



What does the Holy Spirit do? Why is confirmation important?



ANSWERS

they were all in one place together. 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 as of fire, which came to rest on them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim

– Acts 2:1-13

Saints & inspirational stories

St Marguerite de Youville

St Marguerite de Youville shows us that no matter how hard life can get, we cannot stop praying. In the hardest moments of her life, she heard the voice of the Holy Spirit to help others. Following this call led her to help thousands of souls.



Megan Ternus

Megan Ternus is an example of what you can do when you follow the inspirations of the Holy Spirit and do not try to come up with excuses why not to do something. She believed that God placed certain people and brochures in her path so that she could help others. She used her talents to help others in a very unique way.



Team discussion

After reading over the YOUCAT numbers on the following pages, how do you think the Youth Catechism answers the question of the week? Were there any words or ideas that you did not fully understand that you would like to understand better?

Answer in your own words:



YouCat numbers for this week



#113 What does it mean to say: I believe in the Holy Spirit?

To believe in the Holy Spirit means to worship him as God just like the Father and the Son. It means to believe that the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts so that we as children of God might know our Father in heaven. Moved by God's Spirit, we can change the face of the earth. Before his death, Jesus promised his disciples that he would send them "another Counselor" (Jn 14:16) when he was no longer with them. Then when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples of the original Church, they learned what Jesus had meant. They experienced a deep assurance and joy in their faith and received particular charisms; in other words, they could prophesy, heal, and work miracles. To this day there are people in the Church who possess such gifts and have these experiences.

PENTECOST (from Greek pentecoste = "the fiftieth" day after Easter):

originally a feast on which Israel celebrated the establishment of the covenant with God on Mount Sinai. Through the Pentecost event in Jerusalem, it became for Christians the feast of the Holy Spirit.

#114 What role does the Holy Spirit play in the life of Jesus?

Without the Holy Spirit, we cannot understand Jesus. In his life the presence of God's Spirit, whom we call the Holy Spirit, was manifest in a unique way. It was the Holy Spirit who called Jesus to life in the womb of the Virgin Mary (Mt 1:18), endorsed him as God's beloved Son (Lk 4:16-19), guided him (Mk 1:12) and enlivened him to the end (Jn 19:30). On the Cross, Jesus breathed out his Spirit. After his Resurrection, he bestowed the Holy Spirit on his disciples (Jn 20:22). At that the Spirit of Jesus went over to his Church: "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn 20:21).

#115 Under what names and signs does the Holy Spirit appear?

The Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus in the form of a dove. The first Christians experience the Holy Spirit as a healing ointment, living water, a raging storm, or a flaming fire. Jesus Christ himself speaks about the Counselor, Comforter, Teacher, and Spirit of Truth. In the sacraments of the Church, the Holy Spirit is bestowed through the imposition of hands and anointing with oil. The peace that God established in his covenant with mankind after the flood was indicated to Noah through the appearance of a dove. Pagan antiquity, too, considered the dove to be a symbol of love. And so the early Christians understood immediately why the Holy Spirit, the love of God in person, came down in the form of a dove when Jesus allowed himself to be baptized in the Jordan. Today the dove is recognized worldwide as the sign of peace and as one of the great symbols for the reconciliation of man with God (cf. Gen 8:10-11).



#311 What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit? The fruits of the Holy Spirit are charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, and chastity (cf. Gal 5:22-23). In the fruits of the Holy Spirit the world can see what becomes of people who let themselves be adopted, led, and completely formed by God. The fruits of the Holy Spirit show that God really plays a role in the life of Christians.

#116 What does it mean to say that the Holy Spirit has “spoken through the prophets”? Already in the Old Covenant God filled men and women with the Spirit, so that they lifted up their voices for God, spoke in his name, and prepared the people for the coming of the Messiah. In the Old Covenant God sought out men and women who were willing to let him use them to console, lead, and admonish his people. It was the Spirit of God who spoke through the mouth of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and other prophets. John the Baptist, the last of these prophets, not only foresaw the coming of the Messiah. He also met him and proclaimed him as the liberator from the power of sin.

#117 How could the Holy Spirit work in, with, and through Mary? Mary was totally responsive and open to God (Lk 1:38). Thus she was able to become the “Mother of God” through the working of the Holy Spirit—and as Christ’s Mother to become also the Mother of Christians, indeed, the Mother of all mankind. Mary made it possible for the Holy Spirit to work the miracle of all miracles: the Incarnation of God. She gave God her Yes: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38). Strengthened by the Holy Spirit, she went with Jesus through thick and thin, even to the foot of the Cross. There Jesus gave her to us all as our Mother (Jn 19:25-27).

#118 What happened on Pentecost? Fifty days after his Resurrection, the Lord sent the Holy Spirit down from heaven upon his disciples. The age of the Church began. On Pentecost the Holy Spirit transformed fearful apostles into courageous witnesses to Christ. In a very short time, thousands had themselves baptized: it was the birthday of the Church. The miracle of the languages on Pentecost shows that the Church is there for all peoples from the very beginning: She is universal (= the Latin term for the Greek *kat’ holon*, catholic) and missionary. She speaks to all men, overcomes ethnic and linguistic barriers, and can be understood by all. To this day the Holy Spirit is the “soul” of the Church, the essential principle of her life.

