

Confirmation Resource Packet

Dioecese of Kansas City-St. Joseph



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SCRIPTURE PASSAGES PERTAINING TO CONFIRMATION

READINGS FROM THE GOSPELS

Mt 5:1-12	Theirs in the kingdom of heaven
Mt 16:24-27	If anyone wishes to follow me, let him deny himself.
Mt 25:14-30	Because you have been faithful in small matters, come into the joy of your master.
Mk 1:9-11	He saw the Spirit descending and remaining on him.
Lk 4:16-22	The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.
Lk 8:4-15	Parable of the Sower
Lk 10:21-24	I bless you, Father, for revealing these things to children.
Jn 7:37-39	From the heart of the Lord shall flow fountains of living water.
Jn 14:15-17	The Spirit of truth will be with you for ever.
Jn 15:18-27	The Spirit of truth will be my witness.
Jn 16:5-13	The Spirit of truth will lead you to the complete truth.

READINGS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

Acts 1:3-8	You will receive the power of the Holy Spirit and be my witnesses.
Acts 2:1-33	Pentecost
Acts 8:1-17	They laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.
Acts 10:1-44	The Holy Spirit came down on all those listening to the Word of God.
Acts 19:1-6	Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?
Rom 5:1-8	The love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.
Rom 8:14-17	The Spirit and our spirit bear united witness that we are children of God.
Rom 8:26-27	The Spirit himself will express our plea.
I Cor 12:4-13	There is one and the same Spirit giving to each as he wills.
Gal 5:16-25	If we live in the Spirit, let us be directed by the Spirit.
Eph 1:3-19	You have been signed with the seal of the Holy Spirit.
Eph 4:1-6	There is one Body, one Spirit and on baptism.

READINGS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

Is 11:1-4	On him the spirit of the Lord rests.
Is 42:1-3	I have endowed my servant with my Spirit.
Is 61:1-9	Anointed by the Lord God.
Ez 36:24-28	I will place a new Spirit in your midst.
Joel 2:23-30	I will pour out my Spirit on all.

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

PASSAGES ON CHRISTIAN INITIATION, CONFIRMATION, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Parents and catechists designated to prepare others for Confirmation should be encouraged to read key documents on the sacrament including the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) passages on Christian Initiation 1212, 1229, 1275, 1533, 1680; Confirmation 1285-1321; the Holy Spirit 687-747, and those listed in the index. Parents and catechists should have a personal copy of the CCC.

PARAGRAPHS ON CHRISTIAN INITIATION

_____ 1210 - 1211	Section Two: Seven Sacraments
_____ 1212	The Sacraments of Christian Initiation
_____ 1229 - 1233	How is the Sacrament of Baptism Celebrated
_____ 1275	In Brief
_____ 1533	The Sacraments at the Service of Communion
_____ 1680	Sacraments and Christian funerals

SECTION ON THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

_____ 1285	Article 2: The Sacrament of Confirmation
_____ 1286 – 1289	I. Confirmation in the Economy of Salvation
_____ 1290 – 1292	Two traditions: East and West
_____ 1293 – 1296	II. The Signs and the Rite of Confirmation
_____ 1297 – 1301	The celebration of Confirmation
_____ 1302 – 1305	III. The Effects of Confirmation
_____ 1306 – 1311	IV. Who Can Receive This Sacrament?
_____ 1312 – 1314	V. The Minister of Confirmation
_____ 1315 – 1321	In Brief

SECTION ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

_____ 687 – 688	Article 8: I Believe in the Holy Spirit
_____ 689 – 690	I. The Joint Mission of the Son and the Spirit
_____ 691 – 701	II. The Name, Titles and Symbols of the Holy Spirit
_____ 702	III. God's Spirit and Word in the Time of the Promises
_____ 703 – 704	In creation
_____ 705 – 706	The Spirit of the promise
_____ 707 – 708	In Theophanies and the Law
_____ 709 – 710	In the Kingdom and the Exile
_____ 711 – 716	Expectation of the Messiah and his Spirit

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME

_____ 717 – 720	John, precursor, prophet and Baptist
_____ 721 – 726	“Rejoice, you who are full of grace”
_____ 727 – 730	Christ Jesus

THE SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH IN THE LAST DAYS

_____ 731 – 732	Pentecost
_____ 733 – 736	The Holy Spirit – God’s gift
_____ 737 – 741	The Holy Spirit and the Church
_____ 742 – 747	In Brief

CODE OF CANON LAW

PART I: THE SACRAMENTS

Can. 840

The sacraments of the New Testament were instituted by Christ the Lord and entrusted to the Church. As actions of Christ and of the Church, they are signs and means by which faith is expressed and strengthened, worship is offered to God and our sanctification is brought about.

Thus they contribute in the most effective manner to establishing, strengthening and manifesting ecclesiastical communion. Accordingly, in the celebration of the sacraments both the sacred ministers and all the other members of Christ's faithful must show great reverence and due care.

Can. 841

Since the sacraments are the same throughout the universal Church, and belong to the divine deposit of faith, only the supreme authority in the Church can approve or define what is needed for their validity. It belongs to the same authority, or to another competent authority in accordance with can. 838 §3 and 4, to determine what is required for their lawful celebration, administration and reception and for the order to be observed in their celebration.

Can. 842

§1 A person who has not received baptism cannot validly be admitted to the other sacraments.

§2 The sacraments of baptism, confirmation and the blessed Eucharist so complement one another that all three are required for full Christian initiation.

Can. 843

§1 Sacred ministers may not deny the sacraments to those who opportunely ask for them, are properly disposed and are not prohibited by law from receiving them.

§2 According to their respective offices in the Church, both pastors of souls and all other members of Christ's faithful have a duty to ensure that those who ask for the sacraments are prepared for their reception. This should be done through proper evangelization and catechetical instruction, in accordance with the norms laid down by the competent authority.

Can. 844

§1 Catholic ministers may lawfully administer the sacraments only to catholic members of Christ's faithful, who equally may lawfully receive them only from catholic ministers, except as provided in §2, 3 and 4 of this canon and in can. 861 §2.

§2 Whenever necessity requires or a genuine spiritual advantage commends it, and provided the danger of error or indifferentism is avoided, Christ's faithful for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a catholic minister, may lawfully receive the sacraments of penance, the Eucharist and anointing of the sick from non-Catholic ministers in whose Churches these sacraments are valid.

§3 Catholic ministers may lawfully administer the sacraments of penance, the Eucharist and anointing of the sick to members of the eastern Churches not in full communion with the Catholic Church, if they spontaneously ask for them and are properly disposed. The same applies to members of other Churches which the Apostolic See judges to be in the same position as the aforesaid eastern Churches so far as the sacraments are concerned.

§4 If there is a danger of death or if, in the judgment of the diocesan Bishop or of the Episcopal Conference, there is some other grave and pressing need, catholic ministers may lawfully administer these same sacraments to other Christians not in full communion with the catholic Church, who cannot approach a minister of their own community and who spontaneously ask for them, provided that they demonstrate the catholic faith in respect of these sacraments and are properly disposed.

§5 In respect of the cases dealt with in §2, 3 and 4, the diocesan Bishop or the Episcopal Conference is not to issue general norms except after consultation with the competent authority, at least at the local level, of the non-Catholic Church or community concerned.

Can. 845

§1 Because they imprint a character, the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and order cannot be repeated.

§2 If after diligent enquiry a prudent doubt remains as to whether the sacraments mentioned in §1 have been conferred at all, or conferred validly, they are to be conferred conditionally.

Can. 846

§1 The liturgical books, approved by the competent authority, are to be faithfully followed in the celebration of the sacraments. Accordingly, no one may on a personal initiative add to or omit or alter anything in those books.

§2 The ministers are to celebrate the sacraments according to their own rite.

Can. 847

§1 In administering sacraments in which holy oils are to be used, the minister must use oil made from olives or other plants, which, except as provided in can. 999, n. 2, has recently been consecrated or blessed by a Bishop. Older oil is not to be used except in a case of necessity.

§2 The parish priest is to obtain the holy oils from his own Bishop and keep them carefully in fitting custody

Can. 848

For the administration of the sacraments the minister may not ask for anything beyond the offerings which are determined by the competent authority, and he must always ensure that the needy are not deprived of the help of the sacraments by reason of poverty.

PART II: THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

Can. 879

The sacrament of confirmation confers a character. By it the baptized continue their path of Christian initiation. They are enriched with the gift of the Holy Spirit, and are more closely linked

to the Church. They are made strong and more firmly obliged by word and deed to witness to Christ and to spread and defend the faith.

CHAPTER I: THE CELEBRATION OF CONFIRMATION

Can. 880

§1 The sacrament of confirmation is conferred by anointing with chrism on the forehead in a laying on of hands, and by the words prescribed in the approved liturgical books.

§2 The chrism to be used in the sacrament of confirmation must have been consecrated by a Bishop, even when the sacrament is administered by a priest.

Can. 881

It is desirable that the sacrament of confirmation be celebrated in a church and indeed during Mass. However, for a just and reasonable cause it may be celebrated apart from Mass and in any fitting place.

CHAPTER II: THE MINISTER OF CONFIRMATION

Can. 882

The ordinary minister of confirmation is a Bishop. A priest can also validly confer this sacrament if he has the faculty to do so, either from the general law or by way of a special grant from the competent authority.

Can. 883

The following have, by law, the faculty to administer confirmation:

1. within the confines of their jurisdiction, those who in law are equivalent to a diocesan Bishop;
2. in respect of the person to be confirmed, the priest who by virtue of his office or by mandate of the diocesan Bishop baptizes an adult or admits a baptized adult into full communion with the catholic Church;
3. in respect of those in danger of death, the parish priest or indeed any priest.

