

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE: CONFIRMATION, THE APOSTOLATE, AND PERSONAL VOCATION

A. Introductory considerations

5 By making one a Christian, baptism establishes the basic moral requirement that one live as befits a child of God. Moreover, the grace of the Spirit, given in baptism, provides the power to fulfill this requirement, just as the nature and powers one receives from natural begetting empower one to do the things which come naturally. Baptism brings one into the Church, but it does not shape one's life in its intrinsic organiza-
10 tion. It requires a good life, but it does not structure the actions which make up this life.

Confirmation, penance, anointing of the sick, and the Eucharist do shape the intrinsic organization of each Christian life. In distinct, simultaneous, but completely compatible ways these sacraments structure the purposefully lived lives of those who are
15 members of God's family through baptism. In the present chapter, I will show how confirmation does this.

As I explained in chapter thirty-two, section J, baptism includes in an embryonic way the whole of Christian life. The other sacraments do not add something from outside to baptism. Rather, they develop what it contains to a mature, organically differenti-
20 ated, and fully functioning state.

Confirmation is the sacrament of maturation, of strengthening, of the fullness of the Spirit, of complete conformity to Christ. In the sacramental economy (which need not correspond temporally to the natural one), confirmation is the sacrament of passing from divine life as a gift received to the living of divine life with power to express
25 what one is, to profess one's faith, and so to share in the revelatory work of the Church. As natural maturity means that a child becomes an adult, able to be in turn a parent for others, so the supernatural maturity of confirmation means that a child of God shares in the life of the Church not only as one redeemed in Christ but as one redeeming with Him.

As a family in communion with Christ, the Church always as a whole has both of
30 these aspects: She is the mother who embraces all of the redeemed and also the mother who through her children reaches out to those yet to be redeemed. Thus full membership in the Church requires both initiation by baptism into her life as the sanctified Body of Christ and initiation by confirmation into her life as the Body of Christ empowered by His Spirit to proclaim Him and sanctify the world and the entire created universe.

The Church teaches that confirmation is one of the seven sacraments instituted by
35 Christ. The sacrament is done, normally by a bishop or a priest especially authorized, by anointing with chrism as a sealing with the gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. DS 1317-1318/697).[1]

The effect of the sacrament is that the Holy Spirit is given in it for strength
40 just as he was given to the apostles on Pentecost, in order that the Christian may courageously confess the name of Christ. And therefore the one to be confirmed is anointed on the forehead, where shame shows itself, lest he be ashamed to confess the name of Christ and especially his cross. . . (DS 1319/697).

To this teaching of the Council of Florence, Trent adds only that confirmation is really
45 a sacrament, not merely a catechesis of those nearing adolescence, so that they can give an account of their faith before the Church (cf. DS 1628/871).

Vatican II teaches that by confirmation members of the Church are bound to her
50 more closely, endowed by the Holy Spirit with special strength, and so "more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith both by word and by deed as true witnesses of Christ" (IG 11).

The confession or profession of faith, the spreading and defending of the faith-- these are the acts for which the confirmed are especially empowered and equipped by the Holy Spirit. To the more accurate explanation of this point I now turn.

55 B. What is the specific aspect of Christian life consecrated in confirmation?

The specific aspect of Christian life consecrated in confirmation is that share in the priesthood of Christ which exists in the life of the Church communicating or handing on divine truth and love. The confirmed not only must live as adopted children of the
60 divine family, but as children who share in the family's business, which is to extend God's kingdom. The sacrament of confirmation incorporates one into the Church not only insofar as the Church keeps the faith, but also insofar as she spreads it.

The Council of Florence, in its teaching cited above, expresses this notion compactly in the phrase "courageously confess the name of Christ" (DS 1319/697). Vatican II expresses the same idea not only in the phrase quoted above, but also in the transi-
65 tional sentence, by which it proceeds from baptism to confirmation. The relevant passage as a whole is:

Reborn as sons of God, they must confess before men the faith which they have received from God through the Church. Bound more intimately to the Church by the
70 sacrament of confirmation, they are endowed by the Holy Spirit with special strength. Hence they are more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith both by word and by deed as true witnesses to Christ (IG 11).

At the end of the first sentence of this passage, the Council makes reference to the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas on sacramental character.

