so some people will reject our witness to Christ.
2. As the evangelical mission of the Catholic Church began with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, so our evangelical mission begins with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit which is strengthened in Confirmation.
- C. The Church exists to evangelize.
1. Because the Church exists to evangelize, we have seen how the Holy Spirit worked in the life of Jesus, the lives of the apostles and the apostolic Church and in the Sacrament of Confirmation to share the Gospel of salvation.
- a. The Church exists to evangelize - "Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God, and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass, which is the memorial of His death and glorious resurrection" (EN 14).
- b. "There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed" (EN 22).
2. Evangelization has two senses.
- a. It is the proclaiming of the kerygma to unbelievers (primary evangelization).
- b. It is all the activities of the Church that directly or indirectly communicate the Gospel (e.g. catechesis, the liturgy, Catholic media, Christian art and literature, public and private prayer, etc.).
- c. The Sacrament of Confirmation empowers a Christian to evangelize in both ways.

Unit II: The Sacrament of Confirmation

The focus of this unit is to share with students the missionary character of Confirmation. It considers a review of the sacraments in general, leading to the specific catechesis on the Sacrament of Confirmation including the activity of the Holy Spirit and His gifts, fruits, and charisms. It then looks at the necessary elements of personal preparation prior to the sacrament and of choosing guides for living out the grace of the sacrament. It concludes by summarizing these elements in a catechesis on the Rite of Confirmation itself. It will be essential for the teacher to communicate that each student has a vital role to play in the fruitfulness of his or her reception of the sacrament.

Chapter 1 Review of Sacraments

A. Source of the Sacraments

1. All the sacraments flow from the life of Christ and activity of the Holy Spirit.

a. Jesus said in reference to Himself and those who believe in Him, "Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water." Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive" (Jn 7:37-39).

b. Image of a fountain

i. A natural fountain is continuous and pours forth refreshment and new life. ii. Just as from a fountain flows water, so from the heart of Jesus flows the Holy Spirit and the graces of the sacraments.

iii. Sacraments are the means by which we can drink of this supernatural font. iv. The blood and water that flowed from Jesus' pierced Heart on the cross have always been seen by the Church as a symbol of the grace of the sacraments especially Baptism and the Eucharist (Jn 7:37-39, Jn 19:34).

v. When we receive the sacraments we become a font, and the living water of Christ's Spirit flows from our hearts to others. This living water of the Spirit is perhaps the most important part of all evangelization.

2. The sacraments extend the mystery of Christ through the Church, and apply the mystery of Redemption to the lives of those who receive them. **B.**

Definition of a Sacrament

1. Memorize the definition of a sacrament: "A sacrament is an outward sign, instituted by Christ to give grace."

a. Outward sign – signs stand for what they mean; in a sacrament, because they are empowered by Holy Spirit, the signs actually make "happen" what they stand for (e.g., water-cleanses from sin, oil-anoints with the Holy Spirit).

b. Instituted by Christ – each sacrament was started by/given to the Church by Christ. A reference to the institution of every sacrament can be found in Scripture.

c. To give grace – Every sacrament imparts a specific set of graces (sanctifying and actual).

C. Elements of the Outward Sign of a Sacrament

1. Because as humans we have bodies, Jesus took on a Body and made His sacraments tangible with material things: we can see, hear, taste, touch, smell them. He could have chosen to make them only spiritual, but instead He made it possible for us to experience them with our senses and to rely on others to administer them.

2. Every sacrament has matter (material and actions) and form (words) performed by a minister of the sacrament.

a. Matter (materials and actions)

b. Form (words)

c. Minister (the appropriate person(s) who imparts the sacrament)

d. Example of Baptism: Matter = water, poured three times or immersion, Form = "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Minister = usually a priest, but in an emergency anyone.

D. Validity and Fruitfulness of a Sacrament

1. The grace given by a sacrament are guaranteed by God, but since each person is free, his or her reception of the grace will be different depending on the desire and capacity to receive those grace.

a. Validity— For a sacrament to be valid, it must use the correct form and matter by the right minister. i. *Ex opere operato*— "from the work worked" ii. The giving of grace does not depend upon the holiness of the minister.

b. Fruitfulness — For a sacrament to be fruitful, the person receiving the sacrament must have the right disposition and cooperate with the grace of the sacrament. i. *Ex opere operantis* - "from the work of the worker"

ii. The degree of the fruitfulness of a sacrament depends upon the disposition and cooperation of the receiver.

2. By analogy, a fountain flows freely, but the amount of water a person receives depends on proximity to the fountain, the angle at which the bucket is held and whether or not the bucket has holes. Therefore, the one receiving a sacrament must be as open as possible to the grace God wishes to give, needs to have the desire to receive it fully, and ought to be committed to living the new life of grace it provides (cf. CCC 1128).

E. Sacraments Mirror Human Growth

1. God gives us special graces that reflect all the major events and transitions of our natural life.

2. Each of the sacraments mirrors natural events of human life. For example, baptism reflects human birth, confession reflects healing from sickness, Communion reflects taking nourishment, marriage and holy orders reflect natural lifelong commitments in community, anointing of the sick reflects the end of natural life, Confirmation reflects human maturation when a person begins to interact in a public way.

F. Basic Distinctions for the Sacraments

1. The seven sacraments are divided into three categories: Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist), Sacraments of Healing (Penance, Anointing of the Sick), Sacraments at the Service of Communion and Mission (Matrimony, Holy Orders)

a. Initiation means to be brought into something new. The Sacraments of Initiation bring one into a new relationship of love with Christ and in His Church, giving an actual share in His divine life, preparing one for heaven.

- b. Healing means bringing health, strength, wholeness and salvation to the person.
 - c. Service of Communion means to build up the Church.
 - i. The term "Sacraments of Vocation" may be more familiar for Matrimony and Holy Orders, however, the Catechism of the Catholic Church refers to these sacraments as "Sacraments at the service of Communion and Mission" since that is their ultimate role (CCC 1533-1535, Compendium 321).
 - ii. These sacraments give a special grace for a particular mission in the Church to build it up: e.g. Matrimony builds up family life, Holy Orders builds up spiritual life in the Church.
2. Types of Grace
- a. Sanctifying grace – the free gift of God's divine life dwelling within us
 - b. Actual graces – gifts given by God for specific activities and circumstances of life (e.g. showing patience, understanding a point of the faith, sharing the Gospel with others, etc.)
 - c. Sacramental graces – gifts given by God proper to each sacrament
 - d. Special graces or charisms – gifts of the Spirit for the common good and building up of the Church
3. Indelible Mark
- a. The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders can be received only once because they leave a character or indelible mark on the soul which sets that person apart from those who have not received these sacraments.
 - b. An indelible mark: configures, distinguishes, disposes, and obliges a person.
 - i. E.g. in Baptism a person is *configured* (made like) to Christ especially in His Sonship (i.e. one is made a son or daughter of God), a baptized person is *distinguished* from one who is not baptized, through this character of baptism one is *disposed* (more open) to live the Christian life, and one is *obliged* to live the Christian life.

Chapter 2 Catechesis on Confirmation

- A. Confirmation is the sacrament that empowers us to be missionaries for Jesus Christ by the Gift and working of the Holy Spirit. Just as in Baptism, one is made a child of God, so in Confirmation, one is made a missionary for Christ.
1. Confirmation is distinct from but closely related to baptism; Confirmation strengthens, completes, and perfects Baptism.
- a. Distinction between Baptism and Confirmation in Scripture -
 "Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria 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).

b. "By the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed." LG 11

2. Confirmation is the sacrament "through which the faithful receive the Holy Spirit as a Gift" (Paul VI DCN).

B. The Outward Sign of Confirmation

1. Matter (action) = Laying on of hands, Chrism oil in the sign of a cross on the forehead

a. Laying on of hands imparts the Holy Spirit.

i. "Then they laid hands on them and they received the holy Spirit" (Acts 8:17). ii. "And when Paul laid [his] hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied" (Acts 19:6).

b. Chrism oil is placed as a sign of the cross on the forehead.

i. In Greek the word *chrism* literally means "an anointing" and this is from where the word Christ (Anointed One) comes.

ii. Chrism is olive oil with balsam which gives it a sweet aroma (Eastern Rite Catholics call Chrism *myron*).

iii. Those who are confirmed are empowered to share the aroma of Christ, that is, evangelize – "For we are the aroma of Christ" (2 Cor. 2:15).

iv. "But you have been anointed by the Holy One..." (Jn 2:20).

