

## **X (c). SACRAMENTS OF BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION**

### **THESIS:**

*Il Battesimo come \*comunicazione della giustificazione in Cristo, \*incorporazione nel suo corpo mistico, \*liberazione dal peccato originale per praticare la sua giustizia ed \*inaugurazione della vita eterna con lui.*

*La Cresima come \*Pentecoste personale, \*complimento del Battesimo, \*vincolo più stretto con la vita della Chiesa, e \*coinvolgimento più intenso nella testimonianza alla speranza che è in essa.*

*Mediante ciascuno di questi due sacramenti lo Spirito Santo è ricevuto. ed un carattere permanente è conferito, sì che i cristofedeli formino un popolo sacerdotale con un rapporto inscindibile con Cristo e tra di loro.*

### **I. Baptism**

#### **A. Baptism: key theme is justification/justice (terrestrial and celestial aspects)**

**Baptism: l'ôt of Christian justification** gives the foundation of unity for the Church.

Why? because the HS is one and give **unity. Baptism-----Unity**

**Confirmation: l'ôt of Christian operative hope** and the foundation of diversity for the Church. It is the activation of the anointed people invited to share in the **mission** of Christ.

**Confirmation --- Diversity for Mission**

#### **B. Jesus and Baptism:**

##### **1. Jesus' Prophetic Ôt of justification:**

**a. Baptism in Jordan was an ôt that revealed the definitive eschatological justice was already present.**

**b. Life of Jesus continued to personify that justice.**

**c. Cross: first and irrepeatible fulfilment of divine justice.**

**2. Our Baptism is into this continuum.** The advantage of this view is to see the indispensable need for orthopraxis and to see original sin not only as an ontic state but with existential and social implications. Baptism requires a prophetic mission:

**a. Adults: on their own behalf**

**b. Children: they must be part of a community that embraces justice so they may learn.**

##### **3. Other advantages:**

**a. We become living signs to the world.**

**b. We link the logic of the liturgy with orthopraxis as sign to non-Christians.**

##### **4. Link with ôt of justification has three principal effects:**

**1. Gift of baptismal grace (dynamic reality)**

**2. Dignity of communal priesthood (to work on behalf of justice)**

**3. Character: permanently united with Christ and each other in a dynamic fashion- Church as sign of eschatological inbreaking of divine justification.**

#### **C. Four ways to imagine the sacrament of Baptism:**

**1. Europe: fides quarens intellectuam ontologicam: (Faith = truth):** Communication of justification": "Easter is my mystery too because I too am justified with Christ's justification in the resurrection.

**2 N. America: fides quarens intellectuam existenital: (Faith=rapport):** Relationship = Incorporation into mystical body. Subjective and intersubjective aspects

**3. Third World: fides intellectuam quarens practico-socialem: (Faith =responsibility):**

Liberation as from sin in two senses:

**a. liberation from sin (O. Sin)**

b. liberation to practice justice

**4. Eastern Europe: fides quarens intellectum eschatologico: (Faith=promise):**  
Inauguration the reign of the Kingdom of God.

Point: We are anointed to receive unity in the Spirit.

## **II. Confirmation (Rosato)**

**A. Confirmation is linked with Hope.** It is a personal Pentecost; it highlights the diversity of charisms within the unity of the Holy Spirit.

Two great mysteries that constitute the Church:

Easter: emphasis is in unity as the mission of Baptism

Pentecost: linked with testimony and hope as the mission of Confirmation.

It is an interior dynamic in the Church and also an exterior one.

### **B. Jesus and Confirmation:**

Part of Jesus' prophetic *ô*t was a mission of hope for those confronted with desperation in religious and political life (Lk 4: 20-21). In this sense, Confirmation is the anointing with the Spirit of the Risen Christ, giving authorization to the baptized to express divine justification through their work that is filled with hope. Thus, Confirmational grace intensifies one's participation in the communal priesthood and the character received in Baptism in order to allow the confirmed to enter into the mission of the Church.

**Point: Strength ----- Mission**

## **III. Theology of Baptism and Confirmation (Becker)**

### **I. The remission of sins and the infusion of grace are in baptism an act and a gift.**

#### **A. Divine Act:**

##### **1. Remission of personal sin and concession of grace:**

Analogy to human relationships: As a person living and relating with others, I can be offended; the offense can be pardoned and the relationship that is re-established is even stronger. The friendship is elevated. At times, even a mediator is involved in this process.

