

FIDES ALBUM

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CONFIRMATION



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OH! THAT THOU WOULDST
REND THE HEAVENS
AND COME DOWN!

The cry of Isaias is the cry of the entire Old Testament.

Since the time when men were chased from Paradise, there had been a barrier between God and man. Heaven was beyond the reach of man. It was closed.

A day was coming, however, when the anguished cry of Isaias would be heard. With the coming of Jesus, Heaven was opened. The Holy Spirit descended from Heaven, first to rest upon Jesus, subsequently upon the Apostles and upon the Church. He has been poured out profusely. He has covered the whole earth. He has come down to us.

On the day of Confirmation, the miracle of Pentecost is renewed in us. God sends us His Holy Spirit from Heaven. The heavens open. The Holy Spirit comes upon us.

We dedicate this present Fides album to all those who have heard the call of Catholic Action and to all the movements and organizations which are giving testimony to Christ, often in a silent, unpublicized manner, out of an inner call of the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus spoke of the imminent coming of the Holy Spirit, He said: "You will be My witnesses even to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8) For this reason we hope you will look upon Confirmation as the Sacrament of Catholic Action.

Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful; and kindle in them the fire of Thy love. (Alleluia of the feast of Pentecost)

THE HOLY SPIRIT DESCENDS UPON JESUS

When opening the Gospel, even at random, you will always see the figure of Jesus in the foreground. Three times, however, the Holy Spirit intervenes in the Gospel with such intensity and power that He appears as the principal actor in the drama of salvation.

The Annunciation. In St. Luke's account of the events surrounding the birth of Jesus, the Holy Spirit is incessantly at work. Zachary, Elizabeth, and John the Baptist are "filled with the Holy Spirit." And of Simeon, it is said, "The Holy Spirit was upon him." (Luke 1)

At the center of the account we find a woman and a child. To the woman, Mary, the Angel Gabriel speaks: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; and therefore the Holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35) A child will be born, "conceived by the Holy Spirit," as we say in the Apostle's Creed. The Holy Spirit will rest upon Jesus more than upon anyone else.

The Baptism of Jesus. To John the Baptist was confided the mission of baptizing the Messiah and of announcing His imminent coming. To those who wondered if John himself might not be Christ, he said: "One mightier than I is coming after me, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Mark 1:7-8)

John knew the sign by which he would recognize the Messiah. He had been told: "He upon whom thou wilt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, he it is who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." (John 1:33) And so it happened. One day Jesus was found among a crowd, where He received, with the others, the baptism of John. Then the sign appeared. "Heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form as a dove, and a voice came from heaven, 'Thou art my beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased!'" (Luke 3:21)

The heavens open, the Spirit descends, the voice of the Father is heard, a new era begins. Already Jesus is filled with the Holy Spirit. His mission begins.

St. Luke continues. In the chapter following his description of the Baptism of Jesus, he recounts three times when Jesus is moved by the Holy Spirit. Jesus is led by the Holy Spirit into the desert (Luke 4:1); Jesus is accompanied by the Holy Spirit into Galilee (Luke 4:14); and finally, in the synagogue of Nazareth, on the Sabbath Day and before the assembled crowd, Jesus declares that the Holy Spirit rests upon Him. (Luke 4:17-22)

This last occasion He takes the book of the prophet Isaias, and He reads the following passage: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because he has anointed Me; to bring good news to the poor he has sent Me." (Luke 4:18) Later He



says: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:21)

Jesus meant by these words that the prophecy of Isaias is now realized in His own person. Filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb of His mother, Jesus has received the mission to announce the Gospel. In its entirety the Gospel is the work of Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

The Promise of the Spirit. Jesus announced to His disciples that the Holy Spirit would come upon them, remain with them, teach them all things, and lead them as a guide to the Truth. "He will give testimony of Me. And you will be my witnesses." (John 15:26-27) The Apostles are not to be concerned with what words they say before the tribunals, "for it is not you who are speaking, but the Spirit of your Father." (Matt. 10:20)

On the eve of His Resurrection, Jesus appears to His disciples, breathes upon them, and says to them: "Receive the Holy Spirit." When He leaves them on the day of the Ascension, He says to them: "You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence. . . . You shall receive the power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be witnesses for me in Jerusalem and in all Juda and Samaria and even to the very ends of the earth." (Acts 1:4-8)

Just as the Holy Spirit descended and rested upon Jesus after His Baptism and before He began His mission, so will the Holy Spirit visit the Apostles before they begin their mission as witnesses of Christ.

THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

The Flesh and the Spirit

"For the law of the Spirit of the life in Christ Jesus has delivered me from the law of sin and of death. . . (Romans 8:2). For the inclination of the flesh is death, but the inclination of the spirit, life and peace . . . (Rom. 8:6) . . . You, however, are not carnal but spiritual, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you" (Rom. 8:9)

The Spirit of Resurrection

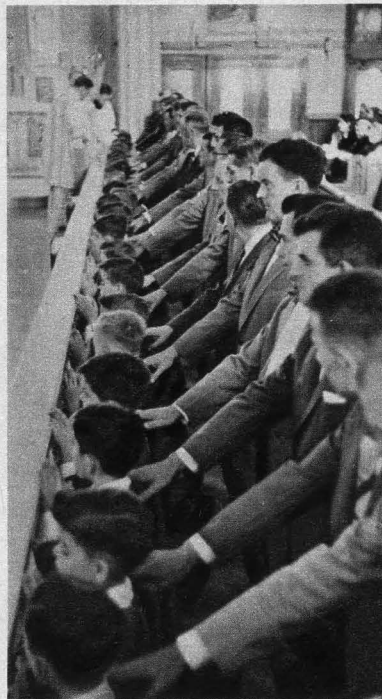
"But if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, then he who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also bring to life your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who dwells in you." (Rom. 8:11)

The Spirit of Sonship

"For whoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. Now you have not received a spirit of bondage so as to be again in fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons, by virtue of which we cry, 'Abba! Father!' The Holy Spirit himself gives testimony to our spirit that we are sons of God." (Rom. 8:14-17)

The Prayer of the Spirit

"But in like manner the Spirit also helps our weakness. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself pleads for us with unutterable groanings. And he who searches the hearts knows what the Spirit desires, that he pleads for the saints according to God." (Rom. 8:26-27)



SPONSORS IN CONFIRMATION

The sponsor in Confirmation guarantees before the Church the good dispositions of the one whom he presents. He himself must be confirmed, must be fourteen years of age, and must have chosen freely to be a sponsor.

Strictly speaking, men ought to sponsor boys, and women ought to sponsor girls. Except by dispensation, one sponsor cannot present more than two candidates at one time. What often happens is not normal, i.e., that there be one sponsor for a group of boys and one for a group of girls. A sponsor should know his Godson and follow him through life. How can this be done for so many Godsons?

According to the ritual, the sponsor should be a person other than the Godparent at Baptism, unless Confirmation immediately follows Baptism, or unless the Bishop decides otherwise for a reasonable motive. The Bishop may want the person who introduced the candidate to the Church at Baptism to follow his spiritual progress through life.

Why not, too, ask a younger man or woman to sponsor? Sponsors of the present generation ought to understand the young candidates better.

THE HOLY SPIRIT DESCENDS UPON THE APOSTLES

In the religious history of the world, Pentecost is a day nearly as important as Easter. Easter remains the day among days when Jesus carries off victory, when the world is saved, when the pledge of the general resurrection is given to us. Easter divides human history in two parts. Sin, death, the devil have been conquered. The Kingdom of God begins. Man must yet come to understand all this, in order that he might move forward under the standard of Christ, the Conqueror.

After Easter the faith of the Apostles is solidly affirmed, but we must remember that until Pentecost only the Apostles and a certain few of the disciples knew that Christ had risen. With Pentecost all will change. A breath of hope, a wind of conquest will sweep the world. A small group of disciples, a mustard seed, the first germ of the Kingdom, will grow rapidly into a great tree.

We must read the events which mark Pentecost, as recounted in the Acts of the Apostles by St. Luke.

—A two-fold external marvel is recorded: the violent

Pentecost. Master of Amiens School, late 15th century. Courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago.



wind which passes and which all feel; the flames of fire which rest upon the head of each of the Apostles.

—Still, the wind and the flames are only a sign. The essential event takes place on another plane. St. Luke expressed it by saying: “They were all filled with the Holy Spirit,” an expression to which he often returns. He has already used it in his Gospel. He will use it again in connection with St. Peter (Acts 4:8) and the community of the faithful. (Acts 4:31) He wants to emphasize a fullness, a possession, a superabundance. Everything that follows in the *Acts of the Apostles* will demonstrate that the Apostles speak with assurance, that they cannot remain silent. When someone questions them, they reaffirm that their force and dynamism has been given them by Jesus Who has sent the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:23)

—Immediately the Apostles began to speak in strange languages “as the Holy Spirit prompted them to speak.” (Acts 2:4) Here is a miracle. Yet we must understand the significance of it, for the gift of tongues did not have as its purpose to provoke astonishment. From that moment on the Apostles must carry the Gospel to all men, whatever their language or race might be. A privilege is given the Apostles to hasten their propagation of the Word of God.

