

QUESTION 72

The Sacrament of Confirmation

Next we have to consider sacrament of confirmation. And on this topic there are twelve questions: (1) Is confirmation a sacrament? (2) Is chrism the appropriate matter for this sacrament? (3) Is it necessary for the sacrament that the chrism has been previously consecrated by a bishop? (4) What is the appropriate form of this sacrament? (5) Does this sacrament imprint a character? (6) Does the character of confirmation presuppose the baptismal character? (7) Does this sacrament confer grace? (8) For whom is it fitting to receive this sacrament? (9) Should this sacrament be conferred on a man's forehead? (10) Is it required that someone support the individual who is to be confirmed (*teneat confirmandum*)? (11) Is this sacrament given only by bishops? (12) Is the rite for this sacrament appropriate?

Article 1

Is confirmation a sacrament?

It seems that confirmation is not a sacrament (*confirmatio non sit sacramentum*):

Objection 1: As was explained above (q. 64, a. 2), a sacrament has its efficacy from its divine institution. But we do not read of confirmation being instituted by Christ. Therefore, it is not a sacrament.

Objection 2: The sacraments of the New Law were prefigured in the Old Law; as the Apostle puts it in 1 Corinthians 10:2ff., "All were baptized in Moses, in the cloud, and in the sea. And all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink." But confirmation was not prefigured in the Old Testament. Therefore, it is not a sacrament.

Objection 3: The sacraments are ordered toward human salvation. But there can be salvation without confirmation, since baptized children who die without confirmation are saved. Therefore, confirmation is not a sacrament.

Objection 4: Through all the sacraments of the Church a man is conformed to Christ, who is the author of the sacrament. But a man cannot be conformed to Christ through confirmation, since we do not read that Christ was confirmed.

But contrary to this: Pope Melchiades wrote to the bishops of Spain: "Concerning the matter on which you asked to be informed, i.e., whether the imposition of the bishop's hand is a greater sacrament than baptism, be assured that they are both great sacraments."

I respond: The sacraments of the New Law are ordered toward specific effects of grace, and so whenever a specific effect of grace occurs, there is a specific sacrament that is ordered toward it. Now since bodily things and things that can be sensed bear a similarity to spiritual and intelligible things, from those things that are done in the corporeal life we can perceive specific things that exist in the spiritual life.

Now it is clear that in the corporeal life there is a certain perfection involved in a man's reaching a full-grown age and being able to perform perfect human actions; hence, in 1 Corinthians 13:11 the Apostle says, "Now that I have become a man, I have put away the things of a child." And so in addition to the movement of *generation*, by which an individual receives corporeal life, there is also a movement of *growth*, by which he reaches a full-grown age.

So, then, a man likewise receives his spiritual life through baptism, which is a spiritual regeneration. And in confirmation a man receives, as it were, a sort of full-grown age of the spiritual life. Hence, Pope Melchiades says, "The Holy Spirit, who comes down upon the waters of baptism with a salvific descent, bestows at the font a fullness with respect to innocence, whereas in confirmation He confers an increase of grace. In baptism we are born again unto life, and after baptism we are

strengthened.”

And so it is clear that confirmation is a special sacrament.

Reply to objection 1: There are three opinions about the institution of this sacrament. Some have claimed that this sacrament was not instituted either by Christ or by the apostles, but instead was instituted later in the course of time at some council, whereas others have claimed that it was instituted by the apostles. But none of this can be the case, since instituting a new sacrament involves the power of excellence, which can belong only to Christ.

And so one should reply that Christ instituted this sacrament not by *enacting* it, but by *promising* it—this according to John 16:7 (“If I do not go away, the Paraclete will not come to you, but if I do go away, I will send Him to you”). And the reason for this is that in this sacrament what is being given is the fullness of the Holy Spirit, which was not to be given before Christ’s resurrection and ascension—this according to John 7:39 (“... for the Spirit had not yet been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified”).

Reply to objection 2: Confirmation is the sacrament of the *fullness* of grace, and so it could not have had anything corresponding to it in the Old Law, since, according to Hebrews 7:19, “the Law brought nothing to completion.”

Reply to objection 3: As was explained above (q. 65, a. 4), all the sacraments are in some sense necessary for salvation; however, some are such that there is no salvation without them, whereas others are such that they work toward the rounding out of salvation (*ad perfectionem salutis*). And it is in this latter way that confirmation is necessary for salvation, even though there can be salvation without it as long as it is not omitted out of contempt for the sacrament.

Reply to objection 4: Those who receive confirmation, which is the sacrament of the *fullness of grace*, are conformed to Christ insofar as from the first instant of His conception, He was “full of grace and of truth,” as John 1:14 says. This fullness was indeed made clear in His baptism, when the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form upon Him. Hence, Luke 4:1 even says, “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan.” However, it was not in keeping with His dignity that Christ, who is the author of the sacraments, should have received the fullness of grace from a sacrament.

Article 2

Is chrism an appropriate matter for this sacrament?

It seems that chrism is not an appropriate matter for this sacrament (*chrisma non sit conveniens materia huius sacramenti*):

Objection 1: As has been explained (a. 1, ad 1), this sacrament was instituted by Christ when He promised the Holy Spirit to His disciples. But He sent them the Holy Spirit without an anointing with chrism. Again, the apostles themselves conferred this sacrament through the imposition of the hand alone, without chrism; for Acts 8:17 relates that the apostles “imposed their hands on those who had been baptized, and they received the Holy Spirit.” Therefore, chrism is not [an appropriate] matter of this sacrament, since the matter is necessary for the sacrament.

Objection 2: As was explained above (q. 65, aa. 3-4), in a certain sense confirmation brings the sacrament of baptism to completion, and so it should be conformed to baptism in the way that a perfection is conformed to what is perfectible. But in baptism the matter is a simple element, viz., water. Therefore, chrism, which is made up of oil and balm, is not an appropriate matter for this sacrament.

