

## Confirmation

**C**ONFIRMATION is the sacrament which helps us to be like the Apostles and other disciples.

There are at least four ways we can be *lay apostles*:-

1. To pray both morning & night; Acts 2:42; 3:1.
2. To go to Mass on Sundays (and holydays of obligation); “break bread” Acts 2:42,46; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 10:16.
3. Be brave if people poke fun at us because they can see that we believe in Jesus and speak up for Him: Acts 4:13; Romans 10:9; 1 Corinthians 12:3.
4. Keep the Ten Commandments when it’s hard or we don’t feel like it or when people mock us or we’re scared of what they might think of us; Acts 5:28-29

See pictures in *Catholic Family Catechism Disciples’ Edition*: for the Confirmation, p. 68; for the symbols, pp. 43,83.

### THE SEVEN GIFTS.

The present official wording of the Bishop’s ritual prayer at the Confirmation (text in *Catholic Family Catechism Disciples’ Edition* p. 69) is not quite the same as the official catechetical wording in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) n. 1831 which has the tradition words of the *Old Green Catechism*:

CCC n. 1831	Confirmation Ritual
wisdom	wisdom
understanding	understanding
counsel	right judgement
fortitude	courage
knowledge	knowledge
piety	reverence
fear of the Lord	wonder & awe in God’s presence

Unfortunately, the red booklet for the candidates, *Confirmation*, abbreviates the Seventh Gift to the single word “wonder”. This obscures the double element in Holy Fear which is wonder with awe.

### WHO CAN RECEIVE THIS SACRAMENT?

CCC 1306 Every baptized person not yet confirmed can and should receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Since Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist form a unity, it follows that “the faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the appropriate time,” for without Confirmation and Eucharist, Baptism is certainly valid and efficacious, but Christian initiation remains incomplete.

CCC 1307 The Latin tradition gives “the age of discretion” as the reference point for receiving Confirmation. But in danger of death children should be confirmed even if they have not yet attained the age of discretion.

[See *Handouts* n. 11, The Three Cs: Confession, Communion, Confirmation: What order?]

CCC 1308 Although Confirmation is sometimes called the “sacrament of Christian maturity,” we must not confuse adult faith with the adult age of natural growth, nor forget that the baptismal grace is a grace

of free, unmerited election and does not need ‘ratification’ to become effective. St. Thomas [Aquinas] reminds us of this: “Age of body does not determine age of soul. Even in childhood man can attain spiritual maturity: as the book of Wisdom says: ‘For old age is not honored for length of time, or measured by number of years.’ Many children, through the strength of the Holy Spirit they have received, have bravely fought for Christ even to the shedding of their blood.”

CCC 1309 Preparation for Confirmation should aim at leading the Christian toward a more intimate union with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit — his actions, his gifts, and his biddings — in order to be more capable of assuming the apostolic responsibilities of Christian life. To this end catechesis for Confirmation should strive to awaken a sense of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, the universal Church as well as the parish community. The latter bears special responsibility for the preparation of confirmands.

### CONFESSION before Confirmation

CCC 1310 To receive Confirmation one must be in a state of grace. One should receive the sacrament of Penance in order to be cleansed for the gift of the Holy Spirit. More intense prayer should prepare one to receive the strength and graces of the Holy Spirit with docility and readiness to act.

CCC 1311 Candidates for Confirmation, as for Baptism, fittingly seek the spiritual help of a sponsor. To emphasize the unity of the two sacraments, it is appropriate that this be one of the baptismal godparents.

### CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS

The ideas in CCC 1308, 1309 on ‘Christian maturity’ are partly expressed in the hymn *On Christian soldiers*.

The Bible texts on the Christian armour of God are also relevant. The ‘Christian soldier’ is not the major theme of Confirmation, but it is relevant to the Christian life, which begins at Baptism and is strengthened in every aspect at Confirmation, especially in conquering sin and standing up and working for the kingdom of God.

See Philippians 2:25; 2 Timothy 2:3; Philemon 1:2.

Then there are the texts on a soldier’s weaponry: Ephesians 6:14,16,17 — breastplate, shield, helmet, sword, and 1 Thessalonians 5:8.

### CONFIRMATION KIT for Home Preparation

**T**HIS was originally 8 worksheets for the parents with children in government schools. Each sheet had the option of being two lessons. The blank spaces were filled in and brought to Mass the next Sunday, where a new sheet for the coming week was issued.

Catholic high schools using them asked for a booklet, with written/drawing work in an exercise book.

Its catechism Q&As are from the earlier edition of the *Catholic Family Catechism*. It is very popular.

# The Twelve Fruits of the Holy Spirit

**T**HE tradition of the Church lists TWELVE fruits of the Holy Spirit: **charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity** (CCC §1832). Its source is St Jerome's Vulgate, a Latin translation of the Hebrew and Greek Bible. Note that this wording does not exactly correspond with the translations in either Douay-Rheims or Knox. Study the tabulation:-

What is more, the six gifts listed in Isaiah 11:2 seem are expanded by the Church into seven; (many of the vital lists for memorization by illiterates were grouped in sevens). The sixth gift in the Bible, *godliness* in the Douay-Rheims, and *the fear of the Lord* in the RSVCE, is rendered in our traditional listing of the Seven Gifts as two separate gifts, *piety* and *the fear of the Lord* — making up the seven as in CCC §1831.