2. Form (word) = "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit."

a. Indelible mark/seal

i. "For on him [Jesus] the Father, God, has set his seal" (Jn 6:27).

ii. "In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised holy Spirit" (Eph 1:13).

b. The Holy Spirit is Himself the Gift of God, and He comes with His many gifts.

3. Minister = ordinarily a bishop, but with permission or in emergency a Catholic priest.

a. Western Rite - a bishop because it shows that the person confirmed is connected with the whole Church and under the ecclesial authority Christ established.

b. Eastern Rite - Confirmation is called *Chrismation* and is administered by a priest at the time of Baptism.

The three sacraments of initiation are given all at once to show their unity.

4. Recipient = a baptized Catholic.

- a. Traditional term for the one to be confirmed is “confirmand” (plural “confirmandi”).
- b. When the recipient is above the age of reason he or she must believe in the truths of the Catholic Faith and desire to receive Confirmation.

C. Instituted by Christ

1. Confirmation was fully instituted at Pentecost.
2. Jesus is the one who sends the Holy Spirit: “When the Advocate comes whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth...” (Jn 15:26).
3. Pentecost fulfills the promise of Jesus, “And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high” (Lk 24:49).
4. “And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:2-4).

D. To give grace

1. The effects of Confirmation (CCC 1303):
 - a. Brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace.
 - b. Roots us more deeply in the divine filiation which makes us cry, “Abba! Father!”
 - c. Unites us more firmly to Christ
 - d. Increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us
 - e. Renders our bond with the Church more perfect
 - f. It gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross.
 - g. Imprints an indelible spiritual mark or character on the soul which seals a Christian with the Holy Spirit that he or she may be Christ's witness (missionary character).

E. Character of Confirmation – a missionary character

1. Meaning of the “character” (seal, mark) of Confirmation
 - a. A *character which completes baptism*: “Like Baptism which it completes, Confirmation is given only once, for it too imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual mark, the “character,” which is the sign that Jesus Christ has marked a Christian with the seal of His Spirit by clothing him with power from on high so that he may be His witness” (CCC 1304).
 - i. Baptism gives the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity.
 - ii. Confirmation strengthens and empowers us to give faith, hope, and charity to others.
 - b. A *character which makes one a spiritual soldier for the Kingdom of God*: Confirmation makes a Christian a spiritual

- soldier of Christ, ready to spread and defend the Catholic faith in word and deed.
- i. In the Roman Empire a *sphragis* was branded onto the arm of Roman soldier, which meant he had special privileges and gifts but also duties to defend and expand the empire.
 - ii. In Confirmation, we are marked with an indelible character, a *sphragis*, which means we have received spiritual gifts and privileges but also have the duty to defend and expand the Kingdom of God.
 - c. A *character* which is *missionary*: by this character, "the confirmed person receives the power to profess faith in Christ publicly and as it were officially" (CCC 1305 quoting St. Thomas Aquinas).
 - i. This mark gives us a permanent missionary character which empowers us to evangelize and proclaim the Gospel.
 - ii. It gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to advance the Gospel by word (e.g. by proclaimed the Kerygma and sharing our testimony) and action (e.g. by witnessing to a holy life and by praying with others)
2. This indelible character:
- a. *Configures* us to Jesus' public ministry (especially His proclamation of the Kingdom of God),
 - b. *Empowers* us to proclaim, defend, and witness to the Gospel,
 - c. *Distinguishes* us from others who are not confirmed,
 - d. *Obliges* us to profess Christ publicly.

Chapter 3 Gifts, Fruits, and Charisms of the Holy Spirit

- A. "Gifts of the Spirit" - a general term for any of the graces, gifts, fruits, and charisms of the Holy Spirit
1. While all sanctifying and actual graces are given by God through the Holy Spirit there are specific gifts that the Spirit gives at different times for different reasons
 - a. *The Seven Gifts* - are given at baptism and strengthened at Confirmation so that by their working a Christian will become holy and get to heaven.
 - b. *The Fruits of the Spirit* - are given as a *result* or "fruit" of our living and walking with the Holy Spirit and following His promptings; they are given so that we may experience and enjoy them.
 - c. *The Charisms* - are given whenever the Spirit wills, so that by their working a Christian can contribute to the building up and common good of the Church.
 2. The Seven Gifts are for the sanctity of the person, the Charisms are for the service of others, the Fruits are for the enjoyment of all. The more Catholics are open to the Holy Spirit the more these three work together.
- B. Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1. Isaiah 11:2-3 - "And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be the fear of the LORD..."
2. The seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit rested fully upon and animated the ministry of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. They also rest upon and animate those baptized into Jesus Christ. Confirmation strengthens these gifts, since it unites one more firmly to Jesus Christ and confers the Holy Spirit as Gift.
3. With the Gifts of the Holy Spirit a person operates not in a human mode but in a divine mode, i.e. God the Holy Spirit operates through him/her.
4. Sometimes the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are called "supernatural virtues." The difference between a gift of the Holy Spirit and a moral virtue is that a gift is freely given without effort on our part (though we cooperate), whereas a moral virtue is acquired over time with repeated action and effort.
5. These gifts are necessary for living out our Christian life. We must have them to become holy, move toward our salvation, and ultimately get to heaven.
6. Traditional list and basic working of the seven gifts:
 - a. Wisdom: seeing all things from God's perspective and that He is the ultimate source of all created things. Wisdom is the greatest of the seven gifts.
 - b. Understanding: deep insight into the things of Faith
 - c. Knowledge: seeing and judging the real values of earthly (limited) and heavenly (infinite) things
 - d. Counsel: supernatural guidance (prudence) to see the most God-pleasing path to follow
 - e. Fortitude: the courage to overcome all obstacles in following Jesus
 - f. Piety: the honoring of God as our loving Father
 - g. Fear of the Lord: a filial fear which is afraid of losing the Father's love through sin. Fear of the Lord is the first and most fundamental gift upon which all the others are built.

C. Fruits of the Spirit

1. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, selfcontrol; against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23).
2. The Fruits of the Spirit are a result of God putting order: (St. Thomas)
 - a. in our own soul,
 - b. in our relation to others,
 - c. in our relation to the world.
 - d. When the fruits are fully evident, they reflect the fact that God has worked and brought order in us and they are present without our effort.
3. The fruits are the effects of the Spirit's work in which we delight; in every fruit there is a sense of enjoyment.

4. Just as a good tree bears good fruit (cf. Lk. 6:43), so Jesus enables us to become good Christians through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and to bear the good fruit of the Spirit in our lives.
- a. Before a tree can bear fruit, it has to go through stages of growth and adversity. In a similar way, before a person experiences the Fruits of the Spirit one has to go through purification from and growth in the gifts and workings of God in his or her soul.
- b. Examples of the fruits resulting from the Gifts:
- i. when we exercise the gift of fortitude in showing charity to another we will often experience the fruit of love;
- ii. when we exercise the gift of understanding in our faith we will often experience the fruit of joy;
- iii. when we exercise the gift of knowledge in our discussions with others we will often experience the fruit of patience and kindness.
5. A traditional list of the Fruits of the Spirit includes: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control and chastity (CCC 1832, cf. Gal 5:22-23).
- a. Love - Joy and delight in loving
- b. Joy - gladness or happiness that results from experiencing that God is present fully in our souls
- c. Peace - the perfection of joy that results from the order that God places in our souls by removing obstacles
- d. Patience - Sanctification of our sufferings, inconveniences, and/or disappointments; the sense of a nearness of Jesus' suffering in our own
- e. Goodness and kindness - easy disposition of will to do good for others
- f. Generosity - disposition of will to do good for as many as possible
- g. Gentleness - disposition of mildness that quells anger and wins the hearts of others
- h. Faithfulness - the joy of being loyal to others
- i. Modesty - moderation in our relations to all creatures
- j. Self-control - a delight in the gift that one's passions are restrained
- k. Chastity - peace in restraining our sexual passions
- l. There are many names for the Fruits of the Spirit that are also used for virtues, e.g. the fruit of love vs. the theological virtue of love, the fruit of chastity vs. the moral virtue of chastity.
- i. While they have the same names they are different since a fruit is not a theological or moral virtue but rather an act of the Spirit in the soul.
- ii. These fruits have resulted from one's walking in the Spirit: living the Christian life of theological virtues, moral virtues, and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

