

Topic

● I INTRODUCTION

● A Confirmation is the "Unknown" Sacrament

● 1 By other Christians

- a Most other Christians don't recognize it as a **Sacrament**
- b Many other Christians don't even see any need for it as a ceremony

● 2 By many Catholics

- a This includes many priests
- b They have a vague understanding of Confirmation
 - (1) They know that we receive the "fullness of the Spirit" in this Sacrament
 - (2) But they also know that we receive the "fullness of the Spirit" in Baptism
 - (3) They seem to have no real idea how the "fullness" in the two Sacraments differ
- c One Catholic recently explained Confirmation as an "adult acceptance of Baptism"
 - (1) Such an acceptance of infant Baptism is necessary – since there is no magic to Christianity
 - (2) But this acceptance has nothing to do with the actual meaning of **Confirmation**

● B The confusion regarding the Sacrament becomes worse when Catholic practice is considered

● 1 Our American experience is that "young adults" receive the Sacrament

- a Up until a few years ago, I would have called it the Sacrament of Christian maturity
 - (1) Many see it as the rite by which a child becomes an adult
 - (2) They see it as the Catholic and Christian "bar mitzvah"
 - (a) Prior to this ceremony, the person is a child, with no responsibilities
 - (b) After it, the person is an adult, able to be counted as one of ten adult males needed to form synagogue
 - (3) A wrong understanding of the meaning of the tap on the cheek in the old rite of Confirmation supported this view of Confirmation
 - (a) **Originally, the action was a sign of Christian love**
 - [1] It was the old "Kiss of Peace"
 - [2] A physical embrace was exchanged by clerics at Mass
 - [3] The Bishop used this religious "hug" on those he had just confirmed to show fellowship
 - (b) But Bishops began to rush as they Confirmed huge groups; in their hurry, they just touched the neck, the cheek
 - (c) **Poorly educated religious instructors lost the real meaning of the sign**
 - [1] They gave their own meaning to the sign that they actually observed
 - [2] They saw what looked like the bishop "slap" each person
 - [3] Teachers interpreted this as a challenge to those being confirmed to be prepared to endure persecution in witnessing to the Christian faith
 - (4) This interpretation added nothing to Confirmation but age – this was the introduction I received as a youth
- b The Sacrament was conferred on 12 or 14 or 16 or 18 years old, depending upon the diocese
- c **And, until recently, it was conferred only by a Bishop**

● 2 But many of the Eastern Rites (both Catholic and Orthodox) use a radically different approach to the Sacrament

- a They offer it to a baby when Baptized
- b It is conferred by the priest offering the Baptism
- c Therefore, Confirmation cannot be an "adult acceptance" of Christianity
- d Baptizing and Confirming babies transferred to children the early Church practice for receiving adults into the Church
 - (1) They were first Baptized
 - (2) And then they were immediately **Confirmed**

● 3 Theologians continue to debate aspects of the Sacrament – showing the continuing confusion

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- a **Nearly none of them like the current American practice**
- b Their remedies, their improvements, go in radically opposite directions
 - (1) Some feel the Eastern practice should be adopted – **Confirm infants along with their Baptisms**
 - (2) Others want Confirmation delayed until full maturity – **At least until the age of 21**
- II GOSPEL INTRODUCTION
 - A To understand Confirmation, we need to look at the two different calls Jesus gives to the people He meets
 - B Jesus enters the lives of people, calling them to “follow” Him
 - 1 He want’s them to “obey” -- but not, primarily to obey the Commandments, old or new
 - a He asks that they stay in His presence
 - (1) That they Stay in the presence of God saving, serving, and accepting them
 - (2) That they stay in the presence of God loving them
 - b He asks that they stay in the presence of God’s Love loving, God’s Love loving them!
 - c He asks that they allow themselves to be loved
 - d Those who obey and stay with Jesus, who are obedient to His request to “follow” Him, are called “Disciples”
 - 2 **Baptism is the Sacrament that describes our experience of and response to this request**
 - a Love enters our world and our lives
 - b Love begins loving us
 - c Love wants the pleasure of our accepting this love
 - 3 **Christmas is the feast that focuses upon this action, upon Jesus entering our world**
 - a Loves comes into our world and unites with our world
 - b And this love, Jesus, is active – loving, ministering
 - C The Disciples, obedient to the invitation, then stay with Jesus for some time
 - 1 In Matthew, they are summoned in 4:18-22 and stay until 10:5
 - a **Matthew 4:18**
 - (1) As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. 19 And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.”
 - (2) 20 Immediately they left their nets and followed him. 21 As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. 22 Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.
 - b **Matthew 10:1**
 - (1) Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness.
 - (2) 5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
 - (3) 7 As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ 8 Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.
 - 2 In Mark, they are called in 1:16-22 and stay until 6:7-13
 - a **Mark 1:16**
 - (1) As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. 17 And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.”
 - (2) 18 And immediately they left their nets and followed him.
 - (3) 19 As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. 20 Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.
 - b **Mark 6:7**

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- (1) He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. 8 He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; 9 but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics.
- 3 In Luke, they are invited in 5:1-11 and stay until 9:1-6
 - a Luke 5:1
 - (1) Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, 2 he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets.
 - (2) 3 He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.
 - (3) 4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch."
 - (4) 8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying,....
 - (5) 10 Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." 11 When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.
 - b Luke 9:1
 - (1) Then Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, 2 and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.
- 4 An important period of development occurs between the two invitations/commands of Jesus
 - a The disciples learn to experience being loved
 - b They witness the action of love in their lives and the lives of others
 - (1) They see **love healing**
 - (2) They see **love cleansing**
 - (3) They see **love reconciling**
 - (4) They see **love forgiving**
 - (5) They see **love feeding**
 - (6) They see **love teaching**
 - c They realize they are love-able
 - d They realize they are able to be loved – as they are!
 - e **They experience love doing this to them freely**
 - (1) As a gift
 - (2) Not as any reward
- D After they have had this experience, Jesus sends them out to love others as they have been and are loved
 - 1 They know love, so they are able to witness to love
 - 2 **Jesus very clearly spells out their share in His mission**
 - a He tells them to **preach**
 - b He tells them to **heal**
 - 3 **Luke demonstrates this identity of Jesus and the Church by the way he organizes his material**
 - a **Jesus (at birth) is filled with the Spirit**
 - (1) Luke 1:35*
 - (a) And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God."
 - (2) Mary is told that the Holy Spirit would come upon her
 - (3) She learns that the power of Most High would overshadow her
 - b Yet the Spirit comes upon Jesus anew at the start of His mission: it anoints Him to start this ministry
 - (1) He receives the Spirit after He is baptized, not during the Baptism (this delay of the anointing occurs in Luke only)
 - (a) The Spirit comes upon Jesus while He was praying
 - (b) Only after this infusion of the Spirit does Jesus begin witnessing publicly to others
 - (2) Luke 3:21

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- (a) Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."
- (b) 23 Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his work.
- c After the Ascension, the Church is presented as united together in prayer
 - (1) Acts 1:14*
 - (a) These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.
 - (2) The Spirit that descended on Jesus descends on them on the Jewish Feast of Pentecost
 - (a) Acts 2:1
 - [1] When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.
 - [2] 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.
 - (3) Only then do the disciples start ministering exactly as Jesus did
 - (a) Preaching
 - (b) Healing
 - (c) Teaching
 - (4) Indeed some of the actions of the Church seem to echo those of Jesus as described in Luke's Gospel
- 4 The sending forth of the disciples to minister is done in a very official action
 - a They are formally commissioned for this mission by Jesus
 - (1) Matthew 9:5
 - (a) These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
 - (b) 7 As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' 8 Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.
 - b They are sent to represent Jesus Himself
 - (1) They are His official representatives – more than just His agents
 - (a) Matthew 10:40
 - [1] "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.
 - (2) Anything done to them is done to Him
 - (3) When they speak, He speaks
- c Acts 13:1-3 shows how official this commissioning is to be considered
 - (1) Acts 13:1*
 - (a) Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.
 - (b) 2* As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."
 - (c) 3* Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.
 - (2) Paul cannot just go forth to witness on his own
 - (3) He is prayed over and hands are imposed over him and his companions
 - (a) This imposing of hands, ("laying on hands,") is a very meaningful symbol
 - (b) It is not connected specifically with Confirmation
 - [1] It is also used (besides Confirmation) in
 - [a] Baptism
 - [b] Anointing

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- *[cf] Holy Orders*
- [2] In all four of these Sacraments, it's done by the celebrant in the same way
 - [a] **When I put my hands on your head,**
 - {1} **I swallow you into myself**
 - {2} **And I allow you to swallow me into yourself**
 - [b] **So the gesture shows**
 - {1} **The person is swallowed into, is united with, the whole Church**
 - {2} **And the whole Church is swallowed into the person**
 - [c] **The gesture symbolizes unity and community**
- (c) The oil of Confirmation does not have a universal sign
 - [1] Oil, too, is used in the same four sacraments
 - *[af] Baptism*
 - *[bf] Confirmation*
 - *[cf] Anointing (different oil)*
 - *[df] Holy Orders*
 - [2] The oil used has different meanings, symbolisms, in each of these Sacraments
- (4) In Confirmation, the mission of the Church, (the mission of Jesus,) now officially becomes their mission
- 5 "Apostle" is the word used for those formally commissioned – the word means "one who is sent"
 - a **We can be misled by Luke's usage of the term**
 - (1) Luke limits "The Twelve" to the "apostles" selected by Jesus
 - (a) He actually unites two separate offices in the early Church
 - [1] "The Twelve" – the title proves that in the Church, Jesus is founding a new Israel
 - [2] "Apostles" – the title proves that Jesus officially sends the Church out into the world as His representatives; the Church is apostolic at its roots
 - [a] **This is the heart of our existence as Church**
 - [b] A dormant community is not a true reflection of the apostolic Church that Jesus asks us to be
 - (b) Luke 6:13
 - [1] And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles;
 - (2) All the other New Testament books call everyone sent by Jesus "apostles"
 - b The term "apostle" refers to a specific office in the early Church
 - (1) 1 Corinthians 12:27.
 - (a) Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.
 - (b) 28 And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues.
 - (c) 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?
 - (d) 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But eagerly desire the greater gifts. And now I will show you the most excellent way.
 - (e) Paul's questions imply different roles of service to the Church and world
 - (f) It also implies that these roles exist in every Church
 - (2) His references to "false apostles" also show an office of "apostle" exists in most, if not all, local churches
 - (a) 2 Corinthians 11:13
 - [1] For such boasters are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.
 - (b) He can't be referring to a false claimant to "The Twelve" – so we must keep the titles "The Twelve" and "Apostles" separate
 - (c) **He is referring to one witnessing to a Gospel other than that of Jesus**

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- (3) "Apostle" was a "charism" of the early Church
 - (a) It is a "gift" of God given to a person for the good of everyone
 - (b) **Those so gifted had some special power when they spoke, a power to move hearts**
 - [1] This power is not based on eloquence according to Paul
 - [2] As proof the power lies elsewhere, Paul referred to the conversions in Corinth in spite of his halting speech
 - (c) 1 Corinthians 1:17
 - [1] For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.
 - (d) 1 Corinthians 2:1
 - [1] When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.
 - [2] 3 And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. 4 My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power.
 - [3] 5 so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.
- c In its widest sense the term "Apostle" includes everyone in the Church
 - (1) The Nicene Creed testifies that being "apostolic" is a trait of the whole Church
 - (a) A trait that must be part of all of us
 - (b) A trait that must be part of each of us
 - (2) **So it is not a title reserved for a select group of missionaries**
 - (3) In some way, therefore, we are all gifted with the Spirit and the love of Jesus in order to share this love with others in our world, in order to be apostolic
- E "Confirmation" is the Sacrament that describes our formal commissioning to become apostles
 - 1 We are so firmly, formed, configured in love, that we can love
 - 2 We are anointed with the Spirit so that we are able
 - a To witness, to "mission"
 - b To witness not as we want, but as Jesus did and wants us to do
 - 3 This anointing assures us that God offers us all that we need
 - a Not only to be loved
 - (1) To love ourselves
 - (2) To know love as it is offered to us
 - (3) To love ourselves in this manner is the assurance of Baptism
 - b But to love
 - (1) To give love
 - (2) To offer our love to all others
 - (3) To accept them as they are
 - (4) To serve their welfare
 - 4 This power is a completely different gift than the power guaranteed through Baptism
 - a In Baptism, I'm guaranteed what I need to be loved
 - (1) I'm guaranteed what I need to love me -- with my **past failures**
 - (2) I'm guaranteed what I need to love me -- with my **present weaknesses**
 - (3) I'm guaranteed what I need to love me -- with my **future fears**
 - b In Confirmation, I'm guaranteed what you need to be loved
 - (1) I'm guaranteed what I need to love you
 - (2) I'm guaranteed what I need to love everyone
 - c My Whitney 5th Step experience illustrates the gift offered in Confirmation
 - (1) I was in a terrible place inside, with little or no peace

