

The Laying On of Hands

24. Then the Bishop (while the Priests associated with him remain by his side) standing, facing the people, with hands joined, says:

Dearly beloved,
let us pray to God the almighty Father,
for these, his adopted sons and daughters,
already born again to eternal life in Baptism,
that he will graciously pour out the Holy Spirit upon them
to confirm them with his abundant gifts,
and through his anointing
conform them more fully to Christ, the Son of God.

And all pray in silence for a while.

25. Then the Bishop lays hands over all those to be confirmed (as do the Priests who are associated with him). But the Bishop alone says:

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who brought these your servants to new birth
by water and the Holy Spirit,
freeing them from sin:
send upon them, O Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete;
give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and fortitude,
the spirit of knowledge and piety;
fill them with the spirit of the fear of the Lord.
Through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

The Anointing with Chrism

26. The sacred Chrism is brought by the Deacon to the Bishop. Each of those to be confirmed goes to the Bishop; or, if appropriate, the Bishop goes to each of those to be confirmed. The sponsor who presents the person to be confirmed places his (her) right hand on his (her) shoulder and says the name of the one to be confirmed to the Bishop; or the one to be confirmed alone says his (her) own name.

27. The Bishop dips the tip of the thumb of his right hand in the Chrism and, with the thumb, makes the Sign of the Cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed, as he says:

N., BE SEALED WITH THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The newly confirmed replies:

Amen.

The Bishop adds:

Peace be with you.

The newly confirmed:

And with your spirit.

28. If Priests assist the Bishop in conferring the Sacrament, all the vessels of sacred Chrism are brought to the Bishop by the Deacon or by the ministers. As each of the Priests comes to the Bishop, he gives each a vessel of Chrism.

Those to be confirmed go to the Bishop or to the Priests; or, if appropriate, the Bishop and Priests go to those to be confirmed. The anointing is done as described above (no. 27).

29. During the anointing a suitable chant may be sung. After the anointing the Bishop washes his hands (as do the Priests).

Notes

Order of Confirmation: Introduction

The Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred through the anointing with Chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of the hand, and through the words:

ACCIPE SIGNACULUM DONI SPIRITUS SANCTI
(BE SEALED WITH THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT).

The laying of hands on those to be confirmed, which is accompanied by the prayer Almighty God, although it does not pertain to the validity of the Sacrament, should still be considered to be of great importance with regard to the integrity of the rite and a fuller understanding of the Sacrament...

The whole rite presents a twofold symbolism. Through the laying of hands on the candidates by the Bishop and the concelebrating Priests, the biblical gesture, by which the gift of the Holy Spirit is invoked, is expressed in a manner well suited to the understanding of the Christian people. In the anointing with Chrism and the accompanying words, the effect of the giving of the Holy Spirit is clearly signified. Signed with the perfumed oil by the hand of the Bishop, the baptized receive the indelible character, the seal of the Lord, together with the gift of the Spirit that conforms them more fully to Christ and gives them the grace of spreading among men and women 'the pleasing fragrance of Christ.' [OC 9]

Isaiah 11:1–2

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord

from the Catechism of the Catholic Church

1288 'From that time on the apostles, in fulfillment of Christ's will, imparted to the newly baptized by the laying on of hands the gift of the Spirit that completes the grace of Baptism. For this reason in the Letter to the Hebrews the doctrine concerning Baptism and the laying on of hands is listed among the first elements of Christian instruction. the imposition of hands is rightly recognized by the Catholic tradition as the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation, which in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church.'

1289 Very early, the better to signify the gift of the Holy Spirit, an anointing with perfumed oil (*chrism*) was added to the laying on of hands. This anointing highlights the name 'Christian,' which means 'anointed' and derives from that of Christ himself whom God 'anointed with the Holy Spirit.' This rite of anointing has continued ever since, in both East and West. For this reason the Eastern Churches call this sacrament *Chrismation*, anointing with chrism, or myron which means 'chrism.' In the West, *Confirmation* suggests that this sacrament both confirms Baptism and strengthens baptismal grace — both fruits of the Holy Spirit.

1293–1296 the sign of *anointing* and what it signifies and imprints: a spiritual *seal*.

1299 In the Roman Rite the bishop extends his hands over the whole group of the confirmands. Since the time of the apostles this gesture has signified the gift of the Spirit.