

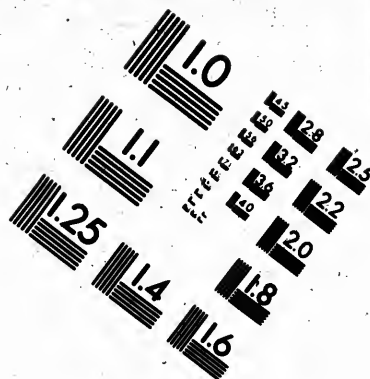
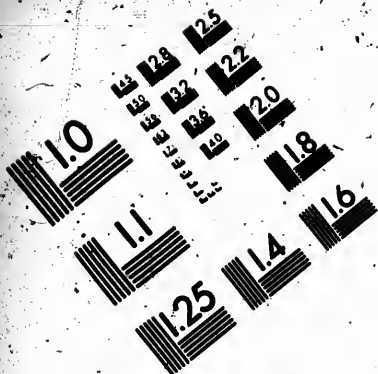
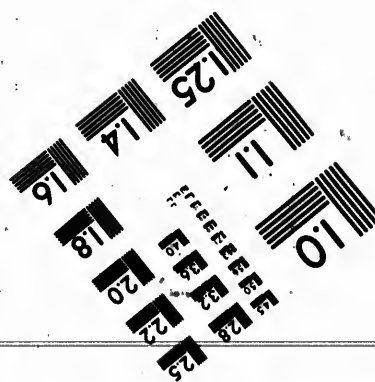
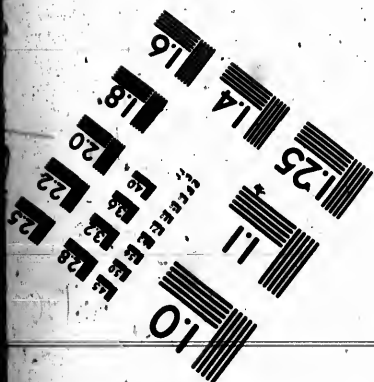
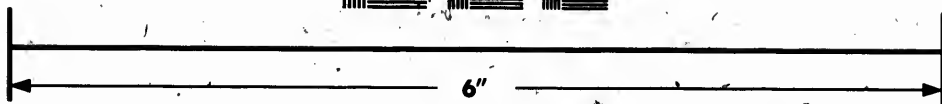


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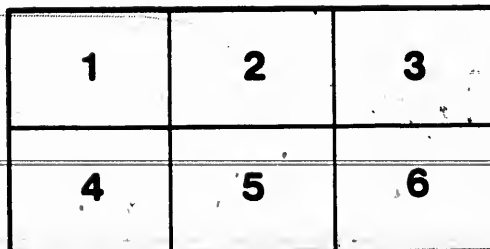
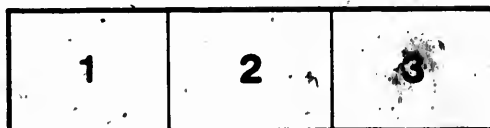
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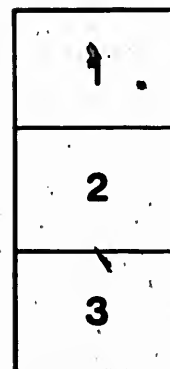
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26

CATECHISM

OF

CONFIRMATION.



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CATECHISM

OF

CONFIRMATION.



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CATECHISM OF CONFIRMATION.

Q. What is Confirmation ?

A. Confirmation is a sacrament, which gives us the Holy Ghost with the abundance of his graces.

Q. Why is the Holy Ghost given to us in Confirmation ?

A. To strengthen us to resist the visible and invisible enemies of our salvation.

Q. Why is this sacrament called Confirmation ?

A. Because it fortifies and strengthens us in the profession of the faith of Jesus Christ, and of the maxims of his gospel.

Q. Is Confirmation absolutely necessary for salvation ?

A. It is not. But to despise it, or not to receive it, through any gross neglect, is a mortal sin.

Q. Why so ?

A. Because whoever neglects to receive it when he has it in his power, voluntarily deprives himself of that abundance of graces which are given in this sacrament and which are greatly conducive to salvation.

