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The Sacrament of Confirmation as a Call to the Evangelization Directed towards Young People

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Keywords: Confirmation, evangelization, young people, effects of Confirmation

Introduction

The contemporary Western world, built on the Latin, Christian civilization is progressively and more and more effectively indoctrinated by champions of the liberal-secular ideology. At the same time, by Islam, the followers of which so to speak colonize Europe due to war and economic migration. Catholics can oppose it by making attempts at evangelizing such persons, and fellow believers whose faith needs strengthening and consolidating. It seems the most easily done in the case of young people, who are very receptive and search for role figures amongst their peers. Receiving the sacrament of Confirmation which serves to strengthen the faith and add forces to actively propagating it, is a strong stimulus able to influence the young person on his or her way to undertaking the evangelizing activity. The present article is aimed at showing the sacrament of Confirmation in the context of calling young people to conducting activity of evangelization. In its first part, in the historical perspective, the problem of Confirmation and appointing a Christian to the evangelization will be introduced. Next, we will discuss the current teaching of the Church concerning the issue in question, to end up with a consideration

of the problem of evangelization through the involvement of young people in some sacraments.

The Confirmation as appointing for evangelization in the history of the Church

The sacrament of Confirmation is showing effect of the Holy Spirit within man. During his earthly life, Jesus Christ foretold sending the Comforter by his Father, who will stay with pupils forever, teaching them the whole truth, that is, God's revelation.¹ The Holy Spirit would be supporting the disciples and keep them company after the Son of God had departed, he would also judge and defeat disbelief then ruling in the world.² The announced pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost included not only the Apostles, but also every baptized person,³ in such a way that they should start propagating the Gospel, instigating the evangelization of the entire world.

Gifts of the Holy Spirit are imparted by laying on of hands, and they manifest themselves in a form of the receiving person speaking in tongues and prophesying. The mentioned signs testify to the presence of the messianic era and they too prove to be instrumental in propagating the salvific advent of Jesus.⁴ By the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the baptized during beginnings of Christianity follow into His footsteps, equipped with diverse gifts, for example, piety, prayer, but first of all, according to St. Paul's teaching, achieve the capability of enriching their brethren and building the God's Church.⁵

Pseudo-Isidore in his (pseudo-) *Decretals* quotes letters of two popes. Pope Urban I (222—230) is instructing all the baptized faithful to receive the Holy Spirit through laying on of hands by a bishop, because Confirmation make them fully Christian, and the Holy Spirit is filling them with the prudence and the perseverance.⁶ Another letter quoted by Pseudo-Isidore, allegedly written by Pope Miltiades (311—314), shows that Confirmation, bringing the growth of the Grace gives the baptized

¹ J 14, 16 f.

² J 15, 26; 16, 8—11.

³ Dz 2, 1—4; 2, 38.

⁴ B. TESTA: *Sakramenty Kościoła*. Trans. L. BALTER. Poznań 1998, p. 153.

⁵ 1 Kor 14, 4 n.

⁶ c. 1. D. V de cons.

power to fight and win.⁷ The said prudence and perseverance in the fight were and remain necessary today to the faithful, in conducting the evangelization, especially in places hostile or indifferent towards Christianity. We should add that Pseudo-Isidore's *Decretals* were included into Gratian's *Decretum*, which made them a topic of lectures at universities of medieval Europe.⁸

The evangelizing activity requires a strong faith of somebody who undertakes it. Without the said faith or a deep conviction about what is being proclaimed, such action cannot yield fruit. Strengthening one's faith is received during Confirming. The Council of Florence confirmed it officially (1439—1442) stating in the part of the Bull containing the Decree for the union with Armenians from 1439 that the sacrament is providing the Holy Spirit in order to strengthen the faith of the follower, in the same vain it had been provided to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, so that the Christian can courageously confess Christ, particularly His cross, being a scandal to Jews and a nonsense to pagans. An effect of the sacrament of Confirmation on Christians is enabling them to bravely confess the name of Christ since they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit for their encouragement.⁹

Saint Thomas Aquinas wrote that Confirmation gives spiritual fortitude to Christians to live through their mature age. Moreover, what is to our particular interest herein, similarly to the Sacrament of Holy Orders, it calls the faithful to heightened personal responsibility within the Church.¹⁰ The responsibility in question seems to consist among others in the obligation to promote the faith in Christ which opens the gates of Salvation for the man.