75 According to this teaching, sacramental character is a spiritual power, by which one shares as an instrument in the priestly act of Christ, and so participates in worship according to the rite of Christian religion. This spiritual power is either passive or active. The passive power is that of receiving divine gifts, the active power is that of handing them on to others.[2] In a subsequent passage, St. Thomas makes clear that
80 baptism belongs on the passive and confirmation on the active side of this division, for in baptism one is made like an infant in divine life, with the capacity to do what is necessary for one's personal salvation, but by confirmation one is made mature, with a power to profess the faith publicly, even before the enemies of Christ. So confirmation presupposes baptism.[3]

The documents of the new rite of confirmation develop this understanding of the sacrament. The Introduction begins by stating the effect of the sacrament:

In this sacrament they receive the Holy Spirit, who was sent upon the apostles by the Lord on Pentecost. This giving of the Spirit conforms believers more perfectly to Christ and strengthens them so that they may bear witness to Christ for the building up of his body in faith and love.[4]

The Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation develops the idea more fully. It begins by emphasizing that through this sacrament the faithful receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. The New Testament shows that the Spirit descended on Jesus and assisted Him in His messianic mission. He promised His followers the gift of the Spirit and kept this promise on Pentecost. From then on the apostles laid hands upon the newly baptized to complete its grace with the gift of the Holy Spirit Himself.[5]

Someone might argue that the emphasis upon the gift of the Spirit tends to exclude any specific role for confirmation. For the Spirit already is received in baptism, as I explained in chapter thirty-two, section L. But this objection is easily answered. It is one thing to receive the Spirit as the principle of one's own adoptive divinity, and it is another thing to receive the Spirit as Jesus did after His baptism and as the apostles did on Pentecost. In the latter case only, one has the Spirit as the principle of one's conscious living out of one's status as member of the divine family, and so as the principle by which one not only adheres to Christ in faith, but reveals His truth to others--not only is redeemed by God's love, but hands on this same love to others.

A homily provided in the new rite of confirmation as part of the rite of confirmation within Mass makes the preceding point clear:

In our day the coming of the Holy Spirit in confirmation is no longer marked by the gift of tongues, but we know his coming by faith. He fills our hearts with the love of God, brings us together in one faith but in different vocations, and works within us to make the Church one and holy.

The gift of the Holy Spirit which you are to receive will be a spiritual sign and seal to make you more like Christ and more perfect members of his Church. At his baptism by John, Christ himself was anointed by the Spirit and sent out on his public ministry to set the world on fire.

You have already been baptized into Christ and now you will receive the power of his Spirit and the sign of the cross on your forehead. You must be witnesses before all the world to his suffering, death, and resurrection; your way of life should at all times reflect the goodness of Christ. Christ gives varied gifts to his Church, and the Spirit distributes them among the members of Christ's body to build up the holy people of God in unity and love.

Be active members of the Church, alive in Jesus Christ. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit give your lives completely in the service of all, as did Christ, who came not to be served but to serve.[6]

Thus, confirmation is an anointing with the Spirit to share in the public ministry of Christ. By baptism, one shares by adoption in what He is by nature; by confirmation, one shares by commissioning in the redeeming work of Jesus. The confirmed have the power of the Spirit; they are equipped to be active members of the Church, which is a sign lifted up before the nations to hand on the truth and love revealed by God in Jesus (cf. LG 1; DS 3014/1794).

C. Further considerations on the professing of faith

In its teaching on atheism, Vatican II prescribes as a remedy a proper presentation of the Church's teaching and

. . .the integral life of the Church and her members. For it is the function of the Church, led by the Holy Spirit who renews and purifies her ceaselessly, to make God the Father and His Incarnate Son present and in a sense visible.

This result is achieved chiefly by the witness of a living and mature faith, namely, one trained to see difficulties clearly and to master them. Very many martyrs have given luminous witness to this faith and continue to do so. This faith needs to prove its fruitfulness by penetrating the believer's entire life, including its worldly dimensions, and by activating him toward justice and love, especially regarding the needy. What does the most to reveal God's presence, however, is the brotherly charity of the faithful who are united in spirit as they work together for the faith of the gospel and who prove themselves a sign of unity (GS 21).

This passage does not mention confirmation, but it does develop the conception of witness of faith which is central to this sacrament. Elsewhere, the Council teaches explicitly that Christians must show by the example of their lives as well as by their words the power of the Spirit by whom they were strengthened at confirmation (cf. AG 11).

In such teaching, Vatican II continues the New Testament's teaching that life in the Spirit is a life of charity, for the law of Christ is fulfilled not merely by saving one's own soul, but by bearing one another's burdens (cf. Gal 6.2) and preaching the Gospel through one's deeds (cf. 1 Pt 2.12, 15). The Christian is not only to have divine life, but to communicate it, as Jesus Himself does--to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (cf. Mt 5.14-16; Mk 4.21, 9.50; Lk 8.16, 11.33, 14.34-35).

