

"The Revised Rite [*Order*] of Confirmation"

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I. Historical Development of the (Roman) Rite of Confirmation

A. Scripture

1. Matthew 3: "And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; a lo, a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'"
2. John 3: "Truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."
3. Acts 8: Peter and John travel to Samaria to impose hands on those who have already been baptized in Christ, but who had not yet received the Holy Spirit.
4. Acts 2: The Pentecost event
5. Hebrew 6: "Therefore, let us leave behind the basic teaching about Christ and advance to maturity, without laying the **foundation** all over again: repentance from dead works and faith in God, instruction about baptisms and laying on of hands...."
6. NT evidence points to a post-baptismal gift of the Spirit through the imposition of hands that is associated with the preaching of the Apostles

B. *Apostolic Tradition* (c. 215?) - Roman/Syrian(?) document

1. "Afterward, when they have come up out of the water, they shall be anointed by the elder with the Oil of Thanksgiving, saying, 'I anoint you with holy oil in the name of Jesus Christ.' Then, drying themselves, they shall dress and afterwards gather in the church. The bishop will then lay his hand upon them, invoking, saying, 'Lord God, you who have made these worthy of the removal of sins through the bath of regeneration, make them worthy to be filled with your Holy Spirit, grant to them your grace, that they might serve you according to your will, for to you is the glory, Father and Son with the Holy Spirit, in the Holy Church, now and throughout the ages of the ages. Amen.' After this he pours the oil into his hand, and laying his hand on each of their heads, says, 'I anoint you with holy oil in God the Father Almighty, and Christ Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.' Then, after sealing each of them on the forehead, he shall give them the kiss of peace."

2. Part of a broader series of rites including Baptism and Eucharist

C. Letter of Pope Innocent I to Decentius of Gubbio (416)

1. Who is the proper minister of "consignation"?: "Concerning the consignation of infants, it is clear that this should not be done by any but the bishop. For

presbyters, although they are priests, have not attained the highest rank of the pontificate. The right of bishops alone to seal and to deliver the Spirit the Paraclete is proved not only by the custom of the Church but also by that reading the Acts of the Apostles which tells how Peter and John were directed to deliver the Holy Spirit to people who are already baptized. For it is permissible for presbyters, either in the absence of a bishop, or when they baptize in his presence, to anoint the baptized with chrism, but only with such as has been consecrated by the bishop; and even then they are not to sign the brow with that oil, for that is reserved to bishops alone when they deliver the Spirit the Paraclete."

2. Tremendous impact on the liturgical development of Confirmation
 - a. Bishops became overseers of multiple worship sites
 - b. Children were being baptized soon after birth (Original Sin+infant mortality rates)
 - c. This led to many more baptisms, and the bishops simply couldn't be present at them all!
 - d. The "consignation" was, therefore, separated from baptism in most instances.

D. Particular Grace/Effect Associated with Confirmation

1. Reflection on the Pentecost event: a strengthening given by the Spirit to proclaim the saving works of Christ
2. Faustus of Riez (early 5th c.): "In baptism, we are regenerated to life; after baptism, we are confirmed for battle. In baptism we are washed; after baptism, we are strengthened."
 - a. Military imagery = a slap on the cheek by the 13th century!

E. 19-20th centuries: Discovery of ancient documents (like the *Apostolic Tradition*) led some theologians to ask if it would not be helpful to speak of the way in which Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist work together to initiate a new Christian?

1. *Quam singulari* (1910): Pope Pius X asks that children receive Holy Communion at the age of discretion

- a. For many, the order of the sacraments of initiation became: baptism at infancy, Communion at 7-8, and Confirmation sometime thereafter

F. Vatican II: "The rite of Confirmation is to be revised in order that the intimate connection of this sacrament with the whole of Christian initiation may stand out more clearly. By the sacrament of Confirmation the faithful are more perfectly bound to the Church and are 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."

