

## **21 Centuries of Catholic Doctrine: CONFIRMATION**

*As taught in the Church's historical writings, from the time of the Apostles down to today*

—ca. 100 A.D., *Death of Saint John, the last of the Apostles*

**181—Saint Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, *To Autolycus***

—*Confirmation*—

1:12 Are you unwilling to be anointed with the oil of God? It is on this account that we are called Christians: because we are anointed with the oil of God. ...

—*Baptism*—

2:16 Moreover, those things which were created from the waters were blessed by God, so that this might also be a sign that men would at a future time receive repentance and remission of sins through water and the bath of regeneration (Titus 3:5)—all who proceed to the truth and are born again and receive a blessing from God.

**ca. 204—Saint Hippolytus of Rome, Bishop of Pontus, disciple of Irenaeus, *Commentary on Daniel***

1:16 "And she said to her maids, 'Bring me oil'" (Dan. 13:17 [Sus. 1:17, LXX]). Indeed, faith and love prepare oil and cleansing unguents for those who are washed. But what were these unguents if not the commands of the Holy Word? And what the oil, if not the power of the Holy Spirit? It is with these, after the washing [i.e., Baptism], that believers are anointed as with a sweet-smelling oil. All these things were prefigured through the blessed Susanna for our sakes, so that we of the present time who believe in God, might not regard as strange the things which now are done in the Church, and that we might believe that all of them have been set forth in figures by the patriarchs.

**ca. 205—Tertullian, *Baptism***

7:1-8:1 After coming from the place of washing [i.e., Baptism] we are thoroughly anointed with a blessed unction, from the ancient discipline by which in the priesthood they were

accustomed to be anointed with a horn of oil, ever since Aaron was anointed by Moses. ... So also with us, the unction runs on the body but profits us spiritually, in the same way that Baptism is itself a corporal act by which we are plunged in water, while its effect is spiritual, in that we are freed from sins. After this, the hand is imposed for a blessing, invoking and inviting the Holy Spirit.

**ca. 210—Tertullian, *The Resurrection of the Dead***

8:2-3 No soul whatever is able to obtain salvation unless it has believed while it was in the flesh. Indeed, the flesh is the hinge of salvation. In that regard, when the soul is deputed to something by God, it is the flesh which makes it able to carry out the commission which God has given it. The flesh, then, is washed [in Baptism], so that the soul may be made clean. The flesh is anointed [in Confirmation], so that the soul may be dedicated to holiness. The flesh is signed [in Confirmation], so that the soul may be fortified. The flesh is shaded by the imposition of hands [in Confirmation], so that the soul may be illuminated by the Spirit. The flesh feeds on the Body and Blood of Christ [in Holy Communion], so that the soul too may feed on God. They cannot, then, be separated in their reward, when they are united in their works.

**ca. 215—Hippolytus, *The Apostolic Tradition***

22 The Bishop, imposing his hand on [the newly baptized], shall make an invocation, saying:

"O Lord God, who made them worthy of the remission of sins through the Holy Spirit's washing unto rebirth, send into them your grace so that they may serve you according to your will: for there is glory to you, the Father and the Son with the Holy Spirit, in the holy Church, both now and through the ages. Amen."

Then, pouring the consecrated oil into his hand and imposing it on the head of the baptized, he shall say:

“I anoint you with holy oil in the name of the Lord, the Father Almighty and Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit.”

And signing them on the forehead he shall kiss them and say:

“The Lord be with you.”

And he that has been signed shall say:

“And with your spirit.”

Thus shall he do with each.

**251—Pope Saint Cornelius, 21<sup>st</sup> Bishop of Rome, Letter to Fabius of Antioch**

6:43:14-15 As [Novatian] seemed about to die, he received Baptism in the bed where he lay, by pouring—if, indeed, such a man [i.e., a schismatic] can be said to have received it at all. And when he recovered from his illness he did not receive the other things which, in accord with the law of the Church, it is necessary to have; nor was he sealed by the bishop. And since this was not done, how could he have the Holy Spirit?

**ca. 255—Saint Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, in council with thirty other bishops of Proconsular Africa, Letter to Januarius and Seventeen Other Bishops of Numidia**

70:2 It is necessary for him that has been baptized also to be anointed, so that by his having received the chrism, that is, the anointing, he can be the anointed of God and have in himself the grace of Christ. But in turn, it is by the Eucharist that the oil with which the baptized are anointed is sanctified on the altar. He that has neither altar nor church, however, is not able to sanctify that creature, oil. Thus there can be no spiritual anointing among the heretics, since it is evident that oil cannot be sanctified nor can the Eucharist be celebrated among them at all.

**ca. 255—Cyprian, Letter to Jubaianus, A Bishop in Mauretania**

73:9 Some, however, say in regard to those who were baptized in Samaria, that when the Apostles Peter and John came there only hands were imposed on them so that they might receive the Holy Spirit, and that they were not, however, re-baptized (cf. Acts 8:14-17). But we see, dearest brother, that this situation in no way pertains to the present case. For those in Samaria who had believed, had believed in the

true faith; and it was by the deacon Philip, whom those same Apostles had sent there, that they had been baptized inside, in the Church, which is one, and in which alone it is permitted to give the grace of Baptism and to absolve sins.

For the reason, then, that they had already received legitimate and ecclesiastical Baptism, it was not necessary to baptize them again. Rather, that only which was lacking was done by Peter and John; and thus, prayer having been made over them, and hands having been imposed upon them, the Holy Spirit was invoked and was poured out upon them. This is even now the practice among us, so that those who are baptized in the Church are then brought to the prelates of the Church; and through our prayer and the imposition of hands, they receive the Holy Spirit and are perfected with the seal of the Lord.

**256—Seventh Council of Carthage, presided over by Cyprian, Prooemium**

And in the Gospel our Lord Jesus Christ spoke with His divine voice, saying, “Except a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). This is the Spirit which from the beginning was borne over the waters; for neither can the Spirit operate without the water, nor the water without the Spirit. Certain people therefore interpret for themselves ill, when they say that by imposition of the hand they receive the Holy Ghost, and are thus received, when it is manifest that they ought to be born again in the Catholic Church by both sacraments [i.e., by Baptism and Confirmation]. Then indeed they will be able to be sons of God, as says the apostle: “Taking care to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, as ye have been called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God” (Eph. 4:3-6). All these things speaks the Catholic Church.

**300—Council of Elvira, Canons**

39 Pagans, if they have asked when ill to have the hand imposed upon them:—if it be a question of some of those among them whose lives are honorable, it is determined that the hand may be imposed upon them, and they may become Christians.

—313, *The Edict of Milan: legalization of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire*

**314—First Council of Arles, Canons**

8 It is determined that if someone come to the

Church from heresy, let them ask him his creed; and if they see that he has been baptized in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, only is the hand to be imposed upon him, so that he may receive the Holy Spirit. But if, upon being interrogated, he does not respond with this Trinity, he is to be baptized.

**343-381—Council of Laodicea, *Canons***

48 [T]hose who have been illuminated [i.e., baptized] are, after Baptism, to be anointed with celestial chrism, and thus become partakers in the kingdom of Christ.

**ca. 350—Saint Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem, Doctor of the Church, *Catechetical Lectures***

—*Baptism of fire*—

3:10 If any man does not receive Baptism, he does not have salvation. The only exception is the martyrs, who even without water, will receive the kingdom. ... For the Savior calls martyrdom a Baptism, saying: "Can you drink the cup which I drink, and be baptized with the Baptism with which I am to be baptized?" (Mark 10:38) ...

3:12 Bearing your sins, you go down into the water; but the calling down of grace seals your soul and does not permit that you afterwards be swallowed up by the fearsome dragon. You go down [in Baptism] dead in your sins, and you come up made alive in righteousness ...

21 (Mystagogic 3):1 And to you in like manner, after you had come up from the pool of the sacred streams, there was given chrism, the antitype of that with which Christ was anointed: and this is the Holy Spirit. ...

21 (Mystagogic 3): 3 But beware of supposing that this is ordinary ointment. For just as the Bread of the Eucharist after the invocation of the Holy Spirit is simple bread no longer, but the body of Christ, so also this holy ointment is no longer plain ointment, nor, so to speak, common after the invocation. Rather, it is the gracious gift of Christ; and it is made fit for the imparting of His Godhead by the coming of the Holy Spirit. This ointment is symbolically applied to your forehead and to your other senses; and while your body is anointed with the visible ointment, your soul is sanctified by the Holy and Lifecreating Spirit.

21 (Mystagogic 3): 4 Just as Christ, after His Baptism and the coming upon Him of the Holy Spirit, went forth and defeated the adversary, so also with you: after Holy Baptism and the Mystical Chrism, having put on the panoply of

the Holy Spirit, you are to withstand the power of the adversary and defeat him, saying, "I am able to do all things in Christ, who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13) ...

22 (*Mystagogic* 4):7 [David says:] "You have anointed my head with oil" (Ps. 23:5). With oil He anointed your head, your forehead, in the God-given sign of the cross, so that you may become that which is engraved on the seal, A HOLY THING OF THE LORD.

**ca. 350—Serapion, Bishop of Thmuis, *The Sacramentary: Prayer Over the Chrism with which the Baptized Are Anointed***

25:1-2 God of powers, aid of every soul that turns to You and comes under Your powerful hand in Your Only-begotten, we beseech You, that through Your divine and invisible power of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, You may effect in this chrism a divine and heavenly operation, so that those baptized and anointed in the tracing with it of the sign of the saving cross of the Only-begotten ... as if reborn and renewed through the bath of regeneration, may be made participants in the gift of the Holy Spirit and, confirmed by this seal, may remain firm and immovable (1 Cor. 15:58), unharmed and inviolate.

**ca. 384—Saint Pacian, Bishop of Barcelona, *Three Epistles to the Novatianist Sympronian***

1:6 If, then, the power of both Baptism and Confirmation, greater by far than charisms, is passed on to the bishops, so too is the right of binding and loosing (cf. Matt. 16:19, 18:18).

**388—Saint John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, Doctor of the Church, *Baptismal Catechesis***

4:4:13 [Baptism] is followed by a spiritual signing, as you have heard in the reading today; for after the font it but remains to perfect the work, when, at the invocation of the priest the Holy Spirit is poured out, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety, the spirit of holy fear: seven powers, as it were, of the Spirit. ...

Who, then, is the author of the Sacraments if not the Lord Jesus? Those Sacraments came from heaven; for every counsel is from heaven.

**401-403—Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, Doctor of the Church, *Against the Letters of Petilian the Donatist, Bishop of Circa***  
2:104:239 The Sacrament of Chrism ... is a

sacrosanct one in that class of visible signs, like Baptism itself. But it can be present in the worst of men, who waste their lives in the works of the flesh and who are not about to possess the kingdom of heaven. ... Distinguish the visible holy Sacrament, which can be present both in good men and in wicked,—unto a reward in the former and a judgment in the latter,—distinguish it from the invisible anointing of love, which belongs only to the good.

**416—Pope Saint Innocent, 40<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome, *Letter to Decentius, Bishop of Gubbio***

25:3-6 In regard to the confirming of infants, however, it is clear that it is not permitted to be done by any other than the bishop. For the presbyters, granted they be secondary priests, do not, however, possess the summit of the pontificate. This is shown to belong only to bishops, not only by ecclesiastical custom but also by that passage of the Acts of the Apostles which declares that Peter and John were directed to give the Holy Spirit to persons already baptized (Acts 8:14-17). For it is permitted presbyters, when they baptize either without a bishop or in the presence of a bishop, to anoint the baptized with chrism, but with chrism which has been consecrated by a bishop; they are not permitted, however, to sign the forehead with that same oil, which signing pertains to bishops only, when they confer the Spirit Paraclete.

**419—Augustine, *The City of God***

—*Baptism of fire*—

13:7 For whatever unbaptized persons die confessing Christ, this confession is of the same efficacy for the remission of sins as if they were washed in the sacred font of baptism. For He who said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5), made also an exception in their favour, in that other sentence where He no less absolutely said, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven;" (Matt. 10:32) and in another place, "Whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it" (Matt. 16:25).

**452—Saint Patrick, first Bishop of Ireland, *A Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus***

2 The very same people I have begotten for God [through Baptism]; their number beyond count, I myself confirmed them in Christ.

3 The very next day after my new converts, dressed all in white, were anointed with chrism, even as it was still gleaming upon their

foreheads, they were cruelly cut down and killed by the swords of ... devilish men. ...

4 And if this wicked deed [i.e., the murder of Christians], so horrible, so unutterable, had to happen, thanks be to God, as men, believing and baptized, you have left this world behind for paradise.

**ca. 460—Pope Saint Leo the Great, 45<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome, *Fourth Sermon on the Nativity of Christ***

6 [R]emain firm in that Faith, which you have professed before many witnesses, and in which you were reborn through water and the Holy Ghost, and received the anointing of salvation, and the seal of eternal life.

**ca. 525—Saint Fulgence, Bishop of Ruspe, *The Rule of Faith***

—*Baptism of fire*—

43 From that time at which our Savior said, "If anyone is not reborn of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven" (John 3:5), no one can, without the Sacrament of Baptism, except those who, in the Catholic Church, without baptism pour out their blood for Christ, receive the kingdom of heaven and eternal life. Anyone who receives the Sacrament of Baptism, whether in the Catholic Church or in a heretical or schismatic one, receives the whole Sacrament; but salvation, which is the strength of the Sacrament, he will not have, if he has had that Sacrament outside the Catholic Church. He must, therefore, return to the Church, not so that he might receive again the Sacrament of Baptism, which no one dare repeat in any baptized person, but so that he may receive eternal life in Catholic society, for the obtaining of which no one is suited who, even with the Sacrament of Baptism, remains estranged from the Catholic Church.

**594—Pope Saint Gregory the Great, 64<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome, Doctor of the Church, *Letter to January, Bishop of Cagliari***

4:26 It has come to our attention that some have been scandalized because we forbade presbyters to touch with chrism those who are to be baptized. And we did this, indeed, in accord with the ancient custom of our Church; but if some are in any way distressed on this account, we allow that, where bishops are lacking, presbyters may touch with chrism, even on their foreheads, those who are to be baptized.

**601—Gregory the Great, *Letter to Bishop Quiricus and Other Catholic Bishops of Georgia [Asiatic Iberia]***

11:52 We have learned from the ancient institution of the Fathers that those who, in heresy, are baptized in the name of the Trinity, when they return to the Holy Church, are to be recalled to the bosom of Mother Church either by anointing with chrism, or by the imposition of the hand, or by a profession of faith alone, ... because the holy Baptism, which they received among heretics, re-engages in them the powers of cleansing at that time when ... they are united to the faith in the bowels of the Holy and Universal Church. But as to those heretics who are baptized not in the name of the Trinity, ... when they come to the Holy Church, they are baptized, because that was not Baptism, which, situated in error, they received not in the name of the Trinity. Nor can this be called a repetition of a Baptism, which, as was stated, was not given in the name of the Trinity.

**627-636—Saint Isidore, Bishop of Seville, Doctor of the Church, *Etymologies***

6:100:19 *Chrisma* is in Latin called "unctio" and from it Christ receives His name, and man is sanctified after the laver; for as in baptism remission of sins is given, so by anointing the sanctification of the Spirit is conferred. The imposition of hands takes place in order that the Holy Spirit, being called by the blessing, may be invited; for after the bodies have been cleansed and blessed, then does the Paraclete willingly come down from the Father.

—636, *Death of Saint Isidore of Seville, end of the patristic period in the West*

**739—Pope Saint Gregory III, 90<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome, *Letter to Boniface about the Organization of the Church in Bavaria***

Those who were baptized with a formula expressed in a heathen tongue, provided their Baptism was performed in the name of the Trinity should be confirmed with sacred chrism and the laying-on-of-hands.

—ca. 749, *Death of Saint John Damascene, end of the patristic period in the East*

**ca. 803—Alcuin, *Letter to Oduin on Baptism***

16 Lastly, by the imposition of the high priest's hands he receives the spirit of the sevenfold grace, so that he may be strengthened by the Holy Spirit to preach to others, who in baptism was accorded the gift of life everlasting.

**ca. 975—Roswitha of Gandersheim, Benedictine nun, earliest known female playwright, *Dulcitus***

IRENA. Let those who wish to provoke the wrath of the Most High prostrate themselves before idols! I will not dishonour this head which has been anointed with heavenly oil by abasing it at the feet of images.

—1054, *Start of the Eastern Schism*

**1081—Pope Saint Gregory VII, 157<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome, *Letter to the Bishop of Metz***

[W]hat king or emperor is able, by reason of the office he holds, to rescue a Christian from the power of the devil through holy baptism, to number him among the sons of God, and to fortify him with the divine unction?

**1141-1151—Saint Hildegard of Bingen, Doctor of the Church, *Scivias***

2: Vis. 4:1 After the illumination of baptism, which rose with the Sun of Justice Who sanctified the world by His own washing, the new Bride of the Lamb [i.e., the Church] was adorned and confirmed in the fire of the ardor of the Holy Spirit for the perfection of her beauty. So also each of the faithful who is regenerated by the Spirit and water should be decorated and confirmed by a bishop's anointing, so that he will be strengthened in all his members toward achieving beatitude and find himself most perfectly adorned with the full fruits of highest justice.

**1258-1261—Saint Thomas Aquinas, Doctor of the Church, *Summa Contra Gentiles***

4:60:1-2 The perfection of spiritual strength consists properly on a man's daring to confess the faith of Christ in the presence of anyone at all, and in a man's being not withdrawn therefrom either by confusion or by terror, for strength drives out inordinate terror. Therefore, the sacrament by which spiritual strength is conferred on the one born again makes him in some sense a front-line fighter for the faith of Christ. And because fighters under a prince carry his insignia, they who receive the sacrament of confirmation are signed with the sign of the cross by which He fought and conquered. This sign they receive on the forehead as a sign that without a blush they publicly confess the faith of Christ.

4:60:3 The signing takes place with a mixture of oil and balm which is called chrism, and not without reason. For by the oil one designates the power of the Holy Spirit, from whom Christ, too, is called "anointed" (Ps. 44:8; Luke 4:18) ...



Suitably, too, this sacrament is conferred only by bishops, who are in some sense the leaders of the Christian army.

**1351—Pope Clement VI, 198<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome, *Super Quibusdam***

First, concerning the consecration of the chrism, do you believe that the chrism cannot rightly and duly be consecrated and by a priest who is not a bishop?

Second, do you believe that the sacrament of confirmation cannot ordinarily be administered in virtue of his office by any other than a bishop?

**1439—Pope Eugene IV, 207<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome, *Exultate Deo***

Holy baptism holds the first place among all the sacraments because it is the door of the spiritual life. By it we are made members of Christ and of his body, the Church. And since through the first man death has come to all men, unless we are reborn of water and of the Holy Spirit, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven as the Truth himself tells us (see John 3:5). The matter of this sacrament is true and natural water. The form is: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." ...

The second sacrament is confirmation. Its matter is chrism blessed by a bishop and made from oil, signifying the purity of a good conscience, and balsam, signifying the sweet odor of a good reputation. The form is: "I sign you with the sign of the cross and I confirm you with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The ordinary minister is the bishop. And, although the simple priest is empowered to perform the other anointings, no one except the bishop should confer this sacrament. For we read that only the apostles, whose office the bishops hold, imparted the Holy Spirit through the imposition of hands. ... Nevertheless, we read that sometimes through a dispensation of the Apostolic See for a reasonable and very urgent reason a simple priest has administered this sacrament of confirmation with the chrism blessed by a bishop. The effect of this sacrament is that the Holy Spirit is given in it for strength just as he was given to the apostles on Pentecost, in order that the Christian may courageously confess the name of Christ. And therefore, the one to be confirmed is anointed on the forehead, where shame shows itself, lest he be ashamed to confess the name of Christ

and especially his cross which was, indeed, according to the Apostle a stumbling block to the Jews and to the Gentiles a foolishness (see 1 Cor. 1:23). And for this reason the recipient is signed with the sign of the cross.

—1517, *Start of the Protestant Revolt*

**1564— Council of Trent, 19<sup>th</sup> ecumenical council, *Creed***

I also acknowledge that there are truly and properly seven sacraments of the New Law, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and that they are necessary for the salvation of the human race, although it is not necessary for each individual to receive them all. I acknowledge that the seven sacraments are: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, penance, extreme unction, holy orders, and matrimony; and that they confer grace; and that of the seven, baptism, confirmation, and holy orders cannot be repeated without committing a sacrilege. I also accept and acknowledge the Catholic Church in the solemn administration of these sacraments.

