



Sacraments 11/35: The Tri-partite Theory of Confirmation

Sacramentum Tantum What the Sacramental Rite itself looks like.

This includes the essentials of the rite that we talked about previously: The Anointing with Oil, the Laying on of Hands, the words used.

Res Tantum What the immediate result of the Sacrament is, the grace given and its ultimate meaning.

In Confirmation, the ultimate meaning is a person in full initiation with the Church. It increases the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and sets the person on a mission in the Church. The grace of this Sacrament is not for the receiver, but for others.

Res et Sacramentum What the abiding, everlasting purpose of the Sacrament is. Confirmation is one of three Sacraments (along with Baptism and Holy Orders) that leave a permanent “character.” So too, as with Baptism, it can never be repeated. The character of the Sacrament is that it makes the person an active witness to God’s grace in the world. After Confirmation, we are no longer just passive members. If some older parishioners remember the old Rite, there was a light slap on the cheek. This has connections with the smack in the face from the ritual of dubbing someone a knight. It is a sharp reminder that we are now Soldiers of Christ.

-Fr. Kopp

Next Week: Catechism Summary of Confirmation