—The Holy Spirit, thus, was not given to the Apostles for themselves, a treasure for them to preserve. He invades them only to make workers of evangelization out of them. Thenceforward, throughout the length of the Acts of the Apostles, we can see the Holy Spirit directing the apostolate. (Acts 10:19, 16:6, 20:22-23 in particular) The Holy Spirit has “filled” them so much, they are so conscious of acting under his impulse, that they will employ on two occasions the extraordinary expression “We and the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 5:32; 15:15-18)

—Finally, just as Jesus had announced the coming of the Spirit to the Apostles, so the Apostles will announce it to the faithful. On the day of Pentecost Peter tells the crowd: “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins;

and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise (that of the coming of the Spirit) and to your children and to all who are far off, even to all whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” (Acts 2:38-40) Wherever the Apostles will go, the Holy Spirit will descend anew.

—After Easter the Apostles understood that they were to be the witnesses of the Resurrection. They declared it themselves in the days which followed the Ascension. (Acts 1:22) The Coming of the Holy Spirit is going to give conquering force to their testimony. Previously, they had been but a group of disciples. Now, they would become a people. They had been weak; they now would sweep through the world. They had been living in fear; now they would be audacious. Just as the preaching of Jesus was inaugurated by the coming of the Spirit upon Him at Baptism, so the preaching of the Apostles begins with the descent of the Holy Spirit.

PENTECOST AND CONFIRMATION

There is neither violent wind, flames of fire, nor gifts of tongue on the day of Confirmation. Nevertheless, for each baptized person Confirmation is a new Pentecost.

Just as the Apostles had their faith affirmed on Easter, before receiving the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, so the new Christian proclaims his faith at the time of Baptism, before receiving the Holy Spirit at Confirmation.

The external, visible signs at Confirmation (the imposition of the hands, the anointing with perfumed oil, the sign of the cross) manifest the gift of the Spirit made to the Christian.

Christians receive the Holy Spirit in order to participate fully in the Church Militant. They become soldiers of Jesus Christ. Under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, they are commissioned to evangelize the world. Confirmation does not change the faith of the baptized person. But it does give him a mission and the strength to accomplish it.

CONFIRMATION NAME

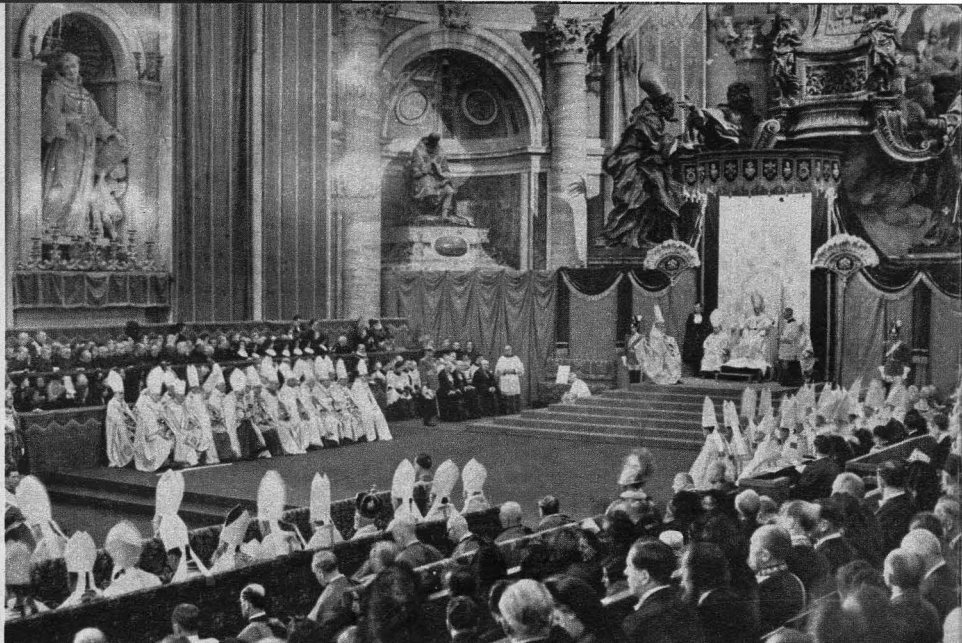
We are not obliged to take a new name at Confirmation, and it is normal to be designated by one's baptismal name at Confirmation. Yet we can show our devotion to a particular Saint by taking a Confirmation name.

Baptized under the name of Jean-Marie, the Cure of Ars assumed the name of Jean-Baptiste-Marie at his Confirmation. He did not change his baptismal name, but he emphasized his devotion to the great preacher of penance.



But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be witnesses for me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the very ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

THE HOLY SPIRIT ANIMATES THE CHURCH



Cardinals and Bishops gather around Pope Pius XII at the canonization of Saint Antonio Maria Claret in St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City.

The *Acts of the Apostles* have preserved for us the memory of the first days of the Church: the discourses of Peter, the martyrdom of Stephen, the conversion of St. Paul, the mission of the first deacons, the persecutions, the voyages of Barnabas and Paul. At times the events are described with great detail; other times a few words serve to summarize entire periods. Yet despite the variety of accounts and the diversity of attitudes, a profound unity is affirmed. The convictions of the Apostles and the faithful, the conquering force of the young Church, has but one cause: the Holy Spirit.

In Joy

In the appointment of deacons, men "full of the Spirit" (Acts 6:3) are chosen. When it is a question of speaking of Barnabas and Paul, of the disciples of Jerusalem or those of Antioch, it is said untiringly of them that they are "Filled with the Holy Spirit." Concerning the disciples of Antioch in Pisidia, it is even said that they "were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit." (Acts 13:52) Joy is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Wherever the Holy Spirit is given, joy bursts forth and carries the disciples to new conquests.

At Antioch there are prophets and doctors. The Holy Spirit tells them to separate Paul and Barnabas in order to carry the Gospel abroad. (Acts 13:2)

A strange surprise awaits St. Peter. The Spirit sends him to a pagan named Cornelius. Peter goes there and announces the Gospel to him. While he was still speaking, the Holy Spirit "fell upon all who were present." (Acts 10:44) And the author of the account, which he undoubtedly received from the mouth of St. Peter, describes the feeling of the faithful converted from Judaism: "And the faithful of the circumcision, who had come with Peter, were amazed, because on the Gentiles also the grace of the Holy Spirit had been poured forth." (Acts 10:45)

Peter himself is at first taken back, but in the face of such evidence, he concludes: "Can anyone refuse the water to baptize these, seeing that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we did?" (Acts 10:47) You see, up to that moment the Church included only Jews or former pagans who had previously been converted to Judaism.

The words of Peter now consecrated a new state of affairs. Pagans could now become disciples of Christ with-

out previously having become Jews. *The Church is intended for all men.*

We cannot even expect the pagans to adopt the religious customs of the Jews. The past is out-dated. We now move along full sail away from the past towards the new shores of the Church, whose dimensions are the entire world. Such a break, such a new extension, such a fusion of two peoples (those of Judaism and those of paganism) into a new people, is the work of the Holy Spirit. St. Peter will affirm this at the first council of the Church of Jerusalem: "God, who knows the heart, bore witness by giving them the Holy Spirit just as He did to us; and He made no distinction between us and them . . ." (Acts 15:8-9)

The Holy Spirit will repose upon all the faithful. He will animate all of them. In a short passage which summarizes the work of the first years, St. Luke can say: "The Church was in peace and was being built up . . . and it was filled with the consolation of the Holy Spirit." (Luke 9:31)

The New Pentecost

Can we for a moment think that the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost had no other purpose than to confirm the Apostles in their mission? No. Pentecost is the sign of a new world in which the Holy Spirit will be at work continually.

The Pentecost which the Jews celebrated was the anniversary of one of the greatest dates in their history. It commemorated the day when Moses had received the decalogue and the law from God on Mount Sinai.

It was an important date. Fifty years before, the Hebrews had been released from slavery and death. They knew then the joy of liberation. But they were not yet a people. Like a throng fleeing a hurricane, like a horde of refugees, they left for the Promised Land. Yet a crowd is not a nation. A nation begins the day it receives its laws, its constitution. On Sinai God gave the decalogue and the law to Moses for all his people. God made an alliance with him. On Sinai the crowd of the Hebrews became a people, the people of God.

Christ arose from the dead, you will recall, on the anniversary day of the Jewish Passover. And on the anniversary day of the Jewish Pentecost, He creates a new people of God. The first Pentecost was accompanied by lightnings and thunder. The second is marked by a great wind and tongues of fire.

At the Pentecost of Sinai the people received the law. At the new Pentecost, the new people received more than a law. They received a living force, a love, a joy, which do not depend only on the good dispositions of each one, but on the Spirit of God present and active. The first law was engraved on the tables of stone; the second is inscribed in hearts. The first people sought to conform themselves to an ideal fixed once and for all, turned towards the past. The new people were animated from within by the Holy Spirit who pushes them onward unceasingly and calls them to a new ideal. The new people are wholly orientated towards the future.