Objection 3: The oil in the matter of this sacrament is used to anoint. But anointing can be done with any sort of oil, e.g., oil made from nuts or from any number of other things. Therefore, it is not the case that only the oil of olives should be used for this sacrament.

Objection 4: It was explained above (q. 66, a. 3) that water is used as the matter of baptism because it is easily found everywhere. But olive oil is not easily found everywhere, and balm even less so. Therefore, it is not the case that chrism, which is made up of them, is an appropriate matter for this sacrament.

But contrary to this: In *Register* Gregory says, “Let no priest dare to sign the baptized infants on the forehead with sacred chrism.” Therefore, chrism is [an appropriate] matter of this sacrament.

I respond: Chrism is an appropriate matter for this sacrament. For as has been explained (a. 1 and q. 65, a. 1), what is given in this sacrament is the fullness of the Holy Spirit for spiritual strength—something that befits a full-grown age. For when a man has reached a full-grown age, he is now sharing his actions in common with others, whereas before this he had lived his life focused, as it were, on himself (*antea vero quasi singulariter sibi ipsi vivit*).

Now oil signifies the grace of the Holy Spirit; hence, Christ is said to be “anointed with the oil of gladness” (Psalm 44:8) because of the fullness of the Holy Spirit that He possessed. And that is why oil is an appropriate matter for this sacrament. Moreover, balm is mixed with the oil because of its fragrant odor, which spreads to others. Hence, in 2 Corinthians 2:15 the Apostle says, “We are the good odor of Christ, etc.” And even though many other things are fragrant, balm is nonetheless used mainly because it has a special fragrance of its own and because it also indicates a lack of corruption; hence, Ecclesiasticus 24:21 says, “My odor is like an unmixed balm.”

Reply to objection 1: By the power that He has in the sacraments, Christ conferred on the apostles the *reality* of this sacrament (*rem huius sacramenti*), i.e., the fullness of the Holy Spirit, without the *sacrament*, because they themselves “received the first fruits of the Holy Spirit,” as Romans 8:23 says.

Nonetheless, there was something conforming to the matter of this sacrament that was shown to the apostles in a visible way in the conferral of the Holy Spirit. For the fact that the Holy Spirit descended upon them visibly in the form of fire is referred back to the same signification to which oil is referred, except for the fact that fire has the active power, whereas oil has the passive power, insofar as it is the matter and the fuel (*fomentum*) for the fire. And this was fitting to a satisfactory degree, since the grace of the Holy Spirit was going to flow through the apostles to others.

Again, the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles in the form of tongues—which is referred back to signifying what balm signifies, except for the fact that a tongue is communicative through speech, whereas balm is communicative through its fragrance. For the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit as teachers of the faith, whereas the faithful are filled with the Holy Spirit as those who do things involved in the building up of the faithful.

Again, and similarly, at the imposition of the hand by the apostles, and likewise at their preaching, the fullness of the Holy Spirit descended upon the faithful under visible signs, just as He had descended upon the apostles at the beginning; hence, in Acts 11:15 Peter says, “When I had begun to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us also at the beginning.” And so visible sacramental matter was not needed where visible signs were being produced miraculously by God. Still, the apostles did commonly use chrism in conferring the sacrament, when [miraculous] visible signs of the sort in question were not exhibited. For in *Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*, chap.4 Dionysius says, “There is a certain perfecting operation which our leaders”—i.e., the apostles—“call the sacrifice of chrism (*chrismatis hostiam nominat*).”

Reply to objection 2: Baptism is given in order for one to receive the spiritual life absolutely speaking, and so a simple matter is fitting for that sacrament. By contrast, this sacrament is given in order for one to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit, whose operation takes many forms—this according to Wisdom 7:22 (“In her there is a [holy] spirit that is ... unique, manifold ...”), and according to 1 Corinthians 12:4 (“There are a variety of gifts, but the same Spirit”). And so it is fitting for this sacrament to have a composite matter.

Reply to objection 3: The properties of oil by which the Holy Spirit is signified are found more in olive oil than in any other sort of oil. Hence, the olive tree itself, being an evergreen (*semper frondibus virens*), signifies the freshness and mercy of the Holy Spirit. Moreover, this oil is called oil properly speaking and is very much in use wherever it is available. And any other liquid is called oil from similarity to this oil, nor is any such liquid in common use except as a substitute among those who lack olive oil. And that is why it is this oil alone that is used for this sacrament and certain other sacraments.

Reply to objection 4: Baptism is a sacrament of absolute necessity, and so its matter should be found everywhere. But it is enough that the matter of this sacrament, which is not of so great a necessity, should be able to be easily sent off to all places on earth.

Article 3

Is it necessary for this sacrament that the chrism, which is the matter of this sacrament, has been previously consecrated by a bishop?

It seems that it is not necessary for this sacrament that the chrism, which is the matter of this sacrament, has been previously consecrated by a bishop (*non sit de necessitate huius sacramenti quod chrisma, quod est materia huius sacramenti, fuerit prius per episcopum consecratum*):

Objection 1: Baptism, in which there is a full remission of sins, is not less efficacious than this sacrament. But even though a sort of sanctification is applied to the baptismal water before baptism, it is not necessary for the sacrament, since it can be omitted in an emergency. Therefore, neither is it necessary for this sacrament that the chrism has been consecrated by a bishop.

Objection 2: The same thing should not be consecrated twice. But the matter of a sacrament is sanctified in the very conferral of the sacrament by the verbal formula (*per formam verborum*) with which the sacrament is conferred; hence, in *Super Ioannem* Augustine says, “The word approaches the element and a sacrament is effected.” Therefore, the chrism does not have to be consecrated before this sacrament is given.