D. Charisms

1. Charisms are supernatural gifts given by God to a person for the sake of the common good and for the building up of the Church.
 - a. "It is not only through the sacraments and Church ministries that the same Holy Spirit sanctifies and leads the people of God. He distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank." *Lumen Gentium* 12
 - b. "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills" (1 Cor. 12:4-11).
 - c. The charisms named are not meant to be an exhaustive list of all the specific charisms God chooses to give to His people. There are other charisms as well.
 - d. See Appendix for a more exhaustive list and a description of specific charisms.
 - e. Charisms are distinct from the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.
 - i. All of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to each person in Baptism and strengthened in Confirmation for personal sanctification.
 - ii. Different charisms are given according to God's will to different people for the sake of helping to sanctify others.
 - f. Charisms are given by God as gratuitous gifts and not as a reward or result of personal holiness.
2. It is for the hierarchy to discern the authenticity of a particular charism, that is, whether it is truly from the Holy Spirit. "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good" (1 Thes 5:19-21).
3. Asking for and Receiving Charisms
 - a. Though the Sacrament of Confirmation does not directly give a particular charism, it gives the fundamental orientation of the charisms, namely, the building up of the Church. The Holy Spirit instills in a person the desire to proclaim Christ and evangelize. Thus, the person will want to seek the charisms and implore the Holy Spirit for them so as to be able to fulfill this desire.

- b. Charisms should be looked for, welcomed and humbly desired for the good of others. "Strive eagerly for the spiritual gifts" (1 Cor 14:1). "Since you strive eagerly for spiritual gifts, seek to have an abundance of them for the building up of the church" (1 Cor 14:12).
- i. One exercise would be to encourage children to think of others they love and for whom they want to pray (for healing, conversion, etc.) or for ways they would like to use their talents for others (giving good advice, etc.).
- ii. Then, consider which charism(s) would assist the people they have brought to mind, and ask God frequently and with trust and perseverance to grant these.
- c. Charisms should be received humbly when given. "These charismatic gifts, whether they be the most outstanding or the more simple and widely diffused, are to be received with thanksgiving and consolation. They are exceedingly suitable and useful for the needs of the Church" (LG 12).
- d. Avoid comparison. One should be grateful for any gift from God, great or small, lofty or humble.
- i. Charisms are not necessarily a sign of holiness nor are they a status symbol or to be compared with others.
- ii. One should rejoice in the charisms others receive regardless of one's own since all are given for the common good and for the glory of God.
- e. Love is greater than any charism: "If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing symbol. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing." (1 Cor 13:1-2).
4. Stories about the working of the charisms of the Holy Spirit (see appendix)

Chapter 4 Personal Preparation for Confirmation

A. The Role of Conversion

1. Conversion is necessary for overcoming obstacles to the many graces God gives in the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- a. Obstacles to the Sacrament of Confirmation
- i. Valid but Unfruitful: this would result from being in state of mortal sin, having no repentance, being indifferent or insincere about the faith, the sacraments, or the moral life
- ii. Invalid: this would be the case if the person confirmed positively rejected the Catholic Faith
- b. One receiving the sacrament of Confirmation should be in the state of grace and must not receive Confirmation in a state of mortal sin.

c. Repentance/Confession

- i. Repentance is a sorrow in the heart for having offended God and the resolution to turn away from sin and toward God.
- ii. Confession is a concrete means of showing genuinerepentance and is one of the greatest means of conversion.
- iii. An important part of being prepared for Confirmation is receiving the sacrament of confession beforehand to remove even small obstacles to grace.

2. Concrete Aspects of Conversion: Renunciation and Faith

- a. The Rite of Confirmation includes the renunciation of sin and the profession of faith; this is a model for ongoing conversion in the Christian life.
- b. The first step is looking at your own life for the things you need to renounce (willfully reject it and not do it any more).
- c. The second step is making a real act of faith in Jesus.
- d. How to practice renunciation and faith in your life:
 - i. Identify anything that is sinful, evil, or a working of the Enemy. For example, in regard to sins, it could be selfishness in getting attention or a tendency to impurity, in regard to evils, it could be a fear of failure or the lie that I am not loved, in regard to a working of the Enemy, it could be resentment against family members/classmates or a spirit of unbelief.
 - ii. Make an act of renunciation of those things in the name of Jesus. For example, one could say, "in Jesus' name I renounce selfishness," or "in the name of Jesus name I reject the lie that I am not loved," or "in Jesus Christ's name to renounce the spirit of resentment against my sister"
 - iii. Make an act of faith in the opposite direction. For example, one could say, "Jesus, I trust that you will help me to be kind and generous," or "Jesus, I know that you love and I accept your love in my life," or "Jesus, I believe in your power over all things and that you will grant me peace."
 - iv. Further examples of things to renounce: anything untrue, media fantasy world, pornography, lies that one is worthless, anything that is dark or disturbing, etc.

B. The Role of Faith

- 1. Closely connected to the role of conversion is personal faith. Personal faith is possible because Jesus revealed the Catholic and Apostolic Faith which becomes one's own.
- a. Faith is the firm trust in God, belief in all that God has revealed to us, and freely committing our lives to Him.
 - i. One must have Catholic faith to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation because every sacrament is a sign of faith. You need to have the Catholic Faith even though your personal faith may not be perfect.

ii. If one is unwilling to adhere to the teachings of Jesus and His Church, he or she should work though this before receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation.

b. Faith that is living (animated by charity) makes Confirmation fruitful

i. The sacraments are not magic, but require faith working through love on the part of the person who receives them.

ii. Unlike baptism which most of us receive as children and then grow to understand our faith afterward, for Confirmation it is essential that we prepare our minds and hearts well beforehand through catechesis in order for the graces to bear fruit in our lives.

2. Importance of Personal Faith

a. The degree of fruitfulness of the sacrament is based upon your intention and desire to receive it. You need to want to receive the sacrament!

b. This happens especially though your decision of personal faith, e.g. "Jesus is *my* Lord." "I desire to receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit."

i. While we come to know about Jesus and the Holy Spirit through the Church, it is ours to personally accept and live it with God's help.

ii. Personal faith is essential for conversion: "Conversion means accepting, by a personal decision, the saving sovereignty of Christ and becoming his disciple." RM 46

C. The Role of Prayer

1. Just as the apostles prepared for the coming of the Holy Spirit by prayer and anticipation, so you will need to set aside time for prayer in anticipation of your Confirmation.

2. Essence of Prayer

a. Prayer is the lifting of the mind and heart to God, or more simply expressed, a conversation with God. i. All prayer is a gift of God. ii. Everyone likes to spend time with those they love and spending time together deepens love. Thus, more frequent and heart-felt prayer leads to a deeper relationship of love with God.

b. Prayer is an opportunity for *daily* connection, to live a life in communion with Jesus on earth which strengthens us for the Christian life in this world and prepares us for a future in heaven.

3. Role of Prayer in Preparation for Confirmation

a. Receptivity – Prayer opens you to receive the Holy Spirit and helps you to realize your dependence on Him in order to bear fruit in your life.

i. There is not really a right or wrong way to pray, but it does take receptivity and commitment ii. We can take great comfort in the fact that "We do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us" (Rom 8:26).