The Magisterium of the Church in the first half of the 20th century, especially the encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi* of Pope Pius XII from 29 June 1943, emphasizes, in the context of Confirmation, the descent (in Polish *wylanie* 'the outpouring') of the Holy Spirit, who definitively devotes the man to Christ, granting the former with "seven gifts" and a special strength to profess faith, underscoring the ecclesial aspect of the ramifications of the sacrament in question.¹¹

Summing up, we should emphasize that even though the documents of the Church did not directly refer to the evangelization in the context of the second sacrament of the Christian initiation, by verbalizing the

⁷ C. 2. D. V de cons.

⁸ M. PASTUSZKO: *Sakrament bierzmowania (kanony 879—896)*. Kielce 2005, p. 307.

⁹ *Bulla unionis Armenorum*. In: *Dokumenty soborów powszechnych*. Eds. A. BARON, H. PIETRAS, Vol. 3. Kraków 2004, pp. 512—513.

¹⁰ *Summa theologica*, III a, q. 72, a. 1, a. 5, a. 8.

¹¹ B. TESTA: *Sakramenty Kościoła...*, p. 164.

effects of Confirmation they pinpointed the gifts of the Holy Spirit, enabling Christians to disseminate the Gospel in the face of adversities met while performing their mission. Such view is present already among the first Christian writing, namely in the apostolic epistles.

The contemporary teaching of the Holy See

First, we should notice that, in the early Christian times the sacraments of Confirmation and Baptism were granted to adults. With the passage of time, the acceptance age of this sacrament started to decrease. The Sacrament of Confirmation today is usually bestowed upon the youth, and young people should be amongst the first to answer the call from Jesus which is associated with gifts provided by the Holy Spirit. The teaching of the Church concerning the matter discussed refers first of all to newly-confirmed.

The very important event in the recent history of the Roman Catholic Church were the debates occurring during the Second Vatican Council (1962—1965), whose decisions are translated into canonic language even today. Vatican II also dealt with the subject matter of the Sacrament of Confirmation. In the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen gentium* we may read that through Baptism the faithful were included into the Church and aimed for taking part in the Christian worship and as revived God's sons and daughters obliged to profess the faith which they received from God through the Church. Through the Sacrament of Confirmation they are more closely tied to the Church, receiving the special power of the Holy Spirit they become firmly obliged as real witnesses of Christ to promote and defend the faith with the word and the act.¹² Therefore, the mentioned document claims that accepting Christianity is for the faithful equal with accepting the duty of professing the faith received from the Creator. It seems that it concerns the duty in a passive sense, that is, admitting the faith publically and living by it.

In the case of Confirmation young people who receive it engage into active propagating of faith amongst other people, particularly amongst their peers by words and acts. It is more serious, more firmly stressed obligation of the evangelization of contemporary world, also through the defense of the Christian faith, frequently fought against in the 21st century by diverse secular or Muslim circles.

¹² KK 11.

Upon completion of the Council Pope Paul VI reformed ceremonies of bestowing the Sacrament of Confirmation. In the Apostolic Constitution *Divinae consortium naturae*, in the fragment introducing the renewed ceremony, he wrote: “through the sacrament of confirmation revive on baptism receive the inexpressible Gift of Holy Spirit which is strengthening them in the special way.”¹³ The Pope emphasized the fact that the received gift strengthens individuals accepting confirmation in the exceptional way. Such special strengthening is necessary while conducting an evangelizing mission because a young Christian can be exposed to adversities of different kind.

The Code of Canon Law refers to the obligations of persons receiving the sacrament in question. We may read in it that through Confirmation’s pressing character, baptized on the road of Christian initiation are enriched with the gift of the Holy Spirit, become further entwined with the Church. This gift strengthens them and obliges them to become witnesses of Christ through their words and acts promoting and defending the faith.¹⁴ As noted by Krzywda, the instigative power of the Holy Spirit brings about the particular gifts and obligations, showing a specific structure and dynamics of this sacrament.¹⁵ Therefore, through a more excellent joining with the Church, becoming more deeply embedded within it, the duty of promoting the faith becomes further emphasized, one could even say, from Confirmation onwards — more firmly required by the Church community. Similarly to nation states, that require from their citizens the defense of their homeland’s territory, the Church expects from their faithful, even young ones, to defend the most valuable value which is faith, as well as to promote it according to the will of Jesus Christ.

The Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches summarizes the issue in question in one sentence — the baptized should receive the sacrament of “chrismation”¹⁶ in order to become witnesses and co-builders of the Kingdom of Christ.¹⁷ The code does not refer directly to the duty resulting from accepting Confirmation, but rather about the consequences of receiving the sacrament. Receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation makes the faithful responsible for construction of the Kingdom of Christ and such construction is connected among others with convincing others, so that they should set about on the path of Christianity. Probably omit-

¹³ PAULUS VI: *Constitutio Apostolica Divinae consortium naturae*, 15.08.1971, AAS 63(1971) p. 660.

¹⁴ CIC 1983, can. 879.

¹⁵ J. KRZYWDA: “Sakrament bierzmowania.” In: *Komentarz do Kodeksu prawa kanonicznego*. Ed. J. KRUKOWSKI, Vol. III/2, Poznań 2011, p. 67.

¹⁶ It is the name of the Sacrament of Confirmation used in the Eastern Churches.

¹⁷ *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*, can. 692.

ting the clear commitment of the evangelization is due to the fact that in Eastern Churches, Confirmation is usually granted along with Baptism already to small children.¹⁸

Another extremely important document of the Holy See is the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which appeared during the pontificate of the Pope John Paul II in 1992. The catechism pays particular attention to the fact that Christ repeatedly promised the ascent of the Holy Spirit and eventually, on the days of the Passover and Pentecost, He fulfilled this promise. Since then the apostles started to disseminate the news of the “great works of God.”¹⁹ That was the beginning of evangelization of the world. Further, the document in question enumerates the effects of confirmation. They are:

- the increase and deepening of baptismal grace,
- more in-depth embeddedness in the divine sonship,
- closer unification with Christ,
- multiplying the gifts of the Holy Spirit,
- the improvement of the unity with the Church,
- granting real witnesses of Christ with the special power of the Holy Spirit for promoting and defense of the faith by words and acts, confessing the name of Christ and proudly acknowledging His cross.²⁰

The document in question constitutes the summing up of the earlier statements of the Magisterium of the Church concerning the issue in question. A young person through their confirmation receives the multiple gifts of the Holy Spirit which unite him or her more closely with the Son of God and, by the same token, embed them within the Church. They also fill them with the special power to promote the faith, that is, undertaking the evangelizing activity. As stressed by Thomas Aquinas, a confirmed Christian receives the power to publically confess the faith in Christ, as though it was a kind of official duty (*quasi ex officio*). However, is it only a quasi-duty? How is the catechism defining the evangelization²¹?

Instructing the man in order to bring him or her to the faith is a task of every believer. The lay persons performs their prophetic mission also by the evangelization, that is, propagating Christ, with both the witness of the life, and their words. The evangelization is gaining specific character and the special efficiency by the fact that it takes places in the circumstances typical to the material world. This kind of missionary activity does not consist solely in the witness of one’s life, but also searching for the chance

¹⁸ Ibidem, can. 695 par. 1.

¹⁹ *Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego*, no. 1287.

²⁰ Ibidem, no. 1302.