Objection 3: Every consecration that is done in the sacraments is ordered toward the reception of grace. But material which can be sensed and which is made up of oil and balm does not have the capacity to receive grace. Therefore, no consecration should be applied to it.

But contrary to this: Pope Innocent says, “When priests baptize, they are permitted to anoint those being baptized with chrism that has been previously consecrated by a bishop, but they should not sign the forehead with the same oil. This belongs to the bishop alone, when he gives the Paraclete”—which is what is done in this sacrament. Therefore, what is required for this sacrament is that the matter of this sacrament be previously consecrated by a bishop.

I respond: As was explained above (q, 64, a. 3), the whole sanctification that belongs to the sacraments flows from Christ. But one must take into account that Christ makes use of certain sacraments that have corporeal matter, viz., baptism and the Eucharist. And so it is from this very usage by Christ that the matters of these sacraments receive the ability to bring the sacrament in question to completion. Hence, Chrysostom says, “The waters of Baptism could never have washed away the sins of believers if they had not been sanctified by touching our Lord’s body.” And, similarly, our Lord Himself, as reported in Matthew 26:26-27 and Luke 22:19-20, “took bread ... and blessed it ... and in like manner the chalice.” And because of this it is not necessary in the case of these sacraments that the matter be blessed ahead of time; for Christ’s blessing is sufficient. Indeed, if any blessing is added, then it belongs to the solemn celebration of the sacrament (*pertinet ad solemnitatem sacramenti*), but is not necessary for the sacrament itself.

By contrast, Christ did not make use of visible anointings, so as not to do injury to the invisible anointing whereby He was “anointed above your fellows” (Psalm 44:8). And that is why both chrism and the oil of the sick are blessed prior to being put to use in a sacrament.

Reply to objection 1: The reply to this objection is clear from what has been said.

Reply to objection 2: The two consecrations of chrism are not referred to the same thing. For just as there are two ways in which an instrument acquires instrumental power, viz., (a) when it receives the form of the instrument and (b) when it is moved by the principal agent, so, too, there are two ways in which the matter of a sacrament stands in need of sanctification. By one of them (a) it *becomes the proper matter* of the sacrament, whereas by the other (b) it is *applied to the effect*.

Reply to objection 3: As was explained above (q. 62, a. 3), corporeal matter is not capable of grace in the sense of being the *that which has* the grace (*quasi gratiae subiectum*); instead, it is capable of grace only in the sense of being an *instrument* of grace. And it is for this latter role that the material of a sacrament is consecrated, either by Christ Himself, or by a bishop, who, in the Church, is acting in the person of Christ.

Article 4

Is this an appropriate form for this sacrament:

“I sign you with the sign of the Cross, I confirm you with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”?

It seems that this is not an appropriate form for this sacrament: “I sign you with the sign of the Cross, I confirm you with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” (*haec non sit conveniens forma huius sacramenti, “Consigno te signo crucis, confirmo te chrismate salutis, in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti, amen.”*):

Objection 1: The exercise of the sacraments is derived from Christ and the apostles. But Christ did not institute this form, nor do we read of the apostles using it. Therefore, this is not an appropriate form for this sacrament.

Objection 2: Just a sacrament is the same for everyone, so its form should also be the same, since each thing has unity, just as it has *esse*, from its form. But not everyone uses the form in question; for some say, “I confirm you with the chrism of sanctification.” Therefore, this is not an appropriate form for this sacrament.

Objection 3: As was explained above (a. 2, obj. 2), this sacrament should be conformed to baptism as a perfection to what is perfectible. But in the form of baptism there is no mention of the signing of a character or even of the cross of Christ—even though through baptism a man dies with Christ, as the Apostle explains in Romans 6:1-11. Nor is there any mention of the effect, viz., salvation, even though baptism is necessary for salvation. Again, in the form of baptism there is only one act posited, and the person of the one doing the baptizing is expressed when it is said, “*Ego te baptizo*”—the contrary of which appears in the form under discussion. Therefore, this is not an appropriate form for this sacrament.

But contrary to this is the authority of the Church, which uses this form universally (*communiter*).

I respond: The form in question is appropriate for this sacrament. For just as the form of a natural entity gives it its species, so the form of a sacrament should contain whatever belongs to the species of the sacrament.

Now as is clear from what has been above (aa. 1-2), in this sacrament the Holy Spirit is given for strength in spiritual combat (*ad robur spiritualis pugnae*). And so in this sacrament there are three necessary things that are contained in the form in question:

The first among them is the *cause that confers the fullness of spiritual strength*, which is the Holy Trinity. This is expressed when it is said, "... in the name of the Father, etc."

The second is the *spiritual strength itself* that is conferred on a man for salvation by a sacrament of visible matter. This is touched upon when it is said, "I confirm you with the chrism of salvation ..."

The third is the sign that is given to the fighter, just as in the case of corporeal fighting, in the way that soldiers are signed with the signs of their generals. And on this score it is said, "I sign you with the sign of the Cross"—more specifically, with the sign in which our King has triumphed (Colossians 2:15).

Reply to objection 1: As was explained above (a. 2, ad 1), through the ministry of the apostles the effect of this sacrament, viz., the fullness of the Holy Spirit, was in some cases brought about with visible signs miraculously by God, who can confer the sacrament's effect without the sacrament. And in such cases neither the matter nor the form of this sacrament was necessary.

By contrast, in some cases the apostles conferred this sacrament as ministers of the sacraments. And in such cases they made use of both the matter and the form as mandated by Christ. For in conferring the sacraments, the apostles observed with care many things that have not been handed down in the Scriptures proposed for common use. Hence, at the end of *Ecclesiastica Hierarchia* Dionysius says, "It is not fair for those interpreting the Scriptures, either their mystical sense or the miracles worked in them by God, to infer anything in general from what is hidden; instead, our sacred tradition teaches those things without ostentation"—i.e., in a hidden way. Hence, in 1 Corinthians 11:34, speaking about the celebration of the Eucharist, the Apostle says, "The rest I shall set in order when I come."

