

The Life of the Spirit

For Personal Reflection:

- In what ways do I listen for the voice of the Spirit?
- Do I rely on the Spirit's guidance when I face significant decisions or difficult situations?
- Do I use gifts of the Spirit for others?
- Would someone who knows me see these gifts are real and active in me?
- Do I shape my life in ways that enable these gifts to really bear fruit in my life?

For Community Reflection:

- Do we try to be attentive to the voice of the Spirit in our community and world?
- How does our parish community reflect the gifts and fruits of the Spirit's presence and action? For example, do our parish meetings and organisations reflect the presence of the Spirit?
- Is ours a spirit of self-giving and cooperation (rather than self-interest and competition)?
- Is ours a spirit of love and encouragement (rather than condemnation)?
- Is ours a spirit of reconciliation?
- Is ours a spirit of outreach to people beyond our boundaries, especially those most in need of our generosity and voices raised, for justice, love and truth?
- Are we ready to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation with new members of the Church? Are we people who truly live the life of the Spirit ourselves?
- Are we open to being re-inspired and renewed in the life of the Spirit each time we celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation in our community?

(Adapted from *Forming the Assembly*, L.E. Mick, 2002, p 17-18).

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Publishing. Formatting: Efficient Office Bendigo: www.efficientoffice.com.au

Nihil Obstat: Reverend Andrew Fewings MA, PP

Imprimatur: + Most Rev Leslie R Tomlinson DD Bishop of Sandhurst.

15th October 2012

Sacraments ~ Part 3

Baptism

Sacraments of Initiation

'Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit'
Baptism and Confirmation are part of one sacramental reality. Confirmation seals what was begun at Baptism, when the gift of the Spirit was received and a newly baptised person was welcomed into the Christian community.



'The water bath of baptism focuses our attention on incorporation into the death and resurrection of Christ. The anointing we call confirmation focuses our attention on the gift of the Spirit, who brings about that incorporation into Christ.'

(*Forming the Assembly To Celebrate Sacraments*, Lawrence Mick, Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2002, p 16).

With Eucharist, initiation into the community of the Catholic Church is complete.

Life in the Spirit

Many of us remember learning about the Gifts of the Spirit when we prepared for Confirmation. Some may be surprised to learn this familiar list came to us first through the prophet Isaiah: He spoke of one guided by God's Spirit, who does not judge by appearances, makes just decisions and has special care for the poor and the powerless of the earth.



Life in the Spirit is transformed and inspired by 'the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord' (often described as awe) (Isaiah 11:2-4).

In telling us all about Jesus and his first followers, the stories and letters of the New Testament are also telling us what life in the Spirit is all about.

*Every individual who receives the Spirit is named
by God as a beloved son or daughter
(Mark 1:10-11).*

*Life in the Spirit means bringing good news,
as Jesus did, especially to the poor
(Luke 4:18).*

*The Spirit changes everything. It is like a spring of never ending
life welling up from within
(John 7:37-39).*

*The Spirit is always there to lead us to what is true, giving guidance and help,
especially when times are dark
(John 16:1-15)*

*The Spirit helps us when it is difficult to pray
(Romans 8:12-27)*

*Jesus gives us his own peace when he breathes the Spirit upon us.
We are not alone when he sends us forward to share his mission from the Father
(John 20:21-23)*

*Each of us has been given many spiritual gifts to use
and to share for the good of others
(1 Corinthians 12:1-11)*

*Life in the Spirit is lived in community.
When we are open to it, the Spirit helps us move beyond differences and divisions,
towards greater understanding and unity.
(Acts 2:1-13, Ephesians 4:1-3).*

**When someone is living the life of the Spirit,
it becomes obvious in the way they are in the world.**

*'Live by the Spirit...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,
generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control'
(1 Galatians 16, 22 – 23)*



For Reflection:

Have you recognised the fruits of the Spirit in someone who...

- Is courageous and patient in times of trial and hardship?
- Endures everyday difficulties patiently? Hopes against terrific odds?
- Carries out responsibilities steadfastly, even if rewards and results appear to be slight?
- Accepts illness, and perhaps death, with faith and courage?
- Shares love, peace and joy with others? Is self-giving and gentle?
- Prays? Talks about faith with others?
- Reaches out to the disadvantaged and those shunned by others?
- Refuses to 'go along with the crowd' in gossip or slander? Challenges cruel remarks?
- Resists temptations to greed, misuse of sexuality, drug use, gossip and other immoral or unethical actions?
- Comforts those who are experiencing sorrow?

We, the community, must give special support and encouragement to recently baptised young people and adults, and parents of baptised infants. Becoming more deeply aware of the presence and action of the Spirit in our own lives, and attuned to the Spirit's voice, we are more ready to respond to the needs of others, with the gifts we have been given.

Mission

Baptism and Confirmation lead to mission, that we may;

Become more and more like Christ

Share the Good News of the Gospel with others by example in the way we live and by all we do and say Witness to God's life giving and saving love for all.

Celebrating Confirmation

The Sacrament of Confirmation is usually conferred during celebration of Eucharist, in the Diocese of Sandhurst. As in the early Church, it is the next Sacrament received after Baptism. The Bishop usually confers Confirmation, but he may delegate this ministry to the Parish Priest.

Key features of the Sacrament are:

- Prayer
- Anointing with the oil of Chrism
- A laying on of hands on the forehead
- The words, 'Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit'
- The sign of peace

The laying on of hands is an ancient symbolic act of prayer for the Holy Spirit to come upon those for whom we pray.