Can. 884

§1 The diocesan Bishop is himself to administer confirmation or to ensure that it is administered by another Bishop. If necessity so requires, he may grant to one or several specified priests the faculty to administer this sacrament.

§2 For a grave reason the Bishop, or the priest who by law or by special grant of the competent authority has the faculty to confirm, may in individual cases invite other priests to join with him in administering the sacrament.

Can. 885

§1 The diocesan Bishop is bound to ensure that the sacrament of confirmation is conferred upon his subjects who duly and reasonably request it.

§2 A priest who has this faculty must use it for those in whose favor it was granted.

Can. 886

§1 A Bishop in his own diocese may lawfully administer the sacrament of confirmation even to the faithful who are not his subjects, unless there is an express prohibition by their own Ordinary.

§2 In order lawfully to administer confirmation in another diocese, unless it be to his own subjects, a Bishop needs the permission, at least reasonably presumed, of the diocesan Bishop.

Can. 887

A priest who has the faculty to administer confirmation may, within the territory assigned to him, lawfully administer this sacrament even to those from outside the territory, unless there is a prohibition by their own Ordinary. He cannot, however, validly confirm anyone in another territory, without prejudice to the provision of can. 883, n.3.

Can. 888

Within the territory in which they can confer confirmation, ministers may confirm even in exempt places.

CHAPTER III: THE PERSONS TO BE CONFIRMED

Can. 889

§1 Every baptized person who is not confirmed, and only such a person, is capable of receiving confirmation.

§2 Apart from the danger of death, to receive confirmation lawfully a person who has the use of reason must be suitably instructed, properly disposed and able to renew the baptismal promises.

Can. 890

The faithful are bound to receive this sacrament at the proper time. Parents and pastors of souls, especially parish priests, are to see that the faithful are properly instructed to receive the sacrament and come to it at the opportune time.

Can. 891

The sacrament of confirmation is to be conferred on the faithful at about the age of discretion, unless the Episcopal Conference has decided on a different age, or there is a danger of death or, in the judgment of the minister, a grave reason suggests otherwise.

CHAPTER IV: SPONSORS

Can. 892

As far as possible the person to be confirmed is to have a sponsor. The sponsor's function is to take care that the person confirmed behaves as a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfils the duties inherent in this sacrament.

Can. 893

§1 A person who would undertake the office of sponsor must fulfill the conditions mentioned in can. 874 which reads:

§1 To be admitted to undertake the office of sponsor, a person must:

- *be appointed by the candidate for baptism, or by the parents or whoever stands in their place, or failing these, by the parish priest or*

the minister; to be appointed the person must be suitable for this role and have the intention of fulfilling it;

- *be not less than sixteen years of age, unless a different age has been stipulated by the diocesan Bishop, or unless the parish priest or the minister considers that there is a just reason for an exception to be made;*
- *be a catholic who has been confirmed and has received the blessed Eucharist, and who lives a life of faith which befits the role to be undertaken;*
- *not labor under a canonical penalty, whether imposed or declared;*
- *not be either the father or the mother of the person to be baptized.*

§2 A baptized person who belongs to a non-Catholic ecclesial community may be admitted only in company with a catholic sponsor, and then simply as a witness to the baptism.

§2 It is desirable that the sponsor chosen be the one who undertook this role at baptism.

CHAPTER V: PROOF AND REGISTRATION OF CONFIRMATION

Can. 894

To establish that confirmation has been conferred, the provisions of can. 876 are to be observed.

Can. 895

The names of those confirmed, the minister, the parents, the sponsors and the place and date of the confirmation are to be recorded in the confirmation register of the diocesan curia or, wherever this has been prescribed by the Episcopal Conference or by the diocesan Bishop, in the register to be kept in the parochial archive. The parish priest must notify the parish priest of the place of the baptism that the confirmation was conferred, so that it be recorded in the baptismal register, in accordance with can. 535 §2 which reads

“In the register of baptisms, a note is to be made of confirmation and of matters pertaining to the canonical status of the faithful by reason of marriage, without prejudice to the provision of can. 1133, and by reason of adoption, the reception of sacred order, the making of perpetual profession in a religious institute, or a change of rite. These annotations are always to be reproduced on a baptismal certificate.”

Can. 896

If the parish priest of the place was not present, the minister, personally or through someone else, is to notify him as soon as possible that the confirmation was conferred.

APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

November 30, 1972

Author: Pope Paul VI

Servant of the Servants of God for an Everlasting Memorial

The sharing of the divine nature which is granted to men through the grace of Christ has a certain likeness to the origin, development, and nourishing of natural life. The faithful are born anew by baptism, strengthened by the sacrament of confirmation, and finally are sustained by the food of eternal life in the Eucharist. By means of these sacraments of Christian initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity. It has rightly been written: 'The body is washed, that the soul may be cleansed; the body is anointed, that the soul may be consecrated; the body is signed, that the soul too may be fortified; the body is overshadowed by the laying on of hands, that the soul too may be enlightened by the Spirit; the body is fed on the body and blood of Christ, that the soul too should be nourished by God.'¹

Conscious of its pastoral purpose, the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council devoted special attention of these sacraments of initiation. It prescribed that the rites should be suitably revised in order to make them more suited to the understanding of the faithful. Since the *Rite for the Baptism of Children*, revised at the mandate of that General Council and published at our command, is already in use, it is now fitting to publish the rite of confirmation, in order to show the unity of Christian initiation in its true light.

In fact, careful attention and application have been devoted in these last years to the task of revising the manner of celebrating this sacrament. The aim of this work has been that 'the intimate connection which this sacrament has with the whole of Christian initiation should be more lucidly set forth'.² The link between confirmation and the other sacraments of initiation is shown forth more clearly not only by closer association of these sacraments but also by the rite and words by which confirmation is conferred. This is done so that the rite and words of this sacrament may 'express more clearly the holy things which they signify. The Christian people, so far as possible, should be able to understand them with ease and take full and active part in the celebration as a community.'³

For that purpose, it has been our wish also to include in this revision what concerns the very essence of the rite of confirmation, through which the faithful receive the Holy Spirit as a Gift.

The New Testament shows how the Holy Spirit assisted Christ in fulfilling his messianic mission. On receiving the baptism of John, Jesus saw the Spirit descending on him (see Mark I :10) and remaining with him (see John I :32). He was impelled by the Spirit to undertake his public ministry as the Messiah, relying on the Spirit's presence and assistance. Teaching the people of

Nazareth, he shows by what he said that the words of Isaiah, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,' referred to himself (see Luke 4:17-21).

He later promised his disciples that the Holy Spirit would help them also to bear fearless witness to their faith even before persecutors (see Luke 12:12). The day before he suffered, he assured his apostles that he would send the Spirit of truth from his Father (see John 15:26) to stay with them 'for ever' (John 14:16) and help them to be his witnesses (see John 15:26). Finally, after his resurrection, Christ promised the coming descent of the Holy Spirit: 'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes down on you; then you are to be my witnesses' (Acts 1:8; see Luke 24:49).

And in fact, on the day of the feast of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came down in an extraordinary way on the Apostles as they were gathered together with Mary the mother of Jesus and the group of disciples. They were so 'filled with' the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4) that by divine inspiration they began to proclaim 'the mighty works of God'. Peter regarded the Spirit who had thus come down upon the Apostles as the gift of the messianic age (see Acts 2:17-18). Those who believed the Apostles' preaching were then baptized and they too received 'the gift of the Holy Spirit' (Acts 2:38). From that time on the apostles, in fulfillment of Christ's wish, imparted the gift of the Spirit to the newly baptized by the laying on of hands to complete the grace of baptism. Hence it is that the Letter to the Hebrews lists among the first elements of Christian instruction the teaching about baptisms and the laying on of hands (Hebrews 6:2). This laying on of hands is rightly recognized by Catholic tradition as the beginning of the sacrament of confirmation, which in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church.

This makes clear the specific importance of confirmation for sacramental initiation by which the faithful 'as members of the living Christ are incorporated into him and made like him through baptism and through confirmation and the eucharist'.⁴ In baptism, the newly baptised receive forgiveness of sins, adoption as sons of God, and the character of Christ, by which they are made members of the Church and for the first time become sharers in the priesthood of their Saviour (see I Peter 2:5, 9). Through the sacrament of confirmation, those who have been born anew in baptism receive the inexpressible Gift, the Holy Spirit himself, by which 'they are endowed... with special strength'.⁵ Moreover, having received the character of this sacrament, they are 'bound more intimately to the Church'⁶ and 'they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith both by word and by deed as true witnesses of Christ'.⁷ Finally, confirmation is so closely linked with the holy eucharist⁸ that the faithful, after being signed by holy baptism and confirmation, are incorporated fully into the body of Christ by participation in the eucharist.⁹

From ancient times the conferring of the gift of the Holy Spirit has been carried out in the Church with various rites. These rites underwent many changes in the East and the West, while always keeping the significance of a conferring of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰

In many Eastern rites, it seems that from early times a rite of anointing, not then clearly distinguished from baptism, prevailed for the conferring of the Holy Spirit. That rite continues in use today in the greater part of the churches of the East.

In the West there are very ancient witnesses concerning the part of Christian initiation which was later distinctly recognized as the sacrament of confirmation. After the baptismal washing and before the Eucharistic meal, the performance of many rites is indicated, such as anointing, the

laying on of the hand and consignation.¹¹ These are contained both in liturgical documents¹² and in many testimonies of the Fathers. In the course of the centuries, problems and doubts arose as to what belonged with certainty to the essence of the rite of confirmation. It is fitting to mention at least some of the elements which, from the thirteenth century onwards, in the ecumenical councils and in the documents of the popes, cast light on the importance of anointing while at the same time not allowing the laying on of hands to be obscured.

