

HOLY COMFORTER-
SAINT CYPRIAN
PARISH

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WASHINGTON DC
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DATES

Bible Study

Wednesdays

11 a.m.

@ school with

Fr. Gancayco

Bible Study

Wednesdays

7 p.m.

Parish Rectory

Msgr. Pope

CONFIRMATION

DETAILS

Sunday, January 13

Candidates and
Sponsors to attend
Class

11 a.m. Mass

And Rehearsal and

Reconciliation

after Mass until

3:00 p.m.

Confirmation

Monday, January

14, 2008 7 p.m.

Please support our

Candidates for
Confirmation

by attending this Mass
with the Archbishop.

Faith Formation

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2008



On **Monday evening, January 14, 2008**

ten young people from our parish will receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Archbishop Donald Wuerl will visit our parish to administer this sacrament. This is a blessed moment for those receiving the sacrament; but also for our parish and the Church universal. The Archbishop, successor of the Apostles, will come among us to anoint our candidates with the sacred oil of chrism.

Let us rejoice with our young people as they receive the Holy Spirit, by recalling the graces which we too received at our own Confirmation. What happens in this sacrament?

Confirmation:

“Send Your Spirit”

Lisa M. Gulino

What is this that we possess as confirmed Catholic Christians?

Jesus told the Apostles to “wait

for the promise of the Father” and in Acts 1:8 he says, “But 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 end of the earth.” The second chapter of Acts recounts for us the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, when the Apostles gained the courage and strength to burst forth from their hiding place (the Upper Room) and proclaim the “mighty works of God.” Only days before, these same Apostles: slept while Jesus prayed in the Garden, fled when the Roman soldiers accosted Jesus, and one

even denied knowing his teacher and friend. **What changed in them? Why?**

“And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues of fire, which parted and came to rest on each of them. And they were filled with the holy Spirit...” (Acts 2:2-4). The Spirit, which was prophesied by the prophet Joel and promised by Jesus, came upon the Apostles. St. Peter recalls for those who accused them of “being drunk” the words of Joel:

“It will come to pass in the last days, God says, ‘that I will pour out a portion of my spirit.’” God’s Spirit falls upon the Apostles! And through the wondrous sacrament of Confirmation, this same Spirit falls upon us! Before we give more details about the sacrament of Confirmation let us answer a more general question.

What is a sacrament?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that the sacraments are “powers that comes forth” from the Body of Christ, which is **ever-living, life-giving, healing touch of Jesus Christ**. Sacraments are actions of the Holy Spirit at work in his Body, the Church. (CCC 1116) **The purpose of the sacraments** is to make us holy, to bring us into the Body of Christ, and to aide us in our worship of God. God takes a personal interest in his people, both collectively and individually, and gives us the Holy Spirit so our faith will be nourished and strengthened. We cannot do it alone! We need God’s grace and we need the Body of Christ, the faith community to be able to journey toward eternal life.

While Baptism is the gateway to all sacraments, Confirmation enlivens the graces of Baptism to make the other sacraments more efficacious (effective, alive) in our lives. As at Baptism, Confirmation places an indelible mark on the soul of the confirmand (the one being confirmed). This “character” is the seal of the Holy Spirit Who clothes the confirmand with power to be a witness of Christ (CCC 1304). In completion of baptismal grace, Confirmation strengthens our bonds of unity with the Father as His adopted sons and daughters. We are drawn close through the Son as He has redeemed us and with the Holy Spirit as He gives us His gifts. We are united in the Church as we belong to the family of God (cf. CCC 1303). Furthermore, Confirmation “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 (CCC 1303).”

The Signs and Symbols

The sacraments of Baptism, the Eucharist and Confirmation together constitute the sacraments of Christian initiation. (cf. CCC 1285) It is through the sacrament of Confirmation that the baptized are “more perfectly bound to the Church.” (CCC 1285) The unity of the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation are seen more clearly as we take a closer look at the Rites and signs of these sacraments. Our Catholic Faith is rich with its many liturgical actions,

signs, symbols, and realities. Water is used in Baptism, oil at Confirmation. **Why is oil used at Confirmation?**

In Roman times, oil was a part of the bathing "ritual." A bath included both water and oil. The water ritual (Baptism) is the washing away of sin, and the oil ritual (Confirmation) is the sweet fragrance of God's presence: sanctifying grace. God's grace washes away sin. Sin cannot be removed except by grace. God's grace fills us with redemption and salvation. This grace, this presence of God in us, is the Holy Spirit. Confirmation is the Sacrament of the Holy Spirit. Oil has many other meanings as well such as: a sign of **abundance and joy**; it too cleanses (before and after a bath), it **limbers** (the anointing of athletes and wrestlers), and it is also a sign of **healing** as it soothes bruises and wounds. Oil makes **radiant with beauty, health and strength**. (CCC 1293). Oil is truly a magnificent sign and symbol for the Church to use as the Holy Spirit descends upon her children. The Holy Spirit fills us with God's life, abundant strength, joy, spiritual health and inner beauty.

Be Sealed with the Holy Spirit

It is through the anointing that the confirmand is marked with a seal. St. Paul writes, “It is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has commissioned us; he has put his seal on us and has given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.” (2 Corth. 1:21-22) **We who are confirmed have this seal of the Holy Spirit which marks our total belonging to Christ**. It reminds us that we are God's and strengthened to be in God's service for ever. This seal offers us the promise of divine protection particularly at the hour of death. Let us pray for those who will be confirmed this year, but let us also recall, renew, and rejoice that we too have the Holy Spirit within us. Consider receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) on a regular basis in order to be better disposed to the working of the Holy Spirit in your life!

Congratulations and Blessings to...

Rache Blanchard

Jennifer Campbell

Justin Cheeks

Ralph Cyrus

Dashyne Harris

Julia Holloway

Peter Riehle

Andrew White

Marolise Williams

Anthony Wilkens