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Confirmation - Catholic Church

# RITE OF CONFIRMATION

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## PROVISIONAL TEXT

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS  
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The English translation of liturgical texts in this publication has been approved for use in the dioceses of the United States by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy and the Executive Committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and have been confirmed by the Apostolic See.

YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO  
JANUARY 15, 1972

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# RITE OF CONFIRMATION

## FOREWORD

This booklet contains the rite for the celebration of the sacrament of confirmation. It is an excerpt from the *Roman Pontifical* and has been revised by the Apostolic See in accordance with the mandate of the Second Vatican Council:

“The rite of confirmation is to be revised and the intimate connection which this sacrament has with the whole of Christian initiation is to be more lucidly set forth; for this reason it will be fitting for candidates to renew their baptismal promises just before they are confirmed. . . .” (Constitution on the Liturgy, no. 71).

The present text is the English translation approved for provisional use. It is provisional in another sense, namely, that no regional or national adaptations (*ibid.*, 37-40) have been introduced at this time. Instead, it is hoped by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy that a period of several years' use will help to discern and develop such adaptations.

The purpose of these notes and commentary is to supplement, not replace, the introduction (*praenotanda*) translated below from the Latin original. The rite of confirmation is derived from the integral rite of adult baptism (not yet

published in revised form) and in fact from the integral celebration of Christian initiation in the Easter Vigil. The rite as given here, however, is planned for the celebration of confirmation apart from baptism. It is therefore all the more important that it be related to baptism (through the renewal of baptismal promises) and the Eucharist (through the celebration of confirmation within the eucharistic celebration). Thus the Council's intention to express the “intimate connection” which confirmation has “with the whole of Christian initiation” can be achieved.

This is summed up in the general introduction to the rites of Christian initiation in the *Roman Ritual* which is reprinted below in part.

In the special introduction to the rite of confirmation (below), attention is drawn to the doctrinal explanation of the sacrament (nos. 1-2) and the communal celebration of the sacrament within the local church (no. 4).

## PASTORAL PREPARATION

Because of the importance of confirm-

ation as a celebration of the local parish or community (introduction, no. 4), the catechetical and pastoral preparation should be addressed to the whole parish or community, as well as to the group of candidates.

This preparation should include the use of preaching, bulletins, and other means in the weeks before the confirmation. On the actual occasion of the rite, there should be some preparation before the service so that the congregation is able to participate; this immediate preparation should include explanations or commentaries, music rehearsal, etc. Since relatives and friends from outside the local community, will often be present, this immediate preparation is especially important.

If a booklet or leaflet is provided for congregational participation, it should contain sufficient doctrinal and pastoral material. This introductory material may be taken from:

- (a) the apostolic constitution on the sacrament of confirmation (doctrinal and historical);
- (b) the general introduction to Christian initiation already mentioned (from the *Roman Ritual*; see below);
- (c) the introduction to the rite of confirmation, especially nos. 1-4 (below);
- (d) the sample homily or address given in the rite itself.

#### AGE OF THE CANDIDATES

The revised rite for this sacrament does not change the discipline of the Latin or Western Church concerning the age of confirmation, which remains "at about seven years of age" (introduction, no. 11). It acknowledges, however, the custom existing in many places of postponing the sacrament so that the candidate may renew and reaffirm his baptismal commitment with greater awareness of Christian responsibility. This matter is left to the judgment of episcopal conferences.

In the United States the postponement of the sacrament is customary, and

confirmation is generally received only several years after first communion. This may somewhat obscure the relation of the sacraments of initiation, in which confirmation complements baptism and leads to the fullness of the eucharistic banquet. In view of this, it is important that the celebration of confirmation be within Mass, when the complete sequence of Christian initiation may be shown: baptism (through the renewal of promises), confirmation, Eucharist.

When older persons are baptized (either at the age customary for confirmation or in later life), they should receive confirmation before first communion. If this cannot be done on the occasion of the Easter Vigil, at least it is possible that such catechumens receive baptism with confirmation during the celebration of the Eucharist. As indicated in the introduction (no. 7b), priests who lawfully baptize adults have the faculty from the law to confirm them.

#### THE BISHOP AS MINISTER OF CONFIRMATION

The constitution *Lumen gentium* explains that the bishop is the original minister of confirmation, as he is indeed the minister of baptism, with which confirmation is closely joined in tradition. The celebration of the sacrament by the bishop, especially during the Eucharist, is thus a preeminent sign or manifestation of the local church or diocese. It can represent the communion of the individual congregation, in a parish or community, with the bishop and with the other congregations of the diocese.

For this reason ministers of confirmation other than the local bishop should speak of this relationship and the meaning of this communion within the local church.

#### ASSOCIATE MINISTERS OF THE SACRAMENT

The introduction to the rite of confirmation (no. 8) explains that when, for

example, there is a large number to be confirmed the bishop (or other minister) may associate other priests with him in the celebration. These associate ministers may be either (a) those who hold special offices in the diocese or (b) the local pastor or priests who have prepared the candidates.

This provision for associate ministers should make it possible for a large number to be confirmed within the eucharistic celebration. Confirmation during Mass has often not been introduced precisely because of the great length of the service, but this obstacle is now removed by the assistance of associate ministers.

The rubrics describe the participation of the associate ministers:

(a) They impose hands on all the candidates in silence (by extending their hands over them), while the bishop says the prayer for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

(b) They receive the vessels of oil from the bishop.

(c) They anoint the candidates, say the form, and offer the sign of peace to each one.

## ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The English translation of the liturgical texts for confirmation is for provisional use in the dioceses of the United States. It was approved for this purpose by the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy and the Executive Committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and confirmed by the Apostolic See.

The translation was prepared by the International Committee on English in the Liturgy, without whose permission it may not be reproduced in whole or in part.