- iii. The best thing for us to do is open our hearts and be receptive to the Holy Spirit's action.
- b. Waiting and anticipation – Prayer, especially prior to the event of Confirmation, is a time to grow in anticipation, desire and longing for the Holy Spirit.
 - i. As Jesus commanded the apostles, you too are called to fervently pray and “wait for the promise of the Father” (Acts 1:4) so that “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you” (Acts 1:8).
 - ii. The greater our desire for the coming of the Holy Spirit, the more He will prepare our hearts to receive Him. But, at the same time, we do not force His action. As God and Father, He knows what His children need and we need to wait with trust for Him to empower us, just as Mary, the disciples, and apostles waited for the coming of the Holy Spirit with trust and were open to receive Him when He came at Pentecost.
 - iii. Set aside some time on a regular basis for silence to listen to the Holy Spirit as well as to express your desire for His coming to you in Confirmation. You might choose to pray a specific prayer to the Holy Spirit as part of your prayer.
- c. Specific prayers to the Holy Spirit
 - i. The ancient hymn, *Veni Creator Spiritus*, is a remarkable summary of the life and working of the Holy Spirit.
 - ii. The traditional Prayer to the Holy Spirit is a mini prayer of Pentecost: “Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of thy faithful...”
 - iii. The simple prayer: “Come, Holy Spirit.”

D. The Role of Experience

1. Experiencing the Holy Spirit

- a. What it might look/feel like at my Confirmation could include:
 - i. A gentle joy and peace, an experience of feeling the Holy Spirit coming upon me, a powerful lifechanging experience of God's presence, experiencing a greater desire to praise God and to share Him with others, an increase of faith, experiencing the fruits of the Holy Spirit, a sense of God's call for my life.
 - ii. Whether the experience is great or small, immediately recognized or understood over time, there will be an experience.
- b. What it means to be docile to the Holy Spirit:
 - i. Paying attention to interior inspirations to pray, to carry out a good work, or to evangelize; ii. Checking those inspirations with what you know is good, or for bigger things, checking with priests or Catholics who live their faith;
 - iii. Carrying out the inspirations with confidence, humility, peace, and joy. iv. Resisting the work/promptings of the Holy Spirit will

- create an inner turmoil since the Holy Spirit will be moving us toward the Gospel.
2. Share examples of the Holy Spirit's activity in the lives of others, e.g. from the lives of saints, the testimonies of the teacher, or the lives of Christians we know.

Chapter

5 Spiritual Guides for Confirmation: Choosing a Sponsor and a Patron Saint

A. Confirmation Sponsor

1. A sponsor takes on a life-long responsibility to spiritually support the person being confirmed.
2. The Church recommends that a baptismal godparent is chosen as a sign of the connection between Baptism and Confirmation, both of which are Sacraments of Initiation, but it is not necessary (Cf. Can. 893 §2).
 - a. A sponsor must be at least 16 years old, a baptized and confirmed Catholic in good standing in the Church (i.e. going to Mass every Sunday, participating in the sacraments, married in the Church, registered in a parish, etc., cf. Can. 874 §1).
 - b. Sponsors should be carefully chosen as spiritual role models since their responsibility involves more than putting their hand on your shoulder at Confirmation.
3. Four characteristics that a student who is going to receive Confirmation should think about in regard to choosing a sponsor include:
 - a. Commitment to Prayer: Is this person willing to pray for me for his or her whole life? A good way to tell is if the potential sponsor is already a person who prays daily.
 - b. Good Example: Is this person going to be a good example of living the Catholic faith? A good way to tell is if the potential sponsor goes to Mass every Sunday, regularly goes to confession, does not have serious areas of sin in their life (e.g. living with a boyfriend or girlfriend), and joyfully shares their Catholic faith with others.
 - c. Courage to Correct: Is this person willing and courageous enough to say something to me if he or she sees me going off on the wrong track? A good way to tell is if he or she has already been a courageous witness to faith and morality in your family.
 - d. Relationship: Do I have a good relationship with this person and do I see them frequently? A good way to tell is by thinking of how often you have seen them in the last year and how well your conversations have gone.

B. Confirmation Name and Patron Saint

1. Part of preparing for the sacrament of Confirmation is carefully choosing a Confirmation name.

- a. A name is incredibly important because it stands for who you are.
- b. The name you choose also becomes part of your new name
- i. Those called by God were given a new name: Abram became Abraham, Saul became Paul, etc.
 - ii. The new name indicated a special calling and a special role that God had in mind for them.
 - iii. Your confirmation name indicates your new participation in the mission of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.
- c. A Confirmation name is always the name of a saint
- i. The reason we choose a saint's name is because: We want to be friends with those in heaven, they are examples of holiness for us, they have a special power of prayer for us, they can educate us in the faith (especially through their writings if they have them), and their lives inspire us.
 - ii. Most people who come from Christian families receive the name of a saint for their baptismal name (first name).
- Confirmation is a new opportunity to choose your patron saint's name
- iii. The word patron comes from the Latin word for protector and defender. A patron saint protects, defends, prays for, befriends, teaches, models, and inspires the one who puts himself under the particular saint's patronage.
2. Ways to Choose your Patron Saint
- a. Pray to Jesus, asking Him to let you know who He would like to be your patron saint. God's providence has someone particularly in mind for you. It's yours to discover who he/she is.
 - b. Read about lives of the saints, especially any whom you find attractive, any who are patrons of areas in which you have interest, or any who demonstrate virtues, characteristics, or gifts you would like to imitate.
 - c. Once you have chosen your patron saint, pray to him/her to prepare you for Confirmation and to continue to guide you and intercede for you once you are confirmed. This is the beginning of a life-long relationship.
 - d. It is preferred that boys choose male saints and girls choose female saints, but this is not an absolute if you are drawn to the witness of a saint who is not the same gender.

Chapter

6 Rite of Confirmation (Understanding as well as Practice)

A. Considerations for Teachers

1. As you go through the earlier connections with Jesus' Baptism, make brief references to the aspects of the connection that the Pentecost, etc., in order for students to make the connection that the aspects of the

Holy Spirit in the life of Jesus and the early Church are made present to them when they are confirmed.

2. Go through the Mass for the Rite of Confirmation in detail, emphasizing the opportunity the students have to open their hearts and pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit during the laying on of hands.

- a. Practice the Rite of Confirmation in the church prior to Confirmation.

- b. The points below (B. 1-9) can serve as commentary for the various elements of the Rite of Confirmation.

- c. For a quick online reference see: https://owensborodiocese.org/wp-content/uploads/RitualText_adapted_2016.pdf.

B. Elements of the Rite of Confirmation

1. The Rite of Confirmation takes place within Mass as a sign of the unity between the Eucharist and Confirmation as Sacraments of Initiation.

2. Liturgy of the Word

- a. Jesus is speaking when the Scripture is proclaimed in the Mass.

- b. He is speaking to you about what you are going to receive in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

- c. Be prepared to listen to what specific message Jesus wants to share with you.

- d. Each of the many options for the readings in Confirmation during Mass speaks of the themes presented in this Curriculum. To highlight some of the lectionary readings for the purpose of review visit: <http://deaconsailor.blogspot.com/2014/01/4-confirmation-764-768.html>

3. PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES – the parish officially presenting its confirmandi to the bishop

- a. The purpose of the presentation of the candidates is to emphasize God's individual calling, but since Confirmation usually includes a number of confirmandi, they are called as a whole group.

- i. God has called you individually by name.
- ii. There is a particular role that you have in the Church that no one else has or could have – the way you will carry out your Catholic life is an irreplaceable contribution to the life of the Church and God's plan of salvation.

- b. When each individual kneels before the bishop, he specifically uses your new name.

4. RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES – renunciation of sin and profession of faith

- a. Renewal of baptismal promises is when you make the baptismal vows your own.

- i. "I do" is the response to each of the five invocations. This signifies what we spoke of regarding personal faith.

- ii. Renewal concludes with "Amen." This signifies that your "yes" matters for the fruitfulness of the sacrament.

