

Tridentine Community News

October 21, 2007

The Classic Form of Confirmation

We continue our coverage of the Extraordinary (Tridentine) Forms of the Sacraments with a description of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

A bishop is the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Holy See has issued regulations permitting a priest to administer Confirmation under certain circumstances, such as if a person is at the point of death. For the purposes of this discussion, we will only address the typical situation of a bishop conferring Confirmation, as it is safe to assume that most of those devoted to the Extraordinary Form of the Mass would have a strong preference for a bishop performing this function.

At the present time, no bishop in Detroit or Windsor has yet taken the initiative to offer to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation according to the Extraordinary Form. However, we have not yet asked them ourselves. We have reason to believe that at least one of our regional bishops would consider acceding to such a request. If you or a member of your family are interested in receiving Confirmation according to the Extraordinary Form, please e-mail the address at the bottom of this page, or speak with Fr. Borkowski at St. Josaphat or Fr. Hrytsyk at Assumption – Windsor. The more people express an interest, the greater the likelihood of getting a bishop to celebrate the Sacrament. Please do not approach a bishop yourself; this must be an initiative of the Tridentine Community.

The Sacrament of Confirmation imparts an indelible seal on the soul. It imparts the Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and Fear of the Lord. The candidate must have been baptized and should be in the state of grace. The place of the ceremony, inside or outside of Mass, is not specified, and thus is left to local custom.

The bishop begins by admonishing those present that the confirmed may not leave until the blessing has been given which will be administered after each has been confirmed. If an infant for good reason should be confirmed, the child is to be held in the right arm of the sponsor. Adult candidates should either place one foot upon the right foot of the sponsor, or the sponsor should place his right hand on the right shoulder of the candidate.

The candidates kneel while the bishop begins, “May the Holy Ghost come down upon you, and may the power of the Most High keep you from sin.” With his hands extended over the candidates, he says a prayer invoking the Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost. Each sponsor and candidate comes forth; the candidate kneels before the bishop.

Dipping his thumb into the Holy Chrism and tracing the Sign of the Cross onto the brow of the candidate, the bishop recites the essential form of the Sacrament: “*N., signo te signo Cru✠cis et confirmo te Chrismate salutis. In nomine Pa✠tris, et Fi✠lii, et Sp̄ritus ✠ Sancti.*” (N., I seal thee with the sign of the Cross and I confirm thee with the Chrism of salvation. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.) The confirmed responds: “*Amen.*” The bishop lightly strikes the confirmed upon the cheek, saying: “*Pax tecum*” (Peace be with thee).

In some places it is the custom to fasten a linen band around the forehead of the newly confirmed. If this is not done, the bishop wipes the brow of the confirmed with cotton after the anointing. This cotton is later burned and the ashes disposed of in the *sacrarium* of the church, or into the soil outside.



The bishop then washes his hands as the following antiphon is said or sung: “Strengthen, O God, what thou has wrought in us, from out thy holy temple which is in Jerusalem.”

While the confirmed all kneel, the bishop recites a prayer asking that the Holy Ghost “may come and abide in the hearts of them whose brow we have anointed with Holy Chrism and sealed with the sign of the Holy Cross.” He says a concluding prayer, followed by a special blessing.

The bishop sits down and puts on his mitre. The confirmed recite aloud the Apostles’ Creed, the Our Father, and the Hail Mary. The bishop then gives the Pontifical Blessing, after which the *Te Deum* or Psalm 112 (*Laudate Pueri*) is customarily sung.

The Novus Ordo Form, in comparison, begins with a reading from the Acts of the Apostles. A brief homily is given, followed by the Renewal of Baptismal Promises. The Laying on of Hands and the Anointing are similar, although no posture is specified for the candidates. In practical matters, this usually means that the candidates stand before the bishop. Some General Intercession-like prayers follow, then the confirmed recite the Our Father, and the bishop imparts a blessing.

Compared to the other Sacraments so far discussed, the content of the Sacrament of Confirmation is rather similar between the Ordinary and Extraordinary Forms. Perhaps this is why one sees less debate about the wording of the Novus Ordo Form.

Next Sunday: First Tridentine Mass at St. Joseph

At noon next Sunday, October 28, St. Joseph Church off Gratiot north of I-75 will celebrate its first monthly 4th Sunday Tridentine Mass at Noon. Directions are at: www.saint-joseph-detroit.org.