Reply to objection 2: Sanctity is the cause of salvation. For this reason, saying "... with the chrism of salvation" amounts to the same thing as "... with the chrism of sanctification."

Reply to objection 3: Baptism is a regeneration to the spiritual life by which a man lives in his own right. And so nothing is posited in the form of baptism except the act itself involving the man himself to be sanctified.

By contrast, this sacrament is ordered not only toward a man's being sanctified in his own right, but also toward his being exposed to a sort of exterior battle. And so not only is mention made of an interior sanctification—when it is said, "... I confirm you with the chrism of salvation"—but the man is also signed exteriorly with, as it were, the banner of the Cross, for an exterior spiritual battle—and this is signified when it is said, "I sign you with the sign of the Cross." Now in the very word 'baptize', which signifies a washing, one understands both the matter, which is the water for washing, and the effect, which is salvation. These things are not understood in the word 'confirmation', and so it was necessary to posit them.

Now it was explained above (q. 66, a. 5, ad 1) that the word '*ego*' does not belong by necessity to the form of baptism, since it is understood in the first-person singular verb. But it is nonetheless posited to express an intention. This is not as necessary in confirmation, which, as will be explained below (a. 11), is conferred only by a minister who is an excellency (*ab excellenti ministro*).

Article 5

Does the sacrament of confirmation imprint a character?

It seems that the sacrament of confirmation does not imprint a character (*sacramentum confirmationis non imprimat characterem*):

Objection 1: 'Character' implies a certain distinctive sign. But it is not the case that through confirmation a man is made distinct either (a) from non-believers, since this is effected through baptism, or even (b) from other believers, since this sacrament is ordered toward spiritual battle, which is

incumbent upon all the faithful. Therefore, it is not the case that any character is imprinted in this sacrament.

Objection 2: It was explained above (q. 63, a. 2) that a character is a certain spiritual power (*potentia spiritualis*). Now a power is either active or passive. But, in the case of the sacraments, an active power is conferred through the sacrament of holy orders, whereas a passive or receptive power is conferred through the sacrament of baptism. Therefore, no character is imprinted through the sacrament of confirmation.

Objection 3: In circumcision, which is a corporeal character, no spiritual character is imprinted. But in this sacrament a certain corporeal character is imprinted, viz., when a man is signed by chrism with the sign of the Cross on his forehead. Therefore, it is not the case that a spiritual character is imprinted in this sacrament.

But contrary to this: A character is imprinted in every sacrament that is not repeated. But this sacrament is not repeated; for Gregory says, “Concerning the man who was confirmed a second time by a bishop (*a pontifice*), such a repetition must be forbidden.” Therefore, a character is imprinted in confirmation.

I respond: As was explained above (q. 63, a. 2), a character is a spiritual power ordered toward certain sacred actions.

Now it was explained above (a.1 and q. 65, a. 1) that just as baptism is a sort of spiritual generation into the Christian life, so, too, confirmation is a sort of spiritual growth that moves a man forward toward a full-grown age in spiritual matters (*promovens hominem in spiritualem aetatem perfectam*). And it is obvious from the similarity to bodily life that the action that belongs to a man immediately upon his being born differs from the action that belongs to him after he has reached a full-grown age. And so what is given to a man through the sacrament of confirmation is spiritual power for certain sacred actions that go beyond those for which he is given power in baptism. For in baptism he receives the power to perform acts that pertain to salvation itself, insofar as he living his life in his own right (*prout secundum seipsum vivit*), whereas in confirmation he receives the power to do things that involve a spiritual battle against the enemies of his faith—something that is clear from the example of the apostles, who, before they received the fullness of the Holy Spirit, were gathered together in the upper room where “they continued steadfastly in prayer” (Acts 1:14). But afterwards they went out and did not fear to profess their faith in public, even in front of the enemies of the Christian Faith.

And so it is clear that a character is imprinted in the sacrament of confirmation.

Reply to objection 1: Spiritual battle against invisible enemies belongs to everyone. But fighting against visible enemies, i.e., against the persecutors of the Faith, by professing the name of Christ belongs to those who have been confirmed, since they have already reached a virile age spiritually—this according to 1 John 2:14 (“I write to you, young men, since you are strong and the word of God remains in you, and you have conquered the evil one”).

Reply to objection 2: All the sacraments are certain professions of the Faith. Therefore, just as the baptized individual receives the spiritual power to profess the Faith by receiving the other sacraments, so the confirmed individual receives, as it were *ex officio*, the power to profess the Faith of Christ in public by his words.

Reply to objection 3: As is clear from Hebrews 9:10, the sacraments of the Old Law are called “the righteousness of the flesh,” since they did not effect anything interiorly. And so in circumcision a character was imprinted only on the body and not on the soul. By contrast, in confirmation a spiritual character is imprinted simultaneously with a bodily character, because it is a sacrament of the New Law.

Article 6

Does the character belonging to confirmation necessarily presuppose the baptismal character?

It seems that the character belonging to confirmation does not necessarily presuppose the baptismal character (*character confirmationis non praesupponat ex necessitate characterem baptismalem*):

Objection 1: The sacrament of confirmation is ordered toward professing the Faith of Christ in public. But there are many who profess the Faith of Christ even before baptism, shedding their blood for the Faith. Therefore, the character belonging to confirmation does not presuppose the baptismal character.

Objection 2: We do not read of the apostles being baptized—especially given that John 4:2 says, “It was not Jesus Himself who baptized, but his disciples.” And yet afterwards they were confirmed through the coming of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, others can similarly be confirmed before they are baptized.

