



"Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone  
who asks you for a reason for your hope"  
1 Peter 3:15

# The Sacrament of Confirmation

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## **Confirmation – A Sacrament of Christian Initiation**

**1285** Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the “sacraments of Christian initiation,” whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For “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.”

# The Sacrament of Confirmation

## **What does Confirmation do?**

**1316** Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.

**1317** Confirmation, like Baptism, imprints a spiritual mark or indelible character on the Christian's soul; for this reason one can receive this sacrament only once in one's life.

# The Sacrament of Confirmation

## **What is the rite of Confirmation?**

The essential rite of Confirmation is anointing the forehead of the baptized with sacred chrism together with the laying on of the minister's hand and the words: “

*“Accipe signaculum doni Spiritus Sancti - ”* or

*“Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

# The Sacrament of Confirmation

## **What are the Effects of the Sacrament Confirmation?**

1. It roots us more deeply in the divine filiation [as sons of God] which makes us cry, "Abba! Father!"
2. It unites us more firmly to Christ
3. It increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us
4. It renders our bond with the Church more perfect
5. 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.

## The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit



**Wisdom**



**Knowledge**



**Counsel**



**Fortitude**



**Understanding**



**Piety**



**Fear of the Lord**

# The Sacrament of Confirmation

## **Is the Sacrament of Confirmation Biblical?**

The sacrament of confirmation is found in Bible passages such as Acts 8:14–17, 9:17, 19:6, and Hebrews 6:2, which speak of a laying on of hands for the purpose of bestowing the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 6:2 is especially important because it is not a narrative account of how confirmation was given and, thus, cannot be dismissed by those who reject the sacrament as something unique to the apostolic age. In fact, the passage refers to confirmation as one of Christianity's basic teachings, which is to be expected since confirmation, like baptism, is a sacrament of initiation into the Christian life.

# The Sacrament of Confirmation

<https://sophiainstituteforteachers.org/sketchpad>

# The Sola Scriptura Problem

Most Protestants make the claim that there is no Biblical proof for the Sacrament of Confirmation – or many other Sacraments, for that matter. Protestants adhere to ***Sola Scriptura*** - the idea that the Bible is our **SOLE** Authority, even though the Bible itself refutes this idea (**Matt. 16:18-19, Matt. 18:15-18, Luke 10:16, John 16:12-15, John 20:21-23**).

These verses show us that Christ left His ***Church*** as our final earthly Authority. If Sola Scriptura were true – **300** years of Christians would be eternally lost because there was **NO** Bible until the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, when the Canon of Scripture was officially declared by the Catholic Church.

Many take the false doctrine of Sola Scriptura so far as to claim that everything must be explicitly mentioned in Scripture. If this were true, then the doctrines of the **Trinity** and the **Incarnation** would be rendered null and void because neither is explicitly mentioned in Scripture.

# *The Bible made me do it . . .*

While it is true that you won't find the **NAME** of the Sacrament of "**Confirmation**" on the pages of the New Testament – you **DO** find the teaching:

## **Acts 8:14-17**

Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, **they sent them Peter and John, who went down and prayed for them, that they might receive the holy Spirit, for it had not yet fallen upon any of them; *they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.***  
**Then they laid hands on them and they received the holy Spirit.**

## **Acts 9:17**

**So Ananias went and entered the house; *laying his hands on him*, he said, "Saul, my brother, the Lord has sent me, Jesus who appeared to you on the way by which you came, **that you may regain your sight and be filled with the holy Spirit.**"**

*(Ananias is listed as one of the "The Seventy Two" disciples that Jesus sent out in Luke 10:1-23.)*

# *The Bible made me do it . . .*

## **Acts 19:5-6**

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul laid his hands on them, the holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

*. . . and especially:*

## **Hebrews 6:1-2**

Therefore, **let us leave behind the basic teaching about Christ and advance to maturity**, without laying the foundation all over again: repentance from dead works and faith in God, instruction about baptisms and laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.

(This passage actually shows the Sacramental role of laying on of hands. It walks through the successive stages of the journey for **ALL** Christians: **Repentance, faith, baptism, confirmation, resurrection, and judgment**). This is called the *ordo salutis* – or the “**order of salvation**”.

# QUESTION:

What are the **ONLY** other uses for the “Laying of hands” in the New Testament?

# *The Bible made me do it . . .*

**ANSWER:** The only other instances of “**laying on of hands**” that we see in the New Testament are for **healing** and **ordination**.

- These verses are neither talking about sick people nor those being ordained. **NOT** all Christians are expected to be ordained or receive Anointing of the Sick. The “laying on of hands” spoken of here is **exclusively** for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Confirmation being the last Sacrament of Initiation, **ALL** Christians are expected to take this journey.
- **Heb. 6:1-2**, cannot simply being dismissed by non-Catholics as being “unnecessary” or something that was only done in the Apostolic age. This passage speaks of this act as being the natural progression for the Christian. Although **MOST** Protestants recognize only **TWO** Sacraments (Baptism, The Lord’s Supper) – this passage **clearly** speaks of **ALL** of the **Sacraments of Initiation** as well as **Confession/Reconciliation**.