Our predecessor Innocent III wrote: 'By the anointing of the forehead the laying on of the hand is designated, which is otherwise called confirmation, since through it the Holy Spirit is given for growth and strength.'¹³ Another of our predecessors, Innocent IV, recalls that the Apostles conferred the Holy Spirit 'through the laying on of the hand, which confirmation or the anointing of the forehead represents'.¹⁴ In the profession of faith of Emperor Michael Palaeologus, which was read at the Second Council of Lyons, mention is made of the sacrament of confirmation, which 'bishops confer by the laying on of the hands, anointing with chrism those who have been baptised'.¹⁵ The Decree for the Armenians, issued by the Council of Florence, declares that the 'matter' of the sacrament of confirmation is 'chrism made of olive oil... and balsam',¹⁶ and, quoting the words of the Acts of the Apostles concerning Peter and John, who gave the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands (see Acts 8:17), it adds: 'in place of that laying on of the hand, in the Church confirmation is given'.¹⁷ The Council of Trent, though it had no intention of defining the essential rite of confirmation, only designated it with the name of the holy chrism of confirmation.¹⁸ Benedict XIV made this declaration: 'Therefore let this be said, which is beyond dispute: in the Latin Church the sacrament of confirmation is conferred by using sacred chrism or olive oil, mixed with balsam and blessed by the bishop, and by tracing the sign of the cross by the minister of the sacrament on the forehead of the recipient, while the same minister pronounces the words of the form'.¹⁹

Many theologians, taking account of these declarations and traditions, maintained that for valid administration of confirmation there was required only anointing with chrism, done by placing the hand on the forehead. In spite of this, however, in the rites of the Latin Church a laying of hands upon those to be confirmed was always prescribed before the anointing.

With regard to the words of the rite by which the Holy Spirit is given, it should be noted that, already in the primitive Church, Peter and John, in order to complete the initiation of those baptized in Samaria, prayed for them to receive the Holy Spirit and then laid hands on them (see Acts 8:15-17). In the East, in the fourth and fifth centuries there appear in the rite of anointing the first indications of the words 'signaculum doni Spiritus Sancti'.²⁰ These words were quickly accepted by the Church of Constantinople and are still used by the Churches of the Byzantine rite. In the West, however, the words of this rite, which completed baptism, were not defined until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. But in the twelfth century Roman Pontifical the formula which later became the common one first occurs: 'I sign you with the sign of the cross and confirm you with the chrism of salvation. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'.²¹ From what we have recalled, it is clear that in the administration of confirmation in the East and the West, though in different ways, the most important place was occupied by the anointing, which in a certain way represents the apostolic laying on of hands. Since this anointing with chrism well represents the spiritual anointing of the Holy Spirit, who is given to the faithful, we intend to confirm its existence and importance.

As regards the words which are pronounced in confirmation, we have examined with due consideration the dignity of the venerable formula used in the Latin Church, but we judge preferable the very ancient formula belonging to the Byzantine rite, by which the Gift of the Holy Spirit himself is expressed and the outpouring of the Spirit which took place on the day of Pentecost is recalled (see Acts 2:1-4, 38). We therefore adopt this formula, rendering it almost word for word. Therefore, in order that the revision of the rite of confirmation may fittingly embrace also the essence of the sacramental rite, by our supreme apostolic authority we decree and lay down that in the Latin Church the following should be observed for the future:

The Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred through the anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of the hand, and through the words: ‘Accipe Signaculum Doni Spiritus Sancti.’

Although the laying of hands on the candidates, which is done with the prescribed prayer before the anointing, does not belong to the essence of the sacramental rite, it is nevertheless to be held in high esteem, in that it contributes to the integral perfection of that rite and to a clearer understanding of the sacrament. It is evident that this preceding laying on of hands differs from the laying on of the hand by which the anointing is done on the forehead.

Having established and declared all these elements concerning the essential rite of the sacrament of confirmation, we also approve by our apostolic authority the order for the same sacrament, which has been revised by the Congregation for Divine Worship, after consultation with the Congregations for the Doctrine of the Faith, for the Discipline of the Sacraments, and for the Evangelization of Peoples as regards the matters which are within their competence. The Latin edition of the order containing the new form will come into force as soon as it is published; the editions of the vernacular languages, prepared by the episcopal conferences and confirmed by the Apostolic See, will come into force on the dates to be laid down by the individual conferences. The old order may be used until the end of the year 1972. From 1 January 1973, however, only the new order is to be used by those concerned.

We intend that everything that we have laid down and prescribed should be firm and effective in the Latin Church, notwithstanding, where relevant, the apostolic constitutions and ordinances issued by our predecessors, and other prescriptions, even if worthy of special mention.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on the fifteenth day of August, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in the year 1971, the ninth of our pontificate.

PAUL PP. VI

ENDNOTES

1. Tertullian. *De resurrectione mortuorum*. VIII, 3: *CCL*, 2, 931.
2. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC) 71.
3. SC, 21.
4. See *Ad gentes* (AG) 36.
5. See *Lumen Gentium* (LG) 11.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, see AG 11.

8. See *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (PO) 5.
9. See *ibid.*

10. See Origen, *De Principiis*, I, 3. 2: *GCS*, 22. 49 sq.; *Comm. in Ep. ad Rom.*, V, 8; *PG*, 14, 1038; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* XVI, 26; XXI, 1-7: *PG*, 33, 956; 1088–1093.
11. See Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, VII–VIII: *CCL*, 1,282 sq.; B. Botte, *La tradition apostolique de Saint Hippolyte: Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen*, 39 (Münster in W., 1963) 52-4; Ambrose, *De Sacramentis*, II, 24; III, 2, 8; VI, 2, 9: *CSEL*, 73, pp. 36, 42, 74–5; *De Mysteriis*, VII, 42: *ibid.* p.106.
12. *Liber Sacramentorum Romanae Ecclesiae Ordinis Anni circuli*, ed. L. C. Mohlberg: *Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta, Fontes*, IV (Rome, 1960) 75; *Das Sacramentarium Gregorianum nach dem Aachener Urexemplar*, ed. H. Lietzmann: *Liturgiegeschichtliche Quellen*, 3 (Münster in W., 1921) 53 sq.; *Liber Ordinum*, ed. M. Ferotin: *Monumenta Ecclesiae Liturgica*, V (Paris, 1904) 33 sq.; *Missale Gallicanum Vetus*, ed. L. C. Mohlberg: *Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta, Fontes*, III (Rome, 1958) 42; *Missale Gothicum*, ed. L. C. Mohlberg: *Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta*, V (Rome 1961) 67; C. Vogel - R. Elze, *Le Pontifical Romano-Germanique de XIIe siècle, Le Texte, II; Studi e Testi*, 227 (Vatican City, 1963) 109; M. Andrieu, *Le Pontifical Romain au Moyen-Age*, t. 1, *Le Pontifical Romain du XIIe siècle: Studi e Testi*, 86 (Vatican City, 1938) 247 sq., 289; t. 2, *Le Pontifical de la Curie Romaine au XIIIe siècle: Studi e Testi*, 87 (Vatican City, 1940) 452 sq.
13. Ep. *Cum venisset*: *PL*, 215, 285. The profession of faith which the same pope prescribed for the Waldensians includes the following: *Confirmationem ab episcopo factam, id est impositionem manuum, sanctam et venerande accipiendam esse censemus*: *PL*, 215, 1511.
14. Ep. *Sub Catholicae professione*: Mansi, *Conc. Coll.*, t. 23, 579.
15. Mansi, *Conc. Coll.*, t. 24, 71
16. *Epistolae Pontificiae ad Concilium Florentinum spectantes*, ed. G. Hofmann: *Concilium Florentinum*, vol. I, ser. A. part II (Rome. 1944) 128.
17. *Ibid.*, 129.
18. *Concilii Tridentini Actorum pars altera*, ed. S. Eshes: *Concilium Tridentinum*, V, Act. II (Fribourg Br., 1911) 996.
19. Ep. *Ex quo primum tempore*, 52: *Benedicti XIV ... Bullarium*, t. III (Prato, 1847) 320.
20. See Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* XVIII, 33, 1056; Asterius, Bishop of Amasea, *In parabolam de filio prodigo*, in 'Photii Bibliotheca', Cod. 271: *PG*, 104, 213. See also *Epistola cuiusdam Patriarchae Constantinopolitani ad Martyrium Episcopum Antiochenum*: *PG*, 119,900.
21. M. Andrieu, *Le Pontifical Romain au Moyen-Age*, t. 1. *Le Pontifical Romain du XIIe siècle: Studi e Testi*, 86 (Vatican City, 1938) 247.

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CHRISTIAN INITIATION, GENERAL INTRODUCTION

February 19, 1988

Author: Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments

I. INTRODUCTION

In the sacraments of Christian initiation we are freed from the power of darkness and joined to Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. We receive the Spirit of filial adoption and are part of the entire people of God in the celebration of the memorial of the Lord's death and resurrection.

Baptism incorporates us into Christ and forms us into God's people. This first sacrament pardons all our sins, rescues us from the power of darkness, and brings us to the dignity of adopted children, a new creation through water and the Holy Spirit. Hence we are called and are indeed the children of God. By signing us with the gift of the Spirit, **confirmation** makes us more completely the image of the Lord and fills us with the Holy Spirit, so that we may bear witness to him before all the world and work to bring the Body of Christ to its fullness as soon as possible. Finally, coming to the table of the Eucharist, we eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man so that we may have eternal life and show forth the unity of God's people. By offering ourselves with Christ, we share in the universal sacrifice, that is, the entire community of the redeemed offered to God by their High Priest, and we pray for a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit, so that the whole human race may be brought into the unity of God's family. Thus the three sacraments of Christian initiation closely combine to bring us, the faithful of Christ, to his full stature and to enable us to carry out the mission of the entire people of God in the Church and in the world.