²¹ S. THOMAS AQUINAS: *Summa theologiae*, III, 72, 5, ad 2.

of propagating Christ amongst the believers and atheists, also verbally.²² The Code of Canon Law indirectly refers to the duty of evangelizing. Every follower should contribute to the improvement of the Church. They also have to co-operate within an extent of broadening God's prophesy concerning salvation so that it included the people of every times and the entire world.²³ This duty arises from the ontological-sacramental position of the faithful, assigning the participation in the mission of the Church, entrusted to them through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. This responsibility is personal in its character and can be carried out both individually and together with other faithful.²⁴

As noticed by Testa, the key point of Confirmation is devoting the young man permanently to Christ, objectively and permanently placing such a person in the Church, as its mature member. It also gives the power to participate in the prophetic mission of the Community and the person receiving the confirmation is more able to offer themselves entirely to God, to publically witness and affirm Christ in His saving of the world through the history of humanity. For the confirmed Christians receive the power of the Holy Spirit for the realization of the mission of defending the faith and preaching the Gospel, building of the Church and conveying to the mankind the Christ's life.²⁵

Evangelization through the involvement in other sacraments

The duty to evangelize the world, which stems from accepting by a young person the Sacrament of Confirmation, can be fulfilled not only in the macro-scale, but also in relation to all people met during one's lifetime. The realization thereof is equally possible in the micro-scale, by accepting the role of a godparent or a witness to someone else's Confirmation. Accepting confirmation allows one to partake in officiating Baptism and Confirmation of one's godson or goddaughter.

In order to accept the task of being a godparent, according to the Law currently in force, one should meet the following criteria:

²² *Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego*, nos. 904—905.

²³ CIC 1983, can. 210—211.

²⁴ J. KRUKOWSKI: "Wierni chrześcijanie." In: *Komentarz do Kodeksu prawa kanonicznego*. Ed. J. KRUKOWSKI, Vol. II/1, Poznań 2005, p. 27.

²⁵ L. LIGIER: *La confermazione. Significato e implicazione ecumeniche ieri e oggi*. Roma 1990, pp. 264—265; B. TESTA: *Sakramenty Kościoła...*, pp. 167—168.

- appointment by person entitled to it,
- being at least 16 years of age,
- being free from any pending canonical penalty,
- not being a biological parent of the baptized child,
- being a member of the Roman Church or the Eastern Orthodox Church,
- having received the Sacrament of Confirmation.²⁶

Young people being at least 16 years old can perform extremely responsible function of godparents if they have been confirmed previously. It is not possible to receive dispensation from the requirement of being confirmed, since one can only be ushered into the Church Community by a person who already fully participates in the life of the Community, and has accepted all the sacraments of Christian initiation.

The godparent's role is to accompany his godchild in the road of Christian initiation, as well as to help him or her to live in accordance with requirements of the received sacrament, faithfully fulfilling the duties that go along with it.²⁷ The godparent is therefore supposed so to bear witness to the faith, acting as the representative of the family and the Church, providing assistance in knowing and confessing the faith by the baptized child.²⁸ He or she should support natural parents when it is necessary in their efforts to help the godchildren profess the faith and express it in their behaviour.²⁹ At a later stage, the godparent is supposed to assist the child in preparation for the sacraments of Communion and Confirmation.³⁰ All these duties of the godparent, even if he or she is a young person, involve evangelizing activities pertaining to the godchild. Through the said evangelization, by both the example of one's own life in accordance with the professed faith, and the provision of knowledge about the faith, morality, everyday functioning of the Church community, the godparent properly fulfills his duties.

Young people being at least 16 years old can also be appointed for acting as the witness to Confirmation. Such a witness, in accordance with the law, must meet the same criteria as the godparent.³¹ The mentioned function stems from the earlier commitment of being a godparent, which does not cease to be binding at the moment of receiving by the child the first sacrament, but rather stretches until he or she becomes an adult

²⁶ CIC 1983, can. 874.

²⁷ Ibidem, can. 872.

²⁸ J. KRZYWDA: *Sakrament bierzmowania...*, p. 59.

²⁹ M. PASTUSZKO: *Prawo o sakramentach św.: normy ogólne i sakrament chrztu*. Vol. 1, Warszawa 1983, p. 302.