In the God-man relationship, man offends and God offers pardon. Man accepts. A Mediator is at work and the relationship is re-established. Unlike the analogy above, God and man are not on the same level, therefore the offense is greater. The pardon and friendship that result are more profound. Also, Christ the Mediator is there and necessary for the entire duration of the friendship -- he doesn't leave.

##### **2. The remission of Original sin and the concession of grace.**

Original sin is a state of abandonment and misery that results from the fault of another. By his own power, man cannot rescue himself from this state. The concession of grace is a free act of benevolence -- a manifestation of God's desire to rescue man from this state of abandonment and misery.

##### **3. This act of God is a visible action, a sacrament.**

God can certainly act invisibly and grant both pardon and grace in an extraordinary and invisible way. But man, is a spiritual-corporeal being in need of tangible signs; God has made his love available to us in a way which we can grasp this forgiving and elevating love. Baptism then is the expression, not the cause, of divine benevolence.

#### **B. As a gift**

## 1. Grace, the participation in divine life

**a. The very word “grace” already implies its motives- the free and unmerited bestowal.** That which is bestowed is God’s very own life and the ability to participate in that life.

### **b. Created grace and uncreated grace:**

**1. Uncreated grace** is the gift of God himself who gives his very self to us.

**2. Created grace** is the spiritual gift itself which is given to us in light of God’s self-communication and which leads us to the beatific vision.

**3. Why the distinction?** On the one hand, you want to say that when God gives himself, he gives himself. The goal of salvation is union and communion with him -- to intimately share his very life; on the other hand, we’re not Pantheists -- we don’t believe that God is simply “diffused” in some way throughout the parts of the universe. There is a real distinction between creature and creator; hence, the distinction between the spiritual gifts and the spiritual Giver.

### **c. The graces received in Baptism:**

#### **1. gratia sanans:**

We speak of Baptism as a gift of new life, a rebirth, that enables me to overcome the inclination to evil which is a consequence of original and personal sin. This grace helps me to overcome the disorder in my life.

#### **2. gratia elevans:**

Baptism gives us the strength to live as Jesus, as a son of the Father. This divine filiation is only possible through a grace that elevates me beyond human nature.

## **2. This new life is a participation in the grace of Christ:**

We participate in the grace given to the man Christ. As the Son, Christ possesses the communicated life of God (the self-gift of the Father in the Holy Spirit). But as man, Christ possesses the participated life of God. In Christ, this participated life is **not** a gratia sanans, because there is no consequence of sin in him. But it is a created participation in the life of the Trinity, in the man Christ. This is the grace of union.

**a. The Incarnation of the Son of God** (God assuming humanity) is the supreme gift or grace of God to man (**gratia unionis**). The formula of the 12th century: “Christ’s human soul received by grace all that his divinity had by nature. Christ the man was declared to be the Son by grace (or Son by union) as opposed to the consideration of the Word which was Son by nature [wasn’t this view condemned in Theodore of Mopsuestia?].

### **b. The effect of the grace of union:**

Because of the grace of union, Christ’s humanity is holy and sinless and the man Christ is the natural, not the adopted, Son of God. Because of the grace of union, **Christ’s habitual grace and virtues** have a **quasi-infinite perfection**; His salvific acts are intrinsically apt to sanctify all mankind, whose grace is incarnational and filial because it participates in the grace of union through the mediation of Christ’s habitual grace and virtues as informing his saving action.

## **3. Our participation in the grace of Christ.**

As I understand it, it goes something like this: the actions and decisions of Christ have a **formative influence** (we might say a reciprocal influence) on this habitual grace which is

passed on to all of us. In other words, we are able to be configured to Christ because of the reception of his grace which enables us to put on His own habits, attitudes, and virtues.

**II. This gift is a new life, a participation in the divine life and in the death and resurrection of Christ, and is an incorporation into the Church.**

**A. Scriptural and historical testimony:**

**1. Romans 6:** “Are you not aware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptism into his death? By baptism into his death we were buried with him so that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might have a new life.”