II. DIGNITY OF BAPTISM

Baptism, the door to life and to the kingdom of God, is the first sacrament of the New Law, which Christ offered to all, that they might have eternal life. He later entrusted this sacrament and the Gospel to his Church, when he told his apostles: "Go, make disciples of all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Baptism is therefore, above all, the sacrament of that faith by which, enlightened by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we respond to the Gospel of Christ. That is why the Church believes that it is its most basic and necessary duty to inspire all, catechumens, parents of children still to be baptized, and godparents, to that true and living faith by which they hold fast to Christ and enter into or confirm their commitment to the New Covenant. In order to enliven such faith, the Church prescribes the pastoral instruction of catechumens, the preparation of the children's parents, the celebration of God's word, and the profession of faith at the celebration of baptism.

Further, baptism is the sacrament by which its recipients are incorporated into the Church and are built up together in the Spirit into a house where God lives, into a holy nation and a royal

priesthood. Baptism is a sacramental bond of unity linking all who have been signed by it. Because of that unchangeable effect (given expression in the Latin liturgy by the anointing of the baptized

person with chrism in the presence of God's people), the rite of baptism is held in highest honor by all Christians. Once it has been validly celebrated, even if by Christians with whom we are not in full communion, it may never lawfully be repeated.

Baptism, the cleansing with water by the power of the living word, washes away every stain of sin, original and personal, makes us sharers in God's own life and his adopted children. As proclaimed in the prayers for the blessing of water, baptism is a cleansing water of rebirth that makes us God's children born from on high. The blessed Trinity is invoked over those who are to be baptized, so that all who are signed in this name are consecrated to the Trinity and enter into communion with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are prepared for this high dignity and led to it by the scriptural readings, the prayer of the community, and their own profession of belief in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Far superior to the purifications of the Old Law, baptism produces these effects by the power of the mystery of the Lord's passion and resurrection. Those who are baptized are united to Christ in a death like his; buried with him in death, they are given life again with him, and with him they rise again. For baptism recalls and makes present the paschal mystery itself, because in baptism we pass from the death of sin into life. The celebration of baptism should therefore reflect the joy of the resurrection especially when the celebration takes place during the Easter Vigil or on a Sunday.

III. OFFICES AND MINISTRIES OF BAPTISM

The preparation for baptism and Christian instruction are both of vital concern to God's people, the Church, which hands on and nourishes the faith received from the apostles. Through the ministry of the Church, adults are called to the Gospel by the Holy Spirit and infants are baptized in the faith of the Church and brought up in that faith. Therefore it is most important that catechists and other laypersons should work with priests and deacons in the preparation for baptism. In the actual celebration, the people of God (represented not only by the parents, godparents, and relatives, but also, as far as possible, by friends, neighbors, and some members of the local Church) should take an active part. Thus they will show their common faith and the shared joy with which the newly baptized are received into the community of the Church.

It is a very ancient custom of the Church that adults are not admitted to baptism without godparents, members of the Christian community who will assist the candidates at least in the final preparation for baptism and after baptism will help them persevere in the faith and in their lives as Christians. In the baptism of children, as well, godparents are to be present in order to represent both the expanded spiritual family of the one to be baptized and the role of the Church as a mother. As occasion offers, godparents help the parents so that children will come to profess the faith and live up to it.

At least in the later rites of the catechumenate and in the actual celebration of baptism, the part of godparents is to testify to the faith of adult candidates or, together with the parents, to profess the Church's faith, in which children are baptized.

Therefore godparents, chosen by the catechumens or by the families of children to be baptized, must, in the judgment of the pastor, be qualified to carry out the proper liturgical functions mentioned in no. 9.

1. Godparents are persons, other than the parents of candidates, who are designated by the candidates themselves or by a candidate's parents or whoever stands in the place of parents, or, in the absence of these, by the pastor or the minister of baptism. Each candidate may have either a godmother or a godfather or both a godmother and a godfather.
2. Those designated must have the capability and intention of carrying out the responsibility of a godparent and be mature enough to do so. A person sixteen years of age is presumed to have the requisite maturity, but the diocesan bishop may have stipulated another age or the pastor or the minister may decide that there is a legitimate reason for allowing an exception.
3. Those designated as godparents must have received the three sacraments of initiation, baptism, **confirmation**, and Eucharist, and be living a life consistent with faith and with the responsibility of a godparent.
4. Those designated as godparents must also be members of the Catholic Church and be canonically free to carry out this office. At the request of parents, a baptized and believing Christian not belonging to the Catholic Church may act as a Christian witness along with a Catholic godparent. In the case of separated Eastern Christians with whom we do not have full communion the special discipline for the Eastern Churches is to be respected.

The ordinary ministers of baptism are bishops, priests, and deacons.

1. In every celebration of this sacrament they should be mindful that they act in the Church in the name of Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. They should therefore be diligent in the ministry of the word of God and in the manner of celebrating the sacrament. They must avoid any action that the faithful could rightly regard as favoritism.
3. Except in a case of necessity, these ministers are not to confer baptism outside their own territory, even on their own subjects, without the requisite permission.

Bishops are the chief stewards of the mysteries of God and leaders of the entire liturgical life in the Church committed to them. This is why they direct the conferring of baptism, which brings to the recipient a share in the kingly priesthood of Christ. Therefore bishops should personally celebrate baptism, especially at the Easter Vigil. They should have a particular concern for the preparation and baptism of adults.

It is the duty of pastors to assist the bishop in the instruction and baptism of the adults entrusted to their care, unless the bishop makes other provisions. Pastors, with the assistance of catechists or other qualified laypersons, have the duty of preparing the parents and godparents of children through appropriate pastoral guidance and of baptizing the children.

Other priests and deacons, since they are co-workers in the ministry of bishops and pastors, also prepare candidates for baptism and, by the invitation or consent of the bishop or pastor, celebrate the sacrament.

The celebrant of baptism may be assisted by other priests and deacons and also by laypersons in those parts that pertain to them, especially if there are a large number to be baptized. Provision for this is made in various parts of the rituals for adults and for children.

In imminent danger of death and especially at the moment of death, when no priest or deacon is available, any member of the faithful, indeed anyone with the right intention, may and sometimes must administer baptism. In a case simply of danger of death the sacrament should be administered, if possible, by a member of the faithful according to one of the shorter rites provided for this situation. Even in this case a small community should be formed to assist at the rite or, if possible, at least one or two witnesses should be present.

Since they belong to the priestly people, all laypersons, especially parents and, by reason of their work, catechists, midwives, family or social workers or nurses of the sick, as well as physicians and surgeons, should be thoroughly aware, according to their capacities, of the proper method of baptizing in case of emergency. They should be taught by pastors, deacons, and catechists. Bishops should provide appropriate means within their diocese for such instruction.

IV. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF BAPTISM

The water used in baptism should be true water and, both for the sake of authentic sacramental symbolism and for hygienic reasons should be pure and clean.

The baptismal font, or the vessel in which on occasion the water is prepared for celebration of the sacrament in the sanctuary, should be spotlessly clean and of pleasing design.

If the climate requires, provision should be made for the water to be heated beforehand.

Except in case of necessity, a priest or deacon is to use only water that has been blessed for the rite. The water blessed at the Easter Vigil should, if possible, be kept and used throughout the Easter season to signify more clearly the relationship between the sacrament of baptism and the paschal mystery. Outside the Easter season, it is desirable that the water be blessed for each occasion, in order that the words of blessing may explicitly express the mystery of salvation that the Church remembers and proclaims. If the baptistery is supplied with running water, the blessing is given as the water flows.

As the rite for baptizing, either immersion, which is more suitable as a symbol of participation in the death and resurrection of Christ, or pouring may lawfully be used.

The words for conferring baptism in the Latin Church are: I BAPTIZE YOU IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

For celebrating the liturgy of the word of God a suitable place should be provided in the baptistery or in the church.

The baptistery or the area where the baptismal font is located should be reserved for the sacrament of baptism and should be worthy to serve as the place where Christians are reborn in water and the Holy Spirit. The baptistery may be situated in a chapel either inside or outside the church or in some other part of the church easily seen by the faithful; it should be large enough to accommodate a good number of people. After the Easter season, the Easter candle should be kept reverently in the baptistery, in such a way that it can be lighted for the celebration of baptism and so that from it the candles for the newly baptized can easily be lighted.

In the celebration the parts of the rite that are to be celebrated outside the baptistery should be carried out in different areas of the church that most conveniently suit the size of the congregation and the several parts of the baptismal liturgy. When the baptistery cannot accommodate all the catechumens and the congregation, the parts of the rite that are customarily celebrated inside the baptistery may be transferred to some other suitable area of the church.

As far as possible, all recently born babies should be baptized at a common celebration on the same day. Except for a good reason, baptism should not be celebrated more than once on the same day in the same church.

Further details concerning the time for baptism of adults and of children will be found in the respective rituals. But at all times the celebration of the sacrament should have a markedly paschal character.

Pastors must carefully and without delay record in the baptismal register the names of those baptized, of the minister, parents, and godparents, as well as the place and date of baptism.