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- (2) And I was working to clear the blocked channels so I could hear God's love for me again
- (3) A hurting young lady, struggling to stay sober, asked me to hear a life Confession
 - (a) For six hours I was able to listen, accept, and share
 - (b) I enjoyed absolute inner peace — and was able to share my own failures
- (4) **At its end, I felt my walls of isolation returning**
 - (a) She wanted to continue sharing
 - (b) But I had to admit to her where I was inside: insecure and isolated
- (5) The ability to listen, God's gift, was offered me temporarily for her sake
 - (a) Once her need for this gift had ended, the gift was removed
 - (b) I now had to work to re-achieve my own peace
- **d The Sacrament assures us that we can have the strength to give "tough love"**
- e This assurance of the ability to love is crucial
 - (1) **For marriage**
 - (2) For friendship
 - (3) For true society
 - (4) For an end to my isolation from you
 - (a) I am not dependent upon what you offer me to relate with you
 - (b) I am dependent on what Jesus offers me to relate with you
 - [1] I can relate whether you reciprocate or not
 - [2] I can relate because Jesus will always give me what I need to offer you
 - [3] He assures me of love when life isn't offering it to me
- **E "Easter" is the feast celebrating this gift**
 - 1 Easter testifies to the victory of love in our world
 - a The world, evil, Satan, cannot kill love
 - b The world, evil, Satan, cannot keep love from living
 - c The world, evil, Satan, cannot keep love from loving
 - 2 The same is true for our hearts
 - a **We cannot kill love**
 - b **And so we can always love**
 - c **All selfishness can be mastered**
 - (1) **But there's nothing automatic to this mastering of self**
 - (2) **I must claim, believe in, Jesus loving me**
 - (a) Not believe about Jesus serving me
 - (b) But commit myself to this love, acting upon it to serve others
- III THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION
 - A **Jesus is commissioning us, sharing with us His own mission**
 - B At Baptism (or while praying) the Father had anointed Jesus with His Spirit
 - 1 **Prior to this, Jesus was God's Son**
 - a He is "Son" because He accepts life from the Father
 - b He is Son because he accepts love from the Father
 - 2 **And we are called to imitate Jesus**
 - a Christian life begins by our accepting Jesus
 - (1) By our accepting His love
 - (2) By allowing ourselves to be loved
 - b Too many of us think we are fashioned in the image of the Father
 - (1) Scripture tells us that the whole universe was created in and through Jesus

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- (a) Colossians 1:16-17
 - [1] "For by Him [Jesus] all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."
- (2) **The whole universe, therefore, was created to be loved and served by the Father**
 - (a) God speaks: Genesis "And God said...."
 - [1] Genesis 1:1
 - [a] In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, 2 the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.
 - [b] 3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.
 - [c] 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.
 - (b) **The universe, the world, listen and, thus, came to be**
 - (c) What God creates, God must sustain
 - [1] God continues to speak
 - [2] We must continue to listen
- (3) **As part of the universe, therefore, we are made to be loved and served by the Father**
 - (a) **Our pride wants to love and serve the Father**
 - (b) **Humility accepts being loved and served by the Father**
 - [1] The Son accepts undeserved love -- accepts the gift of Self from the Father
 - [2] Mary also accepts undeserved love -- accepts a love that is impossible for her, believing it is possible for God
 - [a] Luke 1:38
 - [1] Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.
 - [b] Luke 1:41
 - [1] When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit 42 and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.
 - [2] 43 And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? 44 For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy.
 - [3] 45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."
 - [3] On Pentecost, the Church accepts undeserved love
 - [a] Acts 2:1
 - [1] When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.
 - [2] 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.
- C For years Jesus lived as God's Son
 - 1 He continued to accept life from the Father
 - 2 During these years of the "hidden life" (until Jesus was about 30 years old) Jesus received no special notice or attention
 - a **He offered no "public" ministry, no public service**
 - b Despite this anonymity, the Gospels do not hint He "wasted" this part of His life
 - 3 We, too, have a period of growth
 - a It is not a waste because we're not serving others
 - b It is not a "sin" because we're not serving others
- D When He was ready, Jesus received the Father's Spirit in a public fashion
 - 1 What we call His "baptism" was a very significant moment: – It's actually was His "Confirmation!"