5. THE LAYING ON OF HANDS – calling down the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and His gifts upon the sons and daughters of God

- a. This actions is a continuation of Apostolic Tradition (reference Unit I) whereby the Holy Spirit was given by the laying on of hands.
- b. The Bishop introduces this prayer showing the connection between Baptism and Confirmation: i. Dearly beloved, let us pray to God the almighty Father, for these, his *adopted sons and daughters, already born again to eternal life in **Baptism,*** that he will graciously *pour out the Holy Spirit upon them to **confirm** them with his abundant gifts, and through his anointing conform them more fully to Christ, the Son of God.*
- ii. After this invitation, all in the church pray in silence for the confirmandi. Point out to students that this is the purpose of the silent pause.
- c. The Bishop stretches out his hands over the confirmandi to call down *the Holy Spirit* and the *seven gifts* (this is the epiclesis of this sacrament).
- i. He says, "Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who brought these your servants to new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, freeing them from sin: *send upon them, O Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete; give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety; fill them with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.* Through Christ our Lord." ii. You should be imploring the Lord at this time for an open heart and to be filled with the Holy Spirit and all the gifts the He wants to give.
- iii. Ordinarily, you kneel at this point, unless it is the Easter Season, in which case you stand.
6. THE ANOINTING WITH CHRISM
- a. This is the principal moment when the Holy Spirit anoints you with Himself and His gifts through the ministry of the Bishop.
- b. Using *chrism* oil to *anoint* each confirmand's forehead, he says, "Be *sealed* with the *Gift* of the Holy Spirit."
- i. *Chrism/anointing* - the name of this oil means "anointing," just as Christ means "anointed one." This anointing of the individual reflects the anointing of Christ at His baptism and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.
- ii. *Sealed* – indelible mark (character) shows that you are now bound to Christ forever so that you may be His evangelical witness (cf. CCC 1296, 1304-5).
- iii. *Gift* - The Holy Spirit gives Himself (Gift) as well as His gifts (7 Gifts, fruits, charisms, etc.).
- c. After being confirmed, you have an opportunity to praise and thank God for His abundant gifts, to delight in the gifts you

- have received, and to pray for your special intentions and fellow confirmandi.
- d. Sign of Peace – Bishop: “Peace be with you.” Confirmand: “And with your spirit.” This signifies unity with the Bishop as head of the Church in the diocese.
7. Prayer of the Faithful – the Universal Prayer of the Church
- a. These are offered specifically for those who have been confirmed.
- b. Baptism enabled you to participate in the Prayer of the Faithful, and now, through Confirmation, the power of your prayer is enhanced and strengthened.
8. Liturgy of the Eucharist
- a. With Confirmation, you have now been completely initiated into the Church and can participate the most fully in the Eucharistic sacrifice.
- i. This is symbolized when the newly confirmed take up the bread and wine at the offertory, which signifies the offering of their lives in union with the Eucharistic sacrifice.
- ii. The newly confirmed’s increased participation in the Eucharist culminates in their reception of Holy Communion, which makes them fully initiated Christians.
- iii. Through the strengthening effects of Confirmation they are now able to enjoy a deeper spiritual and physical communion with Christ as they receive his Body and Blood.
- b. More fully nourished with this food from heaven, you can also go forth in greater charity with the Gospel of salvation
9. Solemn Blessing for those Confirmed – the Bishop offers a concluding blessing that emphasizes the gifts that have been received and now can bear fruit in the lives of those confirmed.
- C. The Church Exists to Evangelize - Because the Church exists to evangelize, we have seen in the above six chapters how the Holy Spirit works through the Sacrament of Confirmation to impart to their personal mission to live and share the Gospel of salvation.

Unit III: Confirmation and Evangelization—Kerygma, Witness, and Prayer

The focus of this unit is to give the students the tools to live out their Confirmation well. It spells out the practical aspects of the kerygma, witness/testimony, and praying with others, with the intention of really practicing these areas in their lives. It will be essential for the teacher to build in opportunities for each student to practice proclaiming the kerygma, sharing his or her

testimony, and praying with others, so that they will be more comfortable with these evangelical roles.

Chapter 1 Kerygma – Explicitly Proclaiming the Gospel

A. Initial Considerations

1. The kerygma is the most basic and first activity that characterized the Apostolic Church (e.g. when Paul went somewhere he would proclaim the kerygma, e.g., Acts 17:22-34; 1 Cor 15:3-5).
2. Proclaiming the kerygma is a part of every Catholic's vocation, especially those who are confirmed!
 - a. The kerygma is the very first step of evangelization.
 - b. Proclaiming/sharing this good news with others will depend upon the person and the situation re: what you emphasize and how much you emphasize, but it is always the same essential message.
 - c. We need to use Jesus' name explicitly in proclaiming the kerygma.
 - d. The kerygma speaks of what has actually happened, Jesus has actually died for our sins and has truly risen to give us life; it is not just "knowing about" something. (A person can "know about" Jesus without having experienced the kerygma).
 - e. When the Acts of the Apostles and the Letters of the New Testament speak of the "Good News," "message of salvation," "Gospel," etc., they are referring to the kerygma

B. Essential Components of the Kerygma

1. The following points are essential to the kerygma; their emphasis should be led by the Holy Spirit and the needs of the person to whom you are speaking (situation, etc.).
 - a. God created you.
 - b. God loves you.
 - c. We lost our great relationship with God through sin (this explains why the world has sorrow, suffering, etc.).
 - d. God gave us the solution to our fallen world in Jesus, His Son, whom He sent to save us.
 - e. He died on the cross for our sins so we could all be forgiven and have our relationship with Him restored.
 - f. He rose from the dead so we could all have His divine life.
 - g. He will return in glory to judge the living and the dead, when we will receive the just recompense for our deeds and our acceptance or refusal of God's grace, either eternal life or eternal separation from God
 - h. In summary: *God loves you. He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for your sins so that you can be forgiven and to rise from the dead so that you can have eternal life when he returns to judge the living and the dead. This is the Gospel – the Good News of Salvation!*
2. Grace of Evangelization in Proclaiming the Kerygma

- a. God desires everyone to hear and *accept* this good news.
 - i. This happens when the hearer says “yes,” accepts the grace of conversion, receives baptism, and becomes part of God’s family, the Church. ii. “And he said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mk 15:1516).
 - b. Though not everyone will accept it, we will be effective in proclaiming the kerygma to the degree that the Holy Spirit empowers us and anoints us to do so.
 - c. It is good to proclaim the kerygma again to those who have already heard it – it’s good to hear over and over (we never tire of hearing that we are loved). This deepens evangelization and conversion.
 - i. The message of salvation is always new
 - ii. It is never old news, but always new and good news.
 - d. There are people who will not hear the message of salvation unless *you* proclaim it.
 - e. We draw grace and strength to proclaim the kerygma from all the seven sacraments, especially Confirmation.
3. Simple Ways to Proclaim the Kerygma:
- a. Remind another of God’s love for them.
 - b. Speak of Jesus’ crucifixion/resurrection more frequently.
 - c. If someone asks you a basic question about your faith, it’s a great time to respond with the kerygma. d. You are not too young to proclaim Jesus!!!!
 - e. It’s okay to make mistakes, it’s the only way to learn and grow to express our faith.
4. Practicing the Kerygma
- a. See appendix for scenarios.
 - b. Create your own scenarios - role play

Chapter 2 Witness – Giving Your Testimony

- A. Confirmation empowers us to be witnesses for Jesus Christ.
 - 1. Review definition of witness: A witness gives testimony to events that he has seen and experienced; he testifies to a truth that he knows. To be a witness is to testify to the Person of Jesus, sometimes to the point of shedding one’s blood (martyr).
 - a. The word for *witness* in Greek is *mártur* which is where we get the word martyr.
 - b. “You will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).
 - c. Witness is based primarily on experience and only secondarily through catechetical education.
 - 2. Testimony or witness flows from your relationship with Christ.
 - a. Jesus loves you and His love working in your life becomes the source of your witnesses.
 - b. Testimony is the story of how God has led, and is leading you, in your relationship with Jesus.

