

The Meaning of Confirmation - Evidence from the Catechism

Mass Plus

Series on Sacraments 4

St. Veronica Church

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Here are some quotes from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* about the meaning of confirmation. (Emphasis in bold is added.)

1302 "It is evident from its celebration that the effect of the sacrament of Confirmation is the special outpouring of the Holy Spirit as once granted to the apostles on the day of Pentecost

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

- it roots us **more deeply** in the divine filiation [being a child of God] 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 as true witnesses of Christ, to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of the Cross.

1308 "Although Confirmation is sometimes called the 'sacrament of Christian maturity,' we must not confuse adult faith with the adult age of natural growth, nor forget that the **baptismal grace is a grace of free, unmerited election** and does **not need 'ratification' to become effective**.

1321 "When Confirmation is celebrated separately from Baptism, **its connection with Baptism is expressed**, among other ways, by the **renewal of baptismal promises**. The celebration of Confirmation during the **Eucharist** helps underline the unity of the sacraments of Christian initiation."

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c1a2.htm

Comments by E. Besl:

In n. 1303, do you see any suggestion that the purpose of confirmation is for a teen to "choose" to "confirm the baptism" their parents chose for them?

In n. 1303, do you see that confirmation deepens what happens in baptism? Look at the word "more" and "increase" in the bullets. Catholic theology does not claim that confirmation does anything that baptism did not already start. This is because confirmation used to be part of baptism.

In n. 1308, see that the Catechism does NOT accept the popular current interpretation that confirmation is a teen's "confirming" or "ratifying" their previous baptism, now choosing for themselves.

In n. 1321, what is the purpose of including the renewal of baptism promises in the confirmation ceremony? Is it because the person is "confirming" their baptism? Is it the chief purpose of "confirmation"? NO. It's just to show the connection with baptism, that confirmation continues and deepens the grace of baptism.

Historical note from the Catechism (emphasis added):

1290 "In the **first centuries** Confirmation generally comprised **one single celebration with Baptism**, forming with it a "double sacrament," according to the expression of St. Cyprian. Among other reasons, the multiplication of **infant baptisms** all through the year, the increase of **rural** parishes, and the **growth of dioceses often prevented the bishop from being present at all baptismal celebrations**. In the **West** the desire to reserve the completion of Baptism to the bishop caused the **temporal separation** of the two sacraments. **The East has kept them united**, so that **Confirmation is conferred by the priest who baptizes**. But he can do so only with the "myron" consecrated by a bishop."