

# Doctrinal Session

## APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA Confirmation

*[Peter and John] went down and prayed for [the Samaritans] that they might receive the Holy Spirit. . . . Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.* (Acts 8:15, 17)

### Insight

*If you had to describe yourself in one word, what would that be? Who, besides yourself, would affirm that description?*

Kathy had finished her residency and her medical boards. She had been signed on with a private practice for a year now. While she was going through school and enduring residency, the days and months seemed to drag by. Once established in private practice, seeing patients, making diagnoses, and treating the ill, the days and months went by all too quickly.

Kathy wasn't sure exactly when the feeling came over her. But in the midst of her work she finally truly felt like she was a doctor. She knew she had been awarded the title a while back. But now she was helping others, putting all of that late-night studying to good use. People looked to her for help and trusted her. Graduating from med school was one thing. She was now "graduated" in the eyes of her patients as an MD.

### For Reflection . . .

The goal of Confirmation is to lead the Christian to a more intimate relationship with Christ and a more lively familiarity with the Holy Spirit. Without the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist, a person's Baptism is valid and effective yet incomplete.

*How has your own preparation led you to a deeper relationship with Jesus and enlivened your sense of the Holy Spirit?*

*Imagine yourself as one of the Samaritans. What stirs within you as you listen to Peter and John praying for the Spirit on your behalf?*

### Additional Background

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 1285–1321

**United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:** pages 201–211

**Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 265–270

### Church Teaching

#### *Foretold and Fulfilled*

Prophets in ancient Israel reminded the people that the Spirit of the Lord would rest upon the coming Messiah for his mission (see Isaiah 11:2 as an example). The Holy Spirit would not remain solely with the Messiah but be given to the entire messianic people (see Ezekiel 36:25-27 and Joel 3:1-2). Indeed, Jesus promised this outpouring of the Holy Spirit, something that happened at Pentecost (see Acts 2:1-4).

#### *Anointed and Accompanied*

The Sacrament of Confirmation is ordinarily conferred by a bishop to emphasize that the newly confirmed are more closely bonded to the ecclesial community of the Church. Any baptized person who is not yet confirmed can receive this sacrament. It is, like Baptism, only celebrated once, for it too leaves a unique, indelible spiritual mark upon the person.

Confirmation increases and deepens baptismal grace by

- Grounding us further as adopted sons and daughters of God
- Uniting us firmly to Jesus Christ
- Increasing the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in us
- Strengthening our bond with the Church more perfectly
- Helping us to spread and defend the faith in all circumstances

Through this sacrament, the Holy Spirit accompanies us as we undertake the mission of Christ in the world. Our continuing conversion to the Good News of Jesus and how we mature in our witness to that message is assisted by the gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit.