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The Church—Dedicated by Christ Jesus to His Body
The Church—Spreading the Good News of the Gospel

CHAPTER 2: CONFIRMATION, THE SACRAMENT

Chapter Focus

The objective of chapter 2 is to help students deepen their understanding of the three Sacraments of Initiation, namely, Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist, which draw us into a relationship with Christ and His Church. Each Sacrament will be explained so that students will see that these three Sacraments are different but related to one another.

Each Sacrament has a unique function in bringing a person into the life of Christ and His Church, so by investigating and understanding the uniqueness of each Sacrament, the students preparing for Confirmation will better appreciate the Sacrament they are about to receive, and will be open to its graces.

Correspondence to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Baptism: CCC 977, 1275, 1278

Confirmation: CCC 1285

Eucharist: CCC 2177

Sacraments of Initiation: CCC 1299–333

Explanation

Have students read and discuss the news story “Pope Paul VI Issues New Document to Update Sacrament of Confirmation” on textbook p. 5. Have them answer the six questions.

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Pope Paul VI Issues New Document to Update Sacrament of Confirmation

ROME, August 15, 1971.—Pope Paul VI issued a letter yesterday addressed to the entire Catholic Church on the Sacrament of Confirmation. The document, in celebration of that Sacrament and to assist in its understanding, is the first papal document on this sacrament in the history of the Church.

The letter, entitled *Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation*, not only explains the Sacrament of Confirmation, but also shows that Sacrament's relation to Baptism and Eucharist. All three Sacraments are related, and together they bring the Christian into the life of Christ and His Church.

Pope Paul VI explained in the document the divine nature which is granted to all who receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Certain blessings to the origin, development, and nourishing of natural life,” he wrote.

“The Sacrament of Confirmation, strengthened by the sacrament of Confirmation, and finally are sustained by the Sacrament of Eucharist. The document further explained the effects of each of these three Sacraments.

In addition, the newly baptized receive sacraments of sins, adoption as children of God, and membership in the Church, by which they are members of the Church.

and for the first time became solemn in the sacrament.

“The Sacrament of Confirmation confers a special strengthening.” Moreover, the document states that the sacrament is an “essential moment intimately to the Church’s life.”

“They are more strictly obliged to live in the light of the Holy Spirit,” the Pope continued. “The Holy Spirit is sent by God as true witness of Christ.”

The Sacrament of Confirmation should be administered in the following manner. It is to be administered by a bishop, or a priest or deacon 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 *VOICAT 284*.

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Talk with them about how the effects of the Sacraments of Initiation correspond to the natural life of a person.

Natural life

Birth **Spiritual life**

Growing in strength Baptism—born in the Lord

Nourishment Holy Eucharist—nourished by Jesus


After they have read and discussed the news story, then have them list the effects of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist.

Baptism: sins forgiven, adopted as children of God, receive baptismal character, share in priesthood of Christ

Confirmation: receive strength from the Holy Spirit, receive confirmation character, bound more intimately to the Church, obliged to spread, defend, and live the Faith

Holy Eucharist: sustained by the food of eternal life

Your students may not have seen the Sacrament of Confirmation administered, so conclude discussion of the news story by explaining how Confirmation is administered.

 *Have the students read and discuss YOUCAT 204 to learn more about what Scripture says about Confirmation.*

Baptism and Confirmation

Have the students read and discuss "Baptism—Related to Confirmation" and "Effects of the Sacrament of Baptism" on textbook pp. 6–7. Talk about the list of the effects of the Sacrament with the students. You may want to have students memorize these effects.

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Baptism—Related to Confirmation

To 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," cleanses the soul from all sins, including 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. The baptized person is also made a member of the Church and receives the 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. You are also united to the Holy Spirit, who dwells in you, and to the 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.

Through Baptism, you are made a member of the Church, but also a prophet and a king. The Holy Spirit, who dwells in you, gives you 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 governing all things according to Christ's will.

Through Baptism, Christ 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.

The Holy Spirit 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.

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.

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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. Confirms the character of Christ
5. Makes us members of Christ's Church
6. Makes us priests, prophets, and kings
7. Confirms 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.

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Have the students read and discuss the section "Confirmation—What Is It?" on textbook p. 8. Show the connection of Confirmation to Pentecost and how, like the Apostles, we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit "to spread and defend the Catholic Faith both by word and by deed as true witnesses of Christ". Point out to students that the mission of the Church is to spread and defend the Faith and to make Christ present to the world. By Baptism they are already priests, prophets, and kings, but in Confirmation the Holy Spirit will be given to strengthen them in living these offices.