#119 What does the Holy Spirit do in the Church? The Holy Spirit builds up the Church and impels her. He reminds her of her mission. He calls people into her service and sends them the necessary gifts. He leads us ever deeper into communion with the Triune God. Even though the Church during her long history has often seemed “abandoned by all good spirits”, the Holy Spirit has been at work in her despite all the human failings and inadequacies. The mere fact of her two-thousand-year existence and the many saints of all eras and cultures are the visible proof of his presence. The Holy Spirit is the one who maintains the Church as a whole in the truth and leads her ever deeper into the knowledge of God. It is the Holy Spirit who works in the sacraments and brings Sacred Scripture to life for us. Even today he gives his gifts of grace (charisms) to those who are completely receptive to him.



#207 Who may confirm? The sacrament of Confirmation is normally administered by the Bishop. For weighty reasons when necessary, the bishop can also delegate a priest to do it. In danger of death, any priest can administer Confirmation.

#120 What does the Holy Spirit do in my life? The Holy Spirit makes me receptive to God; he teaches me to pray and helps me to be there for others. Augustine calls the Holy Spirit “The quiet guest of our soul”. Anyone who wants to sense his presence must be quiet. Often this Guest speaks very softly within us and with us, for instance, in the voice of our conscience or through other interior and exterior promptings. Being a “temple of the Holy Spirit” means being there, body and soul, for this Guest, for God in us. Our body is therefore God’s living room, so to speak. The more receptive we are to the Holy Spirit in us, the more he becomes the master of our life, the sooner he will bestow on us even today his charisms for the upbuilding of the Church. And so, instead of the works of the flesh, the fruits of the spirit grow in us.

#310 What are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit? The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord. With these the Holy Spirit “endows” Christians, in other words, he grants them particular powers that go beyond their natural aptitudes and gives them the opportunity to become God’s special instruments in this world. We read in one of Paul’s letters: “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” (1 Cor 12:8-10).

#204 What does Sacred Scripture say about the sacrament of Confirmation? In the Old Testament, the People of God expected the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Messiah. Jesus lived his life in a special Spirit of love and of perfect unity with his Father in heaven. This Spirit of Jesus was the “Holy Spirit” for whom the people of Israel longed; this was the same Spirit whom Jesus promised to his disciples, the same Spirit who descended upon the disciples fifty days after Easter, on the feast of Pentecost. And it is again this same Holy Spirit of Jesus who descends upon everyone who receives the sacrament of Confirmation. In the Acts of the Apostles, which were written a few decades after the death of Jesus, we see Peter and John traveling about to confirm new Christians by imposing hands on those who previously “had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus”, so that their hearts might be filled with the Holy Spirit.

#205 What happens in Confirmation? In Confirmation the soul of a baptized Christian is imprinted with a permanent seal that can be received only once and marks this individual forever as a Christian. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the strength from above in which this individual puts the grace of his Baptism into practice through his life and acts as a “witness” for Christ. To be confirmed means to make a “covenant” with God. The confirmand says, “Yes, I believe in you, my God; give me your Holy Spirit, so that I might belong entirely to you and never be separated from you and may witness to you throughout my whole life, body and soul, in my words and deeds, on good days and bad.” And God says, “Yes, I believe in you, too, my child—and I will give you my Spirit, my very self. I will belong entirely to you. I will never separate myself from you, in this life or eternally in the next. I will be in your body and your soul, in your words and deeds. Even if you forget me, I will still be there—on good days and bad.”



CHRISM (from Greek *chrisma* = oil of anointing; and *christos* = anointed one): Chrism is an ointment made out of a mixture of olive oil and balsam. On the morning of Holy Thursday, the bishop consecrates it, so that it can be used in Baptism, Confirmation, priestly and episcopal ordination, and also the consecration of altars and bells. Oil is a symbol of joy, strength, and health. People anointed with chrism are supposed to spread "the aroma of Christ" (2 Cor 2:15).

#203 What is Confirmation? Confirmation is the sacrament that completes Baptism; in it the gift of the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon us. Anyone who freely decides to live a life as God's child and asks for God's Spirit under the signs of the imposition of hands and anointing with chrism receives the strength to witness to God's love and might in word and deed. He is now a full-fledged, responsible member of the Catholic Church. When a coach sends a soccer player onto the playing field, he puts his hand on his shoulder and gives him final instructions. We can understand Confirmation in a similar way. A hand is placed upon us. We step out onto the field of life. Through the Holy Spirit we know what we have to do and we have been given the power to do it. He has motivated us. His mission resounds in our ears. We sense his help. We will not betray his trust or disappoint him; we will win the game for him. We just have to want to do it and listen to him.

#206 Who can be confirmed, and what is required of a candidate for Confirmation? Any Catholic Christian who has received the sacrament of Baptism and is in the "state of grace" can be admitted to confirmation. To be "in the state of grace" means not to have committed any serious sin (mortal sin). By a serious sin a person separates himself from God and can be reconciled with God only by making a good confession. A (young) Christian who is preparing for Confirmation finds himself in one of the most important phases of his life. He will do everything possible to grasp the faith with his heart and his understanding; he will pray alone and with others for the Holy Spirit; he will reconcile himself in every way with himself, with the people around him, and with God. Confession is part of this, since it brings one closer to God even if one has not committed a mortal sin.

#496 Why do we need the Holy Spirit when we pray? The Bible says, "We do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words" (Rom 8:26). Praying to God is possible only with God. It is not primarily our accomplishment that our prayer actually reaches God. We Christians have received the Spirit of Jesus, who wholeheartedly yearned to be one with the Father: to be loving at all times, to listen to each other with complete attention, to understand each other thoroughly, to want wholeheartedly what the other person wants. This holy Spirit of Jesus is in us, and he is speaking through us when we pray. Basically prayer means that from the depths of my heart, God speaks to God. The Holy Spirit helps our spirit to pray. Hence we should say again and again, "Come, Holy Spirit, come and help me to pray."