G. *Ordo Confirmationis* 1971 (English [US]- 1977)

1. *Divinae consortium naturae* (Apostolic Constitution)

- a. Bl. Pope Paul VI: "The link between confirmation and the other sacraments of initiation is shown forth more clearly not only by closer [temporal] association of these sacraments, but also by the rite and words by which confirmation is conferred."

- b. Matter: "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, 'Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'

c. New Form: "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit."

d. Addition of the renewal of baptismal promises

e. "Confirmation is so closely linked with the holy Eucharist that the faithful, after being signed by holy baptism and confirmation, are incorporated fully into the body of Christ by participation in the Eucharist."

f. "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."

II. A Shift in Liturgical Language

A. 1969: *Comme le prévoit* - Dynamic Equivalence

1. In translating,

a. It is not necessary to follow the word order and structure of the original text

b. It is necessary to convey the same meaning today that the original text would have had on its original audience.

2. Response in the 1970's-80's: Liturgical texts not only convey facts to us, but also attempt to persuade God.

B. *Liturgicam authentiam*: A new and improved method of translation

1. Goals:

a. Avoid some of the perceived weaknesses of Dynamic Equivalence

b. Respect and Promote the Use of the Vernacular, in accordance with Vatican II

c. Recapture unique images, Scriptural references, and theological richness of our prayers

2. "Translations are not so much a work of creative innovation as it is of rendering the original texts faithfully and accurately. While it is permissible to arrange the wording, the syntax and the style... to prepare a flowing vernacular text... the original text, insofar as possible, must be translated integrally and in the most exact manner" *LA*, 20.

C. Process

1. ICEL to Bishops' Conferences to *Vox Clara* to CDWDS

2. Revised Order of Confirmation - *recognitio* given on March 25, 2015

3. Date of Implementation in the United States: Pentecost Sunday (May 15, 2016)

III. Revised *Order of Confirmation*

A. No changes to the Latin typical edition, but a *retranslation* of that text into English

B. Standardization of vocabulary

1. "And with your spirit"/ "Bow down for the blessing"/ "Universal Prayer"

2. *Order of Confirmation* = *Ordo Confirmationis*

C. Prayer preceding the anointing (from the *Old Gelasian Sacramentary* 7-8th c)

1. Current translation: "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. Through Christ our Lord. **R.** Amen."
2. "Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who brought these your servants to new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, freeing them from sin: send upon them, O Lord, the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete; give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety; fill them with the spirit of the fear of the Lord. Through Christ our Lord. **R.** Amen."
3. Extended subordination in prayer texts
4. Holy Spirit as "Paraclete"
5. Seven-fold gifts: now match the English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
 - a. Will the use of terms like *fortitude* and *piety* require adjustments to the catechesis we provide to confirmandi?
 - b. "Fear of the Lord"
 - 1) Need to prepare confirmandi to understand and explain this term
 - 2) Motivated, not by anxiety, but by love
 - 3) Providing an explanation in worship aids/homilies
6. Reject vs. Renounce: A reflection of the gift given at Confirmation
7. From the sample homily (referencing 2 Corinthians 2:14-15):
 - a. Current translation: "your way of life should at all times reflect the goodness of Christ..."
 - b. New translation: "your manner of life, as the Apostles says, may be in every place **the pleasing fragrance** of Christ..."
 - c. *lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi*
8. Universal Prayer (referencing Ephesians 3:17)
 - a. Current translation: "For these sons and daughters of God, confirmed by the gift of the Spirit, that they give witness to Christ by lives built on faith and love: let us pray to the Lord..."
 - b. New translation: "For these his servants, whom the gift of the Holy Spirit has confirmed: that, **planted in faith and grounded in love**, they may bear witness to Christ the Lord by their way of life, let us pray to the Lord."
9. Other changes
 - a. Other parts of the *Ordo Missae* will not be included
 - b. Full texts of biblical readings
 - c. Language of baptismal promises reflects *Easter Vigil* liturgy
 - d. Inserts to Eucharistic Prayers II and III
 - e. Revised translation of the optional Solemn Blessing and Prayer over the People
 - f. Solely published by USCCB Communications in a bilingual edition