

A Confirmation Mini-Catechism

Compiled from *Summa Theologica* (1275) [ST], *Catechism of the Council of Trent* (1566) [RC], *Baltimore Catechism* (1941) [BC], *Code of Canon Law* (1983) [CIC], *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1997) [CCC]

SACRAMENTS

What is a sacrament?

An outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace. [BC 304]

How many sacraments are there?

There are seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. [BC 305]

Do the sacraments give sanctifying grace?

Yes. The sacraments do give sanctifying grace. [BC 307]

Does each of the sacraments also give a special grace?

Yes. Each of the sacraments also gives a special grace, called sacramental grace, which helps one to carry out the particular purpose of that sacrament. [BC 308]

Do the sacraments always give grace?

The sacraments always give grace if we receive them with the right dispositions. [BC 309]

What sin does one commit who knowingly receives a sacrament of the living in mortal sin?

He who knowingly receives a sacrament of the living in mortal sin commits a mortal sin of sacrilege, because he treats a sacred thing with grave irreverence. [BC 312]

Which are the sacraments that can be received only once?

The sacraments that can be received only once are Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders. [BC 313]

Why can Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders be received only once?

Because they imprint on the soul a spiritual mark, called a character, which lasts forever. [BC 314]

SIN

What is actual sin?

Actual sin is any willful thought, desire, word, action, or omission forbidden by the law of God. [BC 64]

How many kinds of actual sin are there?

There are two kinds: mortal sin and venial sin. [BC 65]

What is mortal sin?

Mortal sin is a grievous offense against the law of God. [BC 66]

Why is this sin called mortal?

This sin is called mortal, or deadly, because it deprives the sinner of sanctifying grace, the supernatural life of the soul, makes the soul an enemy of God, takes away the merit of all its good actions, deprives it of the right to everlasting happiness in heaven, and makes it deserving of everlasting punishment in hell. [BC 67-68]

What three things are necessary to make a sin mortal?

To make a sin mortal these three things are needed: *first*, the thought, desire, word, action, or omission must be seriously wrong or considered seriously wrong; *second*, the sinner, must be mindful of the serious wrong; *third*, the sinner must fully consent to it. [BC 69]

What is venial sin?

Venial sin is a less serious offense against the law of God, which does not deprive the soul of sanctifying grace, and which can be pardoned even without sacramental confession. [BC 70]

How can a sin be venial?

A sin can be venial in two ways: *first*, when the evil done is not seriously wrong; *second*, when the evil done is seriously wrong, but the sinner sincerely believes it is only slightly wrong, or does not give full consent to it. [BC 71]

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND GRACE

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is God and the third Person of the Blessed Trinity. [BC 105]

From whom does the Holy Spirit proceed?

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. [BC 106]

Is the Holy Spirit equal to the Father and the Son?

Yes. The Holy Spirit is equal to the Father and the Son, because He is God. [BC 107]

What does the Holy Spirit do for the salvation of mankind?

The Holy Spirit dwells in the Church as the source of its life and sanctifies souls through the gift of grace. [BC 108]

What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?

Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Generosity, Gentleness, Trustfulness, Modesty, Self-control, and Chastity

Where are they mentioned in the Bible?

You can find them in the *Bible* in Galatians 5,22-23a: “¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.”

What are the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and Fear of the Lord.

What purpose do these gifts serve?

The gifts of the Holy Ghost serve to establish us in Faith, Hope and Charity, and to render us prompt in the exercise of those acts of virtue necessary towards attaining the perfection of a Christian life. [SPX]

What is Wisdom?

Wisdom is a gift by which the mind is lifted up from earthly and transitory things, enabling us to contemplate things eternal, that is to say, God Himself, the eternal

truth, and to relish and love Him, in which consists all our good. [SPX]

What is Understanding?

Understanding is a gift which facilitates, as far as this is possible to mortal man, the understanding of the truths of faith and of the mysteries of God, which we are unable to know by the natural light of the intellect. [SPX]

What is Counsel?

Counsel is a gift by which, amidst the doubts and uncertainties of human life, we are enabled to recognize those things that redound more to God’s glory, to our own salvation, and to that of our neighbor. [SPX] It might also be called Right Judgment.

What is Fortitude?

Fortitude is a gift which inspires us with valor and courage to observe faithfully the holy law of God and of the Church, by conquering all obstacles and all the assaults of our enemies. [SPX] It might also be called Courage.

What is Knowledge?

Knowledge is a gift enabling us to estimate created things at their proper worth, and to learn how to use them rightly and to direct them to our last end, which is God. [SPX]

What is Piety?

Piety is a gift enabling us to venerate and love God and His Saints, and to preserve a pious and benevolent mind towards our neighbor for the love of God. [SPX] It might also be called Reverence.

What is the Fear of the Lord?

The Fear of the Lord is a gift which makes us respect God and fear to offend His Divine Majesty, and which detaches us from evil while inciting us to good. [SPX] It might also be called Awe and Wonder.

Where are they mentioned in the Bible?

“¹ There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. ² And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD” (Isaiah 11,1-2).

“¹ Therefore we must pay the closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

² For if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, ³ how shall we escape if we neglect such a

great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him, ⁴ while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his own will” (Hebrews 2,1-4).

What is the difference between the fruits of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Like any fruits, these give evidence that a healthy life is being lived. Trees that bear fruit are healthy trees. Souls that manifest the fruits of the Holy Spirit are healthy souls. It would be difficult to say that we allow the Holy Spirit to be active in our life if we don't have all these fruits. Like any other gift, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are given freely, in the manner and amount chosen by the giver and accepted by the recipient. These gifts are given in a way that might even be out of sync with the life we are living. They may very well be given for the sake of the salvation of others. Whereas the gifts of the Holy Spirit are stable dispositions of the soul, or virtues, fruits of the Holy Spirit are not habits, or permanent qualities. Fruits of the Holy Spirit are acts or individual instances of a work of the Holy Spirit.