Also, point out that the Sacrament makes the candidate a "soldier of Christ" in the spiritual realm. The confirmed person is called upon to defend the Faith when others persecute followers of Jesus and His Church. Point out that the normal minister of Confirmation is a bishop. The bishops are successors of the Apostles. That is, they were ordained to carry on the work of the Apostles in the Church. Be sure the students understand the meaning of "successor". You can explain that our current president is a successor of George Washington.

Ask: How can a young person can spread the Faith by both word and deed? (Answers will vary but should include examples that indicate the following.) *By not following peer pressure to do something known to be wrong, by giving Faith a priority over sports, etc.*

It should be pointed out that after Confirmation, the Holy Spirit helps us to accomplish these ways of spreading the Faith. Have the students look up the definition of the word "martyr", either online or in a dictionary. Point out that the word "witness" is used in the definition. Have the students research some of the saints who were martyrs and write a brief report on one of them. Some examples are Saint Peter, Saint Paul, Saint Catherine of Alexandria, Saint Andrew, Saint Justin Martyr, Saint Anastasia, etc. Catholic Online is a good source for information on saints.

★ Have the students read and discuss CCC 1275 to learn about the Sacraments of Christian Initiation and CCC 1276-84 to learn more about the Sacrament of Baptism.

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Confirmation and the Meaning of Life

Have the students read and discuss "Finding Life's Meaning through the Sacrament of Confirmation" on textbook p. 9.

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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 three Persons of the Blessed Trinity. Granted, the baptized person has already received the Holy Spirit at baptism, but the person sealing with the Holy Spirit is given to find the person even more closely to Christ and His Church.

Baptism is given the personal salvation, but Confirmation is given to thrust an individual outward and to give the person the strength to live a Christian life. Confirmation is given to the baptized person who has been confirmed and given the Holy Spirit to energize them "to spread and defend the Catholic Faith both by word and by deed, as an apostle of Christ Jesus, in all circumstances." This is the mission of Confirmation.

The gift of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation is given to lead you more closely to Christ and His Church, and His 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 sign of Christ's and His Church's presence throughout the world.

In the Sacrament of Baptism you have been anointed priest, prophet, and king, in order to give witness to Christ and His Church. In Confirmation, you are given the grace to become an active sign of Christ's and His Church's presence throughout the world. 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 those offices of Jesus Christ, which have now been delegated by Him to you.

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 more fully.

As a soldier 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 lose physical health. But a soldier of Christ might well be asked to suffer personal loss of health, property, or even life, for the sake of the Faith. 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. The bishop is the one who presides at the sacrament. Confirmation is a sacrament of the Holy Spirit. 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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★ Have the students read and discuss *YOUCAT 203* and *CCC 1315–21* to learn more about Confirmation.

Finding Life's Meaning through the Sacrament of Confirmation



"You will be smart." "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. You will be given the grace to become an active sign of Christ's and His Church's presence throughout the world "to spread and defend the Catholic Faith both by word and by deed as true witnesses of Christ."

Because you are sealed by the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the Faith, you will always have a purpose in life. Remember 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, students, and people with whom you work).

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 around you.

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.

Remember that you will have to look for opportunities to bring the good news 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 the redemption of all sinners.

Some of the witnesses of the Church are the saints, or the others who made the Church. She was a young man who died at the age of twenty-four, who never went to the foreign mission herself. She did, however, offer her prayers and actions for those in need, particularly those in the missions, so because opportunities exist for you.

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

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Have the students read and discuss the feature story about Father John Maronic, O.M.I., on textbook p. 11. Fr. Maronic, O.M.I., founded the Victim Missionary Group. Point out to students that as a feature story, it differs from a news story. Show how those who are sick or disabled can be missionaries of the Church by uniting their suffering with Jesus' death on the Cross and making their sufferings a prayer for others in the Church, such as missionaries in foreign countries; priests and those considering vocations; those who are tempted; or family members and others who need our prayers.

★ Have the students read and discuss YOUCAT 66 and 280 to learn more about suffering and human dignity.

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

BELLEVILLE, ILLINOIS, 1964—Father John Maronic, O.M.I., founded a group to help the sick and disabled share their suffering in the light of the gospel. This group, called the Victim Missionary Group, unites their sufferings with the sacrifice of Jesus' death on the Cross.

Fr. Maronic has been working at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Sorrows, gathered a group of handicapped and sick persons in the area, and made a special mission to the Church in the suffering of their suffering. Because the sick and disabled were traveling to Maron's Shrine to pray, he decided to organize them as they came to the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Sorrows.