## PRAYERS OF THE CONFIRMATION MASS

Since the sacramentary volume of the *Roman Missal* has not yet appeared in English, the several sets of prayers for

the Mass of confirmation are included with the rite for the celebration of the sacrament.

These prayers are taken from among the Masses for the conferral of the sacraments of Christian initiation. The choice among the prayers is left to the celebrant's discretion.

As noted in the introductory rubric, these prayers may not be used on the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, on solemnities, on Ash Wednesday, or during Holy Week.

In most cases there will be singing at the beginning and at the communion of the confirmation Mass. Although the respective antiphons are not said in such circumstances, they are included for the sake of completeness.

At the end of Mass the usual blessing may be given, but it is preferable to employ one of the special substitutes, either (a) the blessing in the form of four verses, to each of which the people respond Amen, or (b) the prayer over the people.

## MUSIC

The rite of confirmation is planned to include sacred song at two points:

(a) *Profession of Faith*. To complete the profession of faith (the "renewal of baptismal promises") by the candidates, the assembled congregation affirms the Church's faith.

This affirmation may be made, as at the celebration of baptism, either by the response Amen to the bishop's declaration ("This is our faith. . .") or by the congregational singing of an acclamation.

Such an acclamation should be clear and simple and should be familiar to the congregation; if a hymn is used, it should not be lengthy and, in any event, must be an appropriate climax to the proclamation of faith.

As an alternative, it may be preferable for the bishop to make the affirmation ("This is our faith . . .") as given in the text, with the people's response. This may then be followed by the singing of an acclamation or brief song.

(b) *Anointing.* During the anointing by the bishop (and priests) it is appropriate to sing an acclamation or other sacred song. The text should be expressive of the central meaning of the celebration—the coming of the Spirit of God.

If there are very few to be confirmed, such an acclamation at the anointing might be sung after each one is confirmed. If there is a large number, acclamations or other songs or hymns might be sung as an accompaniment to the whole rite of anointing.

The following songs may be recommended as appropriate to the celebration of confirmation:

“Come, Spirit, Lord” (traditional melody; text, *Prayer of Christians*)

“Into Our Hearts, O Spirit Come” (*People’s Mass Book*)

Deiss, “Priestly People” (*ibid.*)

Deiss, “The Spirit of God” (*ibid.*)

Quinlan, “Clap Your Hands” (*Hymnal for Young Christians*)

*Mass of Confirmation.* It is equally important that the use of music throughout the Mass of confirmation be well planned. Because of the solemnity of the occasion, it should be possible—with the help of the cantor and choir—to include more singing than at the usual Sunday eucharistic celebration.

Even if the singing during the Mass of confirmation is limited, an appropriate song at the beginning of Mass and during communion should be possible. And the people should be invited to sing, as a minimum, the alleluia before the gospel, the acclamations (Sanctus, memorial acclamation, Amen) and the doxology to the Lord’s Prayer (with the Lord’s prayer itself if possible).

## READINGS

Since the homily by the bishop or other minister of confirmation should be related to the readings from scripture, these must be chosen in advance. “An extensive list of optional readings is

provided to enable the celebrant to consider the particular occasion and the participating group when he chooses from a variety of readings” (*Lectionary for Mass*, introduction, no. 6). This choice should be made enough in advance so that the readers may be prepared.

Either readings from the Mass of the day or from the texts suggested for confirmation in the *Lectionary for Mass* may be chosen. On the greater feasts the proper readings should not be omitted. On other occasions readings selected for their reference to the coming of the Holy Spirit may be preferable. See *Lectionary for Mass*, nos. 763-767.

## PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

Although there is no common custom in the United States for the presentation of the candidates to the bishop, the pastor (or another priest, deacon, catechist, or teacher) may introduce them to the bishop by calling their names, formally or informally. If the very large number of candidates makes this impossible, he may at least speak briefly to invite the candidates to come forward and to present them as a group to the bishop.

## HOMILY

After the gospel and the formal presentation of the candidates, the bishop preaches the homily. A sample is given in the rite, but the explanation of the sacrament should be related to, or flow from, the biblical readings. It is recommended that the homily include some dialogue with the candidates (introduction, no. 18), as well as words addressed to the whole assembly.

If the minister of the sacrament is not an ordained bishop, he should explain the bishop’s role as the “original minister” of confirmation (*Lumen gentium*, no. 27), so that his own ministry on behalf of the bishop is clear. (See no. 7 of the introduction below.)

## PROFESSION OF FAITH

The profession of faith takes a form similar to that of baptism, but includes a distinct question concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament.

According to circumstances, it may seem desirable to add an affirmation by which the individual publicly dedicates himself to the mission of the Gospel at an appropriate moment in the rite. The theme of such a reaffirmation should be the pledge to "bear witness" to the Lord before all the world and eagerly work for the building up of the Body of Christ (II Vatican Council, decree on the Church's missionary activity *Ad gentes*, no. 36).

Such a statement may take the form of an additional question and response, or, as is done in the rite of religious profession (no. 55), it may be a positive statement by the individual candidates. The latter is particularly appropriate if there are very few to be confirmed, but it may be done by a representative of a larger number of candidates.

Because of the profession of faith made by the candidates and then affirmed by the congregation, the usual form of profession of faith ("We believe in one God. . .") is omitted.

## ANOINTING

There are two impositions of hands in the rite of confirmation: the first accompanies the prayer for the coming of the Spirit; although not essential, its profound significance is stressed in the apostolic constitution and the introduction (no. 9). An explanation of this laying on of hands may be needed because it is done by extending the hands over all the candidates at once in a gesture that is much more evident than the second imposition of the minister's hand.

The second imposition, which is essential to the sacrament of confirmation in the Latin Church, is described in the apostolic constitution in these words:

"the anointing with chrism on the forehead, which is done by the imposition of the hand." The older rubric which directed that the minister not only place his thumb with oil on the forehead but also "impose his right hand upon the head of the candidate" (*Roman Pontifical*, confirmation; *Roman Ritual*, title III, chapter 2, no. 6) has been suppressed. As have the signs of the cross made over the newly confirmed persons. Instead the minister is simply directed to dip his right thumb in the chrism and make the sign of the cross with his thumb on the candidate's forehead.