³⁰ B. F. PIGHIN: *Diritto sacramentale*. Venezia 2006, p. 125.

³¹ CIC 1983, can. 893.

and achieves Christian maturity by Confirmation and the Eucharist.³² This period of growing up is always connected with problems of maturing persons, at which numerous doubts and questions, often concerning the issue of the faith and principles of the Christian life arise. In solving them, a witness to Confirmation (often also being a godparent) can be very instrumental by using diverse evangelizing methods. Efficiency of transmitting the faith and attracting to it, by persons only a little older than the child, is particularly strong, since the young people very often search for role figures among their peers rather than parents.

Accepting confirmation also entitles to obtain the Sacrament of the Holy Orders.³³ Young men usually receive the Holy Order of the deacon when being at least 23 years old and ordination to presbytery when being at least 25 years old.³⁴ These young people in the special way are obligated to evangelize. Regulations of the Code of Canon Law emphasize that they undertake to build the Body of Christ (the Church), among others by preaching the Gospel with the help of predicting and the religious education teaching, teaching religion at schools, appearing at conferences, meetings, mass media, etc.³⁵

The Sacrament of Confirmation also entitles to making monastic vows. It is required to be accepted into the novitiate.³⁶ Young people who undertook the consecrated life, by virtue of their own devotion to God, are bearing witness to the Gospel in a special way, having been appointed by the bishop for providing assistance in propagating it.³⁷ We should notice that in their young age many among monks and nuns have become and still are today foreign missionaries travelling to other continents in order to evangelize people who do not know Jesus Christ.

To conclude, we should also mention the Sacrament of Matrimony. Before receiving it, the Church also requires the nupturients to be confirmed.³⁸ As Góralski noticed, it is an obligation and requirement, which may only be waved in a case of serious inconvenience. For the marriage requires a certain degree of Christian maturity, which accepting confirmation is supposed to prove.³⁹ We can agree with this statement only partially.

³² Z. JANCZEWSKI: "Przyjęcie sakramentu chrztu. Skutki teologiczno-prawne." In: *Przynależność do Kościoła a uczestnictwo wiernych w życiu publicznym*. Ed. J. KRUKOWSKI, M. SITARZ, B. PIERON. Lublin 2014, p. 70.

³³ CIC 1983, can. 1033.

³⁴ Ibidem, can. 1031, par. 1.

³⁵ Can. 275, par. 1; can. 757; can. 761.

³⁶ Ibidem, can. 645.

³⁷ Ibidem, can. 758.

³⁸ Ibidem, can. 1065 par. 1.

³⁹ W. GÓRALSKI: "Małżeństwo." In: *Komentarz do Kodeksu prawa kanonicznego*. Ed. J. KRUKOWSKI, Vol. III/2. Poznań 2011, p. 262.

For the canon legislator did not mean to treat Confirmation as an expression or a touchstone of maturity. The sacrament rather seems to be vital in the process of strengthening the future betrothed in order for them to defend and propagate the faith in their future family. The gifts of the Holy Spirit received are, first of all, to assist young people in their mutual evangelization, especially when one of them is a non-believer, his or her faith is weak, or he or she confesses other religion. Second of all, it is a call to evangelize their future offspring. With the assistance of the word and one's own example, parents should become the heralds of the faith for their children, because the family home is the first school of Christian life, where the child learns the adoration of God through the prayer and the devotion of one's life.⁴⁰ Through the Sacrament of Confirmation, the young living in the sacramental marriage is assigned to the evangelization of its family, particularly to the primary evangelization of the offspring within the framework of the concern for their integral development. To sum up, it can be said that receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation prepares and obliges one to the undertake the mission incredibly significant for the Church — the evangelization of the world.

Conclusions

From the historical perspective, it is necessary to state that even though the documents of the Church did not refer directly to the evangelization in the context of the second sacrament of the Christian initiation, however verbalizing its effects referred to the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which prepare for preaching the Gospel in spite of adversities he must meet fulfilling the Christian mission. Such a presentation was already in the first written Christian sources which were apostolic letters.