St. Irenaeus and St. Cyprian of Carthage distinguish two functions of the Spirit, one of bringing to new birth, the other of bringing to maturity. They connect the second to the Spirit of prophecy, with which the Church must be endowed for the promulgation of the Gospel. With this distinction, the effect of the laying-on of hands is distinguished from the effect of baptism. St. Augustine ties the gift of the Spirit in confirmation to the growth of charity and the seven gifts of the Spirit from Isaiah.[7] These ideas are altogether consistent with the conception that confirmation commissions the faithful to share in the life of the Church handing on divine truth and love. For prophecy is a concrete work of continuing the communication of divine revelation. To accept responsibility to cooperate with the Spirit in handing on the faith of itself is to grow in charity.

It has been suggested that the teaching of St. Thomas that confirmation confers the power of doing what belongs to the spiritual fight against enemies of the faith somehow leaves unclear the distinction between confirmation and the other sacraments-- especially baptism and the Eucharist, which also confer strength. It is pointed out that the Eucharist also nourishes divine life while baptism also confers the Spirit.[8]

However, it seems to me that there is nothing unclear or problematic about the teaching of St. Thomas, although the military conception of the profession and spreading of the faith is somewhat restricted. If one grants that confirmation is the "sacrament of the mysterious influence of the Paraclete upon the life of each Christian enabling him to bear witness to Christ,"[9] one implicitly grants that the sacrament gives the power to fight enemies of the faith, for one cannot bear witness to Christ without confronting and struggling against those who reject Him.

D. Scriptural data and the sacrament of confirmation

The Church is not exclusively dependent upon Scripture to know what God revealed in Christ (cf. DV 9). The total appropriation by the apostles of what they witnessed in the life of the Lord Incarnate included their preaching, which is reflected in Scripture, but it also included their practices and the manner in which they organized the Church and its work of handing on the faith. Hence, even if it were clear that the New Testament cannot establish the institution of confirmation by Jesus and its distinct purpose, there would be no solid reason to deny the Church's teaching that Jesus instituted this sacrament as well as the others.

However, since some think they find little or no basis in the New Testament for confirmation, I think it is worth considering briefly what evidence there is in Scripture concerning this sacrament.

The Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation makes use of (and thus provides an ecclesial interpretation of) some relevant passages of Scripture.[10]

First, it is pointed out that the Holy Spirit assisted Christ in His mission; Jesus Himself taught that the words of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," referred to Himself (cf. Lk 4.17-21; Mk 1.10; Jn 1.32). It seems to me that if confirmation is assimilated to this anointing of Jesus with the Spirit, then a solid basis for the distinction between baptism and confirmation is established, for baptism into Christ makes us by adoption what He is naturally, a child of God. The anointing of Jesus with the Spirit was for His mission of revelation and worship of the Father; clearly, we also need a parallel gift and commissioning, distinct from baptism. This gift and consecration is received in confirmation.

Second, the document recounts the promises of Jesus to His disciples that He would send the Spirit, to help them specifically in their capacity as witnesses (cf. Lk 12.12, 24.49; Jn 14.16, 15.26; Acts 1.8). To these I think one might add the passage in which Jesus promises the Spirit both to convict the world of sin, justice, and condemnation, and to help the apostles to assimilate just what Jesus revealed, not anything new and different (cf. Jn 16.7-15). This passage can reasonably be taken to bear on the apostolic task of assimilating and proclaiming the Gospel. Thus, the orientation in the promise of the Spirit is strongly toward the ministry of the followers of Christ, not simply toward their personal transformation.

Third, the document interprets the Pentecost manifestation as the fulfillment of the promises of Jesus. Those filled with the Spirit proclaim the works of God (cf. Acts 2.4), and begin to prophesy according to the promise of the messianic age (cf. Acts 2.17-18). The baptized also received the gift of the Spirit (cf. Acts 2.38). The document uses a reference to the laying-on of hands as distinct from baptism (cf. Heb 6.2) to support the conclusion that from Pentecost on "the apostles, in fulfillment of Christ's wish, imparted the gift of the Spirit to the newly baptized by the laying on of hands to complete the grace of baptism." [11]

I do not see any substantial reason to doubt that the cited texts do provide an adequate Scriptural basis for the judgment that the sacrament of confirmation was instituted by Christ when He promised the gift of the Spirit, that this sacrament was administered by the apostles from Pentecost on, and that confirmation always has been distinct from baptism, as the fullness of Christian life necessary to communicate it to others is distinct from the initial share in Christian life necessary to be transformed personally in Christ.

A passage in Acts which has been taken traditionally, also in the Church's teaching (cf. DS 1318/697 with respect to Acts 8.14-17), to indicate the apostolic administration of the sacrament of confirmation sometimes is claimed today not to provide evidence of this practice.[12] It seems to me that considered in the context of Acts as a whole (cf. Acts 1.5, 2.3-17, 19.4-6), as well as together with other New Testament data already summarized, the passage in question ought to be taken to refer to confirmation and to distinguish it from baptism. To refuse to do so is to create at least as many difficulties as it is to avoid. For if this passage (Acts 8.14-17) is not concerned with confirmation, what is it concerned with?

