

Basic Study Questions for Grade 8

These Basic Study Questions have been revised to reflect new Standards of Learning set forth by the Office of Faith Formation for the Diocese of Arlington.

The questions in this booklet are in the order of subject matter covered in the chapters of the textbook.

There are also questions on subjects not covered in the textbook, but necessary for Confirmation preparation.

➤ **First Semester (Salvation History Overview and Chapters 1- 13):**

1. Who is God?

God is the all-perfect pure spirit. God is eternal, all powerful, all wise and all holy. He is the creator of Heaven and Earth.

2. Did God create us?

Yes, God created us in His image and likeness. We are created as either male or female.

3. Why did God make you?

God made me to know Him, love Him and serve Him in this world and to be happy with Him in Heaven one day.

4. What is the Holy Trinity?

The Holy Trinity is the mystery of the one true God in three Divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are equal but distinct/different.

5. What is the Incarnation?

The Incarnation is when the Son of God (Jesus) became man, through the action of the Holy Spirit, in the womb of the Blessed Mother.

6. Who is Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. He is the Savior of all mankind, the Messiah. He will judge the living and the dead at the end of the world. He is true God and true man.

7. Why did the Son of God become man?

The Son of God became man:

- a. in order to save us (take away our sins) by reconciling us with God
- b. so that we would know God's love
- c. to be our model of holiness
- d. to make us sharers in his divinity

8. What is the name of the Roman governor who ordered the execution of Jesus? In what manner was he to be executed?

Pontius Pilate ordered the execution of Jesus by **crucifixion**. The Crucifixion took place on Good Friday.

***9. What is salvation?**

Salvation is liberation of the individual person from sin and its consequences. It is available on an individual basis to those who ask for it.

***10. What is redemption?**

Redemption refers to Jesus' sacrifice for all of humanity, made possible by his suffering, death and resurrection. Redemption makes salvation possible.

In other words, we are all "redeemed" but we are not all "saved."

11. When did Jesus rise from the dead?

Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday. This is called the Resurrection.

12. What is faith?

Faith is a gift from God which helps us to believe in Him and all He has revealed through Christ and His Church.

13. What is Original Sin?

Original sin is the first sin committed (on earth). It was committed by Adam and Eve through their disobedience to God. All mankind inherited this sin and it is washed away by the Sacrament of Baptism.

14. What is concupiscence?

Concupiscence is the weakness in our human nature due to Original Sin. Although our soul is clean of the stain of Original Sin after Baptism, we are still easily tempted to sin. We need God's grace to overcome it.

15. Name the Twelve Apostles chosen by Christ

Simon Peter, Andrew, James the Greater, John, Thomas, James the Lesser, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon, Thaddeus and Judas

**from Catholic Answers website*

16. Which apostle is remembered as a great apostle who evangelized the Gentiles?

St. Paul is the great apostle who evangelized the Gentiles.

17. What happened at Pentecost and what did the Apostles do after Pentecost?

At Pentecost the Apostles were filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, making it possible to do what Jesus commanded them to do:

- preach the Gospel
- baptize in the name of the Holy Trinity
- teach the people what they were taught by Jesus

The Church continues to do what Jesus commanded the Apostles to do.

18. Who founded/started the Catholic Church?

Name and define the four marks of the Church.

The Church was founded by Jesus Christ. The four marks of the Church are:

one: members are united in Christ through the Faith and Sacraments; they are united in their beliefs

holy: Jesus who founded the Church and the Holy Spirit who guides her are holy

catholic: universal; she was instituted for all men of all time, over the whole world

apostolic: the Church traces her teaching and authority back to the Apostles

19. Where can we find the teachings of the Catholic Church?

The teachings of the Catholic Church can be found in Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition and the Magisterium.

20. What is Sacred Scripture?

Sacred Scripture is the Word of God which is found in the Bible. It is inspired by the Holy Spirit and written down by men.

21. What are the two main parts of the Bible?

The two main parts of the Bible are the Old Testament, which is the first part and the New Testament, which is the second part.

