

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The second sacrament of initiation is Confirmation. In Confirmation the individual confirms their commitment to God. If you like, it is the second half of baptism, where the gift of the Holy Spirit is not only confirmed in the person's life but is fulfilled and completed.

Confirmation is ordinarily administered by the bishop because the sacrament is also a public ceremony of the individual's full admission into the Catholic Church, and the bishop represents the apostolic authority of the whole Catholic Church in his diocese.

While Confirmation is usually administered to young people around the age of fourteen, it is also administered to people who are received into full communion with the church from other Christian groups, to adults who have just been baptized, and to Catholics who, for whatever reason, were never confirmed. In these cases, the bishop will often delegate Confirmation to the parish priest. That is why you will see the parish priest confirm at the Easter vigil or when a person is received into full communion.

A priest may also confirm a person who converts on their deathbed. On one occasion I was blessed to baptize, confirm, hear a confession, give communion, and marry a person who wanted to get right with the church before their illness ended in death. The only sacrament he did not receive on that day was ordination!

The proper subject for Confirmation is a person who has not been confirmed. If there is any doubt, the person will be conditionally confirmed. The proper minister is the bishop or priest to whom it is delegated. The proper form is the spoken words, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit". The proper matter is sacred chrism and the laying on of hands.

Your Pastor,
Fr. Longenecker