The Pentecost manifestation certainly is the central event narrated in the New Testament relevant to confirmation, for although the existence and distinctness of the sacrament is not established by the narrative of this event, the sacrament's substance is the gift of the Holy Spirit for the proclamation of the Gospel, which begins with Pentecost. A footnote in the New American Bible (on Acts 2.1-41) calls in question the fact of the Pentecost manifestation of the Spirit:

It is likely that the narrative telescopes events that took place over a period of time and on a less dramatic scale. The Twelve were not originally in a position to proclaim publicly the messianic office of Jesus without incurring immediate reprisal from those religious authorities in Jerusalem who had encompassed Jesus' death precisely to stem the rising tide in his favor; cf. Jn 11.47f. Once the "new covenant" had acquired many adherents, public teaching could more easily be undertaken.

Now, according to the narrative, the public proclamation was made at once, and "some

three thousand were added that day" (Acts 2.41). Had the apostles not received the gift of the Spirit or had they due to infidelity spurned this gift, then undoubtedly they would have reasoned that they could not carry out the mandate of Jesus to proclaim His messianic office without incurring immediate reprisal from the religious authorities in Jerusalem who had encompassed His death. But since they did receive the gift of the Spirit and since they were faithful, there is no reason whatsoever to doubt that they explained the Pentecost manifestation along the lines narrated. The authorities, who had some difficulty securing Roman authorization and cooperation in the execution of Jesus (cf. Jn 18.28-19.22), doubtless found Pilate unwilling to carry out an additional three thousand crucifixions in an effort to stem a movement which to him surely had more the appearance of religious intoxication than of political insurgence.[13]

The reason why I make an issue of this point of exegesis is that it is relevant to confirmation. The Christian who receives and is faithful to the grace of confirmation is prepared to disregard considerations of worldly prudence and to proclaim Christ boldly, both in word and in deed; confident that martyrdom is itself an eminent form of proclamation and that the power of the Spirit is sufficient to preserve the Church and make her flourish. Anyone who thinks that the Pentecost proclamation could not have been successfully made lacks understanding of confirmation, and seems to project his or her own lack of Spirit upon others.

It is worth noticing that the New Testament also provides evidence that responsibility for professing the faith, which distinguishes the confirmed, is not optional. As St. Paul teaches: "Faith in the heart leads to justification, confession on the lips to salvation" (Rom 10.10). The baptismal grace is holiness, but the public profession of faith by a Christian life is necessary to develop the new life of baptism into eternal salvation. What baptism requires of the Christian, confirmation empowers him or her to fulfill. Again, baptism establishes one in Christ; the Spirit, given in confirmation, anoints and seals one to give a firm commitment to God in the Church's public worship, by which faith is professed (cf. 2 Cor 1.18-22).

30 E. How are apostolate and confirmation related to each other?

Vatican II defines what is meant by "apostolate" and in doing so makes clear that every member of the Church is called to share in it:

For this the Church was founded: that by spreading the kingdom of Christ everywhere for the glory of God the Father, she might bring all men to share in Christ's saving redemption; and that through them the whole world might in actual fact be brought into relationship with Him. All activity of the Mystical Body directed to the attainment of this goal is called the apostolate, and the Church carries it on in various ways through all her members. For by its very nature the Christian vocation is also a vocation to the apostolate. No part of the structure of a living body is merely passive but each has a share in the functions as well as in the life of the body. So, too, in the body of Christ, which is the Church, the whole body, "according to the functioning in due measure of each single part, derives its increase" (Eph 4.16) (AA 2).

Here the Council makes two things unmistakably clear. First, the apostolate includes the entire activity of the Church considered insofar as this activity is directed toward extending redemption to all humankind. Second, every member of the Church has some share in the apostolate.

For a long time there had been some uncertainty concerning whether the apostolate is limited to activities having a specifically religious character. If apostolate were so limited, it would pertain primarily and properly to priests; the ordinary faithful would share in apostolic work only by helping priests and bishops--the latter alone as successors of the apostles truly engaging fully in the apostolic life. But Vatican II eliminates all uncertainty on this point:

The mission of the Church concerns the salvation of men, which is to be achieved by belief in Christ and by His grace. Hence the apostolate of the Church and of all her members is primarily designed to manifest Christ's message by words and deeds and to communicate His grace to the world. This work is done mainly through the ministry of the Word and of the sacraments, which are entrusted in a special way to the clergy. But the laity too have their very important roles to play if they are to be "fellow-workers for the truth" (3 Jn 8). It is especially on this level that the apostolate of the laity and of the pastoral ministry complement one another.

There are innumerable opportunities open to the laity for the exercise of their apostolate of making the gospel known and men holy. The very testimony of their Christian life, and good works done in a supernatural spirit, have the power to draw men to belief and to God; for the Lord says: "Even so let your light shine before men, in order that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Mt 5.16) (AA 6).