22. What is the basic outline of the 46 books of the Old Testament?

- a. Pentateuch / Torah
- b. Historical Books
- c. Wisdom Books
- d. Prophetic Books

23. What is the basic outline of the 27 Books of the New Testament?

- a. Gospels
- b. Acts of the Apostles
- c. Epistles
- d. Revelation (last book of the Bible)

24. What is Sacred Tradition?

Sacred Tradition is the truths revealed by God through Jesus Christ, preached by the Apostles, and passed down to their successors.

25. What is Revelation?

Revelation is the truths of Faith which God has made known to us. This term refers to God disclosing who He is and making Himself known to us. (revelation= to reveal)

26. What is the Creed?

The Creed is a statement of what we believe about God and His Church.
(credo: I believe)

27. What is the Magisterium?

The Magisterium is the teaching authority of the Church guided by the Holy Spirit. It is exercised by the Pope and the bishops united with him.

28. What is infallibility?

Infallible means incapable of error. Infallibility is a gift given by God to the pope and the bishops in union with him, that they cannot make mistakes when **defining a doctrine concerning faith or morals** because they are guided by the Holy Spirit. When the pope speaks EX CATHEDRA (“from the chair”) for the purpose of defining such a doctrine, his pronouncement is infallible.

In the history of the Church, there have been only two occasions where the pope has spoken EX CATHEDRA – in the years 1854 and 1950.

29. What is Apostolic Succession?

Apostolic Succession is the unbroken chain of bishops from the Apostles to the present day. The Apostles received special spiritual gifts from Jesus to become bishops and priests. They passed these gifts on to others through the Sacrament of Holy Orders down to the present day.

30. What is the hierarchy of the Church?

The hierarchy of the Church is the ranking of those in authority; it is the structure of leadership in the Church.

31. What is a pope? Who was the first pope?

A pope is the successor of St. Peter (the first pope), he is the Bishop of Rome. He is the visible head of the entire Church on earth. Jesus Christ is the invisible head of the Church.

32. What is a sacrament?

A sacrament is an outward sign instituted (established) by Christ to give grace.

33. Name the Sacraments of Initiation.

The Sacraments of Initiation are Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist.

➤ **Why are they called Sacraments of Initiation?**

They are called Sacraments of Initiation because with these sacraments, we become full members of the Church.

34. What are the three “character sacraments”? Why are they called “character sacraments”?

Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders are the character sacraments. They are character sacraments because they leave an indelible mark on the soul.

35. What is Baptism?

Baptism is the sacrament which takes away Original Sin and fills our soul with sanctifying grace. It makes us Christians (followers of Jesus Christ), children of God and members of the Church.

36. What is baptism by desire?

Baptism by desire is when someone – through no fault of their own - does not know the Faith, but has a deep desire for God and lives a good life to the best of their knowledge.

37. What is baptism by blood?

Baptism by blood is when someone dies for the Faith even if he/she has not been officially baptized.

38. Name and describe the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit*.

- a. Wisdom: helps us to know God's will for our lives and to see things as God sees them
- b. Understanding: gives us an insight into the mysteries of the faith and helps us explain it to others
- c. Knowledge: allows us to know God and to have a personal relationship with Him
- d. Fortitude: helps us to be courageous in the defense of our faith
- e. Counsel: aids us in making right judgments
- f. Piety: assists us in being prayerful, reverent, and holy
- g. Fear of the Lord: is a holy awe and reverence for God

*see pp. 21-22 for additional explanation of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

39. Name the twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit.

The twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit are:

charity	joy	peace	patience	kindness	goodness
generosity	gentleness	faithfulness	modesty	self-control	chastity

40. What is the Holy Mass?

The Holy Mass is the greatest worship we can give to God. Through the Mass, we are present at the Last Supper, present beneath the Cross of our Lord and present at the Resurrection. The Mass is both a sacrifice and a meal.