**2. I Cor 12:13** -- “For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body.”

**3. Ephesians 5: 26-27:** Christ “gave himself up for her (the Church) to make her holy, purifying her in the bath (loutron) of water by the power of the Word, to present to himself a glorious Church, holy and immaculate. [Christ constitutes His Church through the act of Baptism]

**4. St. Augustine:** De Peccatorum Meritis I, 26, 39: Here, Augustine argues to the existence of original sin through the ecclesial practice of infant baptism; the Pelagians denied original sin but defended the practice of infant Baptism. “... the Lord Jesus Christ came in the flesh, and, in the form of a servant, he came obedient even to the death of the cross, for no other reason than, by this dispensation of His most merciful grace, to give life to all those to whom, as grafted members of His body, He becomes Head for laying hold upon the Kingdom of heaven: to save, free, redeem and enlighten them -- who had afortime been involved in the death, infirmities, servitude, captivity, and darkness of sin, under the dominion of the devil, the author of sin, and thus to become the Mediator between God and man, by whom. . . we might be reconciled to God unto eternal life, having been rescued from the eternal death which threatens such as us... those persons cannot be concerned with that dispensation of Christ which is executed by his humiliation. And inasmuch as to this belongs baptism, in which we are buried with Christ, in order to be incorporated into Him as His members (that is, as those who believe in Him); it of course follows that baptism is unnecessary for them, who have no need of the benefit of that forgiveness and reconciliation which is acquired through a Mediator. Now seeing that they (Pelagians) admit the necessity of baptizing infants. . . they cannot avoid the further concession, that infants require the same benefit of the Mediator, in order that, being washed by the sacrament and thereby incorporated into the body of Christ, which is the Church, they may be reconciled to God and so lie in Him and be saved and delivered and redeemed and enlightened. But from what, if not from death, and the vices, and guilt, and thralldom, and darkness of sin? And inasmuch as they do not commit any sin in the tender age of infancy by their actual transgression, original sin is only left.”

**5. Thomas Aquinas, qu. 69, a. 5:** “Such adults by their prior belief in Christ are spiritually incorporated into Him... But afterwards, when they are baptized, they are incorporated in a certain bodily way, namely by the visible sacrament; without the firm **intention** of the sacrament, they could not be incorporated even spiritually.”

**6. Council of Florence -- Decree for the Armenians (1439):** “among all the sacraments, baptism holds the first place because it is the **gateway** to the spiritual life; by it we are members of Christ and belong to his body, the Church. . .”

**7. Council of Trent’s “Decree on Justification” (1547): The instrumental cause for justification is baptism** (which is the **sacramentum fidei**): “For although no one can be just

unless the merits of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ are imparted to him, still, this communication takes place in the justification of the sinner. . . Hence, in the very act of justification, together with the remission of sins, man receives through Jesus Christ, into whom he is inserted, the gifts of faith, hope and charity, all infused at the same time. For faith, without hope and charity, neither unites a man perfectly with Christ, nor makes Him a living member of His body.”

**8. Pius XII’s Mediator Dei:** “...by reason of their baptism, Christians become by a common title, members of the Body of Christ the Priest; by the character that is, as it were, engrave upon the soul, they are appointed to the worship of God, and therefore according to their condition, they share in the priesthood of Christ Himself...”

**9. Vatican II:**

**a. Lumen Gentium, 7:** “Through Baptism, we are formed in the likeness of Christ: ‘For in one Spirit we are all baptized into One body’ (I Cor. 12:13). In this sacred rite, a union with Christ’s death and resurrection is both symbolized and brought about: ‘For we were buried with him by means of Baptism into his death.’ And if ‘we have been united with Him by likeness to His death, we shall be so in the likeness of his resurrection also.’ (Rom 6:4-5)”

**b. Lumen Gentium, 11:** “Incorporated into the Church through baptism, the faithful are consecrated by their baptismal character to the exercise of the cult of the Christian religion. Reborn as sons of God, they must confess before men the faith they have received from God through the Church.”

**c. Sacrosanctum Concilium, 69:** “In place of the Rite called, ‘Order for Supplying What Was Omitted in the Baptism of an Infant,’ a new rite is to be drawn up which manifests more fittingly and clearly that the infant, baptized by the short rite, has already been received into the Church.”