Q. Who are they who despise or neglect to receive this sacrament ?

A. They who are not willing to dispose themselves to receive it when an opportunity offers.

Q. At what age is it customary to confer this sacrament ?

A. According to the present discipline of the Church, it is not given to those who have not attained the use of reason.

Q. Why so?

A. To the end that they who receive it, may approach it more worthily, and may remember that they have received it.

Q. With what dispositions must we approach this sacrament?

A. They are of two sorts, some regard the body, others regard the soul.

Q. Which are the dispositions that regard the body?

A. We must be modestly dressed, must kneel before the Bishop, with our eyes shut or cast down, the head raised, the hands joined, and the forehead bare.

Q. Is it necessary to be fasting?

A. No; but it is becoming that we be so, if we can conveniently.

Q. What are the dispositions that regard the soul?

A. We must be baptized, instructed in the principal mysteries of faith, in the nature of this sacrament in particular, and must be free from mortal sin.

Q. If a person be guilty of mortal sin, what must he do before Confirmation?

A. He must purify his soul by the sacrament of penance, or perfect contrition.

Q. If he has had the misfortune to profane this sacrament by sacrilegiously receiving it in the state of sin, will he be for ever deprived of its sa-

latory effects ?

A. No. As the character of confirmation remains in his soul, he will receive the happy effects of this sacrament, when, by a good confession, he recovers the grace of God.

Q. What should they do who are about being confirmed ?

A. They should consider the greatness of the sacrament they are going to receive ; they should implore the divine grace to receive it worthily, and make interior acts of faith, of humility, of contrition, of love, and of desire to receive the Holy Ghost.

Q. In what consists the greatness of the sacrament of confirmation ?

A. In the effects which the Holy Ghost produces in those who receive it with due dispositions.

Q. Make an act of faith, relative to the sacrament of confirmation.

A. *I firmly believe, O my God, that thou art willing to replenish me with the Holy Spirit, in order to fortify me against the enemies of my salvation, by means of the sacrament of Confirmation which I am going to receive. Give me the grace necessary to receive as I ought, this Divine Spirit into my heart, that he may take up his abode in it, and may banish sin from it for ever. Amen.*

Q. Make an act of humility ?

A. *I acknowledge, O my God, that I am not worthy to receive the grace of confirmation ; but be pleased to supply my unworthiness by the infinite goodness, and the merits of my dear Savi-*

our Jesus Christ. Amen.

Q. Make an act of contrition?

A. O Holy Spirit, I am covered with confusion, when I consider my shameful treachery and base ingratitude towards thee. When my soul was a slave to satan, thy goodness led thee to expel him from it, and to make it thy own temple, by the sacrament of regeneration. I then engaged to be ever faithful to thee. But, alas! I soon forgot my vows and protestations, and forced thee to depart from my soul, which I again subjected to the devil. I now from my heart detest my repeated treasons and ingratitude. Forgive them all O Divine Spirit: come now and replenish me with thy precious gifts; and I am resolved to be ever faithful to thee for the future.

Q. Make an act of love?

A. O Holy Ghost, who dost not disdain to give thyself to me in the sacrament of Confirmation, I love thee with all my heart, and above every thing that I hold most dear in this world. Grant me grace to love thee daily more and more. Amen.

Q. Make an act of desire?

A. Come, Holy Spirit, come into my heart, heal it of all its infirmities, free it from all evil, fill it with gifts and graces; and enkindle in it for ever the fire of the divine love. Amen.

Q. What effects does Confirmation produce in us?

A. It imparts to us the Holy Ghost, with the abundance of his graces, it makes us perfect Christians, it imprints in our souls an indelible charac-

ter, and gives strength and courage to make an open profession of the faith of Jesus Christ.

Q. Did we not receive the Holy Ghost in our baptism?

A. We did; but this Divine Spirit diversifies his operations in a wonderful manner, according to his will, and the order established by the Divine Wisdom.

Q. What are his operations in baptism?

A. He is in baptism a spirit of regeneration, of purity, of innocence, of simplicity and candour which render us, in the language of St. Peter, like new-born children.

Q. What are his operations in Confirmation?

A. In Confirmation he is a spirit of force and courage, that strengthens us, and consolidates us in the faith, hope and charity, which we received in our baptism; and of children he makes us perfect men, able to fight and to conquer, by bearing witness to the faith and doctrine of Jesus-Christ, at the expense of everything, even of our lives.