41. What are the four main parts of the Holy Mass?

The four main parts of the Mass are:

- a. Introductory Rites
- b. Liturgy of the Word
- c. Liturgy of the Eucharist
- d. Concluding Rites

42. How is the Mass a sacrifice and a meal?

The Mass is a sacrifice because through the priest, Christ offers Himself to the Father on the Cross for our sins. It is a meal because just like the Apostles at the Last Supper, we are fed and nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist.

43. Is the Sacrifice of the Mass the same sacrifice as the sacrifice of the Cross?

The Sacrifice of the Mass is the same sacrifice as the sacrifice of the Cross; the only difference is in the manner in which it is offered.

44. When was the first Mass celebrated and by whom was it celebrated?

The first Mass was celebrated by Jesus Christ at the Last Supper on Holy Thursday.

45. What are the words of Consecration said by the priest at Mass after which the bread and wine become the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ?

The words of Consecration are, "This is My Body and this is My Blood."

46. Who is the Mother of God?

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the Mother of God because she is the mother of Jesus who is God.

47. What are the three central teachings of the Church concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary?

The three central teachings of our Church concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary are:

- The Immaculate Conception: Mary was conceived without original sin
- Perpetual Virginity: Mary was and remained a virgin – before, during and after the birth of Jesus
- The Assumption: at the end of her earthly life, Mary was assumed body and soul into heaven

48. Who is Saint Joseph?

Saint Joseph is the foster father of Jesus; he was Jesus' father on earth.

49. What is the Communion of Saints?

The Communion of Saints refers to all the members of the Church:

- a. Church Triumphant: the victorious souls in Heaven
- b. Church Suffering: the suffering souls in Purgatory
- c. Church Militant: the militant souls on earth (us)

50. What is a martyr?

A martyr is someone who dies witnessing to the Faith.

➤ **Second Semester (Chapters 14-26):**

51. What is virtue?

Virtue is a good habit which helps us to do good and avoid evil.

52. List the three theological virtues and describe each.

Faith: belief in God

Hope: trust in God

Charity (love): to love God and our neighbor

53. List the four cardinal virtues and describe each.

Prudence: the ability to make the right choices in life

Justice: respecting the rights and dignity of every human being and giving to everyone what is rightfully his

Fortitude: courage to face every difficulty or danger with inner peace, even if it involves great sacrifice and suffering

Temperance: the power to control ourselves

54. What are the seven corporal works of mercy?

1. Feed the hungry
2. Give drink to the thirsty
3. Clothe the naked
4. Shelter the homeless
5. Visit the imprisoned
6. Visit the sick
7. Bury the dead

55. What are the seven spiritual works of mercy?

1. Admonish the sinner
2. Instruct the ignorant
3. Counsel the doubtful
4. Comfort the sorrowful
5. Bear wrongs patiently
6. Forgive all injuries
7. Pray for the living and the dead

56. What are the Beatitudes and during which sermon did Jesus preach them to the

crowd?

1. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.
2. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
3. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
5. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
6. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
7. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.
8. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.
9. Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in Heaven.

Jesus preached the Beatitudes during the Sermon on the Mount.

57. Name and describe the evangelical counsels. These are practiced by those who have answered the call to the priesthood or religious life.

- a. poverty: detached from material goods of this world in order to follow Christ
- b. chastity: giving up the goods of marriage and children to dedicate oneself completely to God
- c. obedience: giving up one's liberties submitting completely to the will of God as passed on through legitimate religious superiors

58. What must we do if those in authority command us to violate God's law?

If those in authority command us to violate God's law, we must obey God rather than men.

59. What is natural law? What is its most basic principle?

Natural law is the basic moral law which God has placed in human nature and which we discover through reason. Its most basic principle is, "Do good and avoid evil."