What is grace?

Grace is a supernatural gift of God bestowed on us through the merits of Jesus Christ for our salvation. [BC 109]

How many kinds of grace are there?

There are two kinds: sanctifying grace and actual grace. [BC 110]

What is sanctifying grace?

Sanctifying grace is that grace which confers on our souls a new life, that is, a sharing in the life of God Himself. [BC 111]

What are the chief effects of sanctifying grace?

The chief effects of sanctifying grace are: *first*, it makes us holy and pleasing to God; *second*, it makes us adopted children of God; *third*, it makes us temples of the Holy Spirit; *fourth*, it gives us the right to heaven. [BC 112]

What is actual grace?

It is a supernatural help of God which enlightens our mind and strengthens our will to do good and to avoid evil. [BC 113]

Can we resist the grace of God?

Yes. We can resist the grace of God, for our will is free, and God does not force us to accept His grace. [BC 114]

Why is sanctifying grace necessary for salvation?

Sanctifying grace is necessary for salvation because it is the supernatural life, which alone enables us to attain the supernatural happiness of heaven. [BC 115]

Is actual grace necessary for all who have the use of reason?

Actual grace is necessary for all who have attained the use of reason, because without it we cannot long resist the power of temptation or perform other actions which merit a reward in heaven. [BC 116]

What are the principal ways of obtaining grace?

The principal ways of obtaining grace are prayer and the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist. [BC 117]

How can we make our most ordinary actions merit a heavenly reward?

We can make our most ordinary actions merit a heavenly reward by doing them for the love of God and by keeping ourselves in the state of grace. [BC 118]

CONFIRMATION

What is Confirmation?

Confirmation is the sacrament through which the Holy Spirit comes to us in a special way and enables us to profess our faith as strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ. [BC 330]

Who is the usual minister of Confirmation?

The bishop is the usual minister of Confirmation. In danger of death any priest can give Confirmation. [See BC 331; CCC 1312-14; CIC 882,883 § 3]

What does the bishop do when he gives Confirmation?

The bishop extends his hands over those who are to be confirmed, prays that they may receive the Holy Spirit, and, while laying his hand on the head of each person, anoints the forehead with holy chrism in the form of a cross. [See BC 332; CCC 1299]

What does the bishop say in anointing the person he confirms?

In the traditional form of the Sacrament, as the bishop anoints the person to be confirmed, the bishop says: “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.” In the ordinary form of the Sacrament, the bishop says “Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit”. [See BC 333; CCC 1300,1320]

What is holy chrism?

Holy chrism is a mixture of olive oil and balm, consecrated by the bishop on Holy Thursday. [See BC 334]

What Sacraments use holy chrism?

The Sacraments that can be received only once: Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders.

What does the anointing of the forehead with chrism in the form of a cross signify?

By this anointing the confirmand receives the “mark,” the *seal* of the Holy Spirit. A seal is a symbol of a person, a sign of personal authority, or ownership of an object. Hence soldiers were marked with their leader's seal and slaves with their master's. A seal authenticates a juridical act or document and occasionally makes it secret. The anointing of the forehead with chrism in the form of a cross signifies that the Catholic who is confirmed must always be ready to profess his faith openly and to practice it fearlessly. [See BC 335,336 and CCC 1295]

What are the effects of Confirmation?

Confirmation increases sanctifying grace, gives its special sacramental grace, and imprints a lasting character on the soul. [BC 337]

What is the character of Confirmation?

The character of Confirmation is a spiritual and indelible sign which marks the Christian as a soldier in the army of Christ. This character perfects the common priesthood of the faithful, received in Baptism, and “the confirmed person receives the power to profess faith in Christ publicly and as it were officially (*quasi Ex officio*)” [See ST III,72,5,ad2; BC 339; CCC 1305]

What is necessary to receive Confirmation properly?

A candidate for Confirmation who has attained the age of reason must profess the faith, be in the state of grace, know well the chief truths and duties of our religion, have the intention of receiving the sacrament, and be prepared to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ. [See BC 340; CCC 1310,1319]

What are the precepts of the Church?

1. You shall attend Mass on Sundays and on holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor; 2. You shall confess your sins at least once a year; 3. You shall receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least

during the Easter season; 4. You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church; 5. You shall help provide for the needs of the Church. [CCC 2042-2043]

What will you be allowed to do once you are confirmed and of sufficient age?

Be a god parent, be a Confirmation sponsor, enter religious life, get married, be ordained. [CIC 874§3, 892, 645§1, 1065§1,1033]

What do these all have in common?

What they have in common is that they are all public commitments to share in the responsibility for the salvation of another person

Who can administer Baptism?

The priest is the usual minister of Baptism, but if there is danger that someone will die without Baptism, anyone else may and should baptize. [BC 318]

How would you give Baptism?

I would give Baptism by pouring ordinary water on the forehead of the person to be baptized, saying while pouring it: “I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” [See BC 319]

If someone asks you a question about the Faith and you don't know the answer, what should you say?

“I don't know but I will find out.” [See BC 341]

Will you ever know everything about the Faith?

No, not until the beatific vision in heaven.

Should you ever stop learning about the Faith?

No! [See BC 341]

Why should all Catholics be confirmed?

All Catholics should be confirmed in order to be strengthened against the dangers to salvation and to be prepared better to defend their Catholic faith. [BC 342; CIC 890]