

## **Q&A ON BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT**

*Q. If I have been Baptised and Confirmed, why do I need “Baptism in the Spirit”? Surely I have received the Holy Spirit already?*

A. We do indeed receive the Holy Spirit and all the gifts at Baptism. However, as most people are baptised as infants, they have not made a personal choice to receive and use the gifts given to them. Confirmation is supposed to rectify this problem and teach people to make a personal commitment to their faith and unpack and use all the gifts of the Spirit

However, generally during the teaching to prepare the recipient for Confirmation, only the Old Testament gifts are typically taught and that is usually the only ones mentioned during the Sacrament of Confirmation. However, the Holy Spirit does not limit the gifts but gives all of them.

It’s like someone who receives Christmas gifts and only opens one or two and the others are stored away under the bed, still wrapped up and forgotten until they are reminded of them. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is an opportunity to revisit the gifts you received at Confirmation – both the Old Testament gifts and New Testament charisms – to pull them out from under the bed, take off the wrapping paper and start using them. Usually the first one is your Prayer Language although not always. Gradually you can check for more unwrapped gifts and ask the Holy Spirit to give you opportunities to use them.

*Q. Is Baptism in the Spirit a one-off experience? Can I ask for it again?*

A. Unlike the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation which cannot be repeated, Baptism in the Holy Spirit is an ongoing process of opening yourself up to being continually re-filled with the Holy Spirit, and surrendering yourself to being used by Him. Generally, people do not manifest all the gifts of the Spirit the first time they invite the Holy Spirit to come into their lives: it can be a process which might spread over many months and years. When St Paul wrote: “Be filled with the Holy Spirit” the words he used actually mean “Be constantly being filled...” Just as the Apostles in Acts asked many times for a fresh infilling, we need to do the same. The Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion are excellent opportunities to open ourselves to a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit.

*Q. Do gifts happen automatically when we ask for them?*

A. The Scriptures, confirmed by the teaching of the Catholic Church, say that the Spirit distributes His gifts as He wills, so we need to be submitted to God’s will, not expect Him to do whatever we want. On the other hand, when we pray in humility and surrender, with a real thirst for Him to help us, we can confidently expect God to be generous with giving what He knows we need.

We also have to “step out in faith” and start acting with our natural abilities before we can experience God blessing us with supernatural charisms. For example, if we sincerely want the gift of praying in tongues, we not only have to ask for it but also open our mouths and start praying, using our voices to make sounds and form unknown words. If we want to experience the gift of knowledge and prophecy, we need to ask the Spirit for inspired words or pictures and then speak them out to people, trusting that they will be received and bear fruit. If someone asks us to pray for them to be healed, we need to pronounce a prayer of healing in Jesus name, trusting not in our own ability but in His power to heal.