## The Fruits of the Holy Spirit

CCC <sup>1</sup> §1832	Old Vulgate	DouayRheims	Knox	New Vulgate <sup>2</sup>	RSVCE	Jerusalem	Cath. TEV <sup>10</sup>
Charity	Charitas	Charity	Love	Caritas	Love	Love	Love
Joy	Gaudium	Joy	Joy	Gaudium	Joy	Joy	Joy
Peace	Pax	Peace	Peace	Pax	Peace	Peace	Peace
Patience	Patientia	Patience	Patience	Longanimitas <sup>3</sup>	Patience	Patience	Patience
Kindness	Benignitas	Benignity	Kindness	enignitas	Kindness	Kindness	Kindness
Goodness	Bonitas	Goodness	Generosity	Bonitas	Goodness	Goodness	Goodness
<i>Generosity</i>	<i>Longanimitas</i>	<i>Longanimity</i>	<i>Forbearance</i>				
Gentleness	Mansuetudo	Mildness	Gentleness	Mansuetudo <sup>4</sup>	Gentleness <sup>6</sup>	Gentleness <sup>8</sup>	Humility <sup>11</sup>
Faithfulness	Fides	Faith	Faith	Fides <sup>5</sup>	Faithfulness <sup>7</sup>	Trustfulness <sup>9</sup>	Faithfulness <sup>12</sup>
<i>Modesty</i>	<i>Modestia</i>	<i>Modesty</i>	<i>Courtesy</i>				
Self-control	Continentia	Continenence	Temperateness	Continentia	Self-control	Self-control	Self-control
<i>Chastity</i>	<i>Castitas</i>	<i>Chastity</i>	<i>Purity</i>				

**FOOTNOTES:** *Italicised* words are not in the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. Rather, they are words added in translations to render more exactly the meaning of a single Greek word.

1. The authoritative Latin of §1832 in *Catechism of the Catholic Church* uses the Old Vulgate of St Jerome, as shown in the second column.
2. The new Vulgate or Latin Bible of 1979/1986.
3. The Latin *longanimitas*, longanimity, is similar to patience. This exemplifies the problems of rendering shades of meaning in translations.
- 4 & 5; 6 & 7; 8 & 9; 11 & 12: The order of these words as found in the translation named at the top of their column has been reversed for purposes of this tabulation, the better to compare equivalents in the other versions.
10. Cath. TEV is *Today's English Version*, in its imprimated Catholic edition. i.e. *Good News for Modern Man* as approved by the Church.

**O**N the other hand, CCC §736 lists **nine** fruits of the Holy Spirit, as per Galatians 5:22-23 in *Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition Bible* (RSVCE).

What happened? St Jerome quite reasonably used two words *patience* and *forbearance* to translate the one Greek word usually rendered 'patience'; and he used three words *modesty*, *continence* and *chastity* to translate the Greek word which is usually rendered as 'continence' or, in modern versions, as 'self-control'. Hence the differences between modern translations and St Jerome's Vulgate and its translations such as the Douay-Rheims and the Knox version.

**T**here are, indeed, modern precedents for using two words for one: e.g. in the prayer at Confirmation when the Bishop holds out his hands over the candidates, *Paracletus* is translated in ICEL English as *Helper and Guide*. Fair enough: *Paracletus* in John 14:16, 26; 15:26, and 16:7 is translated in various Bibles as Paraclete, Comforter, Counsellor, 'He Who is to befriend you', Advocate, etc.

Further, in the same Confirmation prayer, the Seventh Gift of the Holy Spirit, in its present ICEL English, is *Wonder and Awe in God's Presence*. This uses two words to translate 'fear' in the phrase 'the fear of the Lord' (*Spiritus timoris tui*), and aptly presents the Sense of the Sacred reality.

**S**OMETIMES, and unfortunately, in preparations for Confirmation, and even on banners displayed on the sanctuary, under the caption of the Seven Gifts, all seven have been replaced by a new list of seven of the seemingly *more attractive* Fruits of the Spirit.

The truth is that the Gifts are like seeds (even fertilizer) from which the Fruits are produced after long co-operation with the graces of the Holy Spirit.

There are no short cuts to holiness.

### SENSE OF THE SACRED and HOLY FEAR

For a scriptural understanding of the Sense of the Sacred and the Spirit of the Holy Fear of the Lord, see *Handouts* n. 96 on the Holy One and the Evil One. The Bible texts could be written out by the faster workers in a Confirmation class.

Much of the above was originally published in *Catechetical News* of the Cardinal Newman Catechist Consultants (which is Fr Tierney's personal apostolate) in n. 164 of 8th March, 2000.

### FOLLOW UP

Some children, due to danger of death, are confirmed in infancy; others at seven years; others in Year 6 of schooling, or older. No matter what age, continuing instruction on Confirmation and the lay apostolate is probably even more important than the original preparation. And, as always, instruction should be persuasive and practical: "Go forth..."