Just as the first Pentecost inaugurated a vast epoch and, centuries later, the Jewish people could be called the people of Sinai, so even more the new Pentecost inaugurated the era of the Church. It will endure to the end of time, and always throughout the centuries, the Church will say it is the Church of Pentecost, for it is the Church of the Spirit.

The *Acts of the Apostles* only recount the early days of the Church, but the Holy Spirit is there throughout the work. You can go through the entire history of the Church, and you will find the Holy Spirit at work. Each time a council is called, it can affirm with the same boldness of the first council of Jerusalem that it is "gathered together" in the Holy Spirit. It is always true to say of our Bishops what St. Paul said: "The Holy Spirit has placed you as Bishops to rule the Church of God." (Acts 20:28) In every country the Holy Spirit stirs up new consecrations, new vocations and dedications, new movements and new enterprises, new saints to meet the needs of the Church in each successive moment of history.



Let each one set to work and drive his roots ever more deeply into the surroundings in which his life is cast. For one it means work in a welfare organization, or one which aims at securing better conditions of housing or of work; for another, action in a trade union or a profession, or accepting his responsibilities in a family association. Some will enter town-planning, others youth movements or rehabilitation schemes.



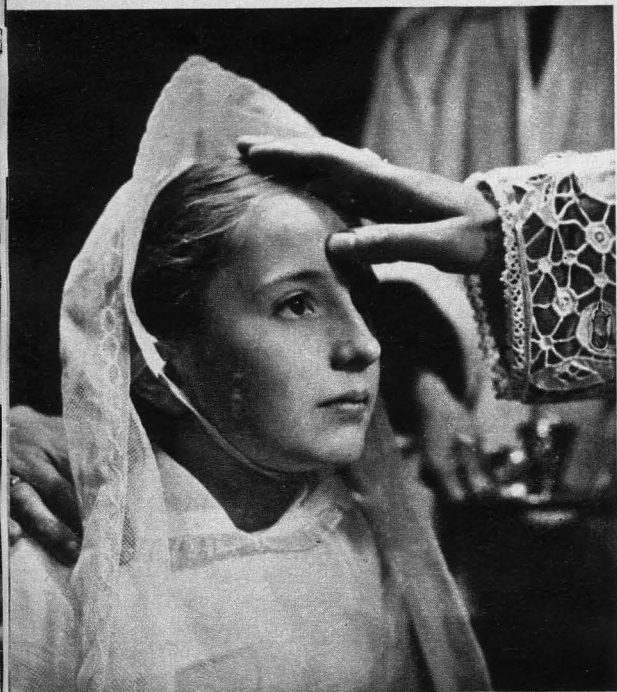


Day by day each can contribute his stone to the edifice all are raising together. Do you now see the lines of opportunity opening before you? Are you going to remain timid and despairing when such a splendid field of construction awaits you?

EMMANUEL CARDINAL SUHARD



THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT



Today the Sacrament of Confirmation renews the Mystery of Pentecost in a young girl. It brings her the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit comes to man in many ways: through prayers, at great feasts, especially at Pentecost, by way of inspirations of charity in the heart, and at times suddenly when a man makes an extraordinary gift which is his alone to make.

Just as the Holy Spirit came to the primitive Church more often than we imagine, so today He animates this man or that woman, perhaps whole groups of men. He is sovereignly free. He breathes where he wishes and when he wishes.

Among all the routes which pleases him to take, there is one which has been especially indicated. There is a Sacrament which brings us the gift of the Spirit and which renews for each of us the mystery of Pentecost. *The Sacrament is Confirmation.*

The Church never forgets that the Holy Spirit breathes where he will, but she is also conscious that she is the depository of the divine gift of the Holy Spirit. It is her mission to transmit it. We see this already in the early days of the Church when the Apostles believed it was one of their prerogatives to give the Holy Spirit, even to those who had already been baptized.

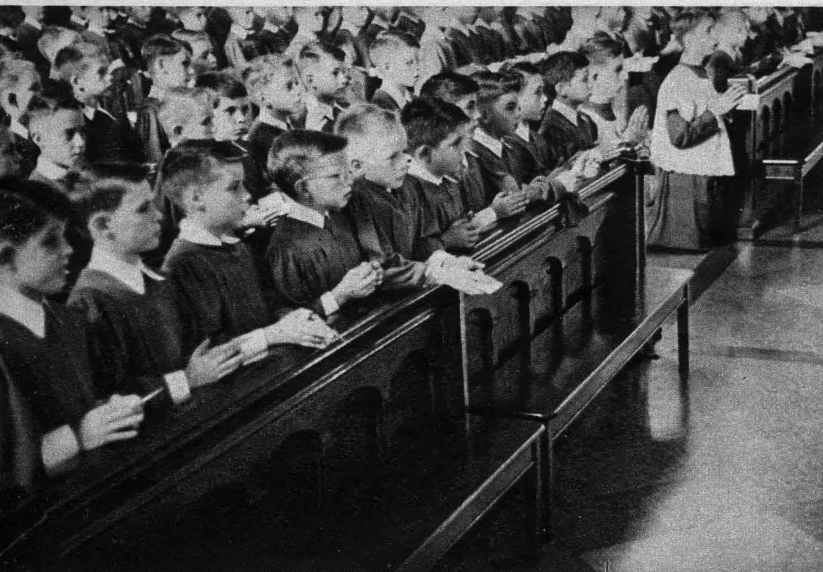
For example, when one of the deacons, Philip, arrived in the town of Samaria, he was listened to; men and women were baptized; and the village became Christian. And yet, with all this, the new Christians had not yet received the fullness of the gift of God. We read in the Bible:

“Now when the Apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John. On their arrival they prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit; for as yet he had not come upon any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 8:14-17)

The prayer of the Apostles and the imposition of hands played an essential role. Henceforward, throughout the *Acts of the Apostles*, the Holy Spirit descends upon the faithful. Although the Apostles knew that the Spirit breathes where he will, they believed that their coming, their prayer, and the imposition of their hands were indispensable conditions for the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the newly baptized.

Twenty years later Paul arrived at Ephesus, where he found some disciples. “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?” (Acts 19:2) he asks them. They replied: “We have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.” (Acts 19:2) Paul continued: “How then were you baptized?” (Acts 19:3) What he meant, of course, was how could anyone have been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit without having known that there is a Holy Spirit?

The disciples replied that they had received the baptism of John the Baptist. And Paul explained to them that this was only provisional and



incomplete. They still were not disciples of Christ.

So they were baptized again. The text continues: "And when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came upon them." (Acts 19:6)

Once again we see the two actions follow one another: Baptism and the imposition of hands. Up to our own day the Sacrament of Confirmation continues the action of Peter and John at Samaria and the action of Paul at Ephesus. It calls for the coming of the Holy Spirit upon those who have been baptized. Just as Peter and John prayed, so the Bishop prays that the Holy Spirit will be given to the candidates.

O God, who didst give the Holy Spirit to Thy Apostles, and didst will that He should be given through them and their successors to the rest of the faithful . . . grant that the same Holy Spirit . . . may graciously consecrate their hearts as a temple of His glory by dwelling within them: Thou who with the Father and the same Holy Spirit, livest and reignest, God through all eternity. (From the Confirmation ritual)

The Sacrament of Confirmation was given to the Apostles and through them to us at Pentecost. It fulfills among us the promise made by Jesus on Holy Thursday: "I will pray to my Father, and He will give the Spirit to you."



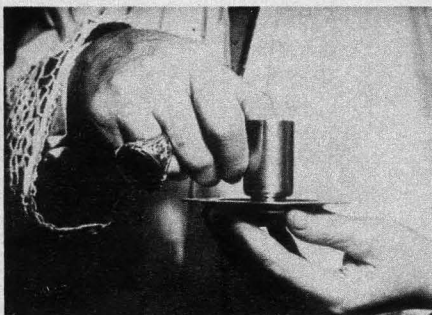
I In a short instruction at the beginning of the rite the Bishop tells the confirmands of the importance of the sacrament they are about to receive.

AGE OF CONFIRMATION

In early Christian times, Confirmation immediately followed Baptism. So it is today in the churches of the East.

The Code of Canon Law, that is, the law of the Latin Church, prescribes today that Confirmation be given to children who have attained the age of reason. When a child is in danger of death, he may be confirmed, no matter what his age. The pastor has a delegated power which permits him to confirm in such a case.

While Confirmation is the Sacrament of Adults, this does not mean it should be delayed. It means it is the sacrament of adults in the spiritual life. In a deChristianized age, even children need the strength of the Holy Spirit. Confirmation gives to each of our acts the value of an apostolic testimony.



2 The Bishop dips the tip of his thumb in the Holy Oil, which he consecrated on Holy Thursday for use throughout the diocese.