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of the Second Vatican Council provides that accepting Christianity is posing at faithful duty of professing the faith received from the Creator. It seems to concern the duty here above all in passive meaning, that is of admitting to the faith and the personal life according to faith. In case of Confirmation, young people receiving it are taking it upon themselves to oblige active propagating the faith for other people, in it for their peers, with both the word, and the act. It is more serious, more firmly stressed obligation of the evangelization of contemporary world, also through the defense of the Chris-

⁴⁰ *Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego*, nos. 1656—1657.

tian faith, frequently fought against in the 21st century by diverse secular or Muslim circles.

Pope Paul VI in the Apostolic Constitution from 15 August 1971 emphasized the fact that the received gift strengthens individuals accepting Confirmation in the exceptional, special way. Such special strengthening is necessary while conducting an evangelizing mission because a young Christian can be exposed to adversities of different kind. The power of the Holy Spirit is bringing gifts along with particular obligations, showing a specific structure and dynamics of this sacrament. Therefore, through a more excellent joining with the Church, becoming more deeply embedded within it, the duty of promoting the faith still becomes more firmly required from the Church and confirmed by the Church community.

The evangelization is gaining specific character and the special effectiveness because it is taking place in the ordinary conditions typical of the world. The Code of Canon Law refers to the duty of evangelizing. The duty to evangelize the world, which stems from accepting by a young person the Sacrament of Confirmation, can be fulfilled not only in the macro-scale, but also in relation to all people met during one's lifetime. The realization thereof is equally possible in the micro-scale, by accepting the role of a godparent or a witness to someone else's Confirmation. Accepting Confirmation allows one to partake in officiating Baptism and Confirmation of one's godson or goddaughter.

Accepting Confirmation also entitles to obtain the Sacrament of the Holy Orders. Ordained young people are obliged to evangelize in a special way. The Sacrament of Confirmation also enables making fair monastic vows. In their young age many among monks and nuns have become and still are today foreign missionaries travelling to other continents as missionaries in order to evangelize people who do not know Jesus Christ.

Before entering into the sacramental marriage, the Church requires from the fiancés/nupturients to have received the Sacrament of Confirmation. Gifts of the Holy Spirit received in it are supposed to help young people, first in the mutual evangelization, especially when one of them is a non-believer, has a weak faith, or is practicing other religion. It is also about appearing challenges to the evangelization of their future offspring.

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ZBIGNIEW JANCZEWSKI

The Sacrament of Confirmation as a Call to the Evangelization Directed towards Young People

Summary

Along with the baptism the faithful accept the duty of professing the faith received from the Creator. In a passive sense, of admitting to the faith and the personal life according to the faith. In the case of Confirmation, young people receiving it are called to a faithful duty of actively propagating the faith among other people. The gift of the

Holy Spirit, resulting from the Sacrament of Confirmation, strengthens those who receive it in a special way.

Such a special embeddedness is necessary while running an evangelizing mission, through more excellent joining with the Church and deeper inclusion in Her. The Christian duty of promoting the faith by words and acts after accepting Confirmation is more binding and, one may dare to say, more desired by the Church.

The said duty can be carried out not only on the macro-scale, but it also translates into day-to-day meetings between people. His completion is possible on the micro-scale by becoming a godfather or a witness to Confirmation of a particular person. Moreover, obtaining Confirmation makes person legitimate for receiving the Holy Orders, being entrusted with the evangelizing mission within a community that entrusted the priest its faithful. A lot of monks and nuns go to different continents as missionaries in order to evangelize. The Confirmation is also a requirement before a religious marriage officiated by the Church.

The received gifts of the Holy Spirit are supposed to help young people at first on the mutual evangelization, especially when one of them is a non-believer, his or her faith is weak, or practices other religion. It also relates to an upcoming challenge of raising their offspring in faith.

