

THE SACRAMENTS.

CONFIRMATION.

- 1.** Confirmation is a Sacrament in which we receive the Holy Ghost with His plenitude of gifts and thereby become perfect Christians.
- 2.** These gifts, seven in number, are Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety and Fear of the Lord.
- 3.** The gift of *Wisdom* makes us appreciate and love the things of heaven - prayer, the divine word, the sacraments, and so on.
- 4.** The gift of *Understanding* opens our eyes to the mysteries of our Faith.
- 5.** The gift of *Counsel* enables us correctly to discern and to do what will redound most to the glory of God and be most effective for our salvation.
- 6.** The gift of *Fortitude* infuses into our souls the strength and courage to acquit ourselves of all our duties in the face of every difficulty.
- 7.** The gift of *knowledge* enables us to discover the divine will.
- 8.** The gift of *Piety* incites us to perform with fidelity all our religious duties and to love God as His faithful children.
- 9.** The gift of the *Fear of the Lord* fills us with reverence combined with love for God and makes us dread to offend Him.
- 10.** Bishops alone, as the successors of the Apostles, are the *ordinary* ministers of confirmation, but simple priests specially delegated for the purpose by the Pope may be the *extraordinary* ministers of the sacrament.
- 11.** In administering the sacrament the bishop imposes his hands conjointly over the assembled candidates for confirmation and next anoints each one on the forehead with the chrism in the form of a cross, gives him a slight blow on the cheek, saying « Peace be with thee », and finally prays that the Holy Ghost may descend on them all with all His gifts.

12. The holy chrism is a mixture of olive oil and balsam consecrated by the bishop on Maundy Thursday.

13. Balsam is a resinous excreted by certain trees and emits a pleasant perfume.

14. The purpose of the oil used is to indicate the abundance, sweetness and strength of the grace the Holy Spirit infuses into the person confirmed.

15. The purpose of the balsam is to impress upon him that he ought now to prove as the sweet odour of Jesus Christ, that is to say, be an edification by his good example to all his neighbours.

16. The anointing is done in the form of a cross to remind him that henceforth he must never be ashamed of the Cross, the emblem of his redemption.

17. And the slight blow on the cheek is to warn him that he must henceforth be ready to submit to any suffering and indignity for Christ's sake.

18. To be in the proper dispositions for confirmation one must have been instructed in the principal mysteries of our faith and be free from mortal sin. It is not necessary to be fasting.

19. After being confirmed, it is still more necessary than before to lead the life of a perfect Christian.

20. Confirmation is not absolutely necessary for salvation, but we should be greatly to blame and should run the risk of being deprived of many graces if we did not allow ourselves to be confirmed.

Explanation of the Plate.

21. *In the left-hand top corner* we see a soldier fighting a seven-headed-dragon. This means that signifies that confirmation makes us soldiers of Jesus Christ and gives us the strength (fortitude) to overcome the seven capital sins.

22. *In the opposite corner* is depicted a child, who, true to his mother's teaching, stoutly declares himself a Christian before a judge bent on making him renounce his Faith, thus illustrating how confirmation

imbues us with the courage to confess boldly the name of Christ in the face of persecution.

23. *In the large picture* we see St. Peter and St. John confirming the faithful in Samaria. Laying their hands upon them, these apostles prayed that they might receive the Holy Ghost. The man descending the steps in the background, holding a bag in his hand, is Simon the Magician, who came to ask St. Peter to sell to him for money the power of conferring the Holy Ghost. He was severely rebuked by the apostle for daring to imagine that « the Gift of God may be purchased with money ». (Acts VIII, 20.)

24. *At the very top of the picture* we see the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove hovering over those just confirmed and raising down upon them His seven gifts.

25. *In the bottom picture* we see a bishop confirming children who have already made their First Communion. He is preceded by his chief assistant priest, coming immediately after him, carries on a tray the chrismatory containing the chrism. A third priest, in surplice and stole, follows and wipes off with cotton wool the chrism from the foreheads of the confirmed.