A member of the religious order called the Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate, Fr. Maronic, O.M.I., became known as "Victim Missionary" because he wanted the sick and disabled to understand that they could offer their sufferings to God. Fr. Maronic, O.M.I., was Fr. John Maronic, an innocent Victim, who gave His life for all of us. He used the word "missionary" because he wanted to see that members of this group would see themselves as missionaries sent to help the Church by



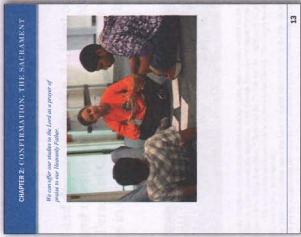
offering their prayers and sufferings for the good of the Church. Fr. Maronic saw the sick and the disabled as a special mission to the Church in the suffering of their suffering. This suffering will be wanted if we do not help these people see that their lives can be a mission for the rest of the Church," he said.

Members of the Victim Missionary Group are called to share their sufferings on the spiritual life, pray together, and offer their sufferings as a sacrifice to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

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

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Have the students read and discuss “Confirmation Is Linked to the Sacrament of the Eucharist” on textbook p. 12. Explain that those who are baptized and confirmed are drawn into the life of Christ and His Church, and that in the Holy Eucharist we are united with Jesus Himself and the Church, whose union with Christ is perfectly expressed in the Holy Eucharist.



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Photo credit: *www.istockphoto.com*

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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.

Just as Baptism 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, and we receive the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us and with us.

When we receive the Eucharist, we are 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 loaf of bread. We truly experience the Church coming together and being united to Jesus.

We were created to know and love the Lord, Baptism and Confirmation are the Sacraments that draw us to Him and give ourselves totally to Him in union with the Holy Spirit, presents us to the Father, Jesus, who in union with the Holy Spirit, presents us to the Father, and unites us to the Church, His Body, His Temple, His Holy Spirit, and His Church. As missionaries and ambassadors of Jesus and His Church, they are to draw all people to the Father, to Jesus, to the Holy Spirit, and to the Church, 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 *YOU'CAT 217*.

★ Have the students read and discuss *YOU'CAT 217* to learn more about what happens when the Eucharist is celebrated.

Review Questions

1. Name the Sacraments of Initiation. What do they accomplish in the life of a believer?
Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist. Initiate means to begin, so these Sacraments bring believers for the first time into the life of Jesus and into His Church.
2. What is the relation between natural life and the supernatural life?
Spiritual life
Baptism—born in the Lord
Confirmation—strengthened by the Holy Spirit
Holy Eucharist—nourished by Jesus

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3. What is Baptism?

It is the Sacrament in which by water and the gift of the Holy Spirit we are made adopted sons and daughters of God, members of the Church, and heirs to Heaven.

4. What is the Sacrament of Confirmation?

It is the Sacrament by which a bishop or priest anoints a person on the forehead with holy chrism in a laying on of hands. The confirmed is thereby strengthened by the gift of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the Catholic Faith by words and deeds.

5. What is the Pentecost event for a Catholic?

It is the Sacrament of Confirmation in which the believer is sent out (like the Apostles) to spread and defend the Faith. The Apostles were in the upper room, and by the power of the Holy Spirit they went out and began to preach the Faith to all nations. After we receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, our mission is to bring the Faith to the rest of the world through our words and deeds.

6. What is a "soldier of Christ"?

Soldiers protect and defend their countries. In the Sacrament of Confirmation, a person is given the Holy Spirit, who gives the confirmed person the spiritual strength and courage to defend the Faith.

7. Doesn't a believer receive the Holy Spirit in Baptism?

Yes, but in the Sacrament of Confirmation, there is a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit to thrust us into the mission of bringing the Faith to the world. Baptism is given more for the sake of our Salvation, whereas Confirmation pushes us outward to help us take up our role in the Church whose mission is to bring others to Jesus Christ. By cooperating with the Holy Spirit in Confirmation we take up our roles in God's plan of Salvation, and in the process we become the saints we are called to be.

8. What is the role of suffering in bringing others to Christ and His Church?

We can unite our sufferings with those of Jesus, and these sufferings can be offered as a prayer for others. They can become a prayer for sinners, for vocations, those who are being persecuted, or for our family, friends, benefactors, and enemies who need our prayers.

9. What is the Holy Eucharist and what is this Sacrament's relation to the Sacrament of Confirmation?

The Holy Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Jesus made present so we can receive Jesus Himself, who unites us with Him and the rest of the Church. This Sacrament perfectly expresses our relationship with Christ and His Church, so that in it, Baptism and Confirmation come to an earthly fulfillment which looks forward to fulfillment in Heaven.

Celebration

As a way to show students the connection between their sufferings and the Salvation of others, have the students pray the Morning Offering (Prayers to Know, student text p. 73).