V. ADAPTATIONS BY THE CONFERENCES OF BISHOPS

According to the Constitution on the Liturgy (art. 63, b), it is within the competence of the conferences of bishops to compose for their local rituals a section corresponding to this one in the Roman Ritual, adapted to the needs of their respective regions. After it has been reviewed by the Apostolic See, it may be used in the regions for which it was prepared. In this connection, it is the responsibility of each conference of bishops:

1. to decide on the adaptations mentioned in the Constitution on the Liturgy (art. 39);
2. carefully and prudently to weigh what elements of a people's distinctive traditions and culture may suitably be admitted into divine worship and so to propose to the Apostolic See other adaptations considered useful or necessary that will be introduced with its consent;
3. to retain distinctive elements of any existing local rituals, as long as they conform to the Constitution on the Liturgy and correspond to contemporary needs, or to modify such elements;
4. to prepare translations of the texts that genuinely reflect the characteristics of various languages and cultures and to add, whenever helpful, music suitable for singing;
5. to adapt and augment the Introductions contained in the Roman Ritual, so that the ministers may fully understand the meaning of the rites and carry them out effectively;
6. to arrange the material in the various editions of the liturgical books prepared under the guidance of the conference of bishops, so that these books may better suit pastoral use.

Taking into consideration especially the norms in the Constitution on the Liturgy (art. 37-40, 65), the conferences of bishops in mission countries have the responsibility of judging whether the elements of initiation in use among some peoples can be adapted for the rite of Christian baptism and of deciding whether such elements are to be incorporated into the rite.

When the Roman Ritual for baptism provides several optional formularies, local rituals may add other formularies of the same kind.

The celebration of baptism is greatly enhanced by the use of song, which stimulates in the participants a sense of their unity, fosters their praying together, and expresses the joy of Easter that should permeate the whole rite. The conference of bishops should therefore encourage and help specialists in music to compose settings for those liturgical texts particularly suited to congregational singing

VI. ADAPTATIONS BY THE MINISTER OF BAPTISM

Taking into account existing circumstances and other needs, as well as the wishes of the faithful, the minister should make full use of the various options allowed in the rite.

In addition to the adaptations that are provided in the Roman Ritual for the dialogue and blessings, the minister may make other adaptations for special circumstances. These adaptations will be indicated more fully in the Introductions to the rites of baptism for adults and for children

RITE OF CONFIRMATION: INTRODUCTION

STRUCTURE

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I. DIGNITY OF CONFIRMATION

1. Those who have been baptized continue on the path of Christian initiation through the sacrament of confirmation. In this sacrament they receive the Holy Spirit, who was sent upon the apostles by the Lord on Pentecost.
2. This giving of the Holy Spirit conforms believers more perfectly to Christ and strengthens them so that they may bear witness to Christ for the building up of his body in faith and love. They are so marked with the character or seal of the Lord that the sacrament of confirmation cannot be repeated.

II. OFFICES AND MINISTRIES IN THE CELEBRATION OF CONFIRMATION

3. It is the responsibility of the people of God to prepare the baptized for confirmation. It is the responsibility of the pastors to see that all the baptized come to the fullness of Christian initiation and are carefully prepared for confirmation.

Adult catechumens, who are to be confirmed immediately after baptism, have the help of the Christian community and, in particular, the formation which is given to them during the catechumenate, catechesis, and common liturgical celebrations. Catechists, sponsors, and members of the local church should participate in the catechumenate. The steps of the catechumenate will be appropriately adapted to those who, baptized in infancy, are confirmed only as adults.

The initiation of children into the sacramental life is for the most part the responsibility and concern of Christian parents. They are to form and gradually increase a spirit of faith in the children and, with the help of catechetical institutions, prepare them for the fruitful reception of the sacraments of confirmation and the Eucharist. The role of the parents is also expressed by their active participation in the celebration of the sacraments.

4. Attention should be paid to the festive and solemn character of the liturgical service, especially its significance for the local church, especially if all the candidates are assembled for a common celebration. The whole people of God, represented by the families and friends

of the candidates and by members of the local community, will be invited to take part in the celebration and will express its faith in the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

5. Ordinarily there should be a sponsor for each of those to be confirmed. The sponsor brings the candidate to receive the sacrament, presents him to the minister for the anointing, and will later help him to fulfill his baptismal promises faithfully under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

In view of contemporary pastoral circumstances, it is desirable that the godparent at baptism, if present, also be the sponsor at confirmation; canon 796, no. 1 is abrogated. This change expresses more clearly the relationship between baptism and confirmation and also makes the function and responsibility of the sponsor more effective.

Nonetheless the choice of a special sponsor for confirmation is not excluded. Even the parents themselves may present their children for confirmation. It is for the local Ordinary to determine diocesan practice in the light of local circumstances.

6. Pastors will see that the sponsor, chosen by the candidate or his family, is spiritually qualified for the office and satisfies these requirements:
 - a) that he be sufficiently mature for this role;
 - b) that he belong to the Catholic Church and have been initiated in the three sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and the Eucharist;
 - c) that he be not prohibited by law from exercising the role of sponsor.
7. The ordinary minister of confirmation is the bishop. Ordinarily the sacrament is administered by the bishop so that there will be a more evident relationship to the first pouring forth of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. After the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit, they themselves gave the Spirit to the faithful through the laying on of their hands. Thus the reception of the Spirit through the ministry of the bishop shows the close bond which joins the confirmed to the Church and the mandate to be witnesses of Christ among men.

In addition to the bishop, the law gives the faculty to confirm to the following:

- a) apostolic administrators who are not bishops, prelates or abbots nullius, vicars and prefects apostolic, vicars capitular, within the limits of their territory and while they hold office;
 - b) priests who, in virtue of an office which they lawfully hold, baptize an adult or a child old enough for catechesis or receive a validly baptized adult into full communion with the Church;
 - c) in danger of death, provided a bishop is not easily available or is lawfully impeded: pastors and parochial vicars; in their absence, parochial associates; priests who are in charge of special parishes lawfully established; administrators; substitutes; and assistants; I in the absence of all of the preceding, any priest who is not subject to censure or canonical penalty.
8. In case of true necessity and special reason, for example, the large number of persons to be confirmed, the minister of confirmation mentioned in no. 7 or the extraordinary minister designated by special indult of the Apostolic See or by law may associate other priests with himself in the administration of this sacrament.

It is required that these priests:

- a) have a particular function or office in the diocese, namely, vicars general, episcopal vicars or delegates, district or regional vicars,² or those who by mandate of the Ordinary hold equivalent offices; or
- b) be the pastors of the places where confirmation is conferred, pastors of the places where the candidates belong, or priests who have had a special part in the catechetical preparation of the candidates.

III. CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

9. The sacrament of confirmation is conferred through the anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of the hand, and through the words: **Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.**

Even though the laying of hands on the candidates with the prayer **All-powerful God** does not pertain to the valid giving of the sacrament, it is to be strongly emphasized for the integrity of the rite and the fuller understanding of the sacrament.

Priests who are sometimes associated with the principal minister in conferring the sacrament join him in laying their hands on all the candidates together, but they do not say the prayer.

The whole rite has a twofold meaning. The laying of hands on the candidates by the bishop and the concelebrating priests is the biblical gesture by which the gift of the Holy Spirit is invoked. This is well adapted to the understanding of the Christian people. The anointing with chrism and the accompanying words express clearly the effects of the giving of the Holy Spirit. Signed with the perfumed oil, the baptized person receives the indelible character, the seal of the Lord, together with the gift of the Spirit, which conforms him more closely to Christ and gives him the grace of spreading the Lord's presence among men.

10. The chrism is consecrated by the bishop in the Mass which is ordinarily celebrated on Holy Thursday for this purpose.
- ii. Adult catechumens and children who are baptized at an age when they are old enough for catechesis should ordinarily be admitted to confirmation and the Eucharist at the same time they receive baptism. If this is impossible, they should receive confirmation in a common celebration (see no. 4). Similarly, adults who were baptized in infancy should, after suitable preparation, receive confirmation and the Eucharist in a common celebration.

With regard to children, in the Latin Church the administration of confirmation is generally postponed until about the seventh year. For pastoral reasons, however, especially to strengthen the faithful in complete obedience to Christ the Lord and in loyal testimony to him, episcopal conferences may choose an age which seems more appropriate, so that the sacrament is given at a more mature age after appropriate formation.

In this case the necessary precautions should be taken so that children will be confirmed at the proper time, even before the use of reason, where there is danger of death or other serious difficulty. They should not be deprived of the benefit of this sacrament.

12. One must be baptized to receive the sacrament of confirmation. In addition, if the baptized person has the use of reason, it is required that he be in a state of grace, properly instructed, and able to renew his baptismal promises.

It is the responsibility of the episcopal conferences to determine more precisely the pastoral methods for the preparation of children for confirmation.

With regard to adults, the same principles should be followed, with suitable adaptations, which are in effect in individual diocese, for the admission of catechumens to baptism and the Eucharist. In particular, suitable catechesis should precede confirmation, and there should be sufficient effective relationship of the candidates with the Christian community and with individual members of the faithful to assist in their formation. This formation should be directed toward their giving the witness of a Christian life and exercising the Christian apostolate, while developing a genuine desire to participate in the Eucharist (see *Christian Initiation of Adults, Introduction*, 19).

Sometimes the preparation of a baptized adult for confirmation is part of his preparation for marriage. In such cases, if it is foreseen that the conditions for a fruitful reception of confirmation cannot be satisfied, the local Ordinary will judge whether it is better to defer confirmation until after the marriage.

If one who has the use of reason is confirmed in danger of death, he should be prepared spiritually, so far as possible, depending upon the circumstances of the individual case.

13. Ordinarily confirmation takes place within Mass in order to express more clearly the fundamental connection of this sacrament with the entirety of Christian initiation. The latter reaches its culmination in the communion of the body and blood of Christ. The newly confirmed should therefore participate in the Eucharist which completes their Christian initiation.

If the candidates for confirmation are children who have not received the Eucharist and are not admitted to their first communion at this liturgical celebration or if there are other special circumstances, confirmation should be celebrated outside Mass. When this occurs, there should first be a celebration of the word of God.