## SIGN OF PEACE

After the anointing, the minister gives the sign of peace to the newly confirmed by saying "Peace be with you." The gesture (striking the cheek lightly) by which the pax was formerly given has been suppressed, and no particular gesture or sign is mentioned in the rite. Instead any particular ritual for the sign of peace is for the episcopal conferences to determine (introduction, no. 17).

In the United States the form of the sign of peace has been left to local usage (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 1969). If the number of persons confirmed is small, the bishop may give them some "sign of peace" after all have been confirmed; such a gesture may be given individually or collectively (introduction, no. 18).

During the Mass the newly confirmed should be invited to bring the gifts to the altar and may receive communion under both kinds (see no. 32 of the rite). In addition, all present may receive communion under both kinds, in accordance with the judgment of the Ordinary (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 1970).

## RECEPTION INTO FULL COMMUNION

A large proportion of baptized persons who are admitted into full com-

munion with the Church will not have been confirmed previously. Such persons may now be confirmed by the priest who lawfully admits them to full communion (introduction, no. 7b).

In this case the profession of faith is made according to the regulations of the local bishop (Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, directory on ecumenism, May 14, 1967, no. 19). The form given in the confirmation rite is preferable. Then the baptized person is confirmed and receives the Eucharist. It is important that the general intercessions on this occasion include a petition for the persons received and that the sign of peace be expressive of welcome into the local community.

Other provisions of the directory on ecumenism should be noted in this connection: Brethren born and baptized outside the visible communion of the Catholic Church "have no need to be absolved from excommunication" or to make any abjuration of heresy (no. 19). "Indiscriminate conditional baptism of all who desire full communion with the Catholic Church cannot be approved" (no. 14). If after serious investigation a reasonable doubt exists and it is necessary to baptize conditionally, the minister must explain the need and the significance of conditional baptism and "carry out the rite according to the private form" (no. 15). Only the profession of faith, confirmation, and eucharistic participation take place publicly.

Not only the ones received into full communion (General Instruction of the *Roman Missal*, no. 242) but also all others present may receive communion under both kinds, in accordance with the judgment of the Ordinary (National Conference of Catholic Bishops, November 1970).

#### NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION OF THE SACRAMENTAL FORM

1. A literal translation of the new sacramental form (*Accipe signaculum Doni Spiritus Sancti*) is: "Re-

ceive the seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit."

2. Underlying the new form is a wealth of scriptural allusions:
  - (a) "Seal" is an echo of Ephesians 1:13 ("you also . . . were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit").
  - (b) "Gift" is a reference to Acts 2:38 ("you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"); see Acts 10:45; 11:17.
  - (c) The "Gift" (note the capital letter) is the Holy Spirit himself. The Holy Spirit is the divine person who is promised by the Father (Luke 24:29; Acts 1:4) and is sent by the Father (Acts 2:33; John 14:26; 15:26).
3. The use of chrism relates confirmation to the anointing of Christ by the Spirit, marking him out as the beloved or only Son (Matt. 3:16-17; Isaiah 42:1). It is the Holy Spirit who gives us the character of sonship in relation to the Father (Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:6-7).
4. In translation it seems desirable to include as much of this scriptural resonance as can be carried in a simple formula. We must try to suggest (a) the personal nature of the Gift; (b) the origin of the Gift in the Father; (c) the relationship of sonship that is implied in the character of confirmation. The following translation suggests something of these concepts: "Receive the seal of the Holy Spirit, the Gift of the Father."
5. The Son is not mentioned, but his active mission of the Holy Spirit is implicit in the whole rite. The theological question of the *Filioque* is not at issue: the sacramental form expresses the external mission of the Holy Spirit (in which the exalted Son plays an essential role), and is not concerned primarily with the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit from Father and Son.



# APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

PAUL, BISHOP  
Servant of the Servants of God  
For an Everlasting Memorial

The sharing in 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 towards 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."<sup>1</sup>

The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, conscious of its pastoral purpose, devoted special attention to 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 in its true light the unity of Christian initiation.

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."<sup>2</sup> 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 as a community to take full and active part in the celebration."<sup>3</sup>

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 (cf. Mark 1:10) and remaining with him (cf. John 1:32). 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 insinuated by what he said that the words of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," referred to himself (cf. 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 (cf. Luke 12:12). The day before he suffered, he assured his Apostles that he would send the Spirit of truth from his Father (cf. John 15:26) to stay with them "for ever" (John 14:16) and help them to be his witnesses (cf. 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; cf. 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 (cf. 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 to the neophytes the gift of the Spirit, 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 pentecostal grace in the Church.

This makes clear the specific import-

ance 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."<sup>4</sup> In baptism, neophytes 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 Savior (cf. 1 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."<sup>5</sup> Moreover, having received the character of this sacrament, they are "bound more intimately to the Church"<sup>6</sup> and "they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith both by word and by deed as true witnesses of Christ."<sup>7</sup> Finally, confirmation is so closely linked with the holy eucharist<sup>8</sup> that the faithful, after being signed by holy baptism and confirmation, are incorporated fully into the body of Christ by participation in the eucharist.<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup>

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 testimonies about 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 "signing."<sup>11</sup> These are contained

both in liturgical documents<sup>12</sup> 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."<sup>13</sup> 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."<sup>14</sup> 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 baptized."<sup>15</sup> 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,"<sup>16</sup> 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 (cf. Acts 8:17), it adds: "in place of that laying on of the hand, in the Church confirmation is given."<sup>19</sup> The Council of Trent, though it had no intention of defining the essential rite of confirmation, nevertheless designated it with the sole name of the sacred chrism of confirmation.<sup>18</sup> Benedict XIV made this declaration: "Therefore let this, which is beyond dispute, be said: 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."<sup>19</sup>

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 (cf. 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."<sup>20</sup> 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."<sup>21</sup>

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 (cf. 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: "ACCIPERE 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 an-

ointing 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 in 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 January 1, 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

## NOTES

1. Tertullian, *De resurrectione mortuorum*, VIII, 3: *CCL*, 2, 931.

2. Cf. Second Vatican Council, con-

stitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 71: *AAS*, 56 (1964) 118.

3. *Ibid*, no. 21: p.106.

4. Cf. Second Vatican Council, decree *Ad Gentes divinitus*, no. 36: *AAS*, 58 (1966), 983.
5. Second Vatican Council, dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium*, no. 11: *AAS*, 57 (1965) 15.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*; cf. decree *Ad Gentes divinitus*, no. 11: *AAS*, 58 (1969) 959-960.
8. Cf. Second Vatican Council, decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, no. 5: *AAS*, 58 (1966) 997.
9. Cf. *ibid.*: pp. 997-998.
10. Cf. 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. Cf. Tertullian, *De Baptismo*, VII-VIII: *CCL*, 1, 282 sq.; B. Botte, *La tradition apostolique de Saint Hippolyte: Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen*, 39 (Munster in W., 1963) 52-54; Ambrose, *De Sacramentis*, II, 24; III, 2, 8; VI, 2, 9: *CSEL.*, 73, pp. 36, 42, 74-75; *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 (Munster in W., 1921), 53 sq.; *Liber Ordinum*, ed. M. Férotin: *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 du dixième 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 XII<sup>e</sup> siècle: Studi e Testi*, 86 (Vatican City, 1938), 247 sq., 289; t.2, *Le Pontifical de la Curie Romaine au XIII<sup>e</sup> 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.*, p. 129.
18. *Concilii Tridentini Actorum pars altera*, ed. S. Ehes: *Concilium Tridentinum*, V, Act. II (Friburgi Br., 1911), 996.
19. Ep. *Ex quo primum tempore, 52: Benedicti XIV. . . . Bullarium*, t. III (Prati, 1847), 320.
20. Cf. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* XVIII, 33: *PG* 33, 1056; Asterius, Bishop of Amasea, *In parabola de filio prodigo*, in "Photii Bibliotheca," Cod. 271: *PG*, 104, 213. Cf. 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 XII<sup>e</sup> siècle: Studi e Testi*, 86, (Vatican City, 1938). 247.

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN INITIATION

(EXCERPT FROM THE ROMAN RITUAL)

1. Through the sacraments of Christian initiation men and women are freed from the power of darkness. With Christ they die, are buried and rise again. They receive the Spirit of adoption which makes them God's sons and daughters and, with the entire people of God, they celebrate the memorial of the Lord's death and resurrection.<sup>1</sup>

2. Through baptism men and women are incorporated into Christ. They are formed into God's people, and they obtain forgiveness of all their sins. They are raised from their natural human condition to the dignity of adopted children.<sup>2</sup> They become a new creation through water and the Holy Spirit. Hence they are called, and are indeed, the children of God.<sup>3</sup>

Signed with the gift of the Spirit in confirmation, Christians more perfectly become the image of their Lord and are filled with the Holy Spirit. They bear

witness to him before all the world and eagerly work for the building up of the body of Christ.<sup>4</sup>

Finally they come to the table of the eucharist, to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man so that they may have eternal life<sup>5</sup> and show forth the unity of God's people. By offering themselves with Christ, they share in his universal sacrifice: the entire community of the redeemed is offered to God by their high priest.<sup>6</sup> They 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.<sup>7</sup>

Thus the three sacraments of Christian initiation closely combine to bring the faithful to the full stature of Christ and to enable them to carry out the mission of the entire people of God in the Church and in the world.<sup>8</sup>

## NOTES

1. II Vatican Council, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, *Ad Gentes*, 14.
2. Romans 8:5; Galatians 4:5; Council of Trent, 6th Session, Decree on Justification, Chapter 4, *Denz.* 796 (1524).
3. 1 John 3:1.
4. II Vatican Council, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, *Ad Gentes*, 36.

5. John 6:55.
6. Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, X, 6: PL 41, 284; II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 11; Decree on the Life and Ministry of Priests, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 2.
7. II Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, 28.
8. *Ibid.*, 31.

# INTRODUCTION

## I. DIGNITY OF CONFIRMATION

1. Those who have been baptized continue 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 the day of Pentecost.

2. This gift 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 the reception of the sacrament of confirmation. Pastors should see that all the baptized come to the fullness of Christian initiation and are therefore 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—in which catechists, sponsors, and members of the local church participate—catechesis, and common liturgical celebrations. The steps of the catechumenate will be appropriately adapted to those who, baptized in infancy, are confirmed as adults.

The initiation of children into the sacramental life is especially 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. It is appropriate for all the candidates to be 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 gifts 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 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 duty and function 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 the responsibility of 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 is sufficiently mature for this role;
- b) that he belongs to the Catholic Church and has been initiated in the three sacraments of baptism, confirmation, and the eucharist;
- c) that he is not prohibited by law from exercising the role of sponsor.

7. The original 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 the day of Pentecost. After they were filled with the Holy Spirit, the apostles themselves gave the Spirit to the faithful through the laying on of their hands. In this way 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 of Christ to be witnesses 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 are in office;
- b) priests who, in virtue of an office which they lawfully hold, baptize an adult or a child old enough for catechesis, or admit 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, their parochial associates; priests who are in charge of special parishes lawfully established; administrators; substitutes; and assistants<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>2</sup> or those who by mandate of the Ordinary are considered to have equivalent offices;
- b) be the pastors of the places where confirmation is conferred, pastors of the places where the candidates belong, or priests who have taken 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 imposition of the hand, and through the words: *Receive the seal of the Holy Spirit, the Gift of the Father.*

Even though the imposition of hands upon the candidates with the prayer *All-powerful God*, does not pertain to the valid conferral 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 associated with the principal minister in conferring the sacrament join him in imposing their hands upon all the candidates together, but they do not say the prayer.

The whole rite has a twofold meaning. The imposition of hands upon the candidates by the bishop and the con-



celebrating priests expresses the biblical gesture by which the gift of the Holy Spirit is invoked and in this way is well adapted to the understanding of the Christian people. The anointing with chrism and the accompanying words express clearly the effects of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Signed with the perfumed oil by the bishop's hand, 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.

11. Adult catechumens and children who are baptized at an age when they can be catechized 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 (cf. no. 4). Similarly, adults who are 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 in the life of the faithful complete obedience to Christ the Lord in loyal testimony to him, episcopal conferences may choose an age which appears more appropriate, so that the sacrament is conferred after appropriate formation at a more mature age.

In this case there should be the necessary concern that children 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 means 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 dioceses for the admission of catechumens to baptism and the eucharist. In particular, suitable catechesis should precede confirmation. The relationship of candidates with the Christian community and with individual members of the faithful should be sufficiently effective to assist them in their formation. This 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 (cf. Introduction to the Christian Initiation of Adults, no. 19).

It sometimes happens that 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 will not 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. Therefore the newly-confirmed should 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 in other special circumstances, confirmation is 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 diverse activity of the Holy Spirit flows upon the Church and upon each one of the baptized and the confirmed and it is by this word that God's will is manifest in the life of Christians.

The recitation 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 the Christian in the Spirit says: *Abba, Father*.

14. The pastor should record the names of the minister, those confirmed, parents and sponsors, the date and place of confirmation in a special book, in addition to the notation in the baptismal register, which is made according to law.

15. If the pastor of the newly-confirmed is not present, the minister should promptly inform him of the confirmation either personally or through a representative.

#### IV. ADAPTATIONS IN 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 their territory.<sup>3</sup>

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 order 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 the individuals or to all the newly-confirmed together.

18. The minister of confirmation may introduce some comments into the rite in individual cases and in view of the nature of the 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, he should mention in the homily that the bishop is the original minister of the sacrament. He should explain 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 assist him and who concelebrate the Mass with him; if the bishop does not celebrate the Mass, the minister and

- the priests who assist 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) chair for the bishop and the priests who assist him;
  - 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.

## NOTES

1. Cf. canons 451, 471, 476, 216, §4, 472, 474, 475.
2. Cf. canon 217, §1.
3. Cf. *Rite of Baptism for Children* (1969), General Instruction on Christian Initiation, nos. 30-33.

# CHAPTER I

## RITE OF CONFIRMATION WITHIN MASS

This Mass is celebrated, with red or white vestments, when confirmation is conferred within Mass or immediately before or after Mass.

It may be used on any day except the Sundays of Advent, Lent, and Easter, solemnities, Ash Wednesday, and Holy Week.

Entrance antiphon                      Ezekiel 36:25-26

I will pour clean water on you and I will give you a new heart, a new spirit within you, says the Lord.

Or:    Cf. Romans 5:5;8:11

The love of God has been poured into our hearts by his Spirit living in us.

### OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray

(Prayer in silence)

A

God of power and mercy,  
send your Holy Spirit  
to live in our hearts  
and make us temples of his glory.

B

Lord, fulfill your promise:  
send your Holy Spirit  
to make us witnesses before the world  
to the Good News  
proclaimed by Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

## C

Lord,  
 send us your Holy Spirit  
 to help us walk in unity of faith  
 and grow in the strength of his love  
 to the full stature of Christ.

## D

Lord, fulfill the promise  
 given by your Son  
 and send the Holy Spirit  
 to enlighten our minds  
 and lead us to all truth.

[We ask you this] through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 your Son,  
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
 one God, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

20. The liturgy of the word is celebrated in accord with the rubrics. The readings may be taken in whole or in part either from the Mass of the day or from the texts in the Lectionary for Mass (nos. 763-767).

## PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

21. After the gospel the bishop and the priests who assist him are seated. The pastor or another priest, deacon, or catechist presents the candidates for confirmation according to the custom of the region. If possible, each candidate is called by name and comes individually to the sanctuary. If the candidates are children, they are accompanied by one of their sponsors or parents and both stand before the celebrant.

If there are many candidates, they are not called by name, but take a suitable place before the bishop.

## HOMILY OR ADDRESS

22. The bishop then gives a brief homily. He should explain the readings and lead the candidates, their sponsors and parents, and the whole assembly to a deeper understanding of the mystery of confirmation.

He may use these or similar words:

At Pentecost the apostles received the Holy Spirit as the Lord had promised. They also received the power of giving the Holy Spirit and so completing the work of baptism. This we read in the Acts of the Apostles. When Saint Paul placed his hands on those who had been baptized, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they began to speak in other languages and prophetic words.

Bishops are successors of the apostles and have this power of giving the Holy Spirit to the baptized, either personally or through the priests they appoint.

In our day the coming of the Holy Spirit is not usually marked by the gift of tongues, but we know his coming by faith. He fills our hearts with the love of God, brings us together in one faith but in different vocations, and works within us to make the Church one and holy.

The gift of the Holy Spirit which you are to receive will be a spiritual sign and seal to make you more Christ-like and more perfect members of his Church. At his baptism by John, Christ was anointed by the Spirit and sent out on his public ministry to set the world on fire.

You have already been baptized into Christ and now you will receive the power of his Spirit and the sign of the cross on your forehead. You must be witnesses before all the world to his suffering, death, and resurrection; your way of life should reflect the goodness of Christ. Christ gives varied gifts to his Church, and the Spirit distributes them among the members of Christ's body to build up the holy people of God in unity and love.

Be active members of the Church, alive in Jesus Christ. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit give your lives completely in the service of all, as did Christ, who came not to be served but to serve.

Before you receive the Spirit, renew the profession of faith you made in baptism or your parents and godparents made for you in union with the whole Church.

## RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

23. After the homily the candidates stand and the bishop questions them. They respond together.

Bishop: Do you reject Satan and all his works and all his empty promises?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who came to the apostles at Pentecost and who comes to you today in the sacrament of confirmation?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

Candidates: I do.

The bishop gives his assent to their profession of faith and proclaims the faith of the Church:

This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church.

We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The congregation responds:

Amen.

For *This is our faith*, some other formula may be substituted, or the community may express its faith in a suitable song.

## IMPOSITION OF HANDS

24. While the priests who assist the bishop stand near him, he stands facing the people, and with hands joined, sings or says:

My dear friends:

by baptism God our Father gave these adopted children  
new birth to eternal life.

Let us ask him

to pour out the Holy Spirit upon them,  
to strengthen them in their faith,  
and anoint them to be more like Christ the  
Son of God.

All pray in silence for a short time.

25. The bishop and the priests who assist him impose hands upon all the candidates. The bishop alone sings or says:

All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
by water and the Holy Spirit  
you freed these candidates from sin.

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 love,  
the spirit of reverence in your service.

[We ask this] through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.



## ANOINTING

26. The deacon brings the chrism to the bishop. Each candidate goes to the bishop, or the bishop may go to the individual candidates. The one who presented the candidate places his right hand on the latter's shoulder and gives the candidate's name to the bishop; the candidate, however, may give his own name.

27. The bishop moistens his right thumb with chrism and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed as he says:

N., receive the seal of the Holy Spirit, the Gift of the Father.

The newly-confirmed responds:

Amen.

The bishop says:

Peace be with you.

The newly-confirmed responds:

And also with you.

28. If priests assist the bishop in conferring the sacrament, all the vessels of chrism are brought to the bishop by the deacon or by other ministers. The bishop gives a vessel of chrism to each of the priests.

The candidates go to the bishop or to the priests, or the bishop and priests may go to the candidates. The anointing is done as described above (no. 27).

29. During the anointing a suitable song may be sung. After the anointing the bishop and the priests wash their hands.

## GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

30. The general intercessions follow, in this or a similar form determined by the competent authority.

Bishop:        My brothers and sisters:  
                  let us be one in prayer to God our Father  
                  as we are one in the faith, hope, and love his Spirit gives.

Deacon or minister:  
                  For our brothers and sisters,  
                  confirmed by the gift of the Spirit,  
                  that with faith and love as the foundation of their lives  
                  they may be witnesses to Christ the Lord.  
                  Let us pray to the Lord.

All:            Lord, hear our prayer.

Deacon or minister:  
                  For the parents and godparents  
                  who brought these newly-confirmed to the faith,  
                  that by word and example they may encourage them  
                  to follow the way of Jesus Christ.  
                  Let us pray to the Lord.

All:            Lord, hear our prayer.

Deacon or minister:  
                  For the holy Church of God,  
                  in union with N. our pope, N. our bishop, and all the  
                  bishops,  
                  that God, who gathers us together by the Holy Spirit,  
                  may help us grow in unity of faith and love  
                  until his Son returns in glory.  
                  Let us pray to the Lord.

All:            Lord, hear our prayer.

Deacon or minister:

For the whole world,  
that all who have but one Father, one Maker,  
may see beyond racial and national differences  
to their common brotherhood,  
and seek the kingdom of God in the peace of the Holy  
Spirit.

Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Bishop: God our Father,  
you sent the Holy Spirit upon the apostles  
and through them and their successors  
you give the Spirit to your people.  
May the faith and love that spread everywhere  
when the gospel was first preached  
continue to grow  
through the hearts of all who believe.  
[We ask this] through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

## LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

31. After the general intercessions the liturgy of the eucharist is celebrated according to the Order of Mass, with these exceptions:

- a) the profession of faith is omitted, since it has already been made;
- b) some of the newly-confirmed may join those who bring the gifts to the altar;
- c) when the Roman canon is used, the special *Hanc igitur* is said.

32. Adults who are confirmed, their sponsors, parents, wives and husbands, and catechists may receive communion under both kinds.

## PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Pray, brethren . . .

A

Lord,  
in the eucharist  
we celebrate the memorial of our redemption  
by which your Son won for us the gift of the  
Holy Spirit.

Accept our offerings  
and send us your Spirit  
to make us more like Christ  
in bearing witness to the world.

B

Lord,  
you have signed our brothers and sisters  
with the cross of your Son  
and anointed them with the oil of salvation.  
As they offer themselves with Christ,  
continue to fill their hearts with your Spirit.

C

Lord,  
accept the offering of your family  
and help those who receive  
the gift of your Spirit  
to keep him in their hearts  
and come to the reward of eternal life.

[We ask this] through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

When the Roman canon is used, the special *Hanc igitur* is said.

Father,  
accept this offering  
from your whole family  
and from those reborn in baptism  
and confirmed by the coming of the Holy Spirit.  
Protect them with your love.

[Through Christ our Lord. Amen.]

Communion antiphon Cf. Hebrews 6:4

All you who have been enlightened, who have experienced the gift of heaven and who have received your share of the Holy Spirit, rejoice in the Lord.

Or: Psalm 33:6, 9

Look up at him with gladness and smile; taste and see the goodness of the Lord.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray

(Prayer in silence)

A

Lord,  
help those you have anointed by your Spirit  
and fed with the body and blood of your Son;  
bring them through every trial  
and by their works of love  
build up the Church in holiness and joy.

B

Lord,  
you give your Son as food  
to those you anoint  
with your Spirit.  
Help them to fulfill your law  
by living in freedom as your children  
and in holiness as prophets of your kingdom.