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- a We must not think that what Jesus experienced at the Jordan was our "Sacrament" of Baptism
 - (1) In our baptism, we, too, die to being ourselves
 - (2) We receive the Spirit of Jesus and the Father
 - (3) First we must learn to live as Jesus did – by being loved
 - (4) **First we must learn to identify with the Son**
 - (5) Only later can we identify with the Father and share the love we have been accepting
- b **Jesus "drowns"**
 - (1) He dies to self
 - (2) He dies to just being "Son"
- c He rises filled with the Father's "Spirit"
 - (1) God's Spirit is His life force, that which makes the Father the Father
 - (2) Loving, serving, giving is what makes our Father God the Father
- 2 So Jesus rises to go forth and love and serve others
 - a From now on He ministers to others
 - b From now on His life is one of serving others
- E The call we receive through this Sacrament is to die to self so that we might love others
 - 1 Like Jesus, we are commissioned to share in the work of the Father
 - 2 Through Baptism, we know what being loved, accepted, forgiven, truly is
 - 3 Now we can go forth to love, accept, and forgive
 - a Jesus said,
 - (1) John 13:34
 - (a) "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."
 - b "As" is a crucial word in this commissioning
 - (1) It certainly means "like," the "way that" as it does in English
 - (2) But it also means "with," "with the love we first receive through Him"
 - c Confirmation challenges us to live both meanings
 - (1) We must receive the love first from Jesus, then we can share it
 - (2) And we must share it according to the model He offers us
- IV THE SIGN OF THE SACRAMENT
 - A The sign is an "Anointing with oil"
 - 1 Receiving oil is not a "natural" sign
 - 2 The meaning of the anointing is not obvious
 - 3 Proof of this claim lies in the fact that two Sacraments use oil as the main sign
 - 4 **So an interpretation of the sign is necessary in both cases**
 - B The way oil is used in Confirmation has an Old Testament background
 - 1 Pouring oil was a solemn act in the OT used to set something aside
 - a From ordinary use
 - b For God's use
 - 2 That which is set aside can be a thing
 - a **Pillars are anointed**
 - (1) Genesis 31:13
 - (a) I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and return to the land of your birth."
 - (2) The pillar and the place are consecrated to God
 - b **The altar is anointed**
 - (1) Leviticus 8:11

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- (a) He sprinkled some of the oil on the altar seven times, anointing the altar and all its utensils and the basin with its stand, to consecrate them.
 - (2) It is no longer used for a regular killing of animals for food
 - (3) Now it is reserved for religious sacrifice
- 3 That which is set aside can be a place
 - a Exodus 40:9
 - (1) Then you shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and consecrate it and all its furniture, so that it shall become holy.
 - b A building is anointed
 - (1) It is no longer to be used for regular meetings
 - (2) **It is reserved now for religious meetings**
- 4 That which is set aside can be a person
 - a Kings of Israel and Judah are anointed
 - (1) 1 Samuel 9:16
 - (a) "Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be ruler over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines; for I have seen the suffering of my people, because their outcry has come to me."
 - b Priests are anointed
 - (1) Exodus 28:41
 - (a) You shall put them on your brother Aaron, and on his sons with him, and shall anoint them and ordain them and consecrate them, so that they may serve me as priests.
 - c There are two references to prophets as having been anointed
 - (1) 1 Chronicles 16:22
 - (a) ... saying, "Do not touch my anointed ones; do my prophets no harm."
 - (2) Isaiah 61:1
 - (a) The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners;
 - (3) Normally the OT does not say that prophets were anointed
 - (4) **They may have been -- but probably were not**
 - (5) They usually challenged the organized religion and so would not have been sanctioned by them
- 5 Everything anointed was set aside from ordinary, natural, use in order to serve God
 - a **It is natural for us to serve ourselves**
 - (1) **All nature is created in the Son's image**
 - (2) **It is natural for all creatures to seek to be loved**
 - b In Confirmation we are called to do more than is natural; we are called to serve the Father's interest
 - (1) We are called to seek to serve the needs of all of the Father's people
 - (2) We are called to seek to love them
- C As far as I can see, the sign can't be improved
 - 1 **There is no good American "setting aside" gesture or ceremony**
 - 2 **Nor is there is any other good substitute in the modern world**
- D **Therefore, it's probably best to stick with oil and to explain the ceremony clearly**
- E Remember: the sign is not the oil: the sign is the anointing with oil -- the action
 - 1 **Oil has no meaning by itself**
 - 2 **The anointing does; it recalls the Biblical meaning of the action**
 - a **Something ceases to exist for own purpose**
 - b **It now exists for the Father's purpose**
- V THE IMPORTANCE OF CONFIRMATION
 - A Most priests tell us that Jesus gave us the Sacrament