60. List the precepts of the Church

1. Attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation and rest from servile labor.
2. Confess your sins at least once a year.
3. Receive the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist at least during the Easter season.
4. Observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church.
5. Help provide for the needs of the Church.
6. Obey the laws of the Church concerning Matrimony.*
7. Participate in the Church's mission of evangelization of souls.*

* Not found in student textbook

61. List the Ten Commandments in order.

1. I am the Lord your God; you shall not have other gods before Me.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.
4. Honor your father and mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

62. What is conscience? How do we develop a well-informed conscience?

Conscience is the internal guide which helps us decide what actions are right or wrong.

We develop our conscience by studying the Bible and the teachings of the Church, by praying and by living our faith with guidance from parents, priests, etc.

63. What is sin?

Sin is choosing to do something in disobedience or rejection of God's law.

64. What is mortal sin?

Mortal sin is a serious act of disobedience to the law of God which kills God's life

(grace) within us. There are three conditions under which a sin is considered mortal:

- is a serious/grave matter,
- done with full knowledge
- done freely of our own will

(please note: if not redeemed by repentance and God's forgiveness, it causes exclusion from God's Kingdom.)

65. What is venial sin?

Venial sin is an offense against the law of God in a small matter. It weakens our relationship with God, but does not kill God's life within us.

66. Why is human life sacred?

Human life is sacred because we are created in the image and likeness of God. All human life should be protected from conception until natural death.

67. What two things make up man?

Man is made up of a physical body and a spiritual soul.

68. What is prayer?

Prayer is lifting our minds and hearts to God; having a conversation with God.

69. Name the Mysteries of the Rosary (and be able to briefly explain them).

Joyful Mysteries: The Annunciation, The Visitation, The Nativity, The Presentation in the Temple, The Finding of the Child Jesus after Three Days in the Temple

Sorrowful Mysteries: The Agony in the Garden, The Scourging at the Pillar, The Crowning with Thorns, The Carrying of the Cross, The Crucifixion and Death of Our Lord

Glorious Mysteries: The Resurrection, The Ascension, The Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, The Assumption of Mary, The Crowning of the Blessed Mother as Queen of Heaven and Earth

Luminous Mysteries: The Baptism at the Jordan, The Miracle at Cana, The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God (and call to conversion), The Transfiguration, The Institution of the Holy Eucharist (at the Last Supper)

70. What is transubstantiation?

Transubstantiation means “change of substance.” It is the complete change of the bread and wine into Jesus Christ’s Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity which occurs at the Consecration during Mass.

71. What is grace?

Grace is a supernatural gift from God. It makes us holy and unites us with God.

72. Name and describe three types of grace.

- a. sanctifying grace is that grace through which we share in the life and love of the Holy Trinity.
- b. actual grace is the grace that helps us to act by enlightening our minds and strengthening our will to do good and avoid evil
- c. sacramental grace is the special grace given to us through the sacraments

73. How can we restore sanctifying grace which is lost by mortal sin?

Sanctifying grace can only be restored through the Sacrament of Penance.

74. Who forgives our sins in the Sacrament of Penance?

Christ forgives our sins in the sacrament of Penance through the priest.

75. List and briefly describe the seven sacraments:

- a. Baptism: takes away Original Sin and fills our soul with sanctifying grace. It makes us Christians (followers of Jesus Christ), children of God and members of the Church.
- b. Penance / Reconciliation: forgives sins committed after Baptism
- c. Confirmation: increases our strength to profess, defend and spread the faith with the gifts of the Holy Spirit
- d. Holy Eucharist/Communion: the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ under the appearances of bread and wine
- e. Matrimony: unites a man and woman as husband and wife
- f. Holy Orders: gives the power and the grace to men to perform the sacred duties of bishops, priests and deacons
- g. Anointing of the Sick: given to Christians who are gravely ill or dying for spiritual and/or physical healing/strengthening.

76. To what does the term “real presence” refer?

Real Presence refers to Jesus Christ’s Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. This real presence can be found in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

77. Where in the church can the Holy Eucharist be found?

The Holy Eucharist is found in the tabernacle of every Catholic Church.