The Council goes on to insist that good deeds often must be accompanied by the words of faith. The laity need to the extent of their ability and learning to explain, defend, and apply Christian principles (cf. AA 6). As usual, revelatory activity, which communicates divine truth and love, is a complex of words and deeds (cf. DV 2). In the present instance, every Christian is called upon to reveal Christ by a faithful life, which will shine like a lamp, accounted for in Christian terms, in the light of faith. The lamp of a Christian life is to be illuminated by the light of Christian truth. It follows that works of mercy toward persons and groups who are in great need, if they are carried out in a really Christ-like way, are especially important (cf. AA 8).

It would be a mistake, however, to limit the apostolate to the doing of specific types of acts. While works of mercy are especially effective witnesses to the love of God, any good act which contributes to the unfolding of one's Christian faith and love can be apostolic. If one's life is to be apostolic, one needs faith and a life in harmony with it, perfect honesty, charity, and an awareness of one's Christian responsibility. With all these, one's life will be apostolic. And there will be no limit to this

apostolate:

This apostolate should reach out to all men wherever they can be found; it should not exclude any spiritual or temporal benefit which can possibly be conferred. True apostles, however, are not content with this activity alone, but look for the opportunity to announce Christ to their neighbors through the spoken word as well. For there are many people who can hear the gospel and recognize Christ only through the laity who live near them (AA 13).

Moreover, not only does apostolate extend to everybody one meets and to all the goods one does, it extends to every Christian act. One is not limited to doing apostolic acts in confraternities, Catholic action groups, and the like:

A particular form of the individual apostolate, as well as a sign especially suited to our times, is the testimony of a layman's entire life as it develops out of faith, hope, and charity. This form manifests Christ living in those who believe in Him. Then by the apostolate of the word, which is utterly necessary under certain circumstances, lay people announce Christ, explain and spread His teaching according to their situation and ability, and faithfully profess it (AA 16).

The Council goes on to explain that an important aspect of this pervasive apostolate is to act always with Christian motives and not to hide these motives. In this way, one not only does good acts but also does them in the most apostolically effective manner.

In all of these texts, the Council talks about the laity, but what it is saying applies equally to every Christian's life. Of course, more needs to be said when one considers the specific form of the apostolate of the priest, who is ordained for the service of the Word and the sacraments.

With understanding of what the apostolate is and what confirmation consecrates, one sees at once that confirmation is the sacrament of apostolate. Yet the Council does not explicitly say so, perhaps because "apostolate" is too easily understood in a narrower sense than the Council wishes, and perhaps because the sacrament of confirmation is to be conferred even on infants in danger of death, although such persons cannot engage in apostolic activity. [14]

Nevertheless, confirmation consecrates the Christian for living and speaking as a witness to Christ, and such witnessing precisely is the common essence of the apostolate. And Vatican II does say that the lay apostolate

. . . is a participation in the saving mission of the Church itself. Through their baptism and confirmation, all are commissioned to that apostolate by the Lord Himself (IG 33).

Again, the Council teaches:

The laity derive the right and duty with respect to the apostolate from their union with Christ their Head. Incorporated into Christ's Mystical Body through baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through confirmation, they are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord himself. They are consecrated into a royal priesthood and a holy people (cf. 1 Pt 2.4-10) in order that they may offer spiritual sacrifices through everything they do, and may witness to Christ throughout the world (AA 3).

It seems to me that these passages certainly are compatible with the position that confirmation is the sacrament of apostolate, and perhaps even imply this position, although they stop just short of asserting it.

F. Should one's whole life be lived as a response to one's personal vocation?

St. Paul teaches: "The fact is that whether you eat or drink--whatever you do-- you should do all for the glory of God" (1 Cor 10.31). As I explained in chapter twelve, section L, the whole of life for Christians ought to be a living sacrifice (cf. Rom 12.1-2). "Whatever you do, whether in speech or in action, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col 3.17). The Christian's life, provided that it is morally upright, is open to all good: "Finally, my brothers, your thoughts should be wholly directed to all that is true, all that deserves respect, all that is honest, pure, admirable, decent, virtuous or worthy of praise" (Phil 4.8). All good activities have a place provided only that they can and are done for God's glory and in Jesus' name.

The notion of "vocation" often has been limited to the personal calling of some to the clerical or religious life. Vatican II sometimes talks about "vocations" in a narrow sense (cf. LG 46; PC 5, 24; OT 2). In other contexts, "vocation" is used very broadly to refer to the whole destiny which God has in mind for human persons in Christ (cf. GS 11; LG 39).