3. Testimony flows from the activity of the Holy Spirit in your life.
 - a. The Holy Spirit enlightens you to see the workings of Jesus in your life.
 - b. The Gift of the Holy Spirit, which has come more deeply in the Sacrament of Confirmation, will empower you to share your testimony in a way that will help others.
4. There is a great evangelical power in witness and testimony.
 - a. The way God has worked in your own life (i.e., your witness/testimony) has a great evangelical power because it's difficult to argue with personal experience
 - b. Since the Lord interacts with you individually He can reveal His love through your very person. **B. Discovering your witnesses story/testimony.**
1. To be a good witnesses of the Gospel you need to discover the story of how God has worked in your life, identify its main elements and circumstances, and adapt it so that it can be shared with others
 - a. It is important for you to be aware of the way that God has worked in your life.
 - i. You are loved. You have been loved. You want to look for that. ii. The Lord guides you and loves you daily, in fact every moment. It is important to take some time to see how you have felt and experienced God the Father's love and work in your life.
 - b. Identifying the ways God has worked in your life becomes the content of your testimony
 - i. Identifying your story includes specific (not general) events, persons, places, memories, etc...
 - ii. Think of the first time you experienced Jesus' love, or a time when you felt close to God, or a time when you recognized God was really working in your life.
 - iii. Question: "What is something that happened to help me to see that Jesus is real?" iv. Come up with a short testimony about your experience (see appendix for details and lesson).
 - c. All testimony is something we recognize ourselves and then share with others; God has worked in your life firsthand and you can share this with others
 - i. Realize that witness and testimony are not only for you to see God's workings in your life but also for the sake of others so they can be inspired, come to greater faith themselves, and recognize God is really working in their lives, too.
 - ii. Testimony needs to be adapted to the person or people that are listening to the witness. iii. When coming up with your personal testimony also think of appropriate ways to share it, i.e. neither too private nor too general.
2. Giving your witness/testimony.
 - a. Actual practice: Share with classmates your testimony (see appendix).

- i. Identify that personal sharing has an aspect of trust and vulnerability with those around you.
- ii. Prepare students with appropriate listening posture, expression and remarks for the sharing of others.
- b. Reflection points:
 - i. Reflect on how you feel when you hear the testimony of others; consider how your testimony can then affect others.
 - ii. Avoid comparison. You may feel like how God worked in your life is “smaller” or “bigger” than someone else. The fact is, it is personal and therefore not greater or lesser but simply a sign of God’s love for you.
 - iii. Ask the Holy Spirit for the gift of fortitude to witness to God’s working in your life.
- 3. Use “Personal Testimony” lesson in appendix.

Chapter 3 Prayer – Learning to Pray with Others

- A. Praying with Others is Evangelical
 - 1. Prayer for others is essential for evangelization because:
 - a. It communicates the Holy Spirit to the one with whom you pray.
 - b. It gives human and Christian contact to the person with whom you pray.
 - i. Personal contact – a normal part of human contact is human touch; sometimes it can be helpful to touch the person’s shoulder or hand when praying with them (you should always ask them first if they are comfortable with this before doing so).
 - ii. Even in the Apostolic Church there was contact with hands when communicating the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:17).
 - c. It gives the other person an encounter with Jesus Christ through you. When you pray for others you become an instrument of Jesus for the other person.
- B. The Focus of Praying with Others
 - 1. Praying with others is always directed toward God the Father first and foremost, nevertheless we want to adapt our prayer to the needs, intentions and difficulties of the one with whom we are praying
 - a. Though the person will hear you pray, you are not doing it just for them to hear you, but as a way to help them
 - i. Jesus said, “If two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Mt 18:19-20).
 - ii. When praying “Jesus raised his eyes and said, ‘Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me’” (Jn 11:41-42).

- b. The most important aspect is not whether you pray with the most beautiful and precise words, but that you pray to God with a sincere heart, even with simple words.
- i. Though it is helpful, you don't have to have the best words for prayer to be effective to the person with whom you are praying.
- ii. The prayer is not to impress the other or to look good or holy yourself.
2. Our prayer for others should be motivated by genuine concern for their good and should be a response to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Both of these motivations need to be based upon a relationship with Jesus.
- a. "On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers'" (Mt 7:22-23).
- b. "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (Lk 10:20).
- C. Practical Points for Praying with Others
1. Praying in the moment:
- a. If someone is speaking to you and asking for prayers, it's a great moment to stop what you're doing and say, "Let's pray right now."
- b. Praying in the moment can mean more to the person and can be more powerful than saying, "I'll pray for you," and doing it later. Of course, praying later is good and, depending on the situation, could be the more appropriate response.
2. Praying with the Trinity
- a. Christian prayer always proceeds toward the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit.
- i. Before you start praying it can be helpful to say under your breath, "Come, Holy Spirit." ii. When you pray always ask Jesus and invoke Jesus' name. iii. Sometimes it can be helpful to simply repeat Jesus' name: "Jesus...Jesus...Jesus."
- b. For example, you can pray, 'God, our Heavenly Father, we ask you to help my friend, John, with his struggles so he can know Jesus is with him. Please fill him with the strength and comfort of the HS. Amen.'
3. Prayer for Particular Needs
- a. When you ask a person what they want you to pray for, you should never pray for anything that is bad/sinful, but if it is anything good, no matter how great, difficult or seemingly impossible it is, you should pray for it, with humble and trusting faith.
- i. For example, if someone's arm is broken, you can ask God to heal their broken arm. ii. If it happens that their arm is healed, you may have the charism of healing.

- But even if their arm is not healed, God still hears your prayer and gives grace through your prayer.
- iii. Even if your prayer is not answered immediately, it may be answered soon after.
- b. When praying for the other person, if there is something negative or bad they are struggling with, you pray for the opposite:
- i. E.g. If the person is afraid, ask for courage; if sad, ask for comfort; if physically hurting, ask for healing; if they feel alone, pray for feeling the nearness of God;
- ii. If they are angry, pray for peace; if they are lacking faith, pray for faith, etc.
4. Four steps you can use when praying for others:
- a. Ask, "What do you want to pray to Jesus for?"
- b. Begin to pray to Jesus for the gift they asked for.
- c. Ask, if it's appropriate at the time, if there is anyone they need to forgive. If there is someone to forgive, invite the person to forgive the other: e.g. "I forgive my friend for stealing my phone."
- d. Thank Jesus for the gift if it's answered, and also thank Him, in confidence, even if It's not immediately answered.
5. Practicing: use "How to Pray Aloud with Others" appendix.
- C. The Church Exists to Evangelize - Because the Church exists to evangelize, we have seen how the Holy Spirit works in our lives as confirmed Catholics, through the kerygma, witness, and prayer with others, to share the Gospel of salvation.

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Appendices

- A. The Spiritual Gifts as Found in Sacred Scripture
- B. Organizational Chart of Gifts of the Holy Spirit
- C. Examples (stories) of the Charismatic Gifts
- D. How to Identify Your Spiritual Gifts
- E. How to Develop Your Spiritual Gifts
- F. How to Pray Aloud with Others
- G. Personal Testimony
- H. Writing a Testimony

The Spiritual Gifts as Found in Sacred Scripture

1 Corinthians 12:8-10

Word of wisdom
 Word of knowledge
 Faith
 Healing
 Miracles
 Prophecy
 Discernment of Spirits
 Tongues
 Interpretation of Tongues

1 Corinthians 12:29-30

Apostleship
 Prophecy
 Teaching
 Miracles
 Healings
 Tongues
 Interpretation of Tongues

Ephesians 4:11

Prophecy
 Evangelism
 Pastor-Teacher

Joel 2

Visions

1 Corinthians 12:28

Apostleship
 Prophecy
 Teaching
 Miracles
 Healings
 Helps
 Administrations
 Tongues