# Early Church Fathers on Confirmation

The Early Church Fathers also recognized Confirmation as a Sacrament distinct from Baptism, even though it was usually given on the same occasion as Baptism. Their words speak powerfully about this anointing and imposition of hands for reception of the Holy Spirit and the role it has in Christian initiation

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## Tertullian

"After coming from the place of washing (baptism) **we are thoroughly anointed with a blessed unction, from the ancient discipline by which [those] in the priesthood . . . were accustomed to be anointed with a horn of oil, ever since Aaron was anointed by Moses. . . .** So also with us, the unction runs on the body and profits us spiritually, in the same way that baptism itself is a corporal act by which we are plunged in water, while its effect is spiritual, in that we are freed from sins. **After this, the hand is imposed for a blessing, invoking and inviting the Holy Spirit**" (*Baptism* 7:1-2, 8:1 [A.D. 203]).

### **Tertullian (cont'd)**

"No soul whatever is able to obtain salvation unless it has believed while it was in the flesh. Indeed, the flesh is the hinge of salvation. . . . The flesh, then, is washed [baptism] so that the soul may be made clean. The flesh is anointed so that the soul may be dedicated to holiness. The flesh is signed so that the soul may be fortified. **The flesh is shaded by the imposition of hands [confirmation] so that the soul may be illuminated by the Spirit.** The flesh feeds on the body and blood of Christ [the Eucharist] so that the soul too may feed on God. They cannot, then, be separated in their reward, when they are united in their works" (*The Resurrection of the Dead* 8:2-3 [A.D. 210])

### **Hippolytus**

"**The bishop, imposing his hand on them**, shall make an invocation, saying, 'O Lord God, who made them worthy of the remission of sins through the Holy Spirit's washing unto rebirth, send into them your grace so that they may serve you according to your will, for there is glory to you, to the Father and the Son with the Holy Spirit, in the holy Church, both now and through the ages of ages. Amen.' **Then, pouring the consecrated oil into his hand and imposing it on the head of the baptized, he shall say, 'I anoint you with holy oil in the Lord, the Father Almighty, and Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit.'** Signing them on the forehead, he shall kiss them and say, 'The Lord be with you.' He that has been signed shall say, 'And with your spirit.' Thus shall he do to each" (*The Apostolic Tradition* 21-22 [A.D. 215]).

## Cyprian

**"It is necessary for him that has been baptized also to be anointed, so that by his having received chrism, that is, the anointing, he can be the anointed of God and have in him the grace of Christ" (*Letters* 7:2 [A.D. 253]).**

"Some say in regard to those who were baptized in Samaria that when the apostles **Peter and John came there only hands were imposed on them so that they might receive the Holy Spirit** and that they were not re-baptized. But we see, dearest brother, that this situation in no way pertains to the present case. Those in Samaria who had believed had believed in the true faith, and it was by the deacon Philip, whom those same apostles had sent there, that they had been baptized inside -- in the Church. . . . **Since, then, they had already received a legitimate and ecclesiastical baptism, it was not necessary to baptize them again.** Rather, that only which was lacking was done by Peter and John. **The prayer having been made over them and hands having been imposed upon them, the Holy Spirit was invoked and was poured out upon them.** This is even now the practice among us, so that those who are baptized in the Church then are brought to the prelates of the Church; through our prayer and the imposition of hands, they receive the Holy Spirit and are perfected with the seal of the Lord" (*ibid.* 73[72]:9).

## Cyril of Jerusalem

"After you had come up from the pool of the sacred streams, there was given chrism, the antitype of that with which Christ was anointed, and this is the Holy Spirit. But beware of supposing that this is ordinary ointment. Just as the bread of the Eucharist after the invocation of the Holy Spirit is simple bread no longer, but the body of Christ, so also this ointment is no longer plain ointment, nor, so to speak, common, after the invocation. Further, it is the gracious gift of Christ, and it is made fit for the **imparting of his Godhead by the coming of the Holy Spirit. This ointment is symbolically applied to your forehead and to your other senses; while your body is anointed with the visible ointment, your soul is sanctified by the holy and life-giving Spirit.** Just as Christ, after his baptism and the coming upon him of the Holy Spirit, went forth and defeated the adversary, so also with you after holy baptism and the mystical chrism, having put on the panoply of the Holy Spirit, you are to withstand the power of the adversary and defeat him, saying, 'I am able to do all things in Christ, who strengthens me'" (*Catechetical Lectures*, 21:1, 3-4 [A.D. 350]).

"[David says,] 'You have anointed my head with oil.' **With oil he anointed your head, your forehead, in the God-given sign of the cross, so that you may become that which is engraved on the seal, 'a holy thing of the Lord'**" (*ibid.*, 22:7)

### **Pacian of Barcelona**

"If, then, the power of both baptism and **confirmation, greater by far than charisms, is passed on to the bishops, so too is the right of binding and loosing**" (*Three Letters to the Novatianist Sympronian* 1:6 [A.D. 383]).

### **Apostolic Constitutions**

"**How dare any man speak against his bishop, by whom the Lord gave the Holy Spirit among you upon the laying on of his hands**, by whom you have learned the sacred doctrines, and have known God, and have believed in Christ, by whom you were known of God, by whom you were sealed with the oil of gladness and the ointment of understanding, by whom you were declared to be the children of light, by whom the Lord in your illumination testified **by the imposition of the bishop's hands**" (*Apostolic Constitutions* 2:4:32 [A.D. 400]).