3 "I seal 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." These are the words of the Bishop as he makes the sign of the cross with the holy chrism upon the forehead.

ADMINISTRATION OF CONFIRMATION

Ordinarily only the Bishop can confirm. It belongs to him personally to confirm those who have already received Baptism. The Bishop confirms because he is the head of the diocese.

If they receive a special delegation from the Bishop, priests can administer Confirmation, for they have been ordained to help him in his ministry. In the Latin Church, a delegation is given by the Holy See only to those having a quasi-episcopal function, or perhaps at a time of extraordinary conditions.

Since 1946 all pastors have the power to administer Confirmation in their parish to those in danger of death, if it is impossible for the Bishop to come. Pastors are the immediate auxiliaries of the Bishop.

Such a decision of the Church indicates how desirable it is that all the faithful be confirmed. Confirmation is not absolutely necessary for salvation, but it gives to the baptized a spiritual richness which prepares them for the life of heaven.

Whether a priest or a Bishop, the one who confirms always uses Holy Chrism, the perfumed oil which has been consecrated by the Bishop on Holy Thursday. Only the Bishop can consecrate Holy Chrism, through which he is subsequently present, symbolically, at all confirmations.



THE IMPOSITION OF HANDS

A sacrament is not composed solely of words. The words which are used accompany actions. In Baptism the water which is poured, the anointings with oil, the signs of the cross, the white robe, the candle are so many actions through which the faith of the Church is expressed and which contribute towards giving birth to a son of God.

There are three principal actions in Confirmation: the imposition of hands, the anointing with Holy Chrism, the sign of the cross on the forehead.

All three actions are related. The Bishop places his right hand on the head of each candidate (imposition of hands). While his hand so rests on the forehead, the Bishop anoints the forehead with his thumb (the anointing), tracing there the sign of the cross (the signing). Each action has a proper origin and significance. We cannot be indifferent to them. We must study and understand them.

When Peter and John came from Jerusalem into Samaria, they imposed their hands upon the new converts, and "they received the Holy Spirit." (Acts 8:1) The same event happened at Ephesus. "When Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them." (Acts 19:6)

At Ephesus as in Samaria, in the year 35 as in the year 53, Peter, John, and Paul performed the same action: they imposed their hands in order to call down the Holy Spirit upon the faithful.

Why this action? Where does it come from?

Other than the events at Ephesus and Samaria, which we know about in detail, the *Acts of the Apostles* tell about three other impositions of the hands. At the time when the Apostles decided to ordain deacons, having prayed they imposed their hands upon those whom they had chosen. After Paul had been thrown from his horse on the road to Damascus and after he had stayed three days without food or drink, and blinded, a disciple named Ananias was brought to him. He laid his hands upon him saying: "Brother Saul, the Lord hath sent me... that thou mayest recover thy sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 9:17) Some years later at Antioch there were prophets and doctors. The Holy Spirit said to them: "Set apart for me Saul and Barnabas unto the work to which I have called them." (Acts 13:2) Having

thus fasted and prayed, they imposed their hands upon them and sent them on their mission.

Three impositions of hands. Three different purposes: to ordain deacons, to cure a blindness, and to confide an extraordinary mission. And each time the imposition of hands is accompanied by prayer and fasting. It is not a magical gesture, but a religious action. In his second epistle to Timothy, St. Paul writes to his disciple, now a Bishop: "I admonish thee to stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the laying on of my hands." (2 Tim. 1:6) As in all the cases we have cited, here there is a human action and a divine action.

We should not be surprised by the different circumstances for the same action. Today the imposition of hands is made in Baptism, at the ordination of deacons (as for Stephen and his companions), at the ordination of priests, at the consecration of Bishops (as for Timothy). We see it made in the Sacrament of Extreme Unction (as the healing of Saul), and in the Sacrament of Penance. The imposition of hands is one of the basic actions in the Christian liturgy, and it has been since the time of the Apostles.

The action has a long history. The patriarch Jacob had imposed his hands upon two of his grandsons in order to give them his special benediction. (Gen.



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Continuing, the Bishop then makes the sign of the cross three times over the person at the name of each of the three divine persons.

48:14-20) Moses, at the point of death, received the command from God to lay his hands on Josue. "And Josue the son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands upon him." (Deut. 34:9)

The imposition of hands was an action of Christ. The Gospels show Christ imposing His hands upon the sick and upon the children whom He blessed.

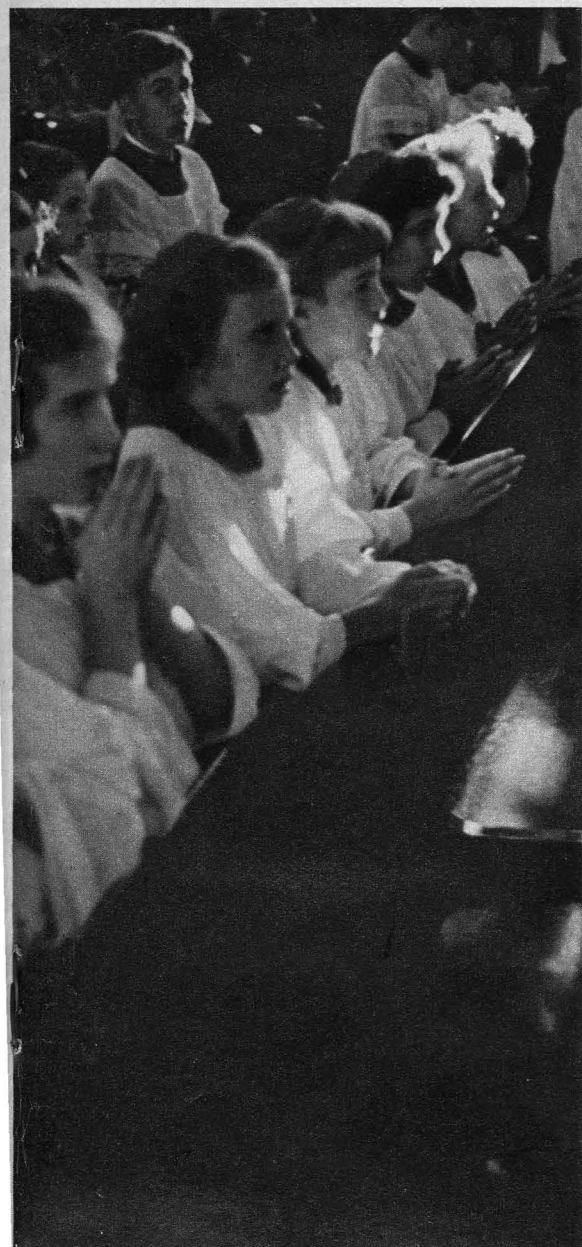
Have we not ourselves come very naturally to lay a hand on the head of our children as a paternal, affectionate gesture which we would not accord a grown person? Do we not remember a priest who met us on the street when we were children and laid his hand upon our shoulder? Are not bonds which words cannot express thus established?

The hand of man is one of the great tools for expression. Greetings are expressed by shaking hands. But when in the celebration of the liturgy, the priest lays his hand upon the head of one of the faithful, a mystery nothing less than the coming of the Holy Spirit is conveyed.

So it is in Confirmation. At the beginning of the ceremony, turned towards those who wish to be confirmed, the Bishop with his two arms extended and his hands opened calls upon the Holy Spirit. "Send forth upon them, from heaven, your Holy Spirit, the Spirit of knowledge and of piety . . . Fill them with the Spirit of your fear." Each time the congregation responds: "Amen. We believe in him."

Then the Bishop comes towards the candidates to place his right hand on their heads. The imposition of hands on each continues the imposition of hands on all and individualizes the meaning of the prayer. John and Peter prayed, and they imposed their hands. So the Bishop at Confirmation, with his hands extended, prays, then he imposes his hands on each candidate.

What the prophets said of the hand of God can be said of the hand of the Bishop when he confirms: it transmits the force of God; it gives the Holy Spirit.



5 Pax tecum. Peace be with you. The Bishop strikes the confirmand lightly upon the cheek, which recalls the kiss of peace given in ancient times.

BLOW ON THE CHEEK

Once having marked the candidate for Confirmation with the sign of the cross, the Bishop strikes the cheek of the candidate lightly with his hand. While so doing he says to him, "Pax Tecum"—peace be with you.

What a singular way to wish peace to someone, by giving him a blow, however light.

At the end of Baptism the priest wishes peace to the newly baptized. At the end of the Ordination the Bishop wishes peace to the new priest. At the same time he gives him the kiss of peace (an embrace).

All this brings to mind what was done in the early days of the Church at Confirmation, when the Bishop culminated the ceremony with the wish for peace and the kiss of peace. When the Church began to confirm little children, however, it was no longer possible to embrace them. Thus the kiss of peace was replaced by a light, friendly tap on the cheek.

THE ANOINTING WITH HOLY OILS

At Mass on Holy Thursday in the Cathedral churches, the Bishop blesses the Holy Oils and consecrates the Holy Chrism. The pictures which follow highlight this beautiful liturgy.



