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### Pope Paul VI Issues New Document to Update Sacrament of Confirmation

ROME, August 16, 1971—Pope Paul VI issued a letter yesterday addressed to the entire Catholic Church on the Sacrament of Confirmation to update the liturgical celebration of that Sacrament and to assist the faithful in understanding better the effects that this Sacrament has on the lives of Catholics.

The letter, entitled *Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation*, not only explains the Sacrament of Confirmation, but also shows that Sacrament's relationship to the other Sacraments of Initiation—Baptism and Eucharist. All three Sacraments are related, and together they initiate a person into the life of Christ and His Church.

Pope Paul VI explained in the document that the spiritual life has a certain likeness to the natural life. "The sharing in the divine nature which is granted to all people through the grace of Christ has a certain likeness to the origin, development, and nourishing of natural life", he wrote.

"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", the Pope continued. The document further explained the effects of each of these three Sacraments.

"In baptism, the newly baptized receive forgiveness of sins, adoption as sons of God, and the character of Christ, by which they are members of the Church

and for the first time become sharers in the priesthood of their Savior", Pope Paul VI stated.

The Sacrament of Confirmation confers a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, who gives "special strength". "Moreover, having received the character of this, they are 'bound more intimately to the Church' and 'they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith both by word and by deed as true witnesses of Christ'", the Pope continued.

Pope Paul VI also explained that the Sacrament of Confirmation should be administered in the following manner. It is to be "conferred through the anointing with Chrism on the forehead, which is done by the laying on of the hand, and through the words: 'Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.'"



To learn more about what Sacred Scripture says about Confirmation read **YUCAT 204**.

## CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

### *Baptism—Related to Confirmation*

**T**o understand the Sacrament of Confirmation, it is necessary to understand the Sacrament of Baptism. Exactly what does the Sacrament of Baptism do for the person receiving it? The Sacrament, which consists in the pouring of water with the words, "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit", has several effects. Baptism first of all cleanses an individual of all sin, both Original Sin and any actual sins that might have been committed. This enables the baptized person to be a friend of the Lord, something that would have been impossible if the person had not been freed from Original Sin or any mortal sin. For Original Sin deprived Adam and Eve and all their descendants of the sanctifying grace that made them friends with God.

Through Baptism, which forgives sins, you are made a friend of God. Baptism, through the power of the Holy Spirit, unites you to Jesus, who becomes your Brother. You, then, become an adopted child of the Father.

Through this union with Jesus, you take on the character of Christ. Because Christ and His Church are one, you, then, become united with the Church and enter and become a member of the Church.

The baptized person also becomes a sharer in the priesthood of Jesus, who offers Himself to His Heavenly Father, particularly in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. You, therefore, are given the responsibility of offering praise and worship to the Heavenly Father through words and deeds.

The baptized person is not only made a priest (not an ordained priest), but also a prophet and a king. For Jesus is Priest, Prophet, and King. As a prophet, you have the responsibility of bringing the good news of Salvation to others. As a king, you serve, and you have dominion over the created world by reordering all things according to Christ's will.

Because Baptism has made you an adopted child of the Father, it also has made you an heir to Heaven. You now can attain Heaven for all eternity, so long as you do not forfeit Heaven by dying in the state of mortal sin.

Baptism also gives you the gifts of faith, hope, and charity, which enable the baptized person to know God, to hope in Him, and to love Him and His other sons and daughters. This first Sacrament of Initiation also confers the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord.

Baptism, then, is the first Sacrament all Catholics must receive before any of the other Sacraments. It is the Sacrament that applies to each person the merits of Jesus' death and Resurrection, which won Salvation for all mankind.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, then, Baptism is given as a means of personal Salvation. The individual is redeemed and born into the life of God. This initial life is further strengthened and nourished by the work of the Holy Spirit in the Sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Eucharist.

## CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT



### Effects of the Sacrament of Baptism

1. Takes away all sin (Original and actual), which deprives one of friendship with God
2. Gives sanctifying grace, which establishes a friendship with God
3. Makes us adopted children of God
4. Confers the character of Christ
5. Makes us members of Christ's Church
6. Makes us priests, prophets, and kings
7. Confers the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity
8. Bestows the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit
9. Makes us heirs of Heaven
10. Applies the merits of Jesus' death and Resurrection



**Learn more about the Sacraments of Christian Initiation by reading CCC 1275 and the Sacrament of Baptism by reading CCC 1276–84.**

## CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

### *Confirmation—What Is It?*

The Sacrament of Confirmation is a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit in which a baptized person is sealed with the gift of the third Person of the Blessed Trinity. Granted, the baptized person has already received the Holy Spirit in Baptism, but this special sealing with the Holy Spirit is given to bind the person even more closely to Christ and His Church.