Objection 3: Acts 10:44ff. says, “While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to his words,” and later, “he ordered them to be baptized.” Therefore, by parity of reasoning, others can be confirmed before being baptized.

But contrary to this: In *De Institutione Clericorum* Rabanus says, “Lastly the Paraclete is given to the baptized by the imposition of the high priest’s hand, in order that the baptized might be strengthened by the Holy Spirit to preach.”

I respond: The character belonging to confirmation necessarily presupposes the baptismal character—more specifically, to such a degree that if an unbaptized individual were confirmed, he would receive nothing, but instead would have to be confirmed again after baptism. The reason for this is that, as is clear from what was said above (a. 1 and q. 65, a. 1), confirmation is related to baptism in the way that growth is related to birth. But it is obvious that no one can advance to a full-grown age without first being born. Similarly, if an individual is not first baptized, then he cannot receive the sacrament of confirmation.

Reply to objection 1: God’s power is not tied down to the sacraments. Hence, the spiritual strength to confess the Faith of Christ in public can be conferred on a man without the sacrament of confirmation—in the same way that one can attain the remission of sins without baptism.

However, just as no individual receives the effect of baptism without desiring baptism, so no individual receives the effect of confirmation without desiring confirmation—something that can occur even before the reception of confirmation.

Reply to objection 2: As Augustine explains, “From the fact that in John 13:10 our Lord says, ‘He who has bathed needs to wash only his feet’, we infer that Peter and the other disciples of Christ had been baptized, either with the baptism of John, as some think, or—what is more credible—with the baptism of Christ. Nor did He refuse to administer baptism; for He wanted to have baptized* servants through whom He might baptize the rest.”

Reply to objection 3: Those listening to Peter’s preaching received the effect of confirmation miraculously, but without receiving the sacrament of confirmation. Now it has been explained (ad 1 and a. 2, ad 1 and a. 4, ad 1) that the *effect* of confirmation, though not the *sacrament* of confirmation, can be conferred on an individual before baptism. For just as the *effect* of confirmation, which is spiritual strength, presupposes the *effect* of baptism, which is justification, so the *sacrament* of confirmation presupposes the *sacrament* of baptism.

Article 7

Is sanctifying grace conferred through this sacrament?

It seems that sanctifying grace is not conferred through this sacrament (*per hoc sacramentum gratia gratum faciens non conferatur*):

Objection 1: Sanctifying grace is ordered against sin. But as has been explained (a. 6), this sacrament is given only to the baptized, who have been cleansed of sin. Therefore, sanctifying grace is not conferred through this sacrament.

Objection 2: It is especially sinners who need sanctifying grace, by which alone they can be justified. Therefore, if sanctifying grace is conferred through this sacrament, it seems that it should be given to men who are in a state of sin. But this is not true.

Objection 3: Sanctifying grace is not divided into species, since it is ordered toward a single effect. But two forms of the same species cannot exist in the same subject. Therefore, since sanctifying grace is conferred on a man through baptism, it seems that sanctifying grace is not conferred through the sacrament of confirmation, which is given only to those who are baptized.

But contrary to this: Pope Melchiades says, “In the font of baptism the Holy Spirit gives a fullness with respect to innocence, whereas in confirmation He gives an increase with respect to grace.”

I respond: As has been explained (aa. 1 and 4 and q. 65, a.1), in this sacrament the Holy Spirit is given for strength, just as He was given to the apostles on the day of Pentecost, as we read in Acts 2:2ff., and just as He was given to the baptized through the imposition of the hand of the apostles, as we read in Acts 8:17. But it was shown in the First Part (q. 43, a. 3) that the mission or gift (*missio seu datio*) of the Holy Spirit exists only along with sanctifying grace. Hence, it is clear that sanctifying grace is conferred in this sacrament.

Reply to objection 1: Sanctifying grace is the remission of sin, but it also has other effects, since it is sufficient to move a man through all the steps leading up to eternal life. Hence, in 2 Corinthians 12:9 it is said to Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you,” and in 1 Corinthians 15:10 Paul says of himself, “By the grace of God I am what I am.” And so sanctifying grace is given not only for remitting sin, but also for increasing and strengthening justice or righteousness. And it is for this latter reason that sanctifying grace is conferred in this sacrament.

Reply to objection 2: As is clear from its very name, this sacrament is conferred to confirm what it finds there already. And so it should not be given to those who do not have grace. Because of this, just as it is not given to the unbaptized, so it should not be given to adult sinners unless it has been restored by the sacrament of penance. Hence, the Council of Orleans says, “Let them come to confirmation fasting and let them be admonished to confess their sins first, so that, having been made clean, they might be able to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” And then through this sacrament, as through baptism as well, the effect of penance is brought to completion, since through the grace conferred in this sacrament the penitent receives a fuller remission of sin.

Also, if an individual adult who is in a state of sin of which he is not conscious, or even if he comes forward without being completely contrite, he will receive the remission of his sin through the grace conferred in this sacrament.

Reply to objection 3: As has been explained (q. 62, a. 2), sacramental grace adds to sanctifying grace, taken in its common sense, something that produces a special effect toward which the sacrament in question is ordered. Therefore, if the grace conferred in this sacrament is thought of with respect to what is common [to it and other instances of sanctifying grace], then the grace conferred through this sacrament is not different from the grace conferred through baptism, but instead the sanctifying grace that was there beforehand is increased. On the other hand, if the grace conferred through this sacrament

is thought of with respect to that something special that is added to it [as a sacramental grace], then it is not of the same species as the grace conferred through baptism.

Article 8

Should this sacrament be offered to everyone?

It seems that this sacrament should not be offered to everyone (*hoc sacramentum non sit omnibus exhibendum*):

Objection 1: As has been explained (a. 2, ad 2 and q.65, aa. 3-4), this sacrament is given for a certain kind of excellence. But that which involves excellence does not belong to everyone. Therefore, this sacrament should not be given to everyone.

