

The Sacrament of Confirmation

St. Ambrose PREP
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Zoom protocol:

- During the presentation:
 - Please keep yourself muted and (suggested) your video turned off
 - If you have a question, feel free to send me a chat, and I will address it as soon as (reasonably) possible
- During discussion time:
 - You will be placed in “breakout rooms”
 - Feel free to turn on your video and unmute to share
- Recording
- Thank you!

Prayer of St. Augustine to the Holy Spirit:

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.

Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.

Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I may love but what is holy.

Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.

Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I may always be holy.

Amen.

Meaning of Advent:

- “Advent” = “coming towards,” “approach”
- The 4 weeks of Advent symbolize 4 the “comings” of Jesus Christ
 1. In **history** - born of the Virgin Mary as a Baby in Bethlehem
 2. In **mystery** - born in us spiritually by grace
 3. In **majesty** - returning to the earth at the end of time
 4. In our **mortality** - at the death of each individual



Salutary Practices during Advent:

- The Advent/St. Andrew novena: prayed from the Feast of St. Andrew (11/30) until Christmas:

“Blessed and praised be the hour and the moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in piercing cold. In that hour, vouchsafe, O my God, to hear my prayer and grant my desires, through the merits of our Savior Jesus Christ and of His Blessed Mother. Amen.”



Salutary Practices during Advent:

- Advent Wreath/Calendar
- Jesse Tree
- Pray the Rosary to grow in devotion to Mary: since Jesus chose to come to the world by Mary, the easiest, safest and best way to come to Jesus is also through Mary
- Reading & meditation on Mass readings for Advent
 - Chosen by Church (Mystical Body of Christ)
 - Focus on Isaiah (“5th Gospel”)
 - Read, tell back, discuss, pray



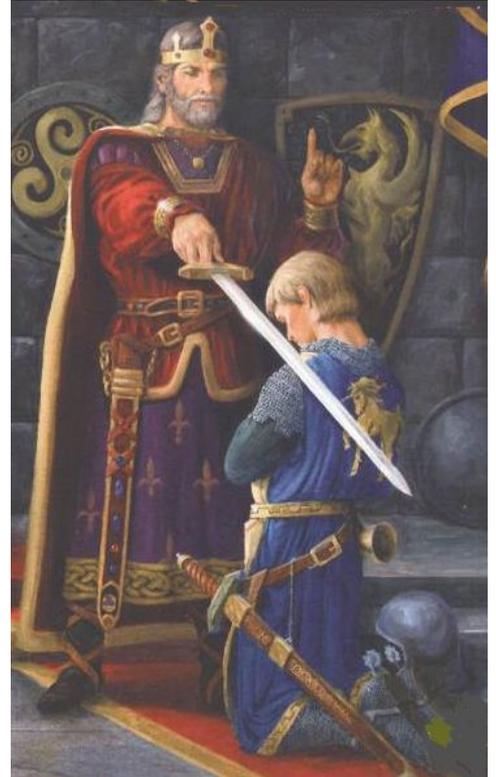
Sacraments of Initiation:

- 3 Sacraments of Initiation:
 - Baptism
 - Confirmation
 - Holy Eucharist
- Originally received together (still this way for catechumens being received into Church on Easter Vigil & for infants in Eastern Rites)



Sacraments of Initiation:

- Connection with the Trinity
- Father, Son & Holy Spirit “work” together
- But to distinguish each Person, we “appropriate” certain things to each Person, e.g.:
 - Father: power, creation
 - Son: wisdom, salvation
 - Holy Spirit: love, sanctification



Sacraments of Initiation:

- The Sacraments of Initiation, likewise, show us the action of the whole Trinity, yet can also be appropriated to each Person:
 - Baptism: ***the Father*** “generates His Son anew” in us
 - Holy Eucharist: ***the Son*** “becomes incarnate anew” to save us
 - Confirmation: ***the Holy Spirit*** “descends anew” upon us



Is Baptism Enough?:

The Apostles were all baptized, but how did they turn out?