78. What are three conditions necessary for the worthy reception of the Holy Eucharist?

- a. be in the state of grace (free of mortal sin)
- b. believe it is Jesus whom we are about to receive
- c. observe the Eucharistic fast (no food or drink – other than water and medicine – for one hour before Holy Communion)

79. What is the particular judgment?

The particular judgment is the judgment by Jesus of each person at the end of their life. We will be judged on the good and evil we have done in our thoughts, words and deeds.

80. What is the general judgment?

The general judgment or Last Judgment takes place at the end of the world when Jesus returns to judge all people, living and dead.

81. What is Purgatory?

Purgatory is a place of temporary separation from God. Purgatory is a time of cleansing souls of venial sins and preparing them to go to Heaven.

82. What is Hell?

Hell is eternal separation from God; a state of eternal punishment.

83. What is Heaven?

Heaven is eternal happiness in God's presence. The souls in Heaven are called saints.

84. What is an angel?

An angel is a pure spirit created by God and is a messenger of God. Each person has a guardian angel appointed by God.

85. What do we call the process by which a person is officially declared a saint by the Church?

The process by which a person is officially declared a saint by the Church is canonization.

86. What is the Beatific Vision?

The Beatific Vision is the vision of God experienced by those in Heaven.

87. What does “resurrection of the body” mean?

The “resurrection of the body” refers to the time when our body and soul will be reunited at the Last Judgment.

88. Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is God, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, the sanctifier of souls.

89. What is Confirmation? What are the effects of Confirmation?

Confirmation is a Sacrament of Initiation which:

- completes the grace of Baptism through the outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- changes the soul by marking it with a permanent seal of the Holy Spirit
- unites one more fully to Christ
- strengthens one to spread and defend the Faith
- equips one for more active participation in the life of the Church

90. When did Jesus institute the Sacrament of Confirmation?

The first Sacrament of Confirmation was received by the Apostles at Pentecost (fifty days after Easter), when God the Father sent the Holy Spirit to them. “Tongues of fire” rested upon their heads and the fire of God’s love filled their souls.

91. What is the matter of the Sacrament of Confirmation?

The matter of the Sacrament of Confirmation is the laying on of hands and the anointing with chrism.

92. What is the form of the Sacrament of Confirmation?

The form of the Sacrament of Confirmation is “(Name), be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

93. Who is the usual/ordinary minister of Confirmation?

A bishop is the usual/ordinary minister of Confirmation.

94. Why does the Bishop anoint the forehead in the form of a cross?

The Bishop anoints the forehead in the form of a cross to show we belong to Christ and that we must defend our faith with gratitude for Christ's redeeming death on the cross.

95. How is the Sacrament of Confirmation celebrated?

- Confirmation is celebrated by the Bishop, and it is always celebrated within a Liturgy of the Word.
- After the Gospel, the candidates are presented to the Bishop and then he instructs them in a homily.
- The Bishop then asks the candidates to renew their baptismal promises.
- Next, the Bishop expresses the Church's prayer that the Father send the Holy Spirit.
- Then, the Bishop places his hand on the head of each candidate, and anoints the forehead with Holy Chrism by making the sign of the cross.
- Bishop says, "(Saint name) be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit."
Candidate responds, "Amen."
Bishop says, "Peace be with you."
Candidate responds, "And with your spirit."
- Finally, the community prays for the newly Confirmed.

96. What is Sacred Chrism and what does it signify?

Sacred Chrism is a perfumed oil blessed by the Bishop.

Anointing with Sacred Chrism signifies the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and our being made more like Christ in order to continue his work in the world.

For further reflection: *Oils were used by the Jewish people to anoint priests, prophets, and kings. These anointings showed that God called them to a special role of leadership and would empower them with the graces needed to fulfill the responsibilities [of that role].*

In Confirmation, Christians are anointed with Chrism. By receiving the Holy Spirit, we are made more like Christ and are strengthened in doing Christ's work in the world. The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit empower us to fulfill these responsibilities. Chrism reminds us of the sacred character sealed on our soul (as oil on a garment leaves a permanent mark, so Confirmation leaves a permanent mark on the soul). The fragrance of Chrism reminds us, as St. Paul said, to "put on the aroma of Christ."