Objection 2: Through this sacrament an individual grows spiritually to a full-grown age. But a full-grown age is incompatible with a childish age. Therefore, this sacrament should at least not be given to children.

Objection 3: Pope Melchiades says, “After baptism, we are confirmed for the battle.” But battling does not befit women, because of the fragility of their sex. Therefore, this sacrament should at least not be given to women.

Objection 4: Pope Melchiades says, “Even though the blessings of regeneration suffice for those who are about to die, the graces of confirmation are nonetheless necessary for those who are to conquer. The sacrament of confirmation arms and builds up those who have been reserved for the struggles and combats of this world. By contrast, he who, after baptism, arrives at death unstained and with the innocence he has acquired is confirmed by death, since after death he can no longer sin.” Therefore, this sacrament should not be conferred on those who are about to die imminently. And so it is not the case that this sacrament should be given to everyone.

But contrary to this: Acts 2:2 says that when the Holy Spirit came, “He filled the *whole* house,” where “whole house” signifies the Church. And afterwards it is added that “they were *all* filled with the Holy Spirit.” But this sacrament is given to attain that fullness. Therefore, it is to be offered to all who are in the Church.

I respond: As has been explained (a. 1), through this sacrament a man is moved forward toward a full-grown spiritual age.

Now it is nature’s tendency (*est de intentione naturae*) that everyone who is born corporeally should reach a full-grown age, but this tendency is sometimes impeded because of the body’s corruptibility, so that the tendency is preempted by death.

But it is much more God’s intention to lead all things to perfection, where nature participates by imitation in this intention. Hence, Deuteronomy 32:4 says, “The works of God are perfect.” But the soul, to which spiritual birth and the perfection of a full-grown spiritual age belong, is immortal, and just as it can attain to spiritual birth in old age, so it can attain to a full-grown spiritual age in youth or childhood. For bodily ages of this sort do not affect the soul. And that is why this sacrament should be offered to everyone.

Reply to objection 1: This sacrament is indeed given for a certain kind of excellence—not, to be sure, an excellence of one man with respect to another, as in the case of holy orders, but an excellence of a man with respect to himself, in the way that the same individual, existing as a full-grown man, has excellence with respect to himself as a boy.

Reply to objection 2: As has been explained, one’s bodily age does not affect his soul. Hence, even at a boyish age a man can attain a perfection of spiritual age. Wisdom 4:8 says of this, “Venerable

old age is not long-lasting, nor counted by the number of years.” And so it is that many individuals of a child’s age, because of strength received from the Holy Spirit, have fought bravely for Christ, even to the point of shedding of their blood.

Reply to objection 3: As Chrysostom explains in a homily on the Maccabees, “In earthly contests fitness of age, appearance, and lineage are required and, consequently, slaves, women, old men, and boys are barred from taking part in them. By contrast, in heavenly contests the stadium is open equally to any person or age or sex without distinction.” Again, in a homily on spiritual warfare he says, “In God’s eyes even the feminine sex fights, and many women have waged spiritual warfare with manly courage. For some have equalled men in their interior human strength in the agonies of the martyrs, and some have indeed been braver than men.” And that is why this sacrament is to be conferred on women.

Reply to objection 4: As has been explained, the soul, to which one’s spiritual age belongs, is immortal. And so this sacrament should be given to those who are about to die in order that they might appear as perfect in the resurrection—this according to Ephesians 4:13 (“... until we attain to perfect manhood, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ”). And that is why Hugo of St. Victor says, “It would be extremely dangerous if an individual happened to leave this life without confirmation”—not that he would be damned, except perhaps because of contempt [for the sacrament], but because the damage to his perfection would be clear. Hence, even children who are confirmed and then die attain greater glory, just as they also receive a greater grace in this life.

Now the authority cited in the objection points to the fact that it is not because of the danger of a present battle that this sacrament is necessary for those who are about to die.

Article 9

Should this sacrament be given to a man on his forehead?

It seems that this sacrament should not be given to a man on his forehead (*hoc sacramentum non sit conferendum homini in fronte*):

Objection 1: As was explained above (q. 65, aa. 3-4), this sacrament brings baptism to completion (*est perfectivum baptismi*). But the sacrament of baptism is given to a man over his whole body. Therefore, this sacrament should not be conferred only on his forehead.

Objection 2: As was explained above (aa. 1, 2, and 4 and q. 65, a. 1), this sacrament is given for spiritual strength. But spiritual strength resides especially in the heart. Therefore, this sacrament should be conferred over the heart rather than on the forehead.

Objection 3: This sacrament is given to a man in order that he might freely profess the Faith of Christ. But as Romans 10:10 points out, “... with the mouth a profession of faith is made unto salvation.” Therefore, this sacrament should be conferred around the mouth rather than on the forehead.

But contrary to this: In *De Institutione Clericorum* Rabanus says, “The baptized individual is signed with chrism on the top of his by the priest, but on his forehead by the bishop (*a pontifice*).”

I respond: As was explained above (a. 1 and 4), in this sacrament a man receives the Holy Spirit for strength in spiritual warfare, so that he might courageously profess the Faith of Christ among the adversaries of the Faith. Hence, it is appropriate for him to be signed with the sign of the Cross on his forehead, and this for two reasons:

First of all, because he is being marked with the sign of the Cross in the way that a soldier is marked with the sign of his general, a sign that ought to be evident and manifest. Now among all the places on the human body it is the forehead, which is almost never covered, that is especially manifest. And so the individual being confirmed is anointed with chrism on his forehead in order that he might

openly show that he is a Christian—just as the apostles, who were previously hiding in the upper room, likewise manifested themselves after having received the Holy Spirit.

