

## Agenda 9/16: What Is Confirmation?

### Welcome & Intros

### Syllabus Overview

### What is Confirmation?

- It doesn't seem that the early church practiced confirmation, or practiced confirmation as a rite separate from baptism; for example, Lent seems to have emerged as a period during which those who wished to enter the church underwent a period of instruction and spiritual discipline, culminating in baptism, anointing with oil, and first communion on Easter. And even in the ancient and medieval period, the eastern Orthodox church did not practice confirmation as a rite separate from baptism.
- As infant baptism became the norm in the western church, confirmation emerged as a separate rite. It was required to receive communion, and typically it was children or young adults who were confirmed. In Catholicism, although not in Anglicanism, confirmation is a sacrament and is required to complete the work begun in baptism.
  - Anglicanism kept confirmation as an important rite, but it is not one of the two rites considered sacraments by Anglicans (baptism and eucharis).
  - Since confirmation is not a sacrament and not required to complete the work of baptism, Anglicans also do not require that someone be confirmed in order to receive communion.
- In modern Anglicanism, the expectation still is that those who are being confirmed will undergo instruction, like this class, so that they can affirm their faith with a solid understanding of what that means. The rite of confirmation involves being anointed with oil by a bishop. This is not the first time a Christian receives the Holy Spirit; instead, it's a special blessing on a mature faith.
- Given this history of confirmation, why be confirmed? If confirmation is not required to receive communion or be a full participant in the life of the church, what is the point?
  - For those baptized as infants, it's an opportunity to make a personal and public declaration of faith
  - For others, it's an opportunity to more fully enter into the life of the church, and to receive a special blessing on their calling and vocation as lay members of the

church – since clergy are not the only members of the church who have a calling within the church

**Read the following:**

- From the catechism:
  - Q. What is Confirmation?
  - A. Confirmation is the rite in which we express a mature commitment to Christ, and receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop.
  
  - Q. What is the ministry of the laity?
  - A. The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church.
  
- From the confirmation liturgy:
  - Almighty God, we thank you that by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ you have overcome sin and brought us to yourself, and that by the sealing of your Holy Spirit you have bound us to your service. Renew in these your servants the covenant you have made with them at their Baptism. Send them forth in the power of that Spirit to perform the service you set before them; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**What are we confirming?**

- That's what this class explores
  
- Hand out: 39 Articles, Catechism

**Prayer requests**