Baptism is given for personal Salvation, but Confirmation is given to thrust an individual outward and send that person on a “mission”. Confirmation is the Pentecost event for a baptized person. Like the disciples who received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and went out to proclaim the good news about Jesus Christ, those who are confirmed are given the Holy Spirit to energize them “to spread and defend the Catholic Faith both by word and by deed as true witnesses of Christ” (*Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation*).

The gift of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation is given to bind you more closely to Christ and His Church, and the mission of the Church is to bring others to Christ by speech and action. The purpose of Confirmation is to help you fulfill your responsibilities within the mission of the Church. Through the Sacrament of Confirmation, you are given the grace to become an active agent for Christ, and not merely a passive recipient of God’s gifts.

In the Sacrament of Baptism you have been anointed priest, prophet, and king, in order to give worship to God, to proclaim the good news, and to serve others and reorder creation according to Christ’s will. In Confirmation, these responsibilities are energized by the Holy Spirit, so that you, as a member of the Church, will take on the tasks connected with these offices of Jesus Christ, which have now been delegated by Him to the Church.

Confirmation strengthens the gifts of faith, hope, and charity and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, which were given for the first time in the Sacrament of Baptism. Now, as these gifts are strengthened, they can be used to spread and defend the Faith.

As a defender of the Faith, you are made a soldier of Christ, that is, someone willing to withstand attacks against the Catholic Faith, even to the point of death. You are a soldier of Christ in a spiritual sense, not in the sense of being willing to face physical battles. But a soldier of Christ might well be asked to suffer persecution for the sake of the Catholic Faith, and you will have the spiritual strength to defend the Faith when it comes under attack from others.

To show the connection between Confirmation and Pentecost, the normal minister of Confirmation is a bishop, because the bishops are successors of the Apostles, who were present at the first Pentecost. In special situations, the bishop may delegate a priest to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation.



**To learn more about the Sacrament of Confirmation read YOUCAT 203 and CCC 1315–21.**

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### *Finding Life's Meaning through the Sacrament of Confirmation*



“You will be sent!” “You will have a mission!”

That mission was given to you when you were baptized, but that mission will be strengthened and energized when you receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. For that Sacrament will bestow on you a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit to send you into the world “to spread and defend the Catholic Faith both by word and deed as true witnesses of Christ”.

Because you are sent by the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the Faith, you will always have a purpose in life. This means that you will have to look for opportunities to bring the good news of Salvation to the people around you.

These opportunities are plentiful, because all people can grow in their understanding and love of Jesus. Every day you will be with people (relatives, friends, neighbors, teachers, and people with whom you work) who need to hear and see that the redemption of the world affects their lives.

We can spread the good news by talking to others about the Faith and also by our example, that is, our good deeds of service to others. If you look for opportunities to spread the good news, you will find them everywhere.

You do not have to talk about Jesus all the time to give witness to your Faith. You can show others that you are a believer by living your Faith and by doing acts of service and kindness.

Even someone sick in bed or dying of cancer has the opportunity and the mission to bring others to Christ by word and deed. Of course, one effective way to bring others to the Lord is by prayer, and ill or disabled persons can lovingly offer their pain and suffering to the Father with the sacrificial death of Jesus on the Cross for sinners, for the missions, for the good of the Church, or for others who need prayers.

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, of the Child Jesus, is the patroness of missions in the Church. She was a young nun who died at the age of twenty-four, who never went to the foreign missions herself. She did, however, offer her prayers and actions for those in need, particularly those in the missions, so she was proclaimed a patroness of missions.

Someone who constantly looks for ways to spread the Faith will find ways, because opportunities exist all around us. Each morning a baptized and confirmed person has a good reason to get up—the mission to spread the good news to others!

To learn more about the mission of the Church read *YOH/CAT 11 and 12*.

To learn more about suffering and human dignity read *YOH/CAT 66 and 280*.

## CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

### Pope Benedict XVI Calls a Synod to Confer about Church's Mission to Evangelize

VATICAN CITY, October 7, 2012—Pope Benedict XVI has convened a synod of bishops to confer on the Church's role in evangelization. The Pope will meet with approximately 250 bishops and cardinals from throughout the world (less than 5 percent of the total number) to discuss various issues surrounding the proclamation of the Faith to believers and nonbelievers.