Second, because an individual is impeded from freely professing the name of Christ by two things, viz., by *fear* and by *shame*. Now signs of both of these are made manifest especially on the forehead due to its proximity to the imagination, and it is because of this proximity that the [bodily] spirits ascend from the heart straight to the forehead. That is why, as *Ethics* 4 puts it, “those who are ashamed become red-faced and those who are afraid turn pale.” And so the individual is signed with chrism on the forehead, lest he fail to profess the name of Christ either because of fear or because of shame.

Reply to objection 1: Through baptism we are reborn to the spiritual life, which belongs to the whole man. But in confirmation we are strengthened for warfare, the sign of which should be carried on the forehead as an evident place.

Reply to objection 2: The source of fortitude is in the heart, but its sign appears on the forehead; hence, Ezekiel 3:8 says, “Behold, I have made your foreheads harder than their foreheads.” And that is why the sacrament of the Eucharist, by which a man is strengthened within himself, belongs to the heart—this according to Psalm 103:15 (“Bread confirms a man’s heart”)—whereas the sacrament of confirmation needs a sign of fortitude for the others. And so this sign is shown on the forehead.

Reply to objection 3: This sacrament is given in order to profess *freely*, but not to profess *absolutely speaking*, since the latter is done in baptism as well. And so the sacramental sign should be given not on the mouth but on the forehead, where the signs appear of those passions by which a free profession is impeded.

Article 10

Does an individual who is being confirmed need to be supported by another for confirmation?

It seems that an individual who is being confirmed does not need to be supported by another for confirmation (*ille qui confirmatur non debet ab alio teneri ad confirmationem*):

Objection 1: This sacrament is made available not only to children but also to adults. But adults can stand on their own. Therefore, it is ridiculous for them to be supported by another (*ab alio teneantur*).

Objection 2: An individual who already belongs to the Church has free access to a prince of the Church, i.e., to a bishop. But as has been explained (a. 6), this sacrament is offered only to one who has been baptized and is already a member of the Church. Therefore, it seems that he does not need to be presented to the bishop in order to receive this sacrament.

Objection 3: This sacrament is given for spiritual strength, which has more vigor in men than in women—this according to Proverbs 31:10: “Who shall find a strong woman?” Therefore, a man should at least not be supported for confirmation by a woman.

But contrary to this: Pope Innocent says (and this is found in *Decretals* 30, q. 4), “If anyone raises the son or daughter of another’s marriage from the sacred font, or supports him or her for confirmation ...” Therefore, just as it is required that someone lift the one who has been baptized from the sacred font, so an individual needs to be supported in order to receive confirmation.

I respond: As has been explained (aa. 1, 4, and 9), this sacrament is given to a man for strength in spiritual warfare. Now just as a newly born individual needs an instructor in those matters having to do with living in community with others—this according to Hebrews 12:9 (“We had fathers of our flesh to correct us, and we revered them”)—so those who are taken up in battle need teachers by whom they

might be instructed in those matters having to do with the conduct of battle, and so in material battles generals and centurions are appointed, and the others are led by them. And for this reason an individual who receives this sacrament is likewise supported by another in the sense that he needs to be schooled by another in battle.

Similarly, since, as has been said (aa. 2 and 5), through this sacrament a full-grown spiritual age is conferred on a man, an individual who approaches this sacrament is supported as one who is still spiritually a weakling and a child.

Reply to objection 1: Even if the one who is confirmed as an adult corporeally, he nonetheless is not yet an adult spiritually.

Reply to objection 2: Even though a baptized individual has become a member of the Church, he is nonetheless not yet an adscript to Christian military service. And so he is being presented to the bishop, as to the general of the army, by another who is already adscripted to Christian military service.

Reply to objection 3: As Colossians 3:11 says, “In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female.” And so it does not matter whether a man or a woman is the supporter of an individual in confirmation.

Article 11

Is a bishop alone able to confer this sacrament?

It seems not to be the case that a bishop alone is able to confer this sacrament (*non solus episcopus hoc sacramentum conferre possit*):

Objection 1: Writing to the bishop Januarius, Gregory says, “It has come to our attention that some have been scandalized because we prohibited priests from anointing with chrism those who have been baptized. Yet we did this in accord with the ancient custom of our Church. However, if this matter is altogether troubling to some, we concede that, where no bishop is available, priests should anoint the baptized on the forehead with chrism.” But that which belongs to the sacraments by necessity should not be changed in order to avoid scandal. Therefore, it seems that it is not necessary for this sacrament to be conferred by a bishop.

Objection 2: The sacrament of baptism seems to have more efficacy than the sacrament of confirmation, since what is effected through baptism is a full remission of sins, both with respect to guilt and with respect to punishment—something that is not effected in this sacrament. But a simple priest can confer the sacrament of baptism *ex officio*, and in the case of an emergency anyone—even if he has not been ordained—can confer baptism. Therefore, it is not necessary to this sacrament that it be conferred by a bishop.

Objection 3: The top of the head which, according to medical experts, is the location of reason (i.e., of *particular* reason, which is called the cogitative power), is more noble than the forehead, which is the location of the power of imagining. But a simple priest can anoint those who are being baptized on the top of the head with chrism. Therefore, *a fortiori*, he can sign them on the forehead—which is what this sacrament involves.

But contrary to this: Pope Eusebius says, “The sacrament of the imposition of the hand should be held in great veneration, and it cannot not be given by anyone other than the high priests. Nor is this sacrament reported, or known, to have been conferred in the time of the apostles by anyone other than the apostles themselves; nor can this ever be done—nor should it be done—by anyone other than those who take the place of the apostles. And if anyone should presume to act otherwise, this act should be held to be null and void; nor will such a thing ever be counted among the sacraments of the Church.” Therefore, it is necessary to this sacrament, which is called the sacrament of the imposition of the hand, that it be

conferred by a bishop.