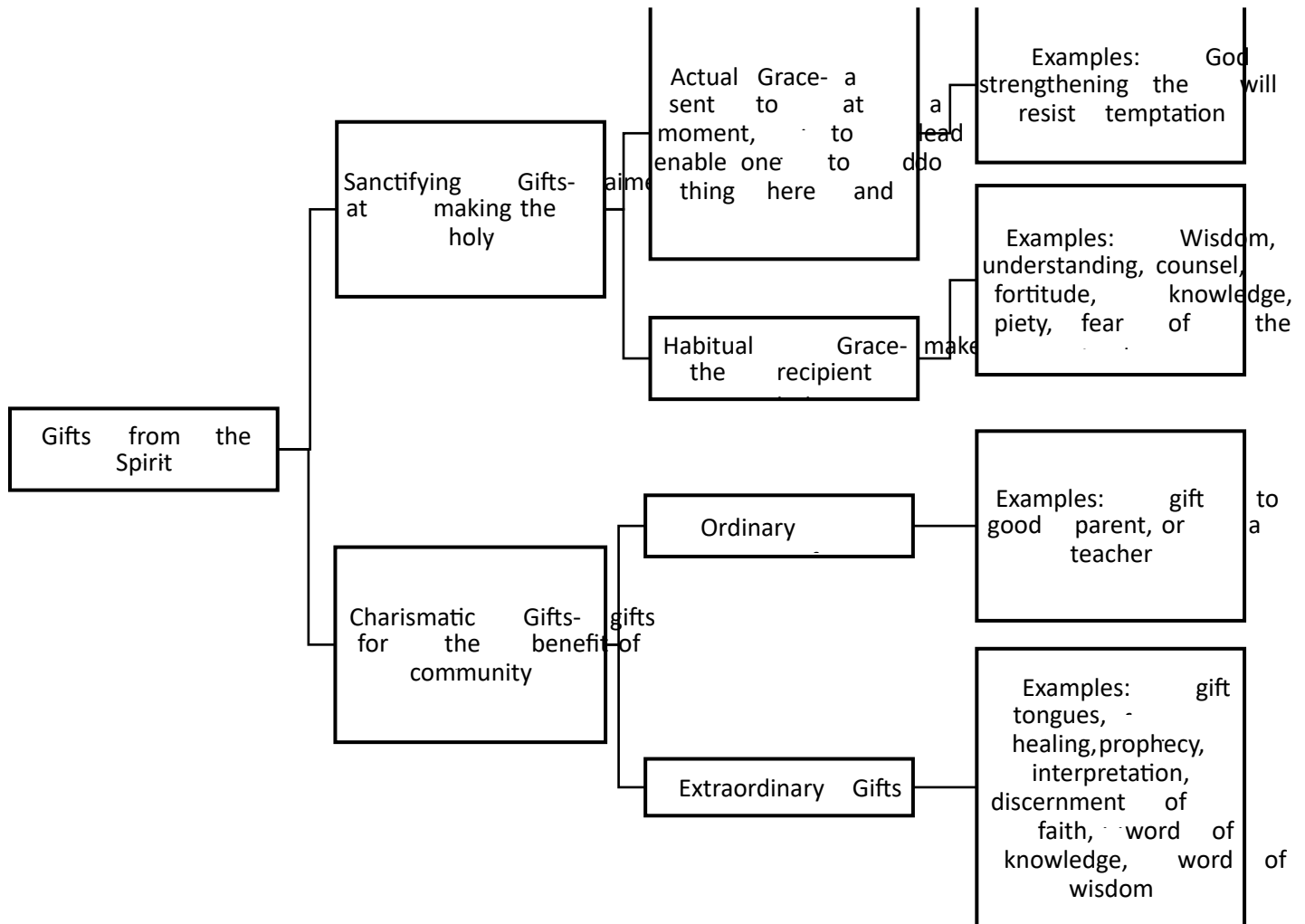
Romans 12:6-8

Prophecy
 Serving
 Leading
 Teaching
 Exhortation
 Giving
 Showing Mercy

1 Peter 4:11

Speaking
 Serving

Organizational Chart – Gifts from the Holy Spirit



Examples of the Charismatic Gifts

- 1) Gift of Faith- St. Clare of Assisi. During the time when St. Clare lived, Saracen armies were attempting to take over Europe. At this time, cities in Italy often had a cloistered convent outside the walls of the city. Cities often wanted a community of cloistered nuns to pray for the needs of the city. When the Saracen armies attacked Italian cities, they would first go to the convent outside the walls and rape and murder the nuns. In 1244, the Saracen armies came to attack Assisi. They came first to the convent. As they were placing their ladders on the wall of the convent, St. Clare went in front of the Blessed Sacrament and prayed. She heard Jesus say to her, "I will always protect you." In an extraordinary act of faith, St. Clare took the Eucharist in a pix and stood on the wall of her monastery. She believed in an impossible situation that God would protect her. As the soldiers began to climb their ladders up the monastery wall, she held the Eucharist up.

- A sudden terror filled the Saracen army, and then retreated, leaving the convent and the city unharmed.
- 2) Healing- Since Jessica Navin was 12 years old, she had severe endometriosis, which was very painful and caused vomiting. When she was on the East Coast, she prayed with a gentleman who had the gift of healing. He put his hand on her shoulder and asked God to heal her. After that, she did not take her pain killers and the vomiting ceased.
- 3) Miracles- Joseph Williams' friend told him of a man he prayed with in Africa. The gentleman prayed with a man who did not have an arm. After they prayed, he miraculously had an arm.
- 4) Word of Knowledge- After Jeff Cavin's conversion, he used to sit in Perkins late at night and read the scriptures. If anyone asked him what he was reading, he would say, "Sit down, and let me tell you what Jesus has done in my life." One night, a girl came in with her friends. She came and asked him what he was reading, and talked with him a while. When she got up to rejoin her friends, he received a word of knowledge, and blurted out, "God knows about your abortion, and he still loves you." He asked for her phone number to keep in touch with her, and she wouldn't give him one, but she took his address. A couple months later, he received a letter in the mail from her father. Her father wrote that his daughter had fallen in with the wrong crowd, gotten pregnant, ran away from home, and had an abortion. After meeting Jeff in Perkins, she came home and came back to the faith. Her father wrote to Jeff to thank him.
- 5) Word of Wisdom- Sr. Ann Shields had a prayer group, and the prayer group had prayed for years that an abortion clinic nearby would close. Despite their prayers, the clinic thrived. Then, one day, the prayed group asked God how they should pray. Each of them received the same word of wisdom about how they should pray: they should pray not that the clinic closed, but that the owner of the clinic be converted. 3 months later the clinic closed, because the owner of the clinic was converted.
- 6) Tongues- When I was in the convent, I wanted to experience prayer that went beyond words, and I prayed for the gift of tongues for over a year. Bishop Hermann came to our convent to give our Pentecost retreat, and he prayed with me for this gift. While I was in confession, I felt like a rushing wind came on me, and I began to sputter and pray in tongues for the first time.
- 7) Interpretation of Tongues- Katherine Capadano being able to get a sense of the tongues message while around those praying in tongues
- 8) Prophecy- 2 examples: 1. When Ralph Martin was beginning his parish missions, he went to a parish, and a woman from the prayer team told him, "I feel God telling me that you will have a great ministry in Eastern Europe." Ralph did not know what this meant, but because Scripture says to test all prophecy, Ralph and his prayer group prayed about it every week. Each week, he would ask them if anyone had received anything about this prophecy. Each week, everyone said no. After about 6 months, Sr. Ann Shields said, "Yes, I feel God is telling us that you will go to Lithuania." Ralph didn't know what that meant either. A short time later, he received a call from a priest in

Lithuania, who invited him to come there and give a parish mission. This began over 20 years of ministry in Eastern Europe.² Ralph Martin was at an interdenominational prayer meeting, and he received a prophecy. He went to the microphone and spoke a message from the Father, "Weep, people of God. Weep, for the Body of my Son is broken," (this referred to the many splinters and denominations in Christianity). People were so moved by this prophecy, that they knelt and wept and prayed for unity in Christianity.

How to Identify Your Spiritual Gifts

By Jessica Navin of FOCUS (edited by Logan Burda)

Identifying your spiritual gifts is not as difficult as some think. Dr. Mary Healy states "We did receive the Holy Spirit in our Baptism and Confirmation, but we can always receive more of Him and more of what He wants to give us based on our capacity to receive." Here are 4 practical ways a person can discover their particular gift(s):

1). Success in an Area of Ministry

Areas of ministry or activity in which a person is most successful are likely to be his gift areas. For example, if a lot of people recover after being prayed over by an individual, this individual is likely to be exercising the gift of healing. So the first practical sign is your degree of success in various attempts at exercising a particular gift in ministry.