1 Twelve priests, seven deacons, and seven subdeacons go in procession to the sacristy to get the oil and the balm, which the Bishop will use in consecrating the Holy Chrism.

The gesture of *anointing* is also associated with Confirmation. To anoint is to cover with oil, and in Confirmation the oil is the perfumed oil which has been solemnly consecrated on Holy Thursday.

Today there can be no Confirmation without the anointing with perfumed oil, just as there can be no Mass without bread and wine, or no Baptism without water.

This has not always been so, for in the two cases where the Apostles gave Confirmation, they imposed their hands, but no allusion is made to the anointing. Neither the Gospels, nor the Acts of the Apostles, nor the Epistles tell us that Jesus or His disciples used perfumed oil to call down the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, the anointing is of great importance. It introduces us to the mystery of the sacrament.

The Kings were "anointed." One day a prophet, Samuel, asked to see the sons of Jesse, for God had chosen one of them. Jesse called forth his oldest, but he was not the one whom God had chosen. One by one the young men came forward. When Samuel saw the youngest, David, he "took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward." (I Kings 16:13)

The priests were "anointed." When the people of God had escaped the slavery of Egypt and when God had given them priests, Moses "poured the oil of unction upon Aaron's head, and he anointed and consecrated him." (Lev. 8:12) The Book of Exodus preserved even the composition of the oil for us. Some perfumed spices were mixed with it: myrrh, cinnamon, cassia.

The prophets were "anointed." Eliseus was anointed by another prophet, Elias. Whereas a real oil—the oil of olive—was used for David and Aaron, the Bible speaks of a different kind of anointing for the prophets—the unction of the Holy Spirit. When David was anointed the Spirit of the Lord rested upon him, but the prophets received the Spirit of Yahweh. Thus they are called the "anointed of the Lord."

Yet we await Him Who must come: a King greater than David, even though of David's race; a Priest not of the descendants of Aaron, although a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech; a Prophet who so far surpasses all others that we call him *The Prophet*. The promised personage, towards whom the hope of the whole people is turned, has been named. He is called "the Lord's Anointed." The word Messiah is but a transcription of the Hebrew word, "Messiah." And the word "Christos" is but a translation into Greek of the same

term: *Messias-Christ*: they mean "anointed."

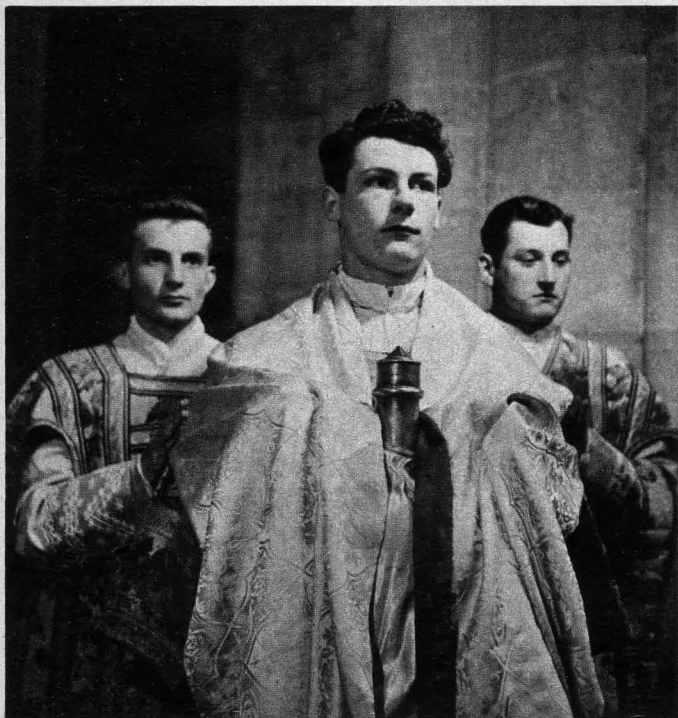
Jesus has not been anointed with an earthly oil, but with the Holy Spirit, for no anointing here below could add to His dignity. The anointings of priests and kings were only images of the mysterious unction which brought Jesus to the fullness of His divinity.

If there is one truth which shines through the writings of the Apostles, it is that the faithful should resemble Christ. Even the name *Christians* is significant. The Christian is the person who resembles Christ—made to the likeness of Christ.

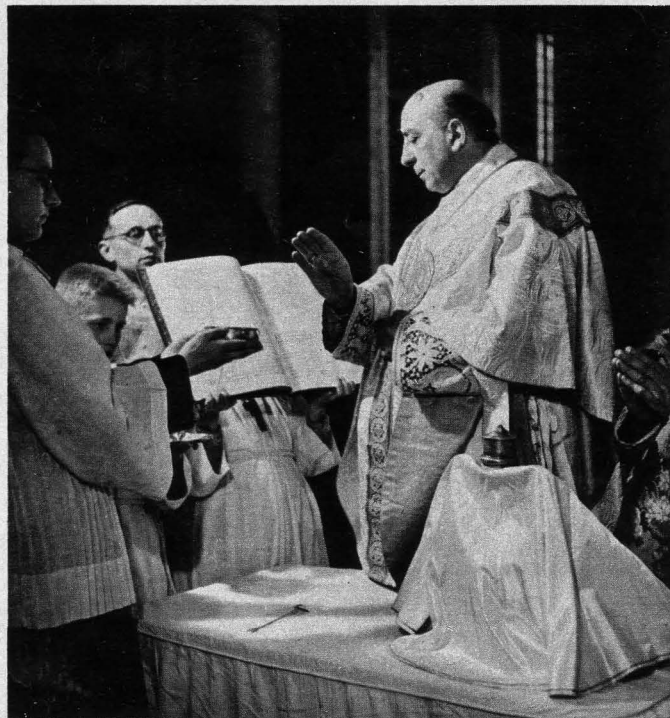
When St. Paul says in his second letter to the Corinthians that "God has anointed us," (1 Cor. 1:21) or when St. John, in his first Epistle, in opposing the faithful to

the anti-Christ, says, "But you have an anointing . . . As for you let the anointing which you have received from Him dwell in you," (1 John 2:20-27) both men certainly mean that the disciples, like Christ, have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

All the tradition of the Old Testament, the name of the Messiah or of Christ, the conviction of the faithful that Christ would be King, Priest, and Prophet should have led the Church to choose oil—perfumed and consecrated—as the visible sign, the sacrament, of that mysterious anointing of the Spirit which the Christian received. "When the body is anointed with the visible chrism," St. Cyril says, around the year 350, "the soul is sanctified by the Holy Spirit."



2 On their return, a deacon carries the urn containing the oil of the catechumens and the oil of the unction for the sick.



3 The Bishop blesses the oil. Lord, we beseech thee to send forth from above thy Holy Spirit . . . upon this juice of olive . . .



4 After blessing the balm, the Bishop takes a small portion of oil . . .



5 . . . and mixes it with the balm to make it more fluid.



6 He then pours the mixed balm and oil into the vessel containing the holy chrism, after chanting the consecratory preface.



7 The vessel containing the chrism is then unveiled, and the Bishop, followed by the twelve priests, salutes the holy chrism three times, *Hail to thee, holy chrism.*

HOLY CHRISM

Be careful to consider that the balm is not only balm. For just as the bread of the Eucharist, after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, is no longer ordinary bread, so also the holy balm, after the invocation, is no longer simply balm, or as one might say, common balm; it is the grace of Christ, and by the presence of the divinity of Christ, it produces the Holy Spirit. With this balm one anoints symbolically the forehead. When the body is anointed with the visible balm, thy soul is sanctified by the holy and invisible spirit.

—St. Cyril of Jerusalem

Through the course of centuries the Sacrament of Confirmation has borne different names, all of which sought to express the mystery of the coming of the Holy Spirit in us. Among these names, whose list is like a litany to the glory of the sacrament, are some which connote *anointing*: sacrament of chrism, anointing of the divine chrism, chrism of salvation, mystical chrism, chrism of spiritual ointment, perfume, mysterious perfume of perfection.

These last two names should not surprise us, for they merely shed light on what the other names mean when they speak of the holy chrism. Chrism actually is a perfume.

The Balm and the Oil

Perhaps you were surprised the first time you assisted at the consecration of holy chrism. You will recall that the Mass of Holy Thursday is in progress. The Bishop comes to the Communion. On the altar there is a consecrated host which he saves for the Mass of the pre-sanctified of Good Friday. The Bishop, however, leaves the altar and joins a choir near a table.

He brings to the table an urn of olive oil and a phial

of balm. Under the eyes of the clergy and the faithful, he mixes the oil and the balm. He acts solemnly, and he alone can do it, as if he were a perfumer. He prepares, he makes, the holy chrism.

Then he sings a Preface. He *gives thanks* to God. The tone becomes lyrical. The memory of the great benefits of God is invoked, and most especially that of Christ Who has been "anointed with the oil of cheerfulness." The consecration of holy chrism, like the Mass, is an act of thanksgiving; the oil is an oil of thanksgiving.