Topic

- 1 He gave us only what we need
- 2 Not to receive it is to bypass something Jesus thinks we must have
- 3 **I have trouble with this type of academic arguing**
- B Experience does prove the need for Confirmation!
 - 1 **Love needs to love**
 - 2 Loving is part of its nature, its essence
 - 3 **Unless it is shared, it dies**
- C My own unique experience supports it
 - 1 **AA's answer to alcoholism**
 - a **One alcoholic stays sober by working with another**
 - b When this work ends, sobriety often ends – even after years without drinking
 - c This slip is logical: God is responsible for the miracle of sobriety
 - (1) But God is love
 - (a) Love must love
 - (b) Love can't abide where love is not shared
 - (c) Love is aborted when love is kept
 - (2) The Annunciation must have the Visitation in order to lead to the Nativity, the presence of Jesus in our world
 - 2 **The experience of many married couples reflects this truth**
 - a As long as love is freely shared, the bonds of love deepen
 - b A point is usually reached where each party waits for the other to respond first
 - c The love that binds them usually weakens during this period
 - (1) The union ends in divorce if this trend is not corrected
 - (2) If it is walked through, often they are bound by a deeper love after doing favors for each other resumes
- D This need to love explains why there are so many unhappy Christians in churches – including Catholic
 - 1 **They are serving God**
 - 2 But God doesn't need service – they are trying to feed the Bread of Life
 - a They are repeating Martha's error in Luke's Gospel
 - (1) She had no peace because she was working too hard to feed the Bread of Life
 - (2) And she was jealous of her sister Mary for enjoying life
 - b **Luke 10:38**
 - (1) *Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named **Martha** welcomed him into her home. 39 She had a sister named **Mary**, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying."*
 - (2) *40 But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me."*
 - (3) *41 But the Lord answered her, "**Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; 42 there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her***
 - 3 **We are not called to serve God, but to serve others**
 - a Jesus spoke words at the Last Supper that the world needs to hear
 - (1) **John 13:6**
 - (a) *He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"*
 - (b) *7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."*
 - (c) *8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."*
 - (d) *9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" 10 Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you."*

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- (e) 12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them.
- (f) 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am.
- (7) 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.
- (h) 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.
- (i) 16 I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.
- (j) 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.
- (k) He says,
 - [1] "Unless I wash you..."
 - [2] Unless I serve you
 - [3] "You have no part of me"
- b "You call me Lord and teacher -- rightly" -- "as I have done you must do"
 - (1) We must serve each other
 - (a) **His service (death) led to His glory**
 - (b) Our refusal to serve keeps us dying!
 - (2) There are conditions to our being "blessed," happy, peaceful, serene, knowing joy that endures,
 - (a) It depends upon our washing each other's feet
 - (b) It depends upon our loving, serving, each other
- VI CONFIRMATION IS TO BE RECEIVED ONCE ONLY –
 - A Like Baptism
 - 1 **It is one of three Sacraments that confer a "character"**
 - 2 Priesthood is the the third
 - B Our commissioning is eternal
 - 1 It is based on the reality of our dying in Baptism
 - a I cease to be
 - b **Jesus lives in me**
 - 2 The Father's gift to me of His commissioning Spirit will never be withdrawn
 - C Our gift depends on an action of God
 - 1 Our failures cannot affect God's gift since "we have died"
 - 2 God guarantees and continues giving all that we need to love
 - D All we need to do is to claim the gift and re-use it
- VII WHO SHOULD RECEIVE CONFIRMATION? – WHAT AGE PERSON?
 - A In the Sacrament, the full mission of the Church is shared
 - B This is the reason Confirmation should precede the Eucharist
 - 1 Communion reveals our full unity with the entire Church
 - 2 Until I accept the complete mission of the Church, I don't have unity
 - 3 **This explains why the Eastern Churches confirm at birth**
 - C But there is also a reason why Confirmation should be delayed
 - 1 There was a delay in the life of Jesus between His birth and His commissioning, a long delay
 - 2 We should wait until we are indeed confirmed in love before we are "Confirmed" by the Church
 - 3 Some experts feel the average person is not able to love until early adulthood
 - a Love involves more than just doing nice things for others
 - b It involves doing it for their good only
 - c It involves doing it with no ulterior motives – no "markers" handed out
- VIII WHAT IS RECEIVED IN CONFIRMATION?