**B. The participation in the grace of Christ is a participation in his death and resurrection:**

**1. Christ’s death is above all a personal decision :**

- a. The following of the Father’s will
- b. It is a renunciation of his own plan, will and good
- c. In this he realizes the salvation of man and conquers sin.

**2. This decision leave vestiges in the grace of Christ;**

**3. Christ’s resurrection is the action of God in the man Christ: Perfect union.**

The human soul of Christ is joined with God. Christ’s soul and body are joined in full harmony. This helps us to understand how all created things are oriented towards God. The consequence of God’s activity --a more profound actuation of all the human forces of Christ (of course, God can actuate his creature more than his creature can). All this too leaves its traces in grace. There is a perfect union of man with God through the resurrection -- friendship is definitively established. This is the grace we receive from the risen one.

**4. Baptism incorporates us into Christ’s life** (including his death and resurrection) -- we receive His grace which includes his personal decision to die and his perfect union as man with God as a fruit of the resurrection. (The baptized can call themselves, “friends of God” -- a self-designation for Christians popular in the Middle Ages.)

**C. Incorporation into Christ and His Church.**

Through the cross and resurrection, Christ definitively acquires His position as Head of the Church. In baptism we are incorporated into Christ as Head of the Church and therefore we

are connected with all the other baptized. **To be incorporated into Christ means to be incorporated into his Church.** Full incorporation requires other bonds (e.g., other sacraments, recognition of Church's authority, etc.)

**III. Confirmation is the Pentecost in the life of the individual Christian which makes him able to give witness to Christ.**

**A. Texts:**

**1. Scriptural references to the reception of dynamis as a gift:**

a. Acts 1:8 -- "You will receive power (dynamis) when the Holy Spirit comes down upon you; then you be my witnesses.

b. Acts 2:38 (Peter's speech) "You must reform and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, that your sins may be forgiven; then you will receive the gift (dorea) of the Holy Spirit."

c. Acts 10:45 -- "The circumcised believers who had accompanied Peter were surprised that the gift (dorea) of the Holy Spirit should have been poured out upon the Gentiles also.

**2. Patristic developments:**

a. **dynamis becomes robur (mission) in Augustine.** At Pentecost, the apostles receive robur for the mission. According to Eusebius Gallicanus, this is the effect of Confirmation -- that Christians receive robur of the Holy Spirit for the sake of mission.

b. **Jerome translates dorea in some of its appearances (as in Acts 10:45) as gratia.** In Ambrose, this becomes the "gratia septiforme Spiritus Sancti." Both dynamis and gratia are joined together in the 8th century.

**3. Thomas uses the Fathers to make a synthesis.** Confirmation is the Pentecost of the Christian life. It gives one **strength** to defend the faith and to diffuse Christ to others. The effect of Confirmation is spiritual strength. Confirmation perfects the growth of the Christian through this new gift of the seven-fold Spirit. It renders him capable of spreading Christ by **witnessing** to him; the sacrament gives the grace of fortitude in order to confess the faith and preach the gospel even to struggling (unto death) with the enemies of the faith.

**Schema:** Confirmation is the Pentecost of the Christian Life:

**-mission/strength to defend/diffuse the faith**

**4. Council of Florence** -- "Decree for the Armenians" (1439). "The effect of this sacrament is that in it the Holy Spirit is given for strength, as He was given to the apostles on the day of Pentecost in order that the Christian may courageously confess the name of Christ,"

**5. Lumen Gentium, 11:** "Bound more intimately to the Church by the sacrament of Confirmation, they are endowed by the Holy Spirit with special strength. Hence, they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith both by word and by deed as true witnesses of Christ."

**6. Paul VI: Apostolic Constitution Divinae Consortium Naturae (1971):** Christ himself in His baptism at the Jordan was anointed with the Holy Spirit for the exercise of His public ministry (a proleptic anointing). Similarly, Christ promised the apostles that the Spirit would come upon them in order that they might be his witnesses. This promise was realized at Pentecost. The Pentecostal gift of the Spirit is ordained to the mission common to all Christians, to be witnesses of Christ. Thus, the document says that "Through the sacrament of Confirmation, those who have been born anew in baptism receive the ineffable gift, the Holy

Spirit Himself, by which ‘they are endowed with special strength’ and by the character of this sacrament ‘are bound more perfectly to the Church.’ and ‘are more strictly obliged, as true witnesses of Christ, to spread and defend the faith by word and by deed.’” [quotes are from Lumen Gentium 11].