The Oil of Cheerfulness

The perfume has its language. When Jesus tells us in the Gospel to perfume our head in the days of our youth, He is commanding us to be cheerful. We must not show a sad face, but rather let men perceive in us the joy of a soul who looks for God. Perfume expresses joy. The holy chrism is the oil of cheerfulness.

To describe for us the joys of friendship, a psalm calls upon the perfumed oil which the highpriest Aaron had consecrated:

*Behold how good it is, and how pleasant,
where brethren dwell at one!
It is when the precious ointment upon the head,
runs down over the beard,
the beard of Aaron. (Ps. 132)*

A proverb of Solomon says the same thing: "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart. Such is the sweetness of a friend." (Prov. 27:9)

The Mystery of Being

We know the odor of the fruitful earth, the forest, the garden after rain. We know the perfume of the rose on a summer morning and the scents of evening. We approach the sea, long before we see it, by an odor of salt air. Through smell we communicate with the hidden beauty of the world.

Without doubt St. Paul had in mind the mysterious depths of the divine when he spoke of the "good odor of Christ."

Look at it this way. *The Canticle of Canticles* is a song

of love. In its words all ages have understood the love of God for His people. "The sweet smell of thy ointments is above all aromatical spices . . . the smell of thy garments, as the smell of frankincense." (4:10-11) God speaks thus to His people, to the Church. And He especially tells her that the perfume of her breath is like scent of apple-blossoms. He compares her to the cypress, to the spikenard, to the saffron, to cinnamon, to myrrh, to aloes, and to the best balms. Meanwhile, let the people of God, the Church, answer that she inhales, like a satchet of myrrh carried near the heart, the perfume of divinity.

In Baptism the priest addresses the candidate with these words: "May you follow the good odor of Christ." St. Paul and his associates carried this "good odor of Christ" to all places. Like Christ, they are in the world, anointed as He was with the perfumed oil of the Holy Spirit. Because of that anointing Christ was a sign of contradiction. So must the Christian be.

In Latin and in Greek the holy chrism is called "charismas." It carries the name of Christ because He anoints us with the unction of the Holy Spirit, which makes us

TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus, in the Gospel, compares His body to a temple. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will rebuild it." In Him lives the fullness of divinity. According to the word of John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit not only descended upon Him, but he remained there.

St. Paul affirms in many places that the bodies of Christians have received an analogous privilege. "Know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16)

A temple is a home which God inhabits. Now, "the Spirit of God dwells in you" (1 Cor. 3:16) as in a family abode.

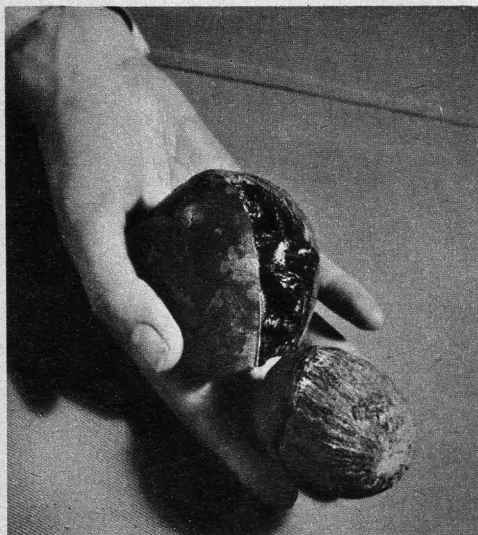
The presence of the Holy Spirit in us is wrapped in silence, although the Spirit is not inactive. We are moved by him, guided by him. A divine force resides in the Christian to help him and even more to stimulate him.

Confirmation, in giving the Holy Spirit to us, makes us temples of the Holy Spirit. "May the Holy Spirit," says the Bishop, "descend into their hearts, and deign to inhabit there, making them the temple of his glory."

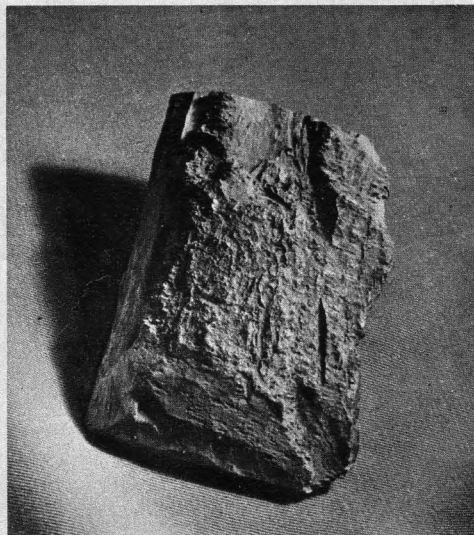
That is why our body will know the glorious resurrection. "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, then he who raised Jesus Christ from the dead will also bring to life your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who dwells in you." (Rom. 8:11)

similar to Christ. Confirmation gives us the good odor of Christ, so that we might pour it forth in the world.

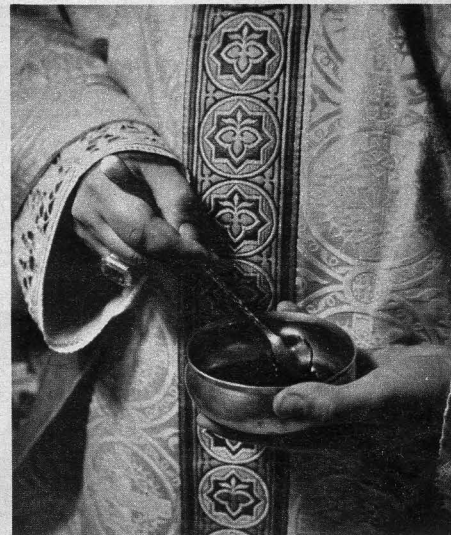
A large olive. Beside it, the olive seed. Virgin oil is pressed from the olive just before it ripens. The dark substance oozing from the olive is the pulp, which may yield from 20 to 60% oil.



Here is a piece of the bark of the tree (Myroxylon Pereirae), which furnishes the balm. The balm is extracted from the bark, which secretes a fragrant resin. The tree grows in San Salvador.



The Bishop mixes the olive oil and the balm—solemnly, as though he were a perfumer. He prepares, he makes holy chrism.



THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

The *imposition of hands* and the *anointing with holy chrism* are not the only actions of Confirmation. A third action, inseparable today from the other two, is the *sign of the cross*. Three times in the course of the ceremony the words of the Bishop underline the importance of this action which marks the confirmed person forever.

In Confirmation

In the great invocation at the beginning, when he has his hands extended towards the candidates and when he has scarcely finished calling the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them, the Bishop continues his prayer: “. . . mark them with the sign of the Cross of Christ, for eternal life.”

Some moments afterwards the candidates approach the Bishop one by one. Upon each of them he imposes his hand, and with the thumb he anoints the forehead with the sign of the cross, saying: “I mark thee with the sign of the cross.”

Finally, at the moment when the ceremony is to be completed, the Bishop asks in a final prayer that the Holy Spirit live in the candidates as in a temple “whose foreheads we have anointed with the holy chrism marking them with the sign of the holy cross.”

In Baptism

Already at the time of Baptism the catechumen has been “marked” with the sign of the cross, first on the forehead and over the heart, then once again on the forehead. In the Baptism of adults the signs of the cross which were inscribed on the new Chris-



The sign of suffering, the sign of victory.

tian are still more numerous. The forehead, the ears, the eyes, the nostrils, the mouth, the breast, the shoulders receive the imprint of the cross. On the forehead, however, the priest very solemnly traces the cross three times, like an indelible mark: "The sign of the holy cross which we place on his forehead, thou cursed demon, never have the audacity to profane."

In Baptism and Confirmation the sign of the cross inscribes, as one marks with a red hot iron, an imprint on the forehead, a sign, which nothing will ever efface and by which everyone will know that this or that person belongs to Christ. He bears on his forehead—so that all can see—the coat of arms of Christ.

Through Baptism and Confirmation the Christian becomes a servant of God and a soldier of Christ. He carries a mark, a "sphragis," that of the cross. St. Paul makes use of the same word (*sphragis*) when he says to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 1:22), "God has stamped us with his seal." A seal, an imprint, but also an inviolable mark which cannot be destroyed without injury to its author.

The mark of slaves or of soldiers was written on the flesh, but the mark of the Christian, the seal of God, is of a different order. That mark which the confirmed person receives and retains is that of the Holy Spirit. Again, St. Paul says: "you . . . were sealed with the Holy Spirit." (Eph. 1:13) The sign with which God has marked us is not only an external mark inscribed on the forehead, but

it is also the presence of the Holy Spirit within us. The Christian, the confirmed, who betrays his commitments, does not violate simply a promise. He offends Him who lives in him. "Do not grieve," says St. Paul, "the Holy Spirit of God in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." (Eph. 4:30)

The sign which marks a Christian, especially the confirmed, is the self same sign which marked Christ: the sign of the Cross. The sign of suffering: the cross is a gibbet. Even if he does not die upon the cross, the Christian will have to suffer like Christ; he will have to give testimony to the Father. On the day of Confirmation, the Holy Spirit makes us witnesses—martyrs in Greek. The early Christians understood by this word a testimony which feared neither death nor torment.