Between these two extremes, the Council used "vocation" to refer to the specific commitments each person makes to shape his or her life into a responsible carrying out of the basic commitment of faith. In this sense, children ought to be taught so that as adults they will responsibly follow their own vocation, whether sacred or secular; in this sense, also, marriage is a possible Christian vocation (cf. GS 52). In a truly Christian home, "husband and wife find their proper vocation in being witnesses to one another and to their children of faith in Christ and love for him" (LG 35). Such a specific form of witnessing is a true Christian vocation and apostolate.

The different Christian states of life are complementary. If clerics are ordained for sacred service, the laity are commissioned for the complementary role of commitment to human goods other than the good of religion itself (cf. AA 6). The Council clearly distinguishes the secular, clerical, and religious types of vocation:

A secular quality is proper and special to laymen. It is true that those in holy orders can at times engage in secular activities, and even have a secular profession. But by reason of their particular vocation they are chiefly and professedly ordained to the sacred ministry: Similarly, by their state in life, religious give splendid and striking testimony that the world cannot be transfigured and offered to God without the spirit of the beatitudes.

But the laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all of the secular professions and occupations.

They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven.

They are called there by God so that by exercising their proper function and being led by the spirit of the gospel they can work for the sanctification of the world from within, in the manner of leaven. In this way they can make Christ known to others, especially by the testimony of a life resplendent in faith, hope, and charity (LG 31).

Thus personal vocation of each type is one's calling to a particular share in the single, all-embracing apostolate of the Church.

The Church is one, but its members are not all alike in their roles and responsibilities. Each member has his or her own task to perform for the good of the whole, and in the total fulfillment of its apostolic purpose (cf. 1 Cor 12.4-14). Citing St. Paul (Col 3.17), Vatican II points out explicitly that family concerns and secular affairs must be included within one's religious, apostolic program of life (cf. AA 4). "By its very nature the Christian vocation also is a vocation to the apostolate" (AA 2). Therefore, the whole of each person's personal vocation also is to be lived apostolically.

I discussed personal vocation in chapter twelve, sections F and G, and chapter twenty-four, sections H through J. Not only the very specific commitments of the mature but also the rather general commitments of children, not only the largest commitments to a state of life consecrated by a special sacrament or by vows but also the many smaller commitments concerning work and leisure activities--all of these choices as to what one will be should organize the harmonious whole of each Christian's life.

In organizing one's life according to one's discernment of the personal vocation one has received from God, one must bear in mind that the commitment of faith itself carries with it certain specific responsibilities. For this reason, no one is free to regard as an aspect of personal vocation a commitment to anything which could not be carried out without immorality, even if the choice were one possibly morally upright for some other person. Charity is "the soul of the entire apostolate" (AA 3). One cannot build an apostolic vocation upon the foundation of any sort of sinful neglect or setting aside of responsibilities--religious or any other--which really have fallen upon one. For instance, a married person may not separate from his or her spouse to enter religion without mutual and fully free consent; a person with family responsibilities may not abandon them in the interest of any other good cause; a priest or religious may not abandon his or her proper way of life in favor of secular activities appropriate to a layperson.

Since one's whole life should be lived in dedication to Christ and as a contribution to the apostolate of the Church, a mature Christian ought not to have any area or type of activity reserved for free self-indulgence. There is no room in a mature Christian life for doing just as one pleases, independent of responsibility to fulfill one's commitments. In other words, every act for every good ought in some positive way to contribute to the fulfillment of one's total personal vocation.

G. A note on recreation

It is true that charity extends not only to God and to one's neighbor but also to oneself. However, it by no means follows that one's life should be divided into compartments--one for religious activities, one for service to others, and one for self-gratification. Rather, all of one's life should be consecrated to God as a living sacrifice of praise; all of it ought to be dedicated to Christlike service of others; and in this way all of it will be fruitful in genuine self-fulfillment in this world and in the next.

Does it follow that there is no room in life for spontaneity? That no time should be devoted to recreation? By no means. A well integrated person with deep commitments fulfills them with considerable spontaneity. One who slavishly follows rules in an always laborious way is perhaps less deeply committed, and certainly is less integrated with the goods to which such burdensome actions are directed. Moreover, everyone needs recreation, and a Christian makes commitments with this need in mind.

However, recreation really ought to be re-creative. It ought not to be mere amusement and escapism. Rest ought really to be restful. It ought not to leave one fatigued and distracted. Genuine recreation, rest, and vacationing themselves fulfill commitments as richly as possible.

There is a difference between a cocktail party, where there is almost no real communication and a good deal of overindulgence in food and drink, and an evening shared with friends, where there is a free and delightful flow of experiences and ideas, a sharing of cares and joys, over a nourishing and delicious meal. There is a difference between putting off one's work by wasting time in idle talk and spending a pleasant afternoon walking with a friend, at the same time doing some business, studying, or praying together. There is a difference between sleeping as long as one can every night and taking care to obtain adequate rest so that one can resist disease and work with maximum efficiency.

