



By Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers

The Deacon and Confirmation

Connecting the Faith to everyday life

What role should deacons play in the Sacrament of Confirmation? The Catechism of the Catholic Church notes that “in the Latin Rite, the ordinary minister of Confirmation is the bishop. If the need arises, the bishop may grant the faculty of administering Confirmation to priests” (No. 1313). Additionally, “if a Christian is in danger of death, any priest can give him Confirmation” (No. 1314). It seems, therefore, that deacons are left out of this sacrament.

The Sacrament of Confirmation, which seals the Sacrament of Baptism, gives us the capacity for spiritual self-mastery and releases the fullness of the Holy Spirit’s power in us.

It gives the person receiving it a greater capacity to follow Christ during times of temptation to sin. Whether the sacrament is received before first Communion, as a teenager or at the Easter Vigil, life presents us with several choices, and we need God’s help to make the right decisions and live virtuously.

Contemporary society presents teenagers, in particular, with incredible tests of purity and moral courage amid the cultural constructs of wokeism, and the so-called redefinition of marriage and gender. The Sacrament of Confirmation gives them, and us, the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, fear of the Lord.

These gifts of the Holy Spirit are supernaturally infused into the soul to provide the power to overcome the allurements of sin that separates us from God’s love, thus allowing us to rise to new levels of holiness. This spiritual strengthening is exactly what the current generation of Catholic young people need to keep Christ as the focus and center of their lives.

How can deacons help? The key to confirmation (and, in fact, to all the sacraments) is freely cooperating with the grace of the

Holy Spirit that is given. Confirmation classes are often used to teach young people about the Faith, but the reality is that for many adolescents there is a serious disconnect between the Faith they are learning and their everyday lives. Deacons, as ministers of evangelization, can help make a deeper connection between the Faith and their lived experience by teaching teens how to use the grace of the sacrament to experience the depth of God’s love for them in a relationship of loving and life-giving communion.

So often we teach the Faith as a subject in school or as a series of dos and don’ts: “You can’t have sex until you’re married”; “You can’t use drugs or alcohol”; “You can’t lie or steal.” While these

statements may be true, presenting the Faith in this way leaves the impression that Catholicism is merely a series of rules and regulations that restrict their freedom. The deacon can help

the young person understand that the exact opposite is true: following the Church’s teachings and embracing virtue frees them to become the person that God created and calls them to be.

Outstanding athletes distinguish themselves from others by employing disciplinary practices. They adhere to a regimented training schedule that restricts what they can eat, how often they can be with friends, play video games and use social media. Athletes willingly sacrifice good things to be great.

Deacons can help young people to see that, just like the athlete, the virtuous life produced by cooperating with the grace of the Sacrament of Confirmation is not something imposed on us but, rather, something we choose freely, which can lead us to better discover the purpose and meaning of our lives. **TD**

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