It is fitting that the minister of confirmation celebrate the Mass or, better, concelebrate the Mass, especially with the priests who may join him in the administration of the sacrament.

If the Mass is celebrated by someone else, it is proper that the bishop preside over the liturgy of the word and that he give the blessing at the end of Mass.

Emphasis should be given to the celebration of the word of God which begins the rite of confirmation. It is from the hearing of the word of God that the many-sided power of the

Holy Spirit flows upon the Church and upon each one of the baptized and confirmed, and it is by this word that God's will is manifest in the life of Christians.

The saying of the Lord's Prayer by the newly confirmed with the rest of the people is also of very great importance, whether during Mass before communion or outside Mass before the blessing, because it is the Spirit who prays in us, and in the Spirit the Christian says 'Abba, Father'.

14. The pastor should record the names of the minister, those confirmed, parents and sponsors, and the date and place of confirmation in a special book. The notation in the baptismal register should also be made according to law.
15. If the pastor of the newly-confirmed person is not present, the minister should promptly inform him of the confirmation, either personally or through a representative.

IV. ADAPTATIONS OF THE RITE OF CONFIRMATION

16. In virtue of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (art. 63b), episcopal conferences have the right to prepare a title in particular rituals corresponding to this title of the Roman Pontifical on confirmation. This is to be adapted to the needs of individual regions so that, after confirmation of their action by the Apostolic See, the ritual may be used in the territory.³
17. The episcopal conference will consider whether, in view of local circumstances and the culture and traditions of the people, it is opportune:
 - a) to make suitable adaptations of the formulas for the renewal of baptismal promises and professions, either following the text in the rite of baptism or accommodating these formulas to the circumstances of the candidates for confirmation;
 - b) to introduce a different manner for the minister to give the sign of peace after the anointing, either to each individual or to all the newly confirmed together.
18. The minister of confirmation may introduce some explanations into the rite in individual cases in view of the capacity of candidates for confirmation. He may also make appropriate accommodations in the existing texts, for example, by expressing these in a kind of dialogue, especially with children.

When confirmation is given by a minister who is not a bishop, whether by concession of the general law or by special indult of the Apostolic See, it is fitting for him to mention in the homily that the bishop is the original minister of the sacrament and the reason why priests receive the faculty to confirm from the law or by an indult of the Apostolic See.

V. PREPARATIONS

19. The following should be prepared for confirmation:

- a) vestments for the celebration of Mass, for the bishop and for the priests who concelebrate with him; if the bishop does not concelebrate the Mass, he and the priests

who may administer confirmation with him should participate in the Mass wearing the vestments for confirmation: alb, stole, and for the minister of confirmation, cope; these vestments are also worn for confirmation outside Mass;

- b) chairs for the bishop and the priests;
- c) vessel or vessels of chrism;
- d) Roman Pontifical or Ritual;
- e) preparations for Mass and, for communion under both kinds, if it is given in this way;
- f) preparations for the washing of the ministers' hands after the anointing.

ENDNOTES

1 See canons 451, 471, 476, 216, §4, 472, 474, 475.

2 See canon 217, §1.

3 See *Christian Initiation, General Instruction*, nos. 30.3, above.

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THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Papal Sunday Addresses April 9 through June 11, 1989

Author: Pope John Paul II

WISDOM

Sunday 9 April 1989

Within the perspective of the Solemnity of Pentecost, towards which the Easter season directs us, we want to reflect together on the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, which the Church's Tradition has always proposed on the basis of the famous text of Isaiah regarding the "Spirit of the Lord" (cf. *Is* 11:1-2). The first and greatest of these gifts is wisdom, which is a light which we receive from on high; it is a special sharing in that mysterious and highest knowledge which is that of God himself. In fact, we read in Sacred Scriptures: "Therefore I prayed, and prudence was given me; I pleaded and the spirit of wisdom came to me. I preferred her to scepter and throne, and deemed riches nothing in comparison with her" (*Wis* 7:7-8).

This higher wisdom is the root of a new awareness, a knowledge permeated by charity, by means of which the soul becomes familiar, so to say, with divine things, and tastes them. St Thomas speaks precisely of "a certain taste of God" (*"Summa Theol."* II-II, q. 45, a. 2 ad 1), through which the truly wise person is not simply the one who knows the things of God but rather the one who experiences and lives them.

This sapiential awareness further gives us a special ability to judge human things according to God's standard, in God's light. Enlightened by this gift, the Christian is able to see into the reality of the world; no one is better able to appreciate the authentic values of creation, beholding them with the very eyes of God. We find a fascinating example of this superior understanding of the "language of creation" in St Francis of Assisi's "Canticle of the Creatures".

Through this gift the entire life of the individual Christian, with all its events, hopes, plans, and achievements, is caught up in the breath of the Spirit, who permeates it with Light "from on high" as is attested to by many chosen souls in our day also and, I would say today especially by St Clelia Barbieri and her shining example as a woman who possessed a wealth of such wisdom, even at her young age. In all of these souls the "great things" that the Spirit did in Mary are repeated. May she whom pious tradition venerates as the "Sedes sapientiae" lead each of us to taste interiorly divine things.

UNDERSTANDING

Sunday, 16 April 1989

In this Sunday reflection I want to pause today on the second gift of the Holy Spirit, understanding. We know very well that faith is adherence to God in the chiaroscuro of mystery; but it is also search in the desire to know he revealed truth more and better. Now, such an interior

urge comes to us from the Holy Spirit who, with faith, gives us precisely this special gift of intelligence and, as it were, intuition of the divine truth.

The word "intellect" derives from the Latin "intus legere", which means "to read within", to penetrate, to understand thoroughly. Through this gift the Holy Spirit who "sees into the depths of God" (1 Cor 2:10), communicates to the believer a glint of such a penetrating capacity, opening the heart to the joyous understanding of God's loving plan. Once again the experience of the disciples of Emmaus is renewed; having recognized the Risen Lord in the breaking of the bread, they said to one another: "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us? (Lk 24:32).

This supernatural intelligence is given not only to individuals, but also to the community: to pastors who, as successors of the Apostles, are heirs to the specific promise made to them by Christ (cf. Jn 14:26; 16:13), and to the faithful who, thanks to the "anointing" of the Spirit (cf. 1 Jn 2:20 and 27), possess a special "sense of the faith" (sensus fidei) which guides them in their concrete choices.

The light of the Spirit, in fact, while it sharpens the understanding of divine things, renders ever more clear and penetrating the understanding of human things. Thanks to it one sees better the many signs of God which are written in creation. Thus is discovered the not merely earthly dimension of events of which human history is woven. One can even arrive at prophetically interpreting the present and the future: signs of the times, signs of God!

Dear faithful, let us turn to the Holy Spirit with the words of the Liturgy: "Come, Holy Spirit, come! And from your celestial home shed a ray of light divine!" (Sequence of Pentecost). Let us invoke him through the intercession of Mary Most Holy, the listening Virgin who, in the light of the Spirit, was able to read tirelessly the deep meaning of the mysteries which the Almighty worked in her (cf. Lk 2:19 and 51).

The contemplation of the wonders of God will also be for us the source of inexhaustible joy: "My soul glorifies: he Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my saviour" (Lk 1:46 f.).

KNOWLEDGE

Sunday, 23 April 1989

The reflection which we began on the preceding Sundays on the gifts of the Holy Spirit leads us today to speak of another gift, the gift of Knowledge, by which we are granted to know the true value of creatures in their relationship to the Creator. We know that modern man, precisely because of the development of the sciences, is particularly exposed to the temptation to give a naturalistic interpretation to the world. Before the manifold magnificence of things, their complexity, variety and beauty, he runs the risk of absolutizing and almost divinizing them to the extent of making them the supreme purpose of his very life. This happens especially when it is a matter of riches, pleasure and power, which indeed can be drawn from material things. These are the principal idols before which the world too often prostrates.

In order to resist such subtle temptations and to remedy the pernicious consequences to which they can lead, the Holy Spirit aids people with the gift of Knowledge. It is this gift which helps them to value things correctly in their essential dependence on the Creator. Thanks to it, as St Thomas writes, man does not esteem creatures more than they are worth and does not place in them the end of his life, but in God (ct. "Summa Theol." II-II, q. 9, a. 4).

He thus discovers the theological meaning of creation, seeing things as true and real, although limited, manifestations of the Truth, Beauty, and infinite Love which is God, and consequently he feels impelled to translate this discovery into praise, song, prayer, and thanksgiving. This is what the Book of Psalms suggests so often and in so many ways. Who does not recall some instances of this raising of the soul to God? "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork" (*Ps* 18 [19]:2; cf. *Ps* 8:2). "Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise him in the heights.... Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars" (*Ps* 148:1, 3).

Enlightened by the gift of Knowledge, man discovers at the same time the infinite distance which separates things from the Creator, their intrinsic limitation, the danger that they can present, when, through sin, he makes improper use of them. It is a discovery which leads him to realize with remorse his misery and impels him to turn with greater drive and confidence to him who alone can fully satisfy the need of the infinite which assails him.

This was the experience of the saints; it was also, we may say, the experience of the five Blessed whom I had the joy of raising to the honors of the altars today. However, in a very special way this was the experience of Our Lady who, by the example of her personal journey of faith teaches us to travel "among the events of the world, having our hearts fixed on where true joy resides" (Prayer of the Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time).

COUNSEL

Sunday, 7 May 1989

Continuing the reflection on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, today let us consider the gift of Counsel. It is given to the Christian to enlighten the conscience in moral choices which daily life presents. A need that is keenly felt in our days, disturbed by not a few crises and by a widespread uncertainty about true values, is that which is called "reconstructing consciences". That is to say, one is aware of the necessity of neutralizing certain destructive factors which easily find their way into the human spirit when it is agitated by passions, and of introducing healthy positive elements into it. In this commitment to moral restoration the Church must be, and is, in the forefront; hence the prayer that arise: from the hearts of her members - of all of us - to obtain especially the help of light from on high.

