

Confirmation

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General questions

What are the main concepts about Confirmation I want them to understand? I want them to understand what confirmation is, why it is done, who it is done to, how it is done, where it is done and when it is done.

What is the action I hope they will do after this talk? I hope that they will have a greater appreciation for the sacrament and how it is not a graduation but a sending on a mission.

1. Introduction to Confirmation

- a. It is a graduation into a greater responsibility as we are called to use the gifts we have been given to bring others to Christ just like the those on Pentecost.
- b. It is a sacrament of commission in which one is sent to the world.

2. What is Confirmation?

- a. It is a sacrament - The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions.(CCC 1131)
- b. It is a being sent out as Christ was sent out at Jordon
 - i. I can bear witness to the world.
 - ii. Pentecost
 1. Babel is being undone
 2. Unity is born
 3. Birthday of the Church is cross and Pentecost is mission nature of the Church is born
- c. It is a strengthening to witness and fight for the Christian life
- d. Participating in the grace of Pentecost, go out to whole world and be a missionary for the Church
- e. External spiritual combat while baptism is internal spiritual combat.
- f. History
 - i. Apostolic Constitution (370 – 380) – Anoint with oil (HS) baptism(death) and then chrism (seal) Chrism makes the person have the aroma of Christ; makes them firm and fixed
 - ii. Augustine is first to use the gifts of the Holy Spirit and refer to it as confirmation. The Holy Spirit completes what is done in baptism.(First time called confirmation)
 - iii. 4th century bishop completes baptism, maybe someone baptized out of the ordinary, the anointing/hand-laying is reserved to the bishop.
 - iv. 13th century - gives us the standard of Confirmation of Trent
 1. Collective imposition of hands and prayer of seven fold gifts
 2. Anoint with Chrism individually on the forehead.
 3. Signing with Chrism is the proximate matter.
 4. Form is the words used
 5. Rituals of baptism and confirmation in different places in ritual book

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6. Baptism done after birth, confirmation done before or after age of reason(7) depending on availability of the bishop. Move seems to be related to Eucharist and the desire to make sure person understands what they are doing.
- v. Council of Florence (1439)
 1. Matter is chrism made from oil signifying purity of conscience
 2. Balsam signifying the fragrance of a good reputation.
 3. Form is “I sign you with the sign of the cross and I confirm you with the chrism of salvation in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- vi. Council of Trent, confirmation and Eucharist given at age 11 or 12
- vii. 1910, Pope Pius X moved communion to age 7, age of discretion but didn’t move confirmation. People liked the idea of a rite of passage into adulthood, Protestant idea, so didn’t change confirmation
- viii. East kept unity of sacraments of initiation, West it was more important for bishop to do it since apostles layed hands

3. Why

- a. Missionary for the Church
- b. Effects
 - i. New character is given
 1. Indelible mark
 2. Character is a spiritual power ordained to certain sacred actions, to testify and do spiritual combat with enemies of the faith
 3. Character is the ability to do the mission, the tool to use
 4. The grace then is the ability actually to use the tool.
 5. It is a distinctive sign and allows me to confess my faith publicly.
 - ii. Confirmation completes and perfects baptism
 - iii. CCC 1303
 1. Brings a deepening of baptismal grace
 2. instills in us divine filiation (sons and daughters)
 3. unites us firmly to Christ
 4. increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit
 5. bond with Church more perfect
 6. special strength of Holy Spirit
 - iv. Provides the HS, the gifts in their fullness.
 1. “They make the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations.” (CCC 1831)
 2. Wisdom
 3. Understanding
 4. Counsel (right judgment)
 5. Fortitude (courage)
 6. Knowledge
 7. Piety (reverence)
 8. Fear of the Lord (wonder and awe)
 - v. “Fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church lists twelve of them:

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"charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity."(CCC 1832)

- vi. CCC 1305 – perfects the common priesthood
- vii. CCC 1316 – This is a sacrament of mission and should be accompanied by words and deeds.

4. Who

- a. Adults
 - i. Given with baptism and communion
- b. Children varies when sacrament is given
- c. Infants – can be given if in danger of death
- d. Sponsor (See eligibility form)
- e. Minister – Who can confirm?
 - i. Ordinary is bishop
 - ii. Extra Ordinary is priest with delegation from bishop, or in danger of death, or if a person is being received into the Church at Easter Vigil

5. How

- a. Preparation
 - i. Child – confirmation classes(faith, prayer, Christian life and community, intro to apostolate)
 - ii. Adult – RCIA
 - 1. Precatechumenate – inquiry and evangelization of person
 - 2. Catechumenate – catechesis
 - 3. Purification and Enlightenment - Conversion therapy, happens during Lent.
 - iii. Rite
 - 1. Collective laying on of hands with prayer → “All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by water and the Holy Spirit you freed your sons and daughters from sin and gave them new life. Send your Holy Spirit upon them to be their helper and guide. Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgment and courage, the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord.”
 - 2. Anointing with Chrism on forehead
 - 3. “Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit” → “Amen”
 - 4. “Peace be with you” → “And also with you” (communal aspect)
 - 5. Shake hands?
- b. After confirmation
 - i. witness to faith
 - ii. continue to grow and learn more about faith
 - iii. it is graduation in that it then requires us to take what we have been given and use it just like any degree

6. Where

- a. Youth – Cathedral, another designated church, or at local parish
- b. Adult – local parish

7. When

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- a. Youth – when scheduled
 - b. Adult – Easter Vigil
8. Conclusion
- a. What
 - b. Why
 - c. Who
 - d. How
 - e. Where
 - f. When
 - g. Confirmation is very important!