I respond: In every work the ultimate consummation is reserved to the highest art or virtue; for instance, (a) the preparation of the matter belongs to the lower craftsmen, whereas a higher craftsman gives the form, and the highest craftsman is the one to whom belongs the use of the artifact, which is the end of all the works of the craft, and, again, (b) the letter that is written by the scribe is signed by the master. But the faithful of Christ are a kind of divine artifact (*quoddam divinum opus*)—this according to 1 Corinthians 3:9 (“You are God’s building”), as well as a kind of “letter written with the Spirit of God,” as 2 Corinthians 3:2-3 puts it.

Now this sacrament is, as it were, the ultimate consummation of the sacrament of baptism, so that, namely, through baptism (a) a man is built into a spiritual house and, as it were, (b) a sort of spiritual letter is written, whereas through the sacrament of confirmation (a) the house that has been built is dedicated as a temple of the Holy Spirit and (b) the letter that has been written is signed with the sign of the Cross. And that is why the conferral of this sacrament is reserved to bishops, who hold the highest power within the Church—just as, in the early Church, through the imposition of the hand of the apostles, whose role the bishops play, the fullness of the Holy Spirit was given (Acts 8). Hence, Pope Urban says, “All the faithful should, after baptism, receive the Holy Spirit through the imposition of the hand of bishops, in order that they might become full Christians.”

Reply to objection 1: Within the Church the Pope has the fullness of power, and because of this he is able to commit to lower orders certain things that belong to higher orders; for instance, he allows priests to confer minor orders—something that belongs to the episcopal power. And it is by this fullness of power that Pope St. Gregory allowed simple priests to confer this sacrament, so that the scandal would be removed.

Reply to objection 2: The sacrament of baptism is more efficacious than this sacrament with respect to the removal of evil, because it is a spiritual generation, which is a change from *non-being* to *being* (*de non-esse in esse*). However, this sacrament is more efficacious with respect to one’s making progress in the good, since it involves growing from incomplete being to complete being (*de esse imperfecto ad esse perfectum*). And that is why this sacrament is assigned to a more dignified minister.

Reply to objection 3: As Rabanus says in *De Institutione Clericorum*, “An individual who is being baptized is signed by the priest with chrism on the top of his head, whereas he is signed by the bishop on his forehead, with the result that what is signified by the first anointing is the descent of the Holy Spirit upon him in order to consecrate a dwelling to God, whereas what is made clear by the second anointing is that the sevenfold grace of the same Holy Spirit is coming to the man with all the fullness of holiness, knowledge, and virtue.” Therefore, the second anointing is reserved to the bishop not because it involves a more dignified part of the body, but because it has a more excellent effect.

Article 12

Is the rite for this sacrament appropriate?

It seems that the rite for this sacrament is not appropriate (*ritus huius sacramenti non sit conveniens*):

Objection 1: As was explained above (a. 2, ad 4 and q. 65, aa. 3-4), the sacrament of baptism has a greater necessity than this sacrament does. But fixed times, viz., Easter and Pentecost, are allotted to baptism. Therefore, a certain time should likewise be fixed for this sacrament.

Objection 2: Just as this sacrament requires the devotion of both the giver and the recipient, so, too, with the sacrament of baptism. But in the case of the sacrament of baptism it is not required that the

sacrament be received or conferred by those who are fasting. Therefore, it seems to have been inappropriately decided at the Council of Orleans that “those who come to confirmation should be fasting” and at the Council of the Meaux that “bishops should not give the Holy Spirit by the imposition of the hand unless they are fasting.”

Objection 3: As was explained above (a. 2), chrism is a sign of the fullness of the Holy Spirit. But, as is reported in Acts 2:1, the fullness of the Holy Spirit was given to the faithful of Christ on the day of Pentecost. Therefore, the chrism should be mixed and blessed on the day of Pentecost rather than at the Lord’s Supper [on Holy Thursday].

But contrary to this is the custom of the Church, which is governed by the Holy Spirit.

I respond: In Matthew 18:20 our Lord made a promise to His faithful when He said, “Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of the them.” And one should firmly hold that the ordinances of the Church are directed according to the wisdom of Christ. For this reason, it is bound to be certain that the rites which the Church observes in the case of this sacrament and of the other sacraments are appropriate.

Reply to objection 1: As Pope Melchiades says, “These two sacraments”—viz., baptism and confirmation—“are so closely connected that they should not in any way be separated from one another unless death intervenes, and the one rite cannot be made complete without the other.” And so the same times for the solemn celebration of baptism and this sacrament should be fixed beforehand.

However, because this sacrament is given only by bishops, who are not always present when priests are baptizing, it was necessary, as regards common custom, for confirmation to be deferred to other times as well.

Reply to objection 2: As we read in Council of the Meaux, “those who are sick or near to death” are excepted from the prohibition. And so because of the multitude of the faithful and because of imminent dangers, it is permissible for this sacrament, which can be given by no one except a bishop, to be given or received even by those who are not fasting. For a single bishop, especially in a big diocese, would not be sufficient to confirm everyone if the time for the sacrament were limited. However, where it can be observed in a suitable way, it is more appropriate for the sacrament to be given and received by those who are fasting.

Reply to objection 3: As we read in the Council of Pope Martin, “It is permissible to mix the chrism at any time.” But since solemn baptism, for which the use of chrism is required, is celebrated at the Easter vigil, it has been fittingly ordained that the chrism should be blessed by the bishop two days beforehand, so that it can be distributed throughout the diocese.

Again, the day on which the sacrament of the Eucharist was instituted is very fitting for blessing things used as the matter of the sacraments, since, as has been explained (q. 65, a. 3), all the other sacraments are in some sense ordered toward the sacrament of the Eucharist.