The Spirit of God responds to this plea through the gift of Counsel, by which he enriches and perfects the virtue of prudence and guides the soul from within, enlightening it about what to do, especially when it is a matter of important choices (for example, of responding to a vocation), or about a path to be followed among difficulties and obstacles. Infact experience confirms that "the deliberations of mortals are timid, and unsure are our plans", as the Book of Wisdom says (9:14).

The gift of Counsel acts like a new breath in the conscience, suggesting to it what is licit, what is becoming, what is more fitting for the soul (cf. St Bonaventure, "Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti", VII, 5). Thus the conscience becomes like the "healthy eye" of which the Gospel speaks (*Mt* 6:21), an eye which acquires, as it were, a new pupil, by means of which it is able to see better what to do in a given situation, no matter how intricate and difficult. Aided by this gift, the Christian penetrates the true meaning of gospel values, in particular those expressed in the Sermon on the Mount (cf. *Mt* 5:7).

Let us therefore ask for the gift of Counsel! Let us ask for it for ourselves and, in particular, for the pastors of the Church, so often called, by the demands of their work, to make arduous and agonizing decisions. Let us ask for it through the intercession of her who, in the litany, is greeted as "Mater Boni Consilii", Mother of Good Counsel.

FORTITUDE

Sunday 14 May 1989

"Come, Holy Spirit!". Dear brothers and sisters, this is the invocation which insistently and confidently arises from the whole Church today, the Solemnity of Pentecost: Come, Holy Spirit, come and "on us who evermore Thee confess and thee adore, with thy sevenfold gifts descend" (Sequence of Pentecost). Among these gifts of the Spirit there is one on which I wish to dwell this morning: the gift of Fortitude. In our time many extol physical force, to the extent of also approving the extreme forms of violence. In fact, man has daily experience of his own weakness, especially in the spiritual and moral sphere, yielding to the impulses of internal passions and external pressures.

Precisely to resist these multiple stimuli, it is necessary to have the virtue of fortitude, which is one of the four cardinal virtues on which the whole structure of the moral life rests. It is the virtue by which one does not compromise in fulfilling one's duty. This virtue finds little room in a society in which surrender and accommodation on the one hand, and domination and toughness on the other, are widespread in economic, social and political relations. Timidity and aggressiveness are two forms of lack of fortitude which are often found in human behavior; they result repeatedly in the distressing sight of one who is weak and cowardly towards the powerful, or of one who is arrogant and overbearing towards the defenseless.

Perhaps today as never before the moral virtue of fortitude needs the support of the corresponding gift of the Holy Spirit. The gift of Fortitude is a supernatural impulse which gives strength to the soul, not only on exceptional occasions such as that of martyrdom, but also in normal difficulties: in the struggle to remain consistent with one's principles: in putting up with insults and unjust attacks: in courageous perseverance on the path of truth and uprightness, in spite of lack of understanding and hostility. When, like Jesus in Gethsemane, we experience "the weakness of the flesh" (cf. *Mt* 26:41; *Mk* 14:38), or rather, of human nature subject to physical and psychological infirmities, we should ask the Holy Spirit for the gift of Fortitude to remain firm and decisive on the path of goodness. Then we will be able to repeat with St Paul: "For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong" (1 *Cor* 12:10).

There are many of Christ's followers - pastors and faithful, priests, religious, and laity, engaged in every area of apostolic and social work who in all times, including our own, have experienced and experience martyrdom of body and spirit, in intimate union with the Mother of Sorrows beside the Cross. All have been victorious thanks to this gift of the Spirit. Let us ask Mary, whom we now greet as Queen of Heaven, to obtain for us the gift of Fortitude in all the vicissitudes of life and at the hour of death

PIETY

Sunday 28 May 1989

Our reflection on the gifts of the Holy Spirit leads us today to speak of another important gift, piety. With it, the Spirit heals our hearts of every form of hardness, and opens them to tenderness towards God and our brothers and sisters. Tenderness, as a truly filial attitude towards God, is expressed in prayer. The experience of one's own existential poverty, of the void which earthly things leave in the soul, gives rise to the need to have recourse to God in order to obtain grace, help and pardon. The gift of piety directs and nourishes such need, enriching it with sentiments of profound confidence in God; trusted as a good and generous Father. In this sense St Paul wrote: "God sent his Son,... that we might receive adoption. As proof that you are children, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' So you are no longer a slave but a son,..." (*Gal 4: 4-7*; cf. *Rom 8: 15*).

Tenderness, an authentically fraternal openness towards one's neighbor, is manifested in meekness. With the gift of piety the Spirit infuses into the believer a new capacity for love of the brethren, making his heart participate in some manner in the very meekness of the Heart of Christ. The "pious" Christian always sees others as children of the same Father, called to be part of the family of God which is the Church. He feels urged to treat them with the kindness and friendliness which are proper to a frank and fraternal relationship.

The gift of piety further extinguishes in the heart those fires of tension and division which are bitterness, anger and impatience, and nourishes feelings of understanding, tolerance, and pardon. Such a gift is, therefore, at the root of that new human community which is based on the civilization of love.

Let us ask the Holy Spirit for a renewed outpouring of this gift, entrusting our prayer to the intercession of Mary, sublime model of fervent prayer and maternal tenderness. May she, whom the Church salutes in the Litany of Loreto as the "Singular vessel of devotion", teach us to adore God "in spirit and truth" (*Jn 4: 23*) and to open ourselves with meek and receptive hearts to all who are her children, and therefore our brothers and sisters. Let us ask her in the words of the "Salve Regina", "...O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!"

FEAR OF THE LORD

Sunday 11 June 1989

Today I want to complete with you the reflection on the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Among these gifts, listed last in the enumeration, is the gift of the "Fear of the Lord". Sacred Scripture affirms that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (*Ps 110 [111]:10*; *Prov 1: 7*). However,

what kind of fear does it mean? It certainly is not that "fear of God" which causes people to flee from every thought and memory of him, as something or someone who disturbs and upsets. This was the state of mind which, according to the Bible, made our first parents, after their sin, hide "themselves from the Lord God among the trees of the garden" (*Gen 3:8*). This was also the sentiment of that unfaithful and wicked servant of the gospel parable who hid in the earth the talent that he received (cf. *Mt 25:28, 26*).

However, this type of fear is not the true concept of the fear which is the gift of the Spirit. Here it is a matter of something much more noble and lofty; it is a sincere and reverential feeling that a person experiences before the tremendous majesty of God, especially when he reflects upon his own infidelity and the danger of being "found wanting" (*Dan 5:27*) at the eternal judgment which no one can escape. The believer goes and places himself before God with a "contrite spirit" and a "humbled heart" (cf. *Ps 50 [51]:19*), knowing well that he must await his own salvation "with fear and trembling" (*Phil 2:12*). Nonetheless, that does not mean an irrational fear, but a sense of responsibility and fidelity to the law.

All this is what the Holy Spirit takes up and elevates with the gift of the Fear of the Lord. It certainly does not exclude the trepidation that arises from an awareness of the faults committed and the prospect of divine chastisement, but mitigates it with faith in the divine mercy and with the certitude of the fatherly concern of God who wills the eternal salvation of each one. With this gift, however, the Holy Spirit instills in the soul most of all a filial love which is a sentiment rooted in love of God. The soul is now concerned not to displease God, whom he loves as a Father, not to offend him in anything, to "abide in him" and grow in charity (cf. *Jn 15:4-7*).

The practice of the Christian virtues and especially of humility, temperance, chastity and mortification of the senses, depends on this holy and just fear, united in the soul with love for God. Let us recall the exhortation of the Apostle Paul to his Christians: "Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit, making holiness perfect in the fear of God" (*2 Cor 7:11*). It is a warning for all of us who sometimes, so easily, transgress God's law, ignoring or defying his chastisements. Let us invoke the Holy Spirit, that he may generously pour out the gift of the holy fear of the Lord on the people of our day. Let us invoke him through the intercession of her who, at the message from the heavenly messenger, "was greatly troubled" (*Lk 1:29*) and, although perturbed by the unimagined responsibility that was being entrusted to her, was able to pronounce the "fiat" of faith, obedience and love.

CONFIRMATION PERFECTS BAPTISMAL GRACE

Papal General Audience, September 30, 1998

Author: Pope John Paul II

In this second year of preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000, a renewed appreciation of the Holy Spirit's presence focuses our attention especially on the sacrament of Confirmation (cf. *Tertio millennio adveniente*, n. 45). As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches, "it perfects baptismal grace; it ... gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds" (n. 1316).