97. What is the significance of choosing a saint's name as your Confirmation name?

The candidate takes a saint's name to remind him that he is to place himself under the protection of a patron saint, which he chooses as an advocate before God and that he is to follow the exemplary life of this patron saint.

➤ Prayers and Lists

PL 1. Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations. Through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

PL 2. The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into Hell; on the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from there He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

PL 3. Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

PL 4. Act of Contrition

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of Thy just punishments; but, most of all, because they have offended Thee, my God, who are all good and deserving of all my love, I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace, to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.

PL 5. The Books of the Old Testament

THE PENTATEUCH

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

**HISTORICAL
INTRODUCTION**

Joshua
Judges
Ruth
1 Samuel
2 Samuel
1 Kings
2 Kings
1 Chronicles
2 Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah

BIBLICAL NOVELLAS

Tobit
Judith
Esther
1 Maccabees
2 Maccabees

WISDOM BOOKS

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon
Wisdom
Sirach

PROPHETIC BOOKS

Isiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Baruch
Ezekiel
Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

PL 6. The Books of the New Testament**THE GOSPELS**

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John
Acts of the Apostles

LETTERS

Romans
1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians
1 Timothy
2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews

CATHOLIC LETTERS

James
1 Peter
2 Peter
1 John
2 John
3 John
Jude
Revelation

Source: USCCB website

The Bishop has asked that you consider the following as you prepare for Confirmation:

➤ **How will I live the Sacrament of Confirmation?**

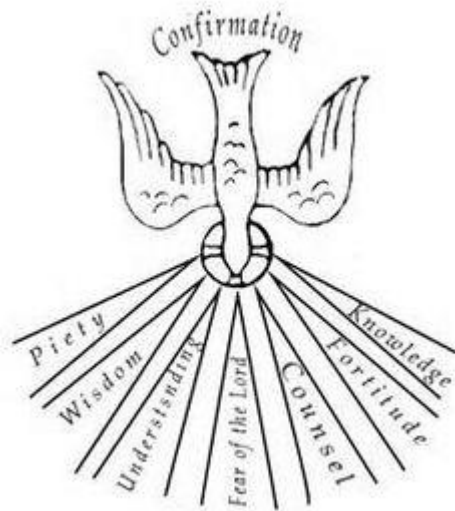
Be able to tell the Bishop how you will live the Sacrament of Confirmation.

For example,

- *attend Mass each Sunday and Holy Day;*
- *pray each day;*
- *read Sacred Scripture;*
- *go to confession regularly;*
- *continue to learn about the faith;*
- *help in the mission of the Church (for example, by participating in the life of my parish);*
- *faithfully fulfill my vocation (for example, be married in the Church and, God willing, raise children in the faith; for example, say “yes” to the call to be a Priest, Sister, or Brother).*

➤ **Who is your Confirmation Saint?**

Be able to tell the Bishop about your Confirmation Saint, what that Saint did to inspire you, and why you chose the saint.



7/2023

The Liturgical Year and the colors which go with each Season:

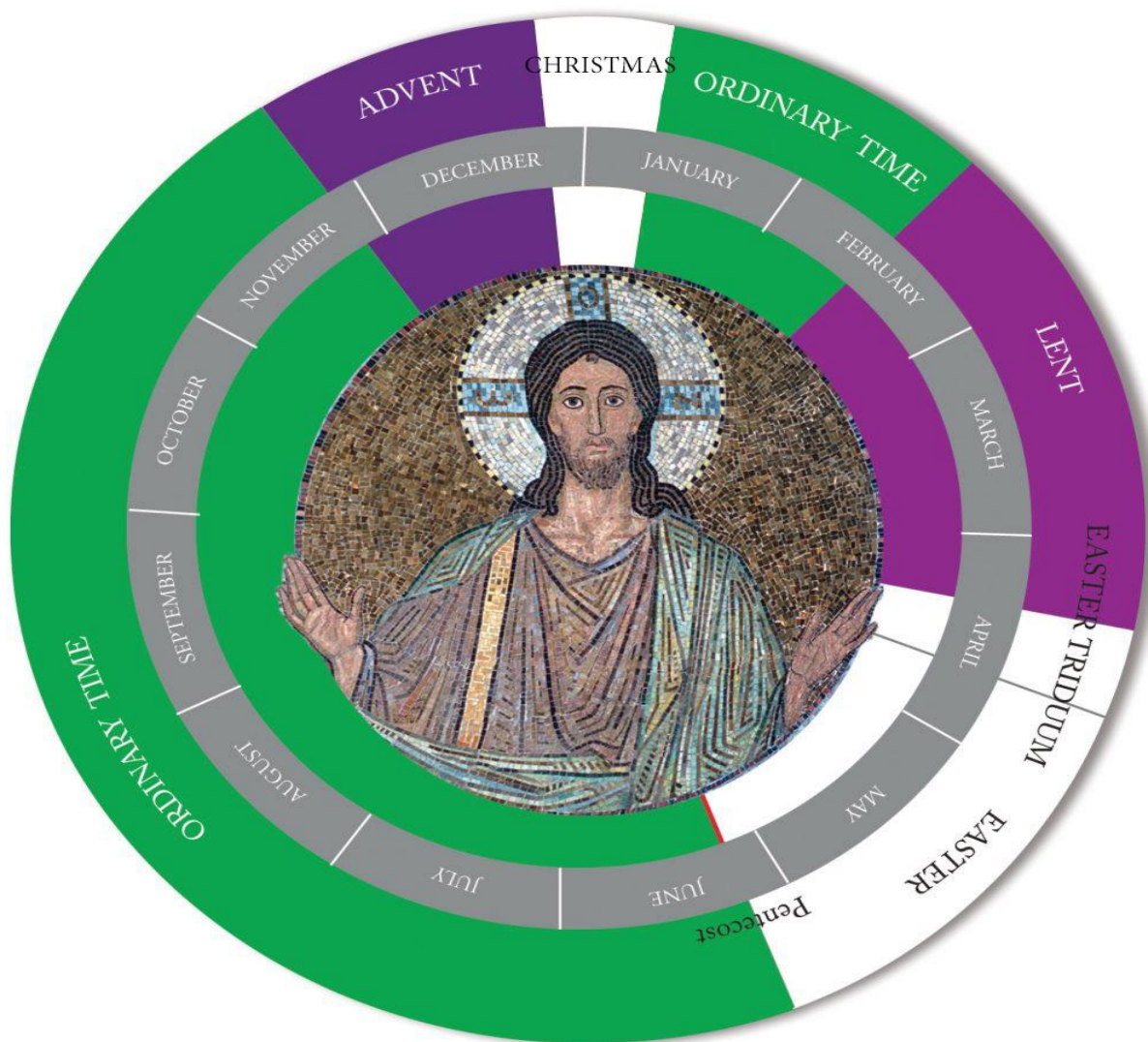
Advent – purple

Christmas (gold and/or white)

Ordinary Time (green)

Lent (purple)

Easter (gold and/or white)



Rediscovering the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

by Rev. Jerry J. Pokorsky*

We received the Gifts of the Holy Spirit when we were confirmed, bringing to fullness the graces of Baptism. But the Gifts are easy to neglect. (How many of them can you identify?) So it's profitable to reconsider and rediscover the gifts promised by the Prophet Isaiah and fulfilled on Pentecost: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.

The gift of Wisdom illumines the mind and instills an attraction to the divine. But our spiritual attention deficit disorder easily distracts us. The Israelites, impatient for the return of Moses from the Mount, turned away from God and worshiped a golden calf. Even the fleeting work of human hands can distract us – and the distractions today are more sophisticated than ever.