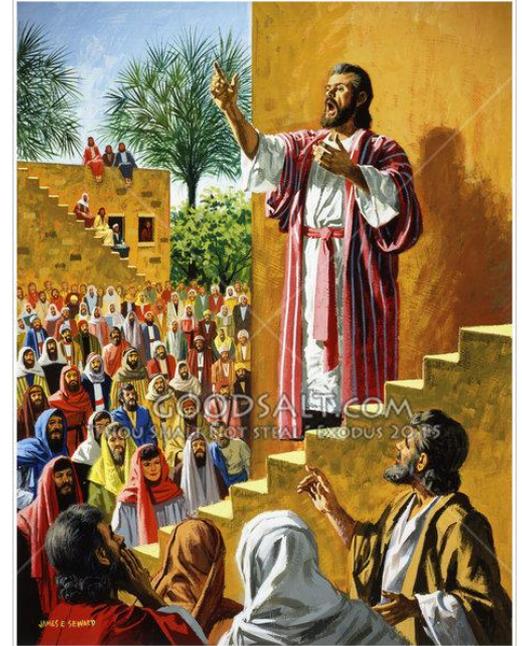
- They often doubted and did not understand what Jesus told them
- Peter contradicted Him
- They often misunderstood Who Jesus is
- Judas betrayed Jesus
- Peter denied knowing Jesus
- All fled when He was arrested
- They went into hiding when Jesus was crucified
- They were (in many ways) cowardly, indecisive, ignorant, incompetent



Is Baptism Enough?:

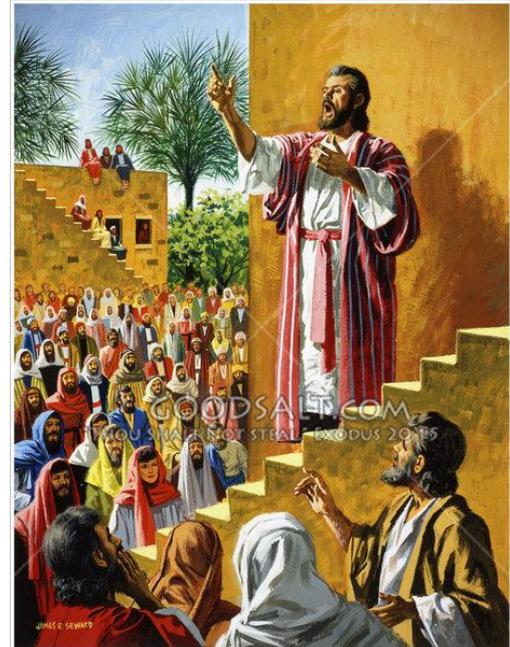
But later, they changed drastically:

- They preached boldly & out-argued the religious leaders
- They were willingly threatened, arrested, beaten & killed
- They traveled to distant countries
- They gave up the comforts of this life
- They converted multitudes
- They led people to holiness
- They founded new communities
- They changed the world
- They spread the Life of Jesus Christ throughout the world



Is Baptism Enough?:

WHAT PRODUCED THIS CHANGE???



Pentecost:

“And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:2-4)

**The Holy Spirit
changed them!!!**



Pentecost:

The Sacrament of Confirmation is our “personal Pentecost.”



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Confirmation:

- At conception, a person receives human nature/life truly & completely
- But this life, with its powers & capacities needs to be developed
- We don't start out life being able to speak, walk, eat solid food, reason, etc.
- In time, these abilities can be developed
- "Maturity"



Confirmation:

- In Baptism, a person receives the Life of Christ, sharing in the Life of God truly & completely
- But this Life of Grace, with its powers & capacities needs to be developed
- The abilities we receive in Baptism often remain latent in us, e.g.: faith, evangelization, intimate prayer, sacrifice, good deeds
- The Sacrament of Confirmation is our spiritual “maturity”
- Confirmation “develops” the Life we receive in Baptism



Confirmation:

- And so, Confirmation completes & perfects Baptism, making us mature, strong, developed Christians



Effects of Confirmation:

- The Holy Spirit appeared in the form of tongues of fire:
 - Fire gives light
 - Fire purifies
 - Fire consumes/takes over
 - Fire strengthens
 - Tongue = preaching

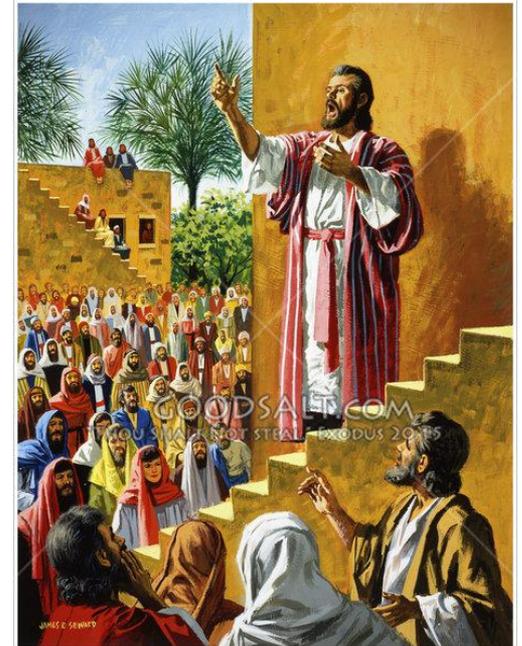


Effects of Confirmation:

“But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice....So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.” (Acts 2:4, 41)

Confirmation fits us for and calls us to the **Apostolate**:
carrying on the mission of Jesus

- We are anointed with chrism < Christ
- 3 “christs”:
 - ***Priests***- offering ourselves to God by uniting with the Sacrifice of Christ
 - ***Prophets***- open to hearing the Word of God and empowered to proclaim It
 - ***Kings***- governing our own actions, and our relations with God, others and the world

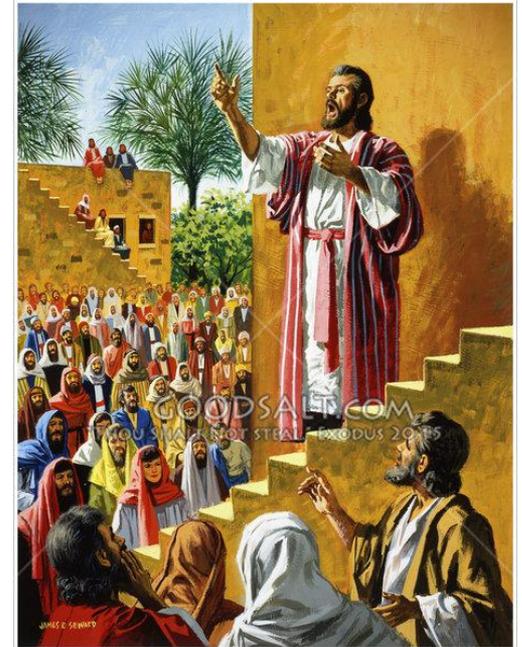


Effects of Confirmation:

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (Acts 2:42)

Confirmation also fits us for and calls us to the **Contemplative Life**: a richer and deeper interior life

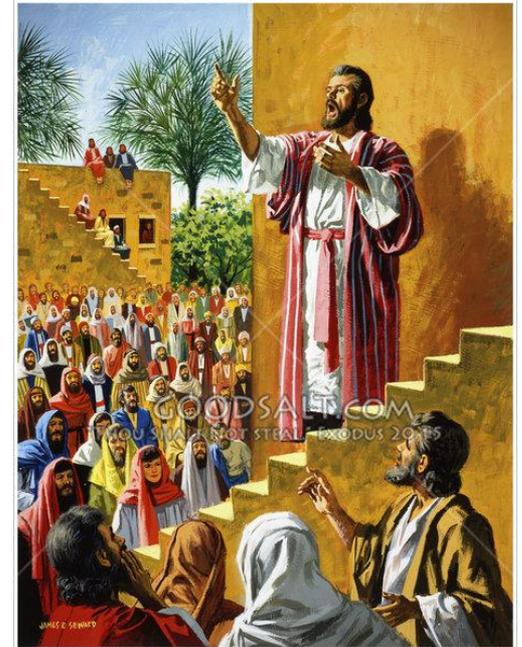
- The Contemplative Life must be founded on:
 - **Profession of faith**: “the apostles’ teaching”
 - **Morality**: “fellowship”
 - **Sacraments**: “the breaking of bread”
 - **Private & liturgical prayer**: “the prayers”
- In order to be a good athlete/soldier, one must also take time to train, foster community, have discipline, rest, study



Effects of Confirmation:

Thus, Confirmation is not “the end” of anything: our catechesis, our obligation to the Church, our spiritual progress...

- Like becoming an athlete or a soldier, it is rather a commitment to a fuller, richer, more developed life
- “Enough” is a dangerous word in the spiritual life
- When we stop growing, we start dying



The Secret Way to the Holy Spirit:

“And there appeared to them **tongues parting asunder**, like as of fire; and **it sat** upon each one of them.” (Acts 2:3)

- Did the Holy Spirit descend first upon Mary, and from her out to the other disciples?
- He did come first upon Mary at the Incarnation
- She is the true “Ark of the Covenant,” where God’s “shekinah” dwells - she has always been in union with God
- “De Maria numquam satis!”



Discussion questions:

- 1.) How is Confirmation connected to Baptism?
- 2.) What are the effects of Confirmation?
- 3.) Why is Confirmation **not** a graduation or another completion ceremony?