The sign of victory! Just as Christ vanquished sin and death by dying on the cross, so the Christian, especially the confirmed, will be animated by the conquering force of the Holy Spirit.

The sign of final glory! In the *Apocalypse* St. John saw men divided according to the sign which they bore on their forehead. Some carry the sign of the devil; others, the seal of the living God. Two races of men; two armies. Between them a struggle. Baptism, and still more Confirmation, enroll us under the standards of Christ, in his victorious army marching towards eternal life.



SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In the prophecy in which he announces the coming of the Messias, Isaias says: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of this root. And the spirit of the Lord will rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness. And he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord" (Is. 11:1-3). This text is the origin of the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

When the Bishop extends his hands towards the candidates for Confirmation, he asks Almighty God to send His Holy Spirit into them. With hands still extended, he repeats the enumeration of Isaias.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are granted to all who are confirmed. The more they progress in the love of God, the more these gifts will be a source of living water, a source of sanctification which wells up into eternal life.

The gifts of Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge direct the confirmed towards the contemplation of God. The other four gifts transform the life of each day, so that the love of God animates everywhere and always.

The diversity of the Gifts shows what resources the Holy Spirit brings. According to St. Paul, "those who are led by the Spirit of God, behold they are the sons of God." The Holy Spirit is not inactive in us. If we are attentive, he helps the love of God and the love of our brothers grow in us. He is untiringly at work.

TOWARDS NEW SHORES

Grant us, Lord, to be the doorstep by which the multitudes may come to worship Thee. And if, in the saving of their souls, we are ground underfoot and spat upon and worn out, at least we shall have served Thee in some small way in helping pagan souls; we shall have become the King's Highway in pathless China.

Bishop Francis Xavier Ford

When Brooklyn-born Francis Xavier Ford composed the above prayer, he was the Bishop of Kaying in South China. Neither he nor the world knew that God would take him, literally, at his word. Today the records show that Bishop Ford is the fourth American civilian listed as having died either under Chinese Communist arrest or shortly after having been released from arrest. News of his death at the hands of the Reds was brought to Hong Kong early September, 1952, by his former secretary, Sister Joan Marie Ryan, of the Bronx, who had been arrested with him at Meih sien in 1950.

Bishop Francis Xavier Ford, the first student to enroll with the Foreign Mission Society of America, Maryknoll, New York, is a twentieth century apostle-martyr. When he was confirmed, his Bishop, while calling down the Holy Spirit and laying his hands upon him, applied Holy Chrism to his forehead with these words: "I seal 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." When Francis Xavier Ford died, another Bishop, Fulton J. Sheen, said these words at the funeral Mass: "Bishop Ford brings out the record of the story of the man on the Cross. He was sealed with the seal of His Cross."

From Confirmation to Martyrdom! A martyr bears witness to the truth of Christ crucified. Confirmation gives strength to shed blood for Christ. When Bishop Ford needed that strength, it was there. More practically for us, Confirmation gives the zeal and the power to carry out Christ's mission today, to bear witness to His truth by and in our lives now.

Writing of the death of Bishop Ford in *The Commonwealth*, Julie Bedier, a member of the Maryknoll Sisters, described the following scene:

"It was a chill day in January, 1952, and the dank atmosphere of the unheated Chinese prison struck through to the marrow of the bones. A slight, emaciated young woman, in ragged Chinese garments, limped along the dark corridor. She was a Maryknoll Sister, far from her native land.

"Over her shoulder the young woman carried a coolie's shoulder pole,



Bishop Francis Xavier Ford, M.M.

with two five-gallon cans of water dangling from its ends. Her bare foot slipped suddenly on the wet stone floor, and she went down on one knee. She struggled to rise, and then stopped, breathless. From her position on the floor she could see through the low ventilator slits in the wooden door. What she saw was a prisoner, a Chinese carrying a man down the stairs, slung over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes. She recognized the Chinese gown, now ragged and dirty, of the helpless man. It belonged to Bishop Ford, captive of the Chinese Reds since April, 1951.

"The Chinese prisoner stood the Bishop on his feet and ordered him to walk. The sick man stood a moment, feet wide-apart, arms outstretched, trying to balance himself. The water-carrier saw his face. It was the face of an old man, haggard, hollow-eyed, with long white hair and bushy beard. He was unable to walk, so his Chinese companion dragged him roughly along out of her sight.

"A few months later, in August, Sister Joan Marie was relieved of her duties as prison water-carrier and called to the head office of the prison authorities. She was shown photographs of the Bishop, who was either dead or near death when the pictures were taken. She was taken out to see his grave, and was forced to sign a paper stating that Bishop Ford had died of old age and illness, despite the special medical attention and care lavished upon him by

the Communists. In a few days they sent for her and told her she was free. They sent a guard with her to the border, where she was welcomed into Hong Kong."

What kind of martyr was Bishop Ford? Perhaps the words of a fellow Maryknoller, Father John Considine, best expresses it: "He was no hero in facing physical trials, but he possessed that pearl without price, a genuinely integrated picture of his calling, formed during a lifetime of thoughtful meditation, sublimated by prayer."

Today the Catholic Church is present in all the lands of the earth. Is this enough? After 2,000 years of preaching, the Gospel has touched only a fraction of men. Numerous as today's missionaries are, they are still too few for such an immense task. Our question is, have all those whom the Holy Spirit invites to go to the far lands responded to His appeal?

The Holy Spirit, always at work, raises up without ceasing new missionary saints. Yesterday St. Francis Xavier and the North American martyrs. Today St. Therese of Liseux, Bishop Ford. In the early Church the Holy Spirit pushed St. Paul and St. Peter towards Rome, then the capital of the pagan world, today the Holy See of the Christian world. In the twentieth century the Holy Spirit calls for missionaries and lay auxiliaries of the missions in Asia and the Far East, now in convulsion and revolt. Who can tell what place these far away lands will play in the life of the Christian world of tomorrow?

THE ANOINTING OF MARTYRS

The Confirmed need not be afraid. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of strength, is in him. "When you are dragged before the magistrates and the authorities, do not be concerned about what you shall say . . . for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you must say."

This does not mean there will be no suffering (physical or moral), but that in suffering we will not be alone and we will be strong with the strength of the Holy Spirit. Christians in the first centuries understood well that they were witnesses of Christ in their tortures and in their death. They are called "witnesses," those who were tortured. The Greek word for "martyr" means witness.

When he consecrates the Holy Chrism, the Bishop calls it the "oil of the martyrs." Confirmation gives us a mission. The confirmed is a candidate for martyrdom. The witness he is called to give may always go as far as martyrdom. He will never know.

But this prospect should not make one sad, for the Holy Spirit is a source of joy. The Apostles rejoiced "that they had been counted worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus."

BAPTISM—CONFIRMATION—EUCCHARIST

Three sacraments mark the entry of men into the Church. In the course of the Easter Vigil at the moment when the passage of Christ from death to life is celebrated, the catechumens received, in the early days of the Church, Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist. The three sacraments constituted the Christian initiation.

Since priests do not have the jurisdiction to confirm, ever since the time when priests were given parishes and thus separated from the episcopal city—the Christian initiation was divided. Today Baptism, Confirmation, and First Communion are separated by intervals of time.

The ceremony of Solemn First Communion—thanks to the renewal of baptismal promises, the candle, the white robe or armband—still marks the link between Baptism and the Eucharist. Often Confirmation is given immediately following First Communion.

The Christian should receive Holy Communion on his Confirmation day. Each time we receive Holy Communion we should be reminded that we have been incorporated with Christ through Baptism and Confirmation.



A MODERN- DAY SAINT OF CATHOLIC ACTION



Pat Groom

An American girl, Patricia Groom, died in Paris on January 30, 1952. She was not a member of a religious community. To no one's knowledge had she taken any vows. She did not die a martyr's death, in the sense of laying down her life in defense of the faith. Her death received no notice in the secular press. She is buried in a cemetery outside of Paris in a grave barely marked, where she asked to be buried.

When Pat Groom died she was the international representative of the Young Christian Students specialized Catholic Action movement. A convert to Catholicism at the age of eighteen, Pat came to Chicago in 1949 to assume the national responsibility of the Young Christian Students. While in Chicago she became bed-ridden for a half year with rheumatic fever, although this never stopped the flow of students to her bed-side for help. When her doctor permitted her, Pat left for Europe to begin work as the international organizer of the student movement.

Pat's work was exhausting—on and off trains; meeting scores of new people, each to be sized up as a person and as a member of a Catholic Action team, working with several languages, organizing international meetings, settling ideological disputes, returning again and again to Paris to find students waiting in need of housing, food, official papers, understanding. Her life knew no rest except when she would disappear periodically for a few days to a monastery to pray and relax.