It is wrong and very dangerous to one's spiritual life to think that one is entitled to make up for service to others by some sort of gratification for oneself. A married man who thinks that his work for his family must be compensated by sexual pleasure has a false attitude toward marriage; if licit pleasure is impossible for some time he is likely to seek illicit gratification. A wife and mother who thinks that her service to her family must be compensated by "self-fulfillment" in some artistic, social, or intellectual activities outside the home is not fully committed to being a wife and mother; she is likely to burden her family with the requirements of her individualistic activities. A priest who thinks that his efforts at prayer and pastoral service must be compensated by amusement and escape is likely to become an alcoholic, a fat slob, an addict of some game or sport, or something else of the sort.

Christians need to make some use of their every part and ability in loving service, precisely in order that they can love God with their whole reality. But a dedicated life cannot be well-rounded; no individual can aspire to be the whole Mystical Body of Christ. Parts of oneself and capacities in oneself which are underemployed in one's fulfillment

of one's major commitments ought to be used in the subordinate role of serving physical and mental health. For example, a person who engages in strenuous labor much of the time does well to choose a form of recreation which is sedentary, and which involves a greater use of intellectual and esthetic capacities. A sedentary person should re-create by some sort of physical exercise.

In using one's time to carry out all of one's commitments, one will have a richer life and make more adequate use of the talents--that is, the possibilities--one has been given, if one avoids passive distractions and instead engages in active forms of recreation. Usually, one can do several things at once, all of them fruitful. For example, one can obtain exercise by walking, one can obtain esthetic experience by walking where there is something lovely to observe, one can make the activity socially enriching by doing it with another or others, and one can use the leisure for contemplation by sharing reflections on some worthy subject.

15 H. Why are strength and courage the special graces of confirmation?

The teaching of the Church reviewed in section B, above, shows that confirmation especially confers the Spirit to strengthen the Christian for courageous witnessing. One's witnessing is one's personal vocation, considered as one's proper share in the apostolate of the Church. Strengthening graces are required to fulfill any Christian vocation consistently, because none will be without much suffering and hardship. The martyr is a witness. The converse also is true: Every true Christian witness will be a martyr.

Stephen, the first martyr, literally followed Jesus. He boldly bore witness to Jesus, commended his spirit to Him, prayed for his persecutors, and died with resignation (cf. Acts 7.54-60). Peter and John before the Sanhedrin also boldly bore witness, for they were filled with the Spirit (cf. Acts 4.8-31).

The Christian can read the signs of the times in the light of faith, thus to relativize the world's time by the standards of eternity (cf. Mt 16.2-3). By this reading, the Christian sees through the world and announces its passing character (cf. 1 Cor 7.31). Not hiding their hope, Christians challenge the worldly powers and their evil ways (cf. LG 35; Eph 6.12). Holiness comes only by intimate association with Jesus, by doing one's ordinary work according to God's will (cf. AA 4). Such simple holiness, although not meant as a condemnation of anyone, is rightly understood by the wicked as a condemnation. The negative reaction of the world is inevitable and every faithful Christian must be prepared for it (cf. Jn 7.7, 15.18-25, 16.1-4; 1 Jn 3.12-13).

Strength is required to fulfill one's Christian vocation, not only because of the world's reaction, but also because of intrinsic difficulties.

Self-interest has to be subordinated to the needs of the kingdom, as it was in the case of John the Baptist, who was content to fade away to make room for Jesus (cf. Jn 3.27-30). One must be prompt to set aside security to be in communion with Jesus, as Levi gave up his job (cf. Mk 2.13-17; Mt 9.9-13; Lk 5.27-32). There is no room for experimentation. Decisions are final, and eternal life is at stake in one's faithfulness to them.

The strength which the Spirit conveys in confirmation is not some sort of supplement apart from charity, but is charity itself enlivening faith and hope. "There is no limit to love's forbearance, to its trust, its hope, its power to endure" (1 Cor 13.7). In committing oneself in vocational choices, one who loves considers needs and dares to try to fulfill them, humbly confident that God will supply. In facing unexpected difficulties, one who loves creatively excogitates new approaches, because love finds a way.

One who loves is willing to strive to fulfill perfectly even a small role in God's story of salvation, for every role is important (cf. 1 Cor 12.19). The many different and limited personal vocations prepare for a rich diversity of relationships in heaven. For human acts--especially those which are vocational commitments--are not simply means to an end. They are made to last. The good deeds of those who die in communion with Christ will remain with them forever (cf. Rv 14.13).