Q. What then is the peculiar grace of Confirmation?

A. It is a grace of strength, to enable us to confess Jesus Christ by our words and works, in spite of the temptations suggested to us by the enemies of our salvation, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Q. How do you know that they who worthily receive the sacrament of Confirmation, receive the Holy Ghost?

A. From the Holy Scripture, which teaches us that the Holy Ghost descended visibly upon those who received the sacrament from the Apostles.

Q. Why does not the Holy Ghost descend now in the same visible manner as formerly?

A. Because this miraculous effect was at the time necessary for the conversion of infidels, and in our days we do not require daily miracles to believe what faith teaches.

Q. In what consist the abundance of graces which we receive in Confirmation?

A. In the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Q. What are these gifts?

A. Wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and the fear of the Lord.

Q. What is the gift of wisdom?

A. It is a sublime knowledge, which gives us a relish and a love for the things of God, and the goods of eternity; and by which we discover our true happiness, and the means that lead to it.

Q. What is the gift of understanding?

A. It is a supernatural light which enables us to penetrate into the truths and mysteries of religion.

Q. What is the gift of counsel?

A. It is an interior light which shows us what, on different occasions, God demands of us, and what we must do to follow his will, and to compass our salvation.

Q. What is the gift of fortitude?

A. It is a degree of strength which enables us to surmount with courage the obstacles which we meet in the service of God, and the work of our salvation.

Q. What is the gift of knowledge?

A. It is a supernatural light which teaches us to know God, to know ourselves, and the use that we

must make of created objects for his glory and our salvation.

Q. What is the gift of piety?

A. It is a gift which leads us to embrace whatever appertains to the worship and service of God, with a promptitude and pleasure arising from a sincere and ardent love.

Q. What is the gift of fear of the Lord?

A. It is a gift which prompts us carefully to avoid whatever can offend God, not because we are afraid of being punished by him; but because we conceive the misfortune of displeasing him, as the greatest of all misfortunes,

Q. Why do not all those who have been confirmed possess all these gifts?

A. Because they did not receive this sacrament with due dispositions: or because after having received it, they were not careful to preserve the grace of Confirmation.

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Q. What, and how many are the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

A. Seven. 1. *Wisdom.* 2. *Understanding.* 3. *Counsel.* 4. *Fortitude.* 5. *Knowledge.* 6. *Piety.* 7. *The fear of the Lord.*

Q. Whereto do these gifts serve?

A. They serve us for the help of Virtue, and to make us perfect in the way of God; because thro' *Fear* we abstain from sin; thro' *Piety*, we are devout and obedient to God; thro' *Fortitude*, we helped to put the same in execution; thro' *Counsel* we are admonished of the deceits of the Devil;

thro' *Understanding*, we are elevated to penetrate the mysteries of Faith; thro' *Wisdom*, we become perfect, ordering all our life and all our works, to the glory of God; because the wise man knows his last end, and to it directs everything.

THE FRUITS OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Q. How many are the Fruits of the Holy Ghost?

A. They are twelve. 1. *Charity*. 2. *Joy*. 3. *Peace*. 4. *Patience*. 5. *Longanimity*. 6. *Goodness*. 7. *Bentignity*. 8. *Mildness*. 9. *Fidelity*. 10. *Modesty*. 11. *Continency*. 12. *Chastity*. Gal. v. 22.

Q. How does Confirmation make us perfect christians.

A. By giving us the necessary helps to become more strong, more courageous; more enlightened in the faith which we received in baptism.

Q. What effects does the character of Confirmation produce in us?

A. It makes us soldiers of Jesus Christ, and gives us a title to those actual graces which may be necessary to enable us through the whole course of our life, to profess the faith and doctrine of Jesus Christ.

Q. Did we not receive a character in baptism?

A. We did; but it was only the character of children of God.

Q. What do you mean by freely confessing the faith of Jesus Christ?

A. It is to follow and practice the maxims of the gospel and bear witness to its truth, without fearing those who wish to hinder us, even though they

threatened us with death.

Q. Who are those who wish to hinder us from following and practising the maxims of the gospel?

A. Libertines, worldlings, and heretics, who deride, despise, and persecute those who profess to square their lives by the law of Jesus Christ.

Q. What assistance does Confirmation give us against these persons?

A. It emboldens us not to fear their railleries, their insults, and their persecutions; and it inspires us with courage to resist them under the direction of prudence.