All of this activity quite naturally led to a recurrence of her fever, a recurrence which she deliberately concealed from her co-workers and friends who did not recognize the symptoms of fatigue and stiffness. She hid the exhausting disease until she felt herself free to resign from the international commission. Within days an infection set in, and Pat was too drained of physical energy to put up a fight. She died a few days later, full of apologies for bothering those around her.

These are the bare facts. What do they mean?

Some may say: "How foolish. Why didn't she stop?" Those who knew Pat knew she would never stop, so long as she was able to be of service to others.

"What was she doing that made such a sacrifice so meaningful?" Simply, she was bearing witness. "Witness to what?" It is almost too simple to say *Christ*, but fundamentally, that is the answer. The essential note of Christianity is love—unstinting love.

"What kind of love?" Pat's love was for those with whom she came in contact. She knew the hesitations of foreign students away from home; she knew the frustrations of students without food and shelter and tuition; she knew the despondency and loneliness of the misfits, the maladjusted,

the wanderers. Students, with their countless, multi-level problems, could come to Pat at any hour. She would get out of bed in the middle of the night to help a student whose problem would not wait till morning for solution.

Her love was not only personal and warm, but efficient as well. A hungry student needs not only understanding but a meal; preferably a series of meals. The discriminated-against person needs not only acceptance by one individual, but also a change in his social environment. An embittered girl needs not only prayers, but counsel as well.

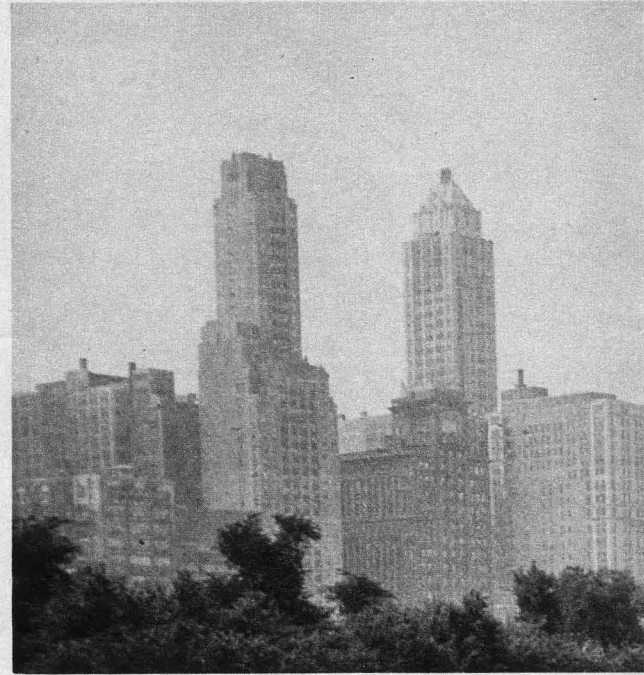
Pat chose to love not only those whom she as an individual could help, but also those who were beyond her contact. She chose to work through institutions. She could also bury herself in an office, crank a mimeograph machine, work over budgets and reports, for she knew this also was a way of loving others.

Today our parishes, our schools, our offices and factories, our homes are full of "good Christians" who practice their religion, frequent the sacraments, keep a good conscience, but what is the quality of their love? Look at St. Paul, who made himself everything to everyone—Jew with Jews, Greek with Greeks. Would he not today make himself worker with workers, student with students, poor with the poor? Would he not participate in their anxieties and hopes?

Why, then, are Christians today deaf? Will the Holy Spirit, which we receive at Confirmation, lay dormant within us, like the buried talent, for which Jesus condemned the one who did not make it increase in value?

The Catholic Church invites all her children to participate in Catholic Action. Catholic Action, or the lay apostolate, means simply opening the Christian way of life to men. It means aiding others to enter into Christian life more fully, helping them to give themselves to God, or to do so more deeply. To do so we must reveal in our own lives an ideal to which others will be attracted freely. We must constantly bear witness to Christ. He has taught us how. He died on the Cross to impress upon others His tremendous love of mankind.

And ever so often Christ reminds us again of His tremendous love by raising up a Pat Groom to show us that a living testimony to His life can be given in our period of history. In her short life Pat Groom showed us the great "priestly" responsibility of laymen in today's world. She lived out all the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, which were planted within her on the day she received the *Sacrament of Catholic Action*.



CHRIST IN THE CITY

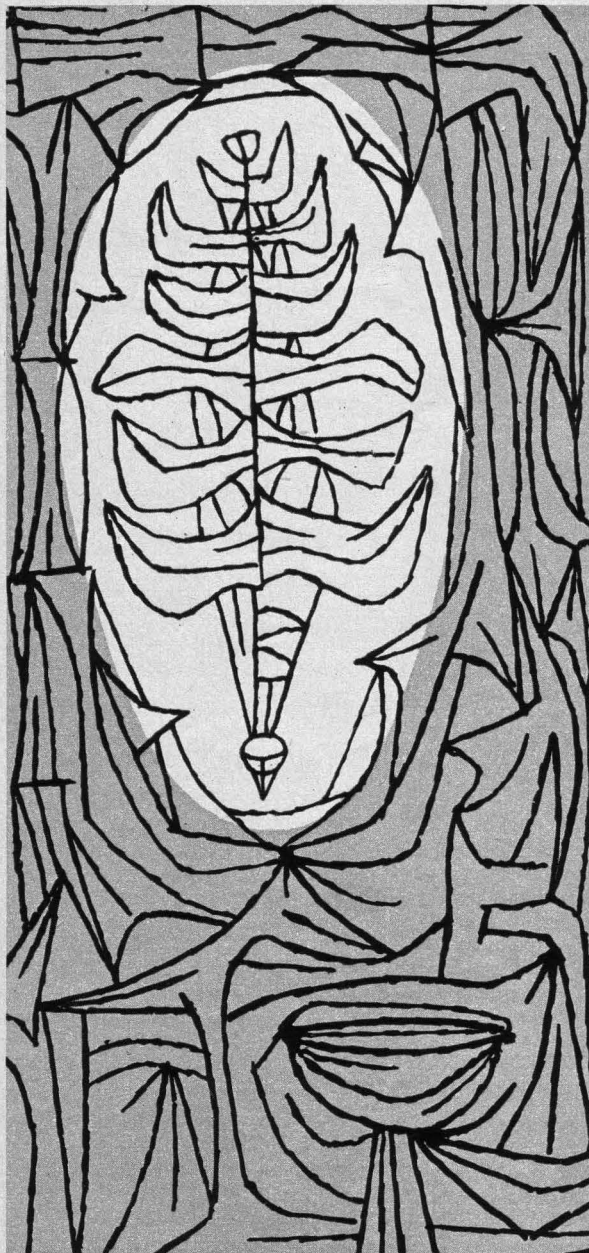
Christ did not turn away from the city. He saw men lost in mobs and masses, men clamoring for gold and glory, other men fighting only for air to breathe, and some of them losing the fight. He knew the city. He loved it, for we are simply told: "He wept . . ."

Our city may be only a small campus with all the ivied trimmings. It may be a streetcar college in New York or Chicago. In either place we are in the throng of men who are fighting for air, for room to live, for the meaning of life.

If we were drawn to share the joy of Christ at Christmas, we must dare to follow Him, to find Him along the roads, in the towns, in the city. If Christ is our Brother, in Him we are brothers with all men. It is our brother, our Christ, who suffers because of a sister gone wrong, because of a class failed, because of a scholarship refused to a darker skin. It is our Christ who needs a library job to keep going, enough cash for *Gray's Anatomy*, or just a friend.

The Passion is our own—our weakness, our despair, our ignorance, our dog-tiredness, our failure. Our Passion with Christ in others is inevitable.

—Pat Groom



WE AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

We and the Holy Spirit by Leonce de Grandmaison, S.J. \$3.75, Fides Publishers, Chicago 10, Illinois.

So often in their spiritual life lay people are told by a spiritual director that a certain course of action represents God's will for them, and that it is dictated by the certain indications of general prudence, popularly called "common sense." They will reply that the advice is indeed sound, but where can they obtain such sage counsel in writing, so that they can further meditate on it and deepen its impression in their lives?

Here, in the English translation of "We and the Holy Spirit" is an indispensable literary companion for the lay person who wishes to lead an apostolic life.

The book should not be confined to lay people alone; it is written with the highest spiritual ideals in view and can benefit equally religious and priests whose vocation places them in the active life.

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The book emphasizes throughout absolute conformity to God's will as that will is shown to us in the commands and wishes of legitimate authority and in the events of our daily lives. A spirit of complete child-like trust in God and the single aim of serving Him pervades every page.

The entire volume must be read and re-read and relished slowly for its proper appreciation. Usually a book is written primarily for priests and religious, and it is suggested that lay persons can also draw profit from it. Here the opposite situation prevails. "We and the Holy Spirit" is written primarily for lay persons, but it should be made available to every priest and religious.

Francis L. Filas, S. J., From *The New World*

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