## **B. Confirmation as Insertion in the Pentecost of Christ:**

### **1. Pentecost in the life of Christ:**

**a. The resurrection is Christ’s passage from death to indestructible life.** It is also the moment when friendship is established between God and man. All this is the activity of the Holy Spirit in the man Jesus. Thus, the Spirit was already operative in Christ’s life, leading him to death, raising and glorifying Him.

**b. With the resurrection, the action of the Spirit upon the humanity of Christ is completed.** But, the action of the Holy Spirit for Christ as a Mediator begins. **Pentecost, in the life of the glorified Christ is the moment of receiving the Holy Spirit for others;** Pentecost, in the life of Christ, means that He receives the Spirit from the Father for others (those who are to believe in Him).

### **c. Role of the Spirit in the life of Jesus:**

**1. Von Balthasar speaks of “soteriological inversion** of roles in the immanent and economic Trinity.” In the life of the immanent Trinity, the Father and Son breathe the Spirit; the Spirit is passive, formed by the mutual love of Father/Son. In the economy of salvation, the Son is the passive recipient of the Spirit. After the resurrection, however, the Son becomes life-giving Spirit.

**2. Acts 10:38:** “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.”

**3. Acts 2:33 --** “Exalted at the right hand of God, he received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father and poured it forth.”

## **2. Participation in the Pentecost of Christ in the life of the believer.**

### **a. To live as Christ, one must be as Christ.**

But, Christ the man possesses not just created grace -- he also possesses the Holy Spirit. He possesses the Holy Spirit in his mortal life as well as his glorified life. For the Christian, full incorporation into Christ is verified if the Christian is incorporated in the moment of glorified life when Christ receives the Holy Spirit. The Christian is incorporated in that Pentecost moment through Confirmation.

### **b. Two linguistic modes of expressing the same reality:**

1. In Confirmation, I receive from Christ the Holy Spirit who takes up residence in me (In this manner of speaking, Confirmation is described from my particular perspective -- I receive the Holy Spirit. The danger is to divorce this reality from Christ, as if the Holy Spirit “left” Christ to come into me.

2. In Confirmation, I am incorporated into the moment that Jesus receives the Holy Spirit for others (Incorporation into the risen Christ who has received the Spirit).

**c. We come to see the relationship of Baptism to Confirmation by seeing the two moments in Christ:**

1. Passage from decision to death-resurrection. (we are incorporated into this death-resurrection at Baptism).

2. The reception of the Holy Spirit in Christ after the resurrection (we are incorporated in this moment at Confirmation)

### **3. Order of events:**

a. Christ himself said that He had to be lifted up (exalted) before drawing all things to Himself. Christ, in his death and resurrection is perfected as a human individual in Himself. Only with this fulfillment of life in Himself can there be fulfillment of his Mediatorship. In his death, Christ offers himself for us to the Father. In his resurrection, he receives the pardon of the Father. Thus reconciliation between God and man take place. Only in this moment does He receive the Spirit, for the reconciliation that was accomplished between Christ and the Father is now to be extended to others by the work of the Spirit (“receive the Holy Spirit - If you forgive mens sins, they are forgiven.)

b. As Christians, we participate in the same order of events. First, man is incorporated into Christ’s death and resurrection in baptism. Then, man is incorporated into Christ’s reception of the Holy Spirit through Confirmation. Only at this moment does he become “fully Christian.”

### **C. Finality of the gift of the Spirit:**

#### **1. The scope of confirmation: Two finalities of the Holy Spirit**

**a. Knowledge of self:** One must first have the Spirit in himself (as illuminator) before he can witness. The Holy Spirit is given in Baptism for the life of the confirmed person himself, to illumine, guide his life. Part of this illumination is knowledge: Full knowledge of the Christian truth is impossible without the Spirit of Christ, since only God can fully know what He revealed. A full decision for the truth is impossible without the illumination of the Spirit. Besides the knowledge of the truth, a full actuation of Christ’s revelation in every moment of my life is impossible without the Holy Spirit. Only he who guided Christ’s life as man can guide mine in the path of Christ.