**1660—Saint Maria de Agreda, *The City of God: The Transfixion***

1:11 [Confirmation] is given in the second place, because Baptism is intended to engender the children of the Church, while Confirmation is to make them strong and courageous in confessing the faith received in Baptism, augmenting the first graces and adding thereto the graces suited to each one's state. [Holy Mary] understood the form, matter, minister and effects of this Sacrament, and the character it impresses upon the soul; and how, by the holy oil and chrism, which form the matter of this Sacrament, is typified the odor of the good works of Christ in which the faithful participate by faith, while the same only in a different way, is also indicated by the form of the Sacrament, namely, by the words used in its administration.

**1756—Pope Benedict XIV, 247<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome, *Ex Quo***

51 As regards the imposition of hands, some think it consists in the stretching out of the hands of the bishop towards the confirmands at the start of the ceremony while he is saying the opening prayers. Others understand it to consist in the very act of anointing the forehead of the confirmand by the bishop, since it is impossible to anoint the forehead without laying a hand on it. These are controversies which engage our theologians, and everyone may embrace interpretation he

finds most persuasive. But it is wrong for anyone to assert that the sacrament of Confirmation does not exist in the Greek Church. For this opinion is contradicted by ancient eastern practice as found in the Greek Rituals which make no reference to the imposition of hands as matter either sufficient or insufficient of the sacrament of Confirmation. And this practice has never been condemned or criticized by the Apostolic See although it was well-known.

**1897—Saint Thérèse (of the Child Jesus) of Lisieux, Doctor of the Church, *The Story of a Soul***

4 Soon after my First Communion, I went into retreat again for Confirmation, and I prepared myself with great care for the coming of the Holy Spirit; I can't understand how anyone could do otherwise before receiving this Sacrament of Love.

As it happened, the ceremony was put off, and I was only too glad to have a little longer in retreat. How happy I was! Like the Apostles, I waited for the promised Holy Spirit and was overjoyed that soon I would be a perfect Christian and have my forehead sealed eternally with the mystic cross of this great Sacrament.

There was no rushing wind, as on the first Pentecost, but just the gentle breeze which murmured on Mount Horeb to Elias (1 Kgs. 19:11 ff.). On that day I was given the strength to suffer, strength I was to need, for the martyrdom of my soul was going to begin very soon.

**1998—Pope John Paul the Great, 264<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome, *General Audience of 30 September***

1 In this second year of preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000, a renewed appreciation of the Holy Spirit's presence focuses our attention especially on the sacrament of Confirmation (cf. *Tertio millennio adveniente*, n. 45). As the *Catechism of the*

*Catholic Church* teaches, "it perfects baptismal grace; it ... gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds" (n. 1316).

In fact, the sacrament of Confirmation closely associates the Christian with the anointing of Christ, whom "God anointed with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 10:38). This anointing is recalled in the very name "Christian," which derives from that of "Christ," the Greek translation of the Hebrew term "messiah," whose precise meaning is "anointed." Christ is the Messiah, the Anointed One of God.

Through the seal of the Spirit conferred by Confirmation, the Christian attains his full identity and becomes aware of his mission in the Church and the world. "Before this grace had been conferred on you," St. Cyril of Jerusalem writes, "you were not sufficiently worthy of this name, but were on the way to becoming Christians" (*Cat. Myst.*, III, 4).

**2012—Pope Benedict XVI, 265<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Rome, *Address to Candidates for Confirmation, Pastoral Visit to the Archdiocese of Milan and 7<sup>th</sup> World Meeting of Families***

Now you have grown up and you yourselves can say your personal "yes" to God, a free and informed "yes." The sacrament of Confirmation strengthens Baptism and pours out the Holy Spirit upon you in abundance. You yourselves, full of gratitude, now have the possibility of accepting his important gifts that help you on your way through life to become faithful and courageous witness of Jesus. The gifts of the Spirit are stupendous realities that enable you to be formed as Christians, to live out the Gospel and to be active members of the community.