In fact, the sacrament of Confirmation closely associates the Christian with the anointing of Christ, whom "God anointed with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 10: 38). This anointing is recalled in the very name "Christian", which derives from that of "Christ", the Greek translation of the Hebrew term "messiah", whose precise meaning is "anointed". Christ is the Messiah, the Anointed One of God. Through the seal of the Spirit conferred by Confirmation, the Christian attains his full identity and becomes aware of his mission in the Church and the world. "Before this grace had been conferred on you", St Cyril of Jerusalem writes, "you were not sufficiently worthy of this name, but were on the way to becoming Christians" (*Cat. Myst.*, III, 4: PG 33, 1092). Sacrament of Confirmation perpetuates Pentecost

To understand all the riches of grace contained in the sacrament of Confirmation, which forms an organic whole with Baptism and the Eucharist as the "sacraments of Christian initiation", it is necessary to grasp its meaning in the light of salvation history. In the Old Testament, the prophets proclaimed that the Spirit of God would rest upon the promised Messiah (cf. Is 11: 2) and, at the same time, would be communicated to all the messianic people (cf. Ez 36: 25-27; Jl 3: 1-2). In the "fullness of time" Jesus was conceived in the Virgin Mary's womb through the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Lk 1: 35). With the Spirit's descent upon him at the time of his baptism in the River Jordan, he is revealed as the promised Messiah, the Son of God (cf. Mt 3: 13-17; Jn 1: 33-34). All his life was spent in total communion with the Holy Spirit, whom he gives "not by measure" (Jn 3: 34) as the eschatological fulfillment of his mission, as he had promised (cf. Lk 12: 12; Jn 3: 5-8; 7: 37-39; 16: 7-15; Acts 1: 8). Jesus communicates the Spirit by "breathing" on the Apostles the day of the Resurrection (cf. Jn 20: 22) and later by the solemn, amazing outpouring on the day of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2: 1-4). Thus the Apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit, begin to "proclaim the mighty works of God" (cf. Acts 2: 11). Those who believe in their preaching and are baptized also receive "the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2: 38). The distinction between Confirmation and Baptism is clearly suggested in the Acts of the Apostles when Samaria is being evangelized. It is Philip, one of the seven deacons, who preaches the faith and baptizes. Then the Apostles Peter and John arrive and lay their hands on the newly baptized so that they will receive the Holy Spirit

(Acts 8: 5-17). Similarly in Ephesus, the Apostle Paul lays his hands on a group of newly baptized and "the Holy Spirit came on them" (Acts 19: 6).

The sacrament of Confirmation "in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church" (CCC, n. 1288). Baptism, which the Christian tradition calls "the gateway to life in the Spirit" (ibid., n. 1213), gives us a rebirth "of water and the Spirit" (cf. Jn 3: 5), enabling us to share sacramentally in Christ's Death and Resurrection (cf. Rom 6: 1-11). Confirmation, in turn, makes us share fully in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit by the risen Lord. The unbreakable bond between the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is expressed in the close connection between the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. This close bond can also be seen in the fact that in the early centuries Confirmation generally comprised "one single celebration with Baptism, forming with it a 'double sacrament', according to the expression of St Cyprian" (CCC, n. 1290). This practice has been preserved to the present day in the East, while in the West, for many reasons, Confirmation came to be celebrated later and there is normally an interval between the two sacraments. Since apostolic times the full communication of the gift of the Holy Spirit to the baptized has been effectively signified by the laying on of hands. An anointing with perfumed oil, called "chrism", was added very early, the better to express the gift of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, through Confirmation Christians, consecrated by the anointing in Baptism, share in the fullness of the Spirit with whom Jesus is filled, so that their whole life will spread the "aroma of Christ" (2 Cor 2: 15). Differences in Confirmation rite express its rich meaning

The differences in the rite of Confirmation which evolved down the centuries in the East and West, according to the different spiritual sensitivities of the two traditions and in response to various pastoral needs, express the richness of the sacrament and its full meaning in Christian life. In the East, this sacrament is called "Chrismation", anointing with "chrism" or "myron". In the West, the term Confirmation suggests the ratification of Baptism as a strengthening of grace through the seal of the Holy Spirit. In the East, since the two sacraments are joined, Chrismation is conferred by the same priest who administers Baptism, although he performs the anointing with chrism consecrated by the Bishop (cf. CCC, n. 1312). In the Latin rite, the ordinary minister of Confirmation is the Bishop, who, for grave reasons, may grant this faculty to priests delegated to administer it (cf. ibid., n. 1313). Thus, "the practice of the Eastern Churches gives greater emphasis to the unity of Christian initiation. That of the Latin Church more clearly expresses the communion of the new Christian with the Bishop as guarantor and servant of the unity, catholicity and apostolicity of his Church, and hence the connection with the apostolic origins of Christ's Church" (CCC, n. 1292).

From what we have said not only can we see the importance of Confirmation as an organic part of the sacraments of Christian initiation as a whole, but also its irreplaceable effectiveness for the full maturation of Christian life. A decisive task of pastoral ministry, to be intensified as part of the preparation for the Jubilee, consists in very carefully training the baptized who are preparing to receive Confirmation, and in introducing them to the fascinating depths of the mystery it signifies and brings about. At the same time, confirmands must be helped to rediscover with joyful wonder the saving power of this gift of the Holy Spirit.

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CONFIRMATION SEALS US WITH THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Papal General Audience, October 14, 1998

Author: Pope John Paul II

In the preceding catechesis we reflected on the sacrament of Confirmation as the fulfillment of baptismal grace. We will now examine the salvific value and spiritual effect expressed by the sign of anointing, which indicates the "seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit" (cf. Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution *Divinae consortium naturae*, 15 August 1971; *L'Osservatore Romano* English edition, 23 September 1971, p. 4). Through this anointing, the confirmand fully receives that gift of the Holy Spirit which he had already received in Baptism in an initial and fundamental way. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church explains, "a seal is a symbol of a person (cf. Gn 38: 18; Song 8: 6), a sign of personal authority (cf. Gn 41: 42), or ownership of an object (cf. Dt 32: 34) ..." (CCC, n. 1295). Jesus himself says that "God the Father set his seal" on him (Jn 6: 27). And so we Christians, having been incorporated into the Body of Christ our Lord by faith and Baptism, are marked by the seal of the Spirit when we receive this anointing. The Apostle Paul explicitly teaches this in speaking to the Christians of Corinth: "It is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has commissioned us; he has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee" (2 Cor 1: 21-22; cf. Eph 1: 13-14; 4: 30). Confirmation imprints indelible mark on the soul

The seal of the Holy Spirit therefore signifies and brings about the disciple's total belonging to Jesus Christ, his being always at the latter's service in the Church, and at the same time it implies the promise of divine protection in the trials he will have to endure to witness to his faith in the world. Jesus himself foretold this, shortly before his Passion: "They will deliver you up to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them.... And when they bring you to trial and deliver you up, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say; but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit" (Mk 13: 9, 11ff.). A similar promise recurs in Revelation, in a vision that embraces the Church's entire history and sheds light on the dramatic situation which the disciples of Christ are called to face in union with their crucified and risen Lord. They are presented in the evocative image of those whose foreheads have been marked with God's seal (cf. Rv 7: 2-4).

By bringing baptismal grace to fulfillment, Confirmation unites us more firmly to Jesus Christ and to his Body, the Church. This sacrament also increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us, to give us "a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross" (CCC, n. 1303; cf. Council of Florence, DS 1319; Second Vatican Council, *Lumen gentium*, nn. 11-12). St Ambrose exhorts the confirmed in these vibrant words: "Recall that you have received the spiritual seal, "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and fortitude, the

Spirit of knowledge and piety, the Spirit of the fear of God. Guard what you have received. God the Father has marked you with his sign, Christ the Lord has confirmed you and has placed the Spirit in your hearts as a pledge" (De Mysteriis, 7, 42; PL 16, 402-403). The gift of the Spirit obliges us to bear witness to Jesus Christ and to God the Father, and ensures that we have the ability and the courage to do so. The Acts of the Apostles tell us clearly that the Spirit was poured out upon the Apostles, so that they would become "witnesses" (Acts I: 8; cf. Jn 15: 26-27). St Thomas Aquinas wonderfully summarizes the Church's tradition, saying that through Confirmation all the necessary help is communicated to the baptized so that they can profess publicly and in every circumstance the faith received in Baptism. "The fullness of the Holy Spirit", he explains, "is given ad robur spirituale (for spiritual strength) which is appropriate to adulthood" (Summa Theologiae, III, 72, 2). This maturity is obviously not to be measured by human criteria, but from within the mysterious relationship of each individual to Christ. This teaching, rooted in Sacred Scripture and developed by sacred Tradition, is expressed in the teaching of the Council of Trent, which says that the sacrament of Confirmation is imprinted on the soul like an "indelible spiritual mark": the "character" (cf. DS 1609) which is precisely the sign Jesus Christ imprints on the Christian with the seal of his Spirit.

This specific gift conferred by the sacrament of Confirmation enables the faithful to exercise their "prophetic office" of bearing witness to the faith. "The confirmed person", St Thomas explains, "receives the power to profess faith in Christ publicly and as it were officially (quasi ex officio)" (cf. Summa Theologiae, III, 72, 5, ad. 2; CCC, n. 1305). Furthermore, the Second Vatican Council, in explaining the sacred and organic nature of the priestly community in *Lumen gentium*, stresses that "by the sacrament of Confirmation they [the faithful] are more perfectly bound to the Church and endowed with the special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread the faith by word and deed" (n. 11). The baptized who receive the sacrament of Confirmation with full and mature awareness solemnly declare before the Church, with the support of God's grace, their readiness to let themselves be grasped by the Spirit of God in an ever new and ever deeper way, to become witnesses to Christ the Lord. Martyrdom is supreme witness to the faith

This readiness, thanks to the Spirit who penetrates and fills their hearts, spurs them even to martyrdom, as we are shown by the uninterrupted series of Christian witnesses who, from the dawn of Christianity to our century, have not been afraid to sacrifice their earthly lives for love of Jesus Christ. "Martyrdom", says the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "is the supreme witness given to the truth of the faith: it means bearing witness even unto death. The martyr bears witness to Christ who died and rose, to whom he is united by charity" (CCC, n. 2473). On the threshold of the third millennium, let us invoke the gift of the Paraclete to revive the effectiveness of the grace of the spiritual seal imprinted on us in the sacrament of Confirmation. Animated by the Spirit, our lives will spread the "aroma of Christ" (2 Cor 2: 15) to the very ends of the earth.

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