Years before he received a cardinal's hat, the great Carlo Caffarra accompanied a priest friend to New York City. He was awestruck by the skyscrapers: "How is it possible for a man to have faith with such magnificence?" Alas, as we know since 9/11, even those towers can collapse. The gift of wisdom remains – and is necessary to keep us focused on the Prize.

The gift of Understanding connects the various truths and orders our thinking in a heavenly direction. With understanding, we begin to see the hand of God in every event of our lives and to recognize that the Cross is the key to unlocking the mystery of our suffering. God's providence can be temporarily thwarted through the misuse of our freedom, but never ultimately defeated. Renewing a desire for the gift of understanding reignites our trust in His providence.

The gift of Counsel perfects the virtue of prudence in us, illuminating the will of God in particular circumstances. Jesus teaches, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." (John 14:15) But in many situations, it's challenging to apply His laws: burning questions of war, immigration, or even simple matters such as whether to work late again tonight and miss the family meal. We need to ask the Holy Spirit to inflame the gift of counsel to fortify our prudence.

The gift of Fortitude is courage under fire, enduring some evil while holding fast to the truth. When Jesus says forgive your enemies, it's disturbing to think that we have (and should have) enemies. Enduring, resisting, and confronting the enemies of God is necessary for every Christian life. But we often cower in silence, hoping the demons will leave us in peace; and sometimes we even defect to the enemy. The Devil will not give up until his victory is complete. With God's grace, neither should we. The gift of fortitude is vital if we are to avoid mortal sin and confront evil according to our means and state of life.

The gift of Knowledge enables us to perceive reality as God sees it. In the first chapter of Genesis, God looks at His handiwork: "And God saw that it was good." The gift of knowledge leads us to rejoice with the Psalmist: "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (Psalm 139:14) If with the gift of knowledge we saw ourselves as God sees us, how many marriages would remain intact? How many unborn babies would see daylight?

The gift of Piety reverences almighty God and elevates religious practices with humility, trust, and love for His Majesty. In Genesis, Abel sacrifices “the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions.” (Gen. 4:4) God accepts Abel’s sacrifices because he offers them with devotion. But the Lord rejects Cain’s offering. St. Augustine speculates that Cain gave God his offerings, but not entirely because his heart was divided. (*City of God* XV.7).

Cain lied to God; he just went through the ritual motions. But Abel’s external holocaust expressed his interior disposition, just as the Cross represents the perfect obedience of Jesus. The celebration of the Mass, according to the rubrics, is praiseworthy. But if the externals are without inner reverence, our worship is in vain. Priests and people need to pray for the gift of piety.

Fear of the Lord is a sense of awe in the divine presence and causes us to fear separation from His love. After the miraculous catch of fish, Jesus calls Peter to be a member of his Band of Brothers. In awe, Peter falls to his knees and exclaims, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” (Luke 5:8) Peter’s fear of the Lord is endearing but imperfect, in need of purification over his entire life.

After the Resurrection but before Pentecost, Jesus encourages Peter to love Him with sacrificial love. “Simon, son of John, do you love me [*agapas*, sacrificial love] more than these?” (John 21:15) In repenting of his threefold denial, Peter seems unable, without the Holy Spirit, to express his love for Jesus beyond filial love. “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you [*philō*, friendship love].” (John 21:16)

In the final scene of his life, Peter returns to Rome and is crucified, joining his beloved Savior in sacrificial love. The Holy Spirit, at last, purifies and elevates Peter’s servile fear.

The seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit were embedded deep within our souls on the day of our Confirmation. They cannot be dislodged, only suppressed by our refusal to open our hearts to Him. But if we want to be full members of His Church, the gifts are available for the asking: “Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.” (Mt. 7:7)

The transformation is not instantaneous. It comes with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit conferred on us at our personal Pentecost, by frequently remembering them and boldly practicing them in sacrificial love.

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created. And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

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