

The Sacraments: Baptism and Confirmation

Baptism - Who can be baptized?

CC 1246: "Every person not yet baptized and only such a person is able to be baptized."

CC 1248: The catechumenate, or formation of catechumens, aims at bringing their conversion and faith to maturity, in response to the divine initiative and in union with an ecclesial community. The catechumenate is to be "a formation in the whole Christian life . . . during which the disciples will be joined to Christ their teacher. The catechumens should be properly initiated into the mystery of salvation and the practice of the evangelical virtues, and they should be introduced into the life of faith, liturgy, and charity of the People of God by successive sacred rites."

CC 1250: Born with a fallen human nature and tainted by original sin, children also have need of the new birth in Baptism to be freed from the power of darkness and brought into the realm of the freedom of the children of God, to which all men are called. The sheer gratuitousness of the grace of salvation is particularly manifest in infant Baptism. The Church and the parents would deny a child the priceless grace of becoming a child of God were they not to confer Baptism shortly after birth.

Acts 16 – CC 1252: The practice of infant Baptism is an immemorial tradition of the Church. There is explicit testimony to this practice from the second century on, and it is quite possible that, from the beginning of the apostolic preaching, when whole "households" received baptism, infants may also have been baptized.

CC 1253: Baptism is the sacrament of faith. But faith needs the community of believers. It is only within the faith of the Church that each of the faithful can believe. The faith required for Baptism is not a perfect and mature faith, but a beginning that is called to develop.

Who can baptize?

CC 1256: The ordinary ministers of Baptism are the bishop and priest and, in the Latin Church, also the deacon. In case of necessity, anyone, *even a non-baptized person*, with the required intention, can baptize, by using the Trinitarian baptismal formula (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). The intention required is to will to do what the Church does when she baptizes.

The Necessity of Baptism

CC 1257: The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation. He also commands his disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to baptize them. Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for this sacrament. The Church does not know of any means other than Baptism that assures entry into eternal beatitude

CC 1258: The Church has always held the firm conviction that those who suffer death for the sake of the faith without having received Baptism are baptized by their death for and with Christ (The holy innocents under Herod's time). This *Baptism of blood*, like the *desire for Baptism*, brings about the fruits of Baptism without being a sacrament.

CC 1259: For *catechumens* who die before their Baptism, their explicit desire to receive it, together with repentance for their sins, and charity, assures them the salvation that they were not able to receive through the sacrament.

CC 1260: Every man who is ignorant of the Gospel of Christ and of his Church, but seeks the truth and does the will of God in accordance with his understanding of it, can be saved. It may be supposed that such persons would have desired Baptism explicitly if they had known its necessity.

The Grace of Baptism

CC 1262: The different effects of Baptism are signified by the perceptible elements of the sacramental rite. Immersion in water symbolizes not only death and purification, but also regeneration and renewal.

CC 1263: By Baptism *all sins* are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as all punishment for sin.

CC 1264: Yet certain temporal consequences of sin remain in the baptized, such as suffering, illness, death, and such frailties inherent in life as weaknesses of character, and so on, as well as an inclination to sin that Tradition calls *concupiscence*, or metaphorically, "the tinder for sin" (*fomes peccati*); since concupiscence "is left for us to wrestle with, it cannot harm those who do not consent but manfully resist it by the grace of Jesus Christ."

Incorporated into the Church, the Body of Christ

CC 1269: Having become a member of the Church, the person baptized belongs no longer to himself, but to him who died and rose for us. From now on, he is called to be subject to others, to serve them in the communion of the Church, and to "obey and submit" to the Church's leaders, holding them in respect and affection.

CC 1271: "Baptism therefore constitutes *the sacramental bond of unity* existing among all who through it are reborn."

An Indelible Mark

- forever

- Seal of the Lord

Confirmation

CC 1285: Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the "sacraments of Christian initiation," *whose unity must be safeguarded*. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For "by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed."

CC 1286: In the Old Testament the prophets announced that the Spirit of the Lord would rest on the hoped-for Messiah for his saving mission. The descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus (in the form of a dove) at his baptism by John was the sign that this was he who was to come, the Messiah, the Son of God.

CC 1287: This fullness of the Spirit was not to remain uniquely the Messiah's, but was to be communicated to *the whole messianic people*.

CC 1288: "From that time on the apostles, in fulfillment of Christ's will, imparted to the newly baptized by the *laying on of hands* the gift of the Spirit that completes the grace of Baptism....The imposition of hands is rightly recognized by the Catholic tradition as the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation, which in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church."

Confirmation

- gives us an entrance into the Pentecost

- a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit

- an outpouring of grace

Eastern Rite: they receive both sacraments at once and in Latin individual sacraments

CC 1293: In treating the rite of Confirmation, it is fitting to consider the sign of *anointing* and what it signifies and imprints: a spiritual *seal*.

Anointing, in Biblical and other ancient symbolism, is rich in meaning: oil is a sign of abundance and joy; it cleanses (anointing before and after a bath) and limbers (the anointing of athletes and wrestlers); oil is a sign of healing, since it is soothing to bruises and wounds; and it makes radiant with beauty, health, and strength.

Celebration of Confirmation

CC 1297:the sacred chrism (myron) in this way: "[Father . . . send your Holy Spirit] on us and on this oil which is before us and consecrate it, so that it may be for all who are anointed and marked with it holy myron, priestly myron, royal myron, anointing with gladness, clothing with light, a cloak of salvation, a spiritual gift, the sanctification of souls and bodies, imperishable happiness, the indelible seal, a buckler of faith, and a fearsome helmet against all the works of the adversary."

CC 1300: The *essential rite* of the sacrament follows. In the Latin rite, "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: '*Accipe signaculum doni Spiritus Sancti*' [Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.]" In the Eastern Churches of Byzantine rite, after a prayer of epiclesis, the more significant parts of the body are anointed with myron: forehead, eyes, nose, ears, lips, chest, back, hands, and feet. Each anointing is accompanied by the formula *Σφραγὶς δωρεᾶς Πνεύματος Ἁγίου* (*Signaculum doni Spiritus Sancti*): "the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Effects of Confirmation

CC 1303: From this fact, Confirmation brings an increase and deepening of baptismal grace:

- it roots us more deeply in the divine filiation which makes us cry, "Abba! Father!";
- it unites us more firmly to Christ;
- it increases the gifts of the Holy Spirit in us;
- it renders our bond with the Church more perfect;
- it gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action

Who can receive this sacrament?

CC 1306: Every baptized person not yet confirmed can and should receive the sacrament of Confirmation.¹²³ Since Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist form a unity, it follows that "the faithful are obliged to receive this sacrament at the appropriate time,"...

Preparation

- be in a state of grace
- Penance
- Intense prayer

Minister of Confirmation

Eastern Rite – Priest

Latin Rite – Bishop

Bishop blesses the oil in both Rites

If death approaches a priest can confirm