**b. Witness:** My self-knowledge leads me to give witness to that faith I know and believe. The Holy Spirit is given in Confirmation so that a Christian can give witness for Christ. But, there is a reciprocity for the believer. When I am bearing witness, I am also called to self-renewal.

#### **NB: Witness of Faith**

c. The old notion of Confirmation as a **sacrament of “Christian maturity?”** Christian maturity is not a presupposition for Confirmation -- there is no support for this view in Scripture or Tradition. Yet, there is a mutual reciprocity between my knowledge of self as a Christian and my ability to witness to what I believe. For the adult, this self-knowledge and decision to give witness are presupposed. For the child recipient, there is the conviction that this person is directed toward this knowledge and decision.

#### **2. The gift of the Spirit and the external phenomena:**

**a. In the Acts of the Apostles,** the external phenomena always appear in those confirmed. In confirmation today, this is not so. This gives rise to two difficulties:

1. The Protestants say that those texts from Acts are not references to the sacrament of Confirmation, and so they reject confirmation as a sacrament.

2. Or, these texts are the authentic celebrations of confirmation, but our celebrations are inauthentic because they are not accompanied by these signs.



**b. St. Augustine** knew this question, so it isn't new. Augustine explains that the ancient Church, on the day of Pentecost existed only in Jerusalem. It was destined to be the Church of all people, so there was a need for speaking in all languages. The gift of glossalia manifested the Church's universality. Augustine says that in our time, the Church is diffused through all the world and therefore speaks all languages (really a greater miracle than that of Pentecost).

**c. Fr. Becker's hypothesis:**

1. The apostolic Church was normative as the authentic interpreters of the deposit of revelation (their witness to the person of Jesus Christ in their life, worship and preaching). However, there are certain aspects of the apostolic Church which are **unrepeatable and not normative** (for example the relation of the first generation to the cultic practice of the Temple).

2. The resurrection event itself was not seen by anyone; the knowledge of Jesus risen comes only after the fact, through the appearances which were necessary for the revelation of the event. He appeared to them in a mode which was recognizably Him -- real and tangible. Yet, Jesus no longer appears thus. He willed to adapt himself to the situation of men who needed signs to understand the tremendous newness of the resurrection. Having once assured the revelation for the future, the appearances ceased.

3. Visible phenomena of the coming of the Spirit. Just as the invisible resurrection needed appearances to be understood, so the coming of the invisible Holy Spirit needed external appearances to be understood. It is true that Jesus promised the coming of the Spirit, but the problem is how would the disciples know if He arrived? Furthermore, the Holy Spirit came for the whole Church -- was entrusted to the apostles to be given to all the believers. The external phenomena correspond to Christ's promises as well as the OT prophecies: "In the last days, the Spirit who inspired the prophets shall come" (Joel). Thus, the external phenomena were necessary for the apostolic church, but not for future generations.

#### **IV. Nature of Character:**

**A. Character means that the Holy Spirit is received definitively.** It derives its meaning from a link with the **sacerdotal community**. The main point is that the rapport between Christ and the members of the Church cannot be broken.

1. It is expressed in pneumatological and dialogical terms: Character is not invisible and passive.

2. It is a lasting anointing with the Holy Spirit: There is an order of baptized and confirmed.

3. He affirms two modes of ontological coordination with the two modes of priesthood:  
a. communal priesthood  
b. ordained priesthood.

4. It is the HS who joins us with the glorified Christ and with each other.

#### **B. Priesthood: Microbiological View of "ecclesial cell"**

1. In the cell there is a nucleus and the rest that are ontologically linked.

2. Church: understands a sacrament diversified from Christ and her universal salvation  
Christ: immanent member of his social body in history

#### **3. Why have two orders of priesthood?**

a. **nucleus:** ordained are transfigured to "be" Christ: Transcendental mode of Christ

**b. Baptized and Confirmed:** Christ is also immanent; social in history:  
Immanent Mode of Christ.

**Thus, there are three sacraments that convey character and two ways to give testimony to Christ that are not in competition.**