Topic

- A Traditional teaching maintained that we receive the seven “gifts of the Spirit”
 - 1 **The list is taken from the prophet Isaiah**
 - a Isaiah 11:2
 - (1) The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him--
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD
 - 2 **These may be the gifts indeed**
 - a But Isaiah’s list was not intended for the purpose of the Sacrament of Confirmation
 - b And discovering seven gifts is actually not reading the passage correctly
 - (1) The list duplicates itself
 - (2) Such duplication is a feature of most Hebrew poetry
- B We receive a very different list of possible gifts from Paul
 - 1 He lists the ministries conferred by the Spirit; he actually has several such lists in his letters [See chart]
 - 2 And the lists are not the same
 - a Some gifts overlap
 - b Some gifts differ
 - c **Some gifts show a similarity in ministry – the same important areas are covered**
 - d But new and different areas are allowed
 - 3 These lists were not intended to be exhaustive
 - 4 **Your gifts, then, need not be part of any specific list**
- C **What are your gifts?**
 - 1 Look at yourself
 - a God didn’t create you to be changed when you discover how He loves you
 - b God made you to carry His love to others
 - 2 **There are clues to your ministry**
 - a Your talents
 - b Your interests
 - c Your history
 - (1) Your **successes**
 - (2) Your **failures**
 - 3 Both your successes and your failures helped mold you into the person that you are today
 - 4 The whole person you are is the person called to minister
- D **What are the needs of others?**
 - 1 **In an emergency**
 - a God guarantees you what others need
 - (1) To be loved
 - (2) To be accepted
 - b Remember my experience at Whitney
 - 2 **Normally**
 - a What others need is not the same as what they want
 - (1) They want us to stop addiction in their family
 - (2) They want us to save their marriage
 - (3) They want us to pay off their bankruptcy
 - b **What they need is to feel accepted, to feel “okay”**
 - (1) **Remember when Jesus was hanging on the cross**
 - (a) **The blind were still blind – He couldn’t touch and heal them**
 - (b) **The lame were still crippled – He couldn’t touch and heal them**

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- (2) But He was able to offer them His love
 - (a) This reality tells us that's what saves others; it tells us the one gift they need
 - (b) We can offer them other gifts
 - (c) We must give this one
- (c) 1 Corinthians 13:1
 - (a) *If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.*
 - b 3 If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.
 - c 4 Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;
 - d 6 it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. 7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
 - e 8 Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end.
 - f 13...And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.
 - g Notice:
 - (1) "The greatest of these is love"
 - (2) All the others pass away
 - (3) Love endures
- (d) All God guaranteed us was the ability to use our free will to love others and serve their best needs: this is a clue to understanding Confirmation – we are able to love
- IX CONCLUSION: REMEMBER
 - A. Sacraments are always outward signs of Jesus
 - B. He, the Father's beloved, is so "con-formed" in love that He loves us
 - C. Let Him love you
 - D. In the Spirit of His love, love others
 - E. Because you are love-able, you are love-capable
- X I. MEDITATION: (While falling asleep, 2002)
 - A. I am in a light from heaven
 - B. A light that embraces all that I am
 - 1. It starts at my head
 - 2. Moves through my body to my feet
 - 3. Includes all that I am
 - C. Conclusions
 - 1. These are the hands of Jesus
 - a. Whom do they touch?
 - b. How do they touch?
 - 2. These are the eyes of Jesus
 - a. What do they see?
 - b. Whom do they see?
 - c. How do they see others?
 - (1). As failures, foes, nerds?
 - (2). Or as God's children?
 - 3. These are the ears of Jesus
 - a. What do they listen to?
 - b. Do they ever hear their unvoiced cries?
 - 4. These are the feet of Jesus
 - a. Where do they go?
 - b. Whom do they visit?
 - 5. This is the tongue of Jesus
 - a. To whom does it speak?
 - b. What does it say?