Q. Does the strength which we receive in Confirmation serve no other purpose.

A. It also enables us to oppose a manly resistance to the temptation of the devil, to the allurements of the world, and of its pleasures, to the cravings of our vicious inclinations; it also helps us to suffer with constancy, whatever pain we may experience in mortifying our senses and our passions.

Q. When are we peculiarly obliged to receive this sacrament?

A. When we suffer violent temptations, or are exposed to persecutions for our faith; and this is always the case, at least in some degree, in all those countries in which there are a variety of religions.

Q. Who are the ministers of this sacrament?

A. Only Bishops, as successors of the Apostles, are the ordinary ministers. But in those countries in which there is no Bishop, a simple Priest may be commissioned by the Pope to administer this sa-

crament.

Q. How does the Bishop administer Confirmation?

A. He prays with his hands stretched out over those who are to be confirmed; with the holy chrism he anoints their forehead in the form of a cross, saying at the same time, *I sign thee with the sign of the cross, I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

Q. What does he do after this?

A. He taps the cheek of the person whom he has confirmed, saying, *Peace be with thee*

Q. What is the purport of the prayers which the Bishop says?

A. He beseeches the Almighty to send down His Holy Spirit with his seven gifts upon those whom he is going to confirm. And it greatly behoves those who are going to be confirmed, to join heartily in these petitions.

Q. What is meant by the Bishop's stretching out his hands over those who are to receive Confirmation?

A. By this is meant that the Holy Ghost descends to dwell in the souls of such as receive the sacrament with due dispositions.

Q. What is the holy chrism with which the Bishop anoints the forehead?

A. It is a mixture of oil of olives and balm, which the Bishop solemnly blesses every year on Maundy-Thursdai.

Q. Why is the oil used as an ingredient?

A. To give us to understand that as oil has the

property of softening and strengthening; so the grace which we receive in Confirmation softens whatever is painful in the law of God, and strengthens us to undertake the observance of it with courage.

Q. Why is balm mixed with the oil?

A. To give us to understand, that as balm (which is a very sweet smelling juice) diffuses an agreeable odour and prevents corruption; so the grace of the Holy Ghost preserves us from the corruption of sin, and enables us to diffuse the good odour of Jesus Christ by our edifying behaviour.

Q. Why does the Bishop anoint the forehead of the person confirmed;

A. To teach him that he must not be ashamed of the Gospel and all its truths.

Q. Why is the unction made in the form of a cross?

A. To teach us that all the virtue of this sacrament is derived from the cross, the passion, and the death of Jesus Christ, and that we ought to glory in his cross.

Q. What is the meaning of the words which the Bishop uses, I sign thee, &c.?

A. They mean by the outward unction, made in the name of the Holy Trinity, the person confirmed receives the mark of a soldier of Jesus Christ, and strength to fight against and to conquer the enemies of his holy name.

Q. Why does the Bishop gently strike the cheek of the person whom he confirms?

A. To signify that the person confirmed must

be ready to suffer all sorts of contempt, affronts, pains and persecution, for Jesus Christ, his faith and religion.

Q. Why does he say at the same time, Peace be with thee?

A. To denote that patience is the source of true peace, of that peace which surpasses all human understanding.

Q. What must we attend to after we have received the unction on our forehead?

A. We must be careful not to put our hand to our forehead before the holy chrism has been wiped off by a Priest.

Q. What ought we to do after receiving Confirmation?

A. We ought to thank God for the Grace which he has bestowed on us, consecrate the whole of our being to the Holy Ghost, and beseech him to preserve in our souls the abundance of graces which he has communicated to us.

Q. Make an act to this purpose!

A. I return thee my most hearty thanks, O Divine Spirit, for having confirmed me in the quality of a Christian: I consecrate myself to thy service without reserve: do with me whatever thou desirest; and never allow me to be so wretched as to forfeit the precious gifts with which thou hast been pleased to enrich my soul. Amen.

Q. What are the particular obligations of those who have been confirmed?

A. They are particularly bound not to be ashamed of confessing the faith of Jesus Christ, and of following the maxims of his gospel.

Q. Who are guilty of violating these obligations?

A. They who speak, or allow others to speak disrespectfully of religion and of what it teaches; or who dissemble their faith, or are ashamed to practice what it prescribes.

Q. What advice should be given to those who have received confirmation?

A. To be careful never to banish the Holy Ghost by any mortal sin; never to grieve him by any deliberate venial sin; and to be ever faithful in following his inspirations.