C

Lord,  
we have shared the one bread of life.  
Send the spirit of your love  
to keep us one in faith and peace.

[We ask this] through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

## BLESSING

## A

33. In place of the usual blessing, the following blessing or prayer over the people is used.

The deacon or minister gives the invitation in these or similar words: Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing.

The bishop extends his hands over the people and sings or says:

God our Father  
made you his children by water and the Holy Spirit:  
may he bless you  
and watch over you with his love.

R. Amen.

Jesus Christ the Son of God  
has promised that the Spirit of truth  
will be with his Church for ever:  
may he bless you and give you courage  
to profess the true faith.

R. Amen.

The Holy Spirit  
descended upon the first disciples  
and filled their hearts with love:  
may he bless you,  
keep you in faith and love,  
and bring you to the joy of the kingdom of God.

R. Amen.

The bishop adds immediately:

And may almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

OR: B

### PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE

In place of the preceding blessing, the prayer over the people may be used.

The deacon or minister gives the invitation in these or similar words: Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing.

The bishop extends his hands over the people and sings or says:

God our Father,  
complete the work of love you have begun  
and keep the gifts of your Holy Spirit  
alive in our hearts.

May we never be ashamed  
to proclaim Christ crucified.

Make us ready to live his gospel  
and eager to do his will.

[We ask this] through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

The bishop adds immediately:

And may almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

## CHAPTER II

### RITE OF CONFIRMATION OUTSIDE MASS

#### ENTRANCE RITE

34. When the candidates, their sponsors and parents, and the whole assembly of the faithful have gathered, the bishop goes to the sanctuary with the priests who assist him, one or more deacons, and the ministers. Meanwhile all may sing a psalm or appropriate song.

35. The bishop makes the required reverence to the altar with the ministers and greets the people:

Peace be with you.

All: And also with you.

#### OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray

(Prayer in silence)

A

God of power and mercy,  
send your Holy Spirit  
to live in our hearts  
and make us temples of his glory.

B

Lord, fulfill your promise:  
send your Holy Spirit  
to make us witnesses before the world  
to the Good News  
proclaimed by Jesus Christ, our Lord.



## C

Lord,  
 send us your Holy Spirit  
 to help us walk in unity of faith  
 and grow in the strength of his love  
 to the full stature of Christ.

## D

Lord, fulfill the promise  
 given by your Son  
 and send the Holy Spirit  
 to enlighten our minds  
 and lead us to all truth.

[We ask this] through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

## CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD

36. The celebration of the word of God follows. At least one of the readings suggested for the Mass of confirmation is read. See the Lectionary for Mass, nos. 763-767.

37. If two or three readings are chosen, the traditional order is followed; that is, the Old Testament, the Apostle, and the Gospel. After the first and second reading there should be a psalm or song, or a period of silence may be observed.

## PRESENTATION OF THE CANDIDATES

38. After the readings the bishop (and the priests who assist him) are seated. The pastor or another priest, deacon, or catechist present the candidates for confirmation according to the custom of the region. If possible, each candidate is called by name and comes individually to the sanctuary. If the candidates are children, they are accompanied by one of their sponsors or parents and both stand before the celebrant.

If there are many candidates, they are not called by name, but take a suitable place before the bishop.

## HOMILY OR ADDRESS

39. The bishop then gives a brief homily. He should explain the readings and lead the candidates, their sponsors and parents, and the whole assembly to a deeper understanding of the mystery of confirmation.

He may use these or similar words:

At Pentecost the apostles received the Holy Spirit as the Lord had promised. They also received the power of giving the Holy Spirit and so completing the work of baptism. This we read in the Acts of the Apostles. When Saint Paul placed his hands on those who had been baptized, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they began to speak in other languages and prophetic words.

Bishops are successors of the apostles and have this power of giving the Holy Spirit to the baptized, either personally or through the priests they appoint.

In our day the coming of the Holy Spirit is not usually marked by the gift of tongues, but we know his coming by faith. He fills our hearts with the love of God, brings us together in one faith but different vocations, and works within us to make the Church one and holy.

The gift of the Holy Spirit which you are to receive will be a spiritual sign and seal to make you more Christ-like and more perfect members of his Church. At his baptism by John, Christ was anointed by the Spirit and sent out on his public ministry to set the world on fire.

You have already been baptized into Christ and now you will receive the power of his Spirit and the sign of the cross on your forehead. You must be witnesses before all the world to his suffering, death, and resurrection; your way of life should reflect the goodness of Christ. Christ gives varied gifts to his Church, and the Spirit distributes them among the members of Christ's body to build up the holy people of God in unity and love.

Be active members of the Church, alive in Jesus Christ. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit give your lives completely in the service of all, as did Christ, who came not to be served but to serve.

Before you receive the Spirit, renew the profession of faith you made in baptism or your parents and godparents made for you in union with the whole Church.

## RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

40. After the homily the candidates stand and the bishop questions them. They respond together.

Bishop: Do you reject Satan and all his works and all his empty promises?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who came to the apostles at Pentecost and who comes to you today in the sacrament of confirmation?

Candidates: I do.

Bishop: Do you believe in the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

Candidates: I do.

The bishop gives his assent to their profession of faith and proclaims the faith of the Church:

This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The congregation responds:

Amen.

For *This is our faith*, some other formula may be substituted, or the community may express its faith in a suitable song.

## IMPOSITION OF HANDS

41. While the priests who assist the bishop stand near him, he stands facing the people, and with hands joined, sings or says:

My dear friends:  
by baptism God our Father gave these adopted children  
new birth to eternal life.

Let us ask him  
to pour out the Holy Spirit upon them,  
to strengthen them in their faith,  
and anoint them to be more like Christ the  
Son of God.

All pray in silence for a short time.