ZBIGNIEW JANCZEWSKI

Le sacrement de confirmation en tant qu'acte d'appeler les jeunes à l'évangélisation

Résumé

La réception du baptême crée chez un fidèle l'obligation de professer la foi reçue du Créateur. Il s'agit ici avant tout de l'obligation comprise dans le sens passif, c'est-à-dire comme le fait de reconnaître sa foi et de vivre personnellement la foi. Pour ce qui est de la confirmation, les jeunes gens qui la reçoivent prennent l'engagement de propager la foi parmi d'autres personnes. Le don de l'Esprit-Saint, étant la conséquence de la confirmation, renforce ceux qui la reçoivent d'une manière exceptionnelle, particulière. Un tel renforcement particulier est nécessaire durant la réalisation de la mission évangélisatrice, par une union plus parfaite avec l'Église, par une implantation plus profonde. L'obligation chrétienne de propager la foi par l'intermédiaire de la parole et de l'action devient encore plus forte après la réception de la confirmation, on pourrait même dire que plus exigée par l'Église.

L'obligation analysée peut être réalisée non seulement à une grande échelle, c'est-à-dire par rapport à toutes les personnes rencontrées sur le chemin de notre vie. Sa réalisation est aussi possible en quelque sorte à une petite échelle, par la prise de la fonction de parrain ou de témoin quant au sacrement de confirmation à l'égard d'une personne concrète donnée. La réception de la confirmation permet de recevoir le sacrement de l'ordre, convoquant à la mission évangélisatrice dans une communauté de fidèles confiée au prêtre et de faire les vœux monastiques. Bien des religieux et des religieuses partent sur différents continents pour y — en tant que missionnaires — prêcher l'Évangile. Ce sacrement est aussi requis avant la conclusion du mariage. Les dons du Saint-Esprit reçus avec ce sacrement doivent aider en premier lieu les jeunes gens dans une évangélisation

mutuelle, en particulier quand l'un d'entre eux est non croyant, il se caractérise par une foi faible ou confesse une autre religion. Il s'agit également de l'appel à l'évangélisation de leur progéniture éventuelle.

Mots clés : confirmation, évangélisation, jeunes gens, conséquences de la confirmation

ZBIGNIEW JANCZEWSKI

Il sacramento della Cresima come chiamata dei giovani all'evangelizzazione

Sommario

Il ricevimento del battesimo crea nel fedele l'obbligo di professare la fede ricevuta dal Creatore. Si tratta soprattutto di un obbligo nel significato passivo ossia di riconoscere la fede e la vita personale nella fede. Nel caso della Cresima i ragazzi che la ricevono assumono l'obbligazione di predicare attivamente la fede alle altre persone. Il dono dello Spirito Santo, essendo l'effetto della Cresima, fortifica in modo straordinario, particolare coloro che la ricevono. Tale fortificazione particolare è necessaria durante lo svolgimento della missione evangelica, mediante un'unione più perfetta con la Chiesa, un innesto più profondo in essa. L'obbligo cristiano di diffondere la fede con le parole e le azioni dopo aver ricevuto la Cresima diventa ancora più rigoroso, si potrebbe addirittura dire, richiesto più fortemente dalla Chiesa.

L'obbligo menzionato può essere realizzato non solo su scala macroscopica ossia rispetto a tutte le persone incontrate sul cammino della propria vita. La sua realizzazione è anche possibile in un certo qual modo su scala microscopica, intraprendendo la funzione di padrino o di testimone della Cresima rispetto ad una data persona concreta. Il ricevimento della Cresima autorizza a ottenere il sacramento dell'ordine che chiama alla missione di evangelizzazione nella comunità di fedeli affidata al sacerdote e alla professione dei voti religiosi. Molti monaci e monache partono per diversi continenti per evangelizzare in quei luoghi come missionari. Il sacramento è richiesto anche prima di contrarre il matrimonio. I doni dello Spirito Santo in esso ricevuti devono aiutare prima i giovani nell'evangelizzazione reciproca, specialmente quando uno di loro non è credente, ha una fede debole o professa un'altra fede. Si tratta anche della sfida che si presenta, all'evangelizzazione della loro prole futura.

Parole chiave: Cresima, evangelizzazione, giovani, effetti della Cresima