2). Our Desires

Our desires may also be indicative of the gifts we have received and of the gifts God wants to give us. It is not good enough to say, "The Lord can give me any gift he wants, so I will not ask him." Jesus says we should ask, and we shall receive (Mt 7:7). It is true that the Holy Spirit distributes his gifts in accordance with his divine will, yet Paul encourages us to desire spiritual gifts (1Cor 12:13; 14:1-39). He also tells us that we should pray for spiritual gifts.

3). Observations of Others

The observations of others can also help us to discover our gifts. A spiritual director or even a friend who knows you well can usually see things about us and can point out the reality of where God seems to be gifting us and where He does not. It is also possible to deceive ourselves about our gifts. A person may have the gift of service, but may ignore it and attempt to claim a gift of something else instead (or may reject the entire concept of receiving spiritual gifts from God). If you do not use your gifts you are depriving God's people of receiving the blessings He

has for them. Like the lazy servant who buried his talent in the ground, it would go badly against you on Judgment day.

4). **Examine Your Motives**

Our motives are a significant factor in the release of the spiritual gifts. What do you want the gifts of the Holy Spirit for? Are your motives those of Christ or you are motivated by personal gain (money, fame, desire to be recognized and praised or the satisfaction of personal ambition)? The spiritual gifts are holy gifts and must be used for holy purposes. Scripture says that the gifts are to be used for the good of the Church. It is therefore, important to know the motives in your heart and present them before God (Jer 17:9-10).

How to Develop Your Spiritual Gifts

By Jessica Navin of FOCUS (edited by Logan Burda)

You need to develop the gifts you've been given (or the gifts you think you might have been given). Here are 5 practical ways a person can develop their spiritual gifts:

1). Your Attitude

You need to be convinced that what Scripture teaches about the gifts are for today and that they are important. You also need to believe that the gifts are given to all Christians, (1Pet 4:10) and not just given to saints or a few especially holy people. Some people exercise their gifts in an attitude of pride (i.e. "Look what I can do"). Don't be surprised if God takes the gift away for a time to humble you. The gifts are for others, so watch out for pride.

At other times, an attitude of fear can stop people from exercising their gifts. Some years ago I hesitated to pray for healing publicly for fear that the person might not recover. Whether it's a fear of making a mistake or of people thinking you are weird, this kind of fear is crippling and keeps God from doing His work through you.

2). Prayer

Pray specifically for the gifts you want (or want to develop) on a daily basis. Ask the Holy Spirit to come/fill you/anoint you, etc.

3). Use Your Gifts

Exercise your gifts on a regular basis. You can practice using your gifts in holy hour, Bible study, discipleship, in your parish, at home, on campus, etc.

4). Take Risks

Be prepared to take risks, especially the risk of looking foolish. If you do not risk, your gift will not grow.

5). Learn About Your Gifts

See the document “Where to Learn More”

How to Pray Aloud with Others

Why is it so hard to pray with others? Perhaps we fear our prayer won't be “good enough.” We don't want to sound stupid. It is an intimate experience, which can intimidate us. We can also doubt whether the other person wants to receive our prayer. The fruits, however, far outweigh the fears, and we must trust in this. Jesus said, “Where two or three are gathered in My name, I am in the midst of them,” (Mt. 18:20) and, “Whatever you ask the Father in My name, I will give you.” (Jn. 14:13)

Remember:

- God wants to use you in prayer with others.
- There is power when we pray aloud and when we pray together.
- People are encouraged and uplifted when they hear our prayer.
- Praying aloud can bring a new dimension to our prayer life that gives us a new intimacy with Our Lord.
- Actually seizing the moment and praying with someone strikes the heart more deeply than promising, “I'll pray for you.”

Learning to pray with others:

1. Pray aloud when you're alone, and especially when you're troubled.

This will help break the ice. It might sound counter-intuitive, but when we are most distressed, we usually pray easiest. This is because we know exactly what we need. When times are good, it can be difficult to gain a direction in prayer.

2. Write down a note or two to help you pray aloud.

This can give you added security and prevent any “freezing up.” Making a notecard with the phrases from the structure below might be helpful.

3. When praying for others, ask them for specific prayer requests.

This gives you a place to start. You could also incorporate things that came up in conversation, if you are praying at the end of a conversation.

4. Pause. Silently ask God's guidance.

Don't be afraid to pause. This is prayerful and not awkward to the other person. Simple breathing a silent, “Lord, help me know what to pray” can help the prayer go smoothly.

5. Be yourself. Talk naturally. Share your heart.

This makes the prayer genuine, and it takes pressure off you. Don't worry about praying like somebody else who uses flowery words and perfect phrases. Remember: you must share YOUR faith, and talk to God sincerely.

6. Practice! Do it again and again.

It is definitely true that practice makes perfect, or at least smoother and less uncomfortable. You also get used to times when you stutter and have to pause – then it's not such a big deal.

7. Remember: it might be awkward on your end to initiate, but the other person ALWAYS benefits, and it ends up being a good experience.

Trust in the end fruits of praying with others. We tend to feel shy about this, but really, if someone asked you to pray with them, wouldn't you appreciate it?

8. Remember you are talking to God, not the people around you. He is pleased with your prayers.

The other person is sharing your prayer to God, but you are talking to God.

Suggested structure for praying aloud:

(Depending on the situation, you might want to do only one or two of these)

- 1. Lord, thank you for...** *(It is always good to begin prayer with gratitude. No matter what, there are many things for which we can be grateful. Thank Our Lord for His blessings, His care, His guidance, for being with us, for this opportunity to pray, as well as for anything personally you know about the other person – his family, career, talents, etc.)*
- 2. We ask you to...** *(This is where you insert prayer intentions for the other person.)*
- 3. Please help us to...** *(In addition to specific prayer intentions, we ask Our Lord to help us grow closer to Him, to purify our hearts, to help us reject sin and the evil one, to help us strive for virtue, to help us see the goodness of following Him.)*
- 4. We love You. Help us to know Your love and to love You more...** *(This is a simple ending that works for everyone.)*

5. You could close with a **memorized prayer that both of you pray together.** *It's a nice unitive way to end.*
6. **Pause... Amen.** *(The pause at the end is nice as it helps to let the prayer soak in before the closing "Amen.")*

**Some sections of the handout were taken from "Praying Out Loud" by Dr. Dennis Jackson and "9 Ways to Get Over the Fear of Praying Aloud" by Natasha Crain*

Personal Testimony

What was from the beginning, what we have heard,

what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked upon and touched with our hands concerns the Word of life – for the life was made visible; we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life

that was with the Father and was made visible to us – what we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; for our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

-

1 John 1:1-3

Personal experience is difficult to argue with. Our Lord really does love us each individually, and He interacts with each of us uniquely.

Our Lord is absolutely in love with you. He watches over you attentively, desiring and waiting for you to open your heart to Him more fully. He cares for you and takes care of you every minute of every day. Even the most faith-filled person doesn't notice everything God does for him daily. If we take some time, however, and take an honest look with faith, we can recall times when Our Lord has touched our lives, when His Providence was felt. Perhaps we knew it at the time but we forgot about it as time went on.

Take some in prayer, to ask Our Lord, "How have You worked in my life? Help me to remember my experiences of Your Presence." Think back from early childhood to today. If you are currently struggling with your faith, think back to a time when your faith was strong. This can be a big event or a small one. Sometimes the most effective testimonies involve a small, everyday occurrence.

Write down a few notes in your journal so you remember what you have experienced. Then ask, "Which of these would You like me to share?" Then follow the directions to write a testimony.

Writing a Testimony

Note: With questions 2-4, you need to be descriptive. You are to speak for a full minute on each of the three main points, to make a three-minute testimony.

Important: This is not a time to divulge sensitive personal information about your family or personal sin. The focus is on how Our Lord acted in your life. If your testimony is about a difficult family situation or personal sin, be vague enough to respect those involved.

1. When have you felt close to Our Lord? When have you experienced His Love? When has your faith grown? Write which experience you will use for this testimony:

2. Describe the scene. What was life like beforehand? Set the stage
 for Our Lord's interaction. What was the situation when Jesus or
 the Father entered in?

3. How did you encounter Jesus?

4. How did your life change? How did you grow in faith as a
 result of what you experienced?