42. The bishop and the priests who assist him impose hands upon all the candidates. The bishop alone sings or says:

All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
by water and the Holy Spirit  
you freed these candidates from sin.  
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 love,  
the spirit of reverence in your service.

[We ask this] through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

## ANOINTING

43. The deacon brings the chrism to the bishop. Each candidate goes to the bishop, or the bishop may go to the individual candidates. The one who presented the candidate places his right hand on the latter's shoulder and gives the candidate's name to the bishop; the candidate, however, may give his own name.

44. The bishop moistens his right thumb with chrism and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed as he says:

N., receive the seal of the Holy Spirit, the Gift of the Father.

The newly-confirmed responds:

Amen.

The bishop says:

Peace be with you.

The newly-confirmed responds:

And also with you.

45. If priests assist the bishop in conferring the sacrament, all the vessels of chrism are brought to the bishop by the deacon or by other ministers. The bishop gives a vessel of chrism to each of the priests.

The candidates go to the bishop or to the priests, or the bishop and priests may go to the candidates. The anointing is done as described above (no. 44).

46. During the anointing a suitable song may be sung. After the anointing the bishop and the priests wash their hands.

## GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

47. The general intercessions follow, in this or a similar form determined by the competent authority.

Bishop: My brothers and sisters:  
let us be one in prayer to God our Father  
as we are one in the faith, hope, and love his Spirit  
gives.

Deacon or Minister:  
For our brothers and sisters,  
confirmed by the gift of the Spirit,  
that with faith and love as the foundation of their lives  
they may be witnesses to Christ the Lord.  
Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Deacon or Minister:  
For the parents and godparents  
who brought these newly-confirmed to the faith,  
that by word and example they may encourage them  
to follow the way of Jesus Christ.  
Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Deacon or Minister:  
For the holy Church of God,  
in union with N. our pope, N. our bishop, and all the  
bishops,  
that God, who gathers us together by the Holy Spirit,  
may help us grow in unity of faith and love  
until his Son returns in glory.  
Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Deacon or Minister:

For the whole world,  
that all who have but one Father, one Maker,  
may see beyond racial and national differences  
to their common brotherhood,  
and seek the kingdom of God in the peace of the Holy  
Spirit.

Let us pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Bishop: God our Father,  
you sent the Holy Spirit upon the apostles  
and through them and their successors  
you give the Spirit to your people.  
May the faith and love that spread everywhere  
when the gospel was first preached  
continue to grow  
through the hearts of all who believe.  
[We ask this] through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

## LORD'S PRAYER

48. All then say the Lord's Prayer, which the bishop may introduce in these or similar words:

Dear friends in Christ,  
let us pray together  
as the Lord Jesus Christ has taught.

All: Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done on earth as it  
is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass  
against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

## BLESSING

## A

49. After the Lord's Prayer the bishop blesses all present. In place of the usual blessing, the following blessing or prayer over the people is used.

The deacon or minister gives the invitation in these or similar words: Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing.

The bishop extends his hands over the people and sings or says:

God our Father  
made you his children by water and the Holy Spirit:  
may he bless you  
and watch over you with his love.

R. Amen.

Jesus Christ the Son of God  
has promised that the Spirit of truth  
will be with his Church for ever:  
may he bless you and give you courage  
to profess the true faith.

R. Amen.

The Holy Spirit  
descended upon the first disciples  
and filled their hearts with love:  
may he bless you,  
keep you in faith and love,  
and bring you to the joy of the kingdom of God.

R. Amen.

The bishop adds immediately:

And may almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.



OR: B

### PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE

In place of the preceding blessing, the prayer over the people may be used.

The deacon or minister gives the invitation in these or similar words:  
Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing.

The bishop extends his hands over the people and sings or says:

God our Father,  
complete the work of love you have begun  
and keep the gifts of your Holy Spirit  
alive in our hearts.

May we never be ashamed  
to proclaim Christ crucified.  
Make us ready to live his gospel  
and eager to do his will.

[We ask this] through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

The bishop adds immediately:

And may almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

R. Amen.

## CHAPTER III

### CONFERRAL OF CONFIRMATION BY A MINISTER WHO IS NOT A BISHOP

50. The minister of confirmation who is not a bishop and who confirms either by concession of the general law or by special indult of the Apostolic See observes the rite described above.

51. If, because of the large number of candidates, other priests join the celebrant in the administration of the sacrament, he chooses them in accord with no. 8 above. Since it is most proper that confirmation be conferred during Mass, these priests should also be concelebrants of the Mass.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONFIRMATION OF A PERSON IN DANGER OF DEATH

52. It is of great importance that the initiation of every baptized Christian be completed in the sacrament of confirmation and the eucharist. The sick person in danger of death who has reached the age of reason should therefore be strengthened by confirmation before he receives the eucharist as viaticum, after the requisite and possible catechesis.

In danger of death, however, the sacraments of confirmation and anointing of the sick are not ordinarily to be celebrated in the same rite.

In the case of a child who has not yet reached the age of reason, confirmation is conferred in accord with the same principles and norms as baptism.

53. When circumstances permit, the entire rite described above is followed.

54. In case of necessity, the minister of confirmation imposes his hands upon the sick person as he says:

All-powerful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
by water and the Holy Spirit  
you freed this candidate from sin.  
Send your Holy Spirit upon him (her)  
to be his (her) Helper and Guide.  
Give him (her) the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of right judgment and courage,  
the spirit of knowledge and love,  
the spirit of reverence in your service.

[We ask this] through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

55. Then the minister moistens his right thumb with chrism and makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the one to be confirmed as he says:

N., receive the seal of the Holy Spirit, the Gift of the  
Father.

The newly-confirmed responds, if he is able:

Amen.

Other parts of the preparatory and concluding rites may be added in individual cases, depending on the circumstances.

56. In case of extreme necessity, it is sufficient that the anointing be done with the sacramental form:

N., receive the seal of the Holy Spirit, the Gift of the  
Father.



