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Confirmation – is it still the sacrament of Christian initiation?

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Summary/Abstract: The sacrament of confirmation is an integral part of Christian initiation. It is not necessary for salvation but together with baptism and the Eucharist forms unity which is the foundation of life in Christ and which should be preserved. Historical and theological reasons confirm it and despite the interruption of chronological order of celebration, liturgical practice also supports this claim. Baptism is incorporation in Christ, in his Mystical Body, confirmation enhances the grace of baptism through the gift of the Holy Spirit, whereas the Eucharist completes and crowns the initiation giving food which is the pledge of eternal life. Facing disquieting phenomena of punctualistic understanding of confirmation in terms of both preparation and mystagogy, the author indicates the criteria of the unity of the sacraments of Christian initiation. In this context, confirmation is not the sacrament of Christian maturity but opening sacramental perspective offers indispensable means of achieving it.


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It is still done this way in the churches of the East. In the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of the West, the two sacraments gradually separated. The Church in the West wanted the bishop to complete a person's initiation. As the Church grew and the bishops ministered over ever larger territories, the bishop could not be present for every Baptism. This restored order returns the celebration of Confirmation to its original place after Baptism in the Sacraments of Initiation, with the Eucharist completing Christian initiation. In the United States the designated age for Confirmation is between the ages of discretion and the age 16. In order to be confirmed a person. must have reached the age of discretion, which is defined as about the age of seven Chapter one the sacraments of christian initiation. Article 1 the sacrament of baptism. 1213 Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit (vitae spiritualis ianua),⁴ and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. 1215 This sacrament is also called "the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit," for it signifies and actually brings about the birth of water and the Spirit without which no one "can enter the kingdom of God."⁷ 1216 "This bath is called enlightenment, because those who receive this [catechetical] instruction are enlightened in their understanding