The Pope usually convenes a synod every two to three years to receive advice and counsel from his brother bishops about various problems in the Church and goals which need to be accomplished. A synod is different from an ecumenical council, which gathers all of the bishops of the world together with the Pope, who is head of the college of bishops. In the two thousand-year history of the Catholic Church there have been only twenty-one ecumenical councils. Whereas synods are advisory, ecumenical councils may teach authoritatively and even can use their authority to declare some teaching of the

Church infallible, that is, without possibility of error.

This synod is focusing on evangelizing, which means proclaiming the good news so that people can come to believe in Jesus Christ and His teachings. One of the problems to be addressed is the re-evangelization of Catholic countries where many believers have lost their faith and there is a need to bring them back to the Catholic Church.



To learn more about the mission of the Church read YOUCAT 11 and 123.

### **Father John Maronic, O.M.I., Founds Victim Missionary Group for Sick and Disabled Persons**

BELLEVILLE, ILLINOIS, 1964—Father John Maronic, O.M.I., founded a group to help chronically ill and disabled people see their suffering in the light of the gospel. This group, called the Victim Missionaries, has as its goal assisting its members to unite their sufferings with the sacrifice of Jesus' death on the Cross.

Father Maronic, who has been working at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows, gathered a group of handicapped and sick persons together in order to support one another in a Christian understanding of their suffering. Because the sick and disabled were traveling to Marian Shrines throughout the world, Father Maronic decided to organize them as they came to the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows.

A member of the religious order called the Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate, Father Maronic called this new organization "Victim Missionaries" because he wanted the sick and disabled to understand that they could offer their sufferings to their Heavenly Father in imitation of Jesus, an innocent Victim, who gave His life for all sinners. He used the word "missionaries" because he hoped that the members of this group would see themselves as missionaries sent to help the Church by



offering their prayers and sufferings for the good of the Church.

Father Maronic saw the sick and the disabled as a real "gold mine", ready to be tapped for the good of the Church. "This suffering will be wasted if we do not help these people see that their lives can bear spiritual fruit for the rest of the Church", he said.

Members of the Victim Missionaries gather together once a month for a day of recollection, in which they have conferences on the spiritual life, pray together, and celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.



To learn more about suffering and human dignity read **YOUCAT 66 and 280.**

## CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

### *Confirmation is Linked to The Sacrament of the Eucharist*

Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist are related to one another, and together they are called the Sacraments of Initiation, because they initiate and draw those who receive them more deeply into the life of Christ and His Church.

The Holy Eucharist is the Sacrament that perfectly expresses our relationship with Christ and His Church. When we receive this great Sacrament, we are united with Jesus Himself as He is risen from the dead. When we receive the Eucharist, we receive the Risen Lord.

When we receive the Eucharist, we are also united with the rest of the Church, for, in the Eucharist, members of the Church become one in the Lord, just as grains of wheat come together to form one bread. The Eucharist perfectly expresses the Church coming together and being united to Jesus.

We were created to know and love the Lord. Baptism and Confirmation help us to know and love the Lord. In the Eucharist we have the perfect opportunity to know Jesus and to give ourselves totally to Jesus, who in union with the Holy Spirit, presents us to the Father.

Those who have been baptized and confirmed are sent as priests, prophets, and kings to serve Jesus and His Church. As missionaries and ambassadors of Jesus and His Church, they are to draw all people together in faith, hope, and charity, so that they will be able to give praise and honor to the Father.



☀ **To learn more about what happens when the Eucharist is celebrated read YOUCAT 217.**

☀ **To learn more about the mission of the Church read YOUCAT 11 and 127.**

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*We can offer our studies to the Lord as a prayer of praise to our Heavenly Father.*



All these relationships and activities give you the skills and talents for the Church and for parents if we have the virtues of charity, respect, obedience, patience, and generosity. We are better friends if we are patient, understanding, and forgiving.

Some of us have athletic talent, while others have the ability to play musical instruments or to sing. Maybe some of us are good with computers, while others are good at cooking.

All these virtues and talents can be put at the service of the Lord and His Church, if we offer them to the Lord. Some can be directly put at the service of the Lord, for instance, by making a cake for a white stork church or by singing in a church choir. We should look for ways in which we can help our parish and our Catholic institutions, because they help to build up the Mystical Person of Christ through the sacramental, educational, or service functions that they provide.

But it is not only in church-related activities that we can use our talents for building up the Mystical Person of Christ. We can offer a basketball or baseball game to the Lord as a prayer of a ending and petition for others to come back to the Church or for some other need. We can start off the game with a prayer in our hearts like the following: "Jesus, thank You for the ability to play basketball. Help me to play well. I give this game (or practice session) to You as a gift of my love, and I offer it as a prayer for others who need my prayers."