



Attention Young People of St. James Cathedral! Why be Confirmed?



As we prepare to begin our Confirmation preparation process, we assume some of you may have your doubts about participating. Before you decide what to do, we invite you to take a moment to read this description, simply to gain a better understanding of what the sacrament of Confirmation is really all about:

Sealed with the Spirit – Your Life has Meaning and Purpose!

Imagine if one of our parishioners recently completed her training with the Seattle Police Department. At her commissioning, a badge would be pinned on her chest, a mark of both the department she represents and the mission she will undertake as an officer. Prior to this, she would have prepared diligently at the academy to fully understand and implement this mission. Now, she can proudly serve the community as a fully initiated member of the police department.

The Church too is in need of fully initiated members to be marked and sent forth, to accomplish a very particular mission and represent a powerful community of love, peace, compassion, and care. In fact, our parishioner's role with the police department flows out of her primary mission as a member of the Church. All of us, no matter what career or life path we take, are first called into the mission of the Church. Confirmation, then, is the sacramental ritual that will seal you with the Spirit of God, thus marking you as a Catholic Christian and entrusting you with a crucial mission in the world.

As nifty as the badge may be, our parishioner would be the first to tell you that the badge is not a permanent mark. It can be removed, lost, etc. However, the mark that you will receive at Confirmation, which is a completion of the grace you received at Baptism, cannot *ever* be removed. The mark of the Church is much more significant. It is a permanent seal of your incorporation with Christ and Christ's Church, meaning you have a mission and purpose that we'd like to prepare you to undertake, just like an officer. Are you curious yet about what this mission entails?

The Body of Christ – A Mission worth Embracing

A little over 2000 years ago, this Jesus guy showed up on the scene and he had a particular mission and vision. For example, he healed a lot of people, he forgave others, he often went off to pray, he ate with sinners, prostitutes and tax collectors, he touched lepers, he blessed children, he fed the hungry, he taught about the Kingdom of God, he felt compassion for the suffering, and he afforded odd groups of people a level of status and dignity that they did not feel they deserved. Much of his mission was centered on lifting up the poor and outcast, healing them out of his great compassion, forgiving them, and ensuring that they felt acceptable before God. This is truly a wonderful and amazing mission!

Today, Jesus cannot continue with his mission in the same way, seeing as how he no longer has a physical body as before. However, as St. Theresa points out, “Christ has no body now, but yours.” In other words, *we* can serve as Christ’s hands and feet. We become his body in the modern world, doing what he did and manifesting the same kind of miraculous and compassionate results. This is who the Church is and what you would be confirmed into: a group of people committed to collectively serving as Christ’s body and continuing Christ’s mission. Confirmation is about belonging completely to Christ, such that you encounter Christ in others and become Christ for others.

Receiving a Remarkable Gift – Just say “Yes”

Jesus was full of an astonishingly beautiful Spirit who flowed over all those who encountered him which brought forth healing and love. It was this Spirit that allowed people to recognize him as the Messiah. He promised, however, that this Spirit was not for him and him alone, but rather was to be given to “*the whole messianic people.*” (This includes you, by the way.) The outpouring of this Spirit would bind all people together and empower them to continue the mission where Jesus left off. At Pentecost, the early disciples had their own confirmation experience when they received the gift of the Spirit in the form of tongues of fire and it filled them up with so much love that they couldn’t help but go forth and share it. Now, it is your turn to receive this gift. For you, it will be signified with Chrism oil placed on your head by the Bishop. And, just like the early disciples at Pentecost, you too will personally receive an outpouring of the very same Spirit as promised by Jesus, such that you can offer it to others. Can you really imagine saying no to such an amazing gift?

Sharing in Ancient Traditions – We are Part of an Ongoing Story

Following the Pentecost experience, the early disciples established a practice known as laying on of hands. Again, this action would complete the grace received at baptism, perpetuate the grace of Pentecost, and signify full Christian maturity. The fully commissioned disciples would then go into the world to proclaim the good news and serve as Christ to others. Throughout the centuries, our Catholic community has continued this practice of laying hands on its members, a beautiful tradition that is now attempting to find its way to you. Confirmation will allow you to participate in an ancient practice and story that is still going on today. It is your turn to have hands laid upon you, just like the multitudes of disciples who have come before you, such that you can take your rightful place in our sacred community and be celebrated as a fully initiated, fully mature Christian who desires to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world. How cool is it that we get to be a part of something that has been going on for so long, beginning with Jesus himself? This is an exciting opportunity to take on the “badge” of Catholic Christianity and live it out with faith, hope, and love.

So the question really is: Why would you *not* want to be confirmed into this extraordinary community and mission? The Church needs you and we aren’t complete without you! Sign up for the formation process today! Registration forms are available in the parish office.