I. What catechetical formation is appropriate for confirmation?

Confirmation can be administered at any age, but it certainly ought to be administered at baptism or at some time during childhood or youth, except in the case of persons received into the Church at a later age. In connection with the new rite, the Church prescribes:

With regard to children, in the Latin Church the administration of confirmation is generally postponed until about the seventh year. For pastoral reasons, however, especially to strengthen the faithful in complete obedience to Christ the Lord and in loyal testimony to him, episcopal conferences may choose an age which seems more appropriate, so that the sacrament is given at a more mature age after appropriate formation.[15]

In the United States, confirmation formerly was usually administered around ten or twelve, but now often is postponed until a later age, sometimes seventeen or older. Among the elements of catechesis for confirmation in some dioceses are

. . . performance standards for Church membership and community service; requiring a specified number of hours of service to qualify for Confirmation; a letter of request for Confirmation; formational programs of catechesis extending over two or three years; and the use of adult advisors.[16]

Programs such as these obviously have been developed with an understanding that confirmation consecrates one's personal vocation as a share in the apostolate of the Church.

Of course, the great breadth of the apostolate must be borne in mind. No pastor ought to take it upon himself to stifle the Spirit by trying to limit the variety of ways in which individuals might be called to participate in spreading the light of Christ by word and by deed. To require a certain number of hours of specific types of service as a condition for receiving confirmation is perhaps to incur too much upon the liberty of God's children. However, a common formation for the Christian apostolate is necessary,

regardless of each individual's personal vocation. Moreover, this formation need not precede, but instead can follow, the reception of confirmation. Instruction should be given to help each Christian form his or her life in fulfillment of the sacrament's commission to profess Christ, whether the individual receives the sacrament in infancy or at the beginning of adult life, or at some point between.

It does seem to me--although I make the suggestion without criticizing judgments made by bishops in this matter--that children would best be confirmed before puberty, usually around the end of the sixth grade of school in the United States. By this time, catechetical instruction could communicate everything essential for formation in the apostolate: an understanding of all the central truths of faith and their bearing upon Christian life, a formation in Christian morality and its application in personal and social life, a guided introduction to the life of Christian prayer both in the liturgy and in personal devotion and meditation, instruction in the most important laws of the Church, and an understanding of personal vocation and the apostolic responsibilities of each and every Catholic.

Children at twelve or thirteen ought not to be asked to make very specific vocational choices--for example, a commitment to the religious life. However, children at this age can and ought to understand that it is their task and responsibility during the next few years to make a harmonious set of commitments by which their entire lives will be dedicated to helping Jesus to spread His truth and love to others. A clear and firm commitment to find and accept one's vocation is possible and very desirable for a child before adolescence begins, with its emotional unbalance, temptations, and tensions with authority. I believe that each and every Catholic child ought to be instructed from the time of first confession (at about six or seven) toward this general vocational commitment. Guidance ought not to be given only to children in groups; every child ought to have a spiritual director who will provide individual guidance and encouragement.

Vatican II teaches that the apostolate requires that union with Christ be integrated with every activity of one's life. Such a life demands a continual exercise of faith, hope, and charity. To interpret everything in the light of faith in providence and to judge everything in the light of fulfillment in Christ are essential expressions of faith. To find strength in temptation and difficulty is an essential expression of hope. To do good to all according to the spirit of the beatitudes is the work of love. The detailed elements of each individual's program of religious life must be left open, to be determined according to differences in state of life, in health and ability, and in work and social activity (cf. AA 4).

Basic to Christian formation for the apostolate is a general human formation, with an understanding of one's own culture.

Above all, however, the lay person should learn to advance the mission of Christ and the Church basing his life on belief in the divine mystery of creation and redemption, and by being sensitive to the movement of the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the People of God and who would impel all men to love God the Father as well as the world and mankind in Him. This formation should be deemed the basis and condition for every successful apostolate (AA 28).

There also must be doctrinal instruction, cultivation of good human relations and cultural values, and formation in Christian action:

Since formation for the apostolate cannot consist in merely theoretical instruction, from the very beginning of their formation the laity should gradually and prudently learn how to view, judge, and do all things in the light of faith as well as to develop and improve themselves and others through action, thereby entering into the energetic service of the Church (AA 29).

What is said here with reference to the laity obviously applies without qualification to the formation of every Christian, especially in his or her early years.

"Training for the apostolate should start with a child's earliest education" (AA 30). It is such training that is appropriate preparation for confirmation, especially if the sacrament is given just before puberty or later. If confirmation is administered at a comparatively early age, the appropriate catechesis can be conducted after the sacrament is received. In any case, formation for a Christian life in witness to Christ must be continued. It ought to begin early; "In a special way, however, adolescents and young adults should be initiated into the apostolate and imbued with its spirit" (AA 30).

In chapter thirteen, sections K and L, and in chapter fourteen, sections E and O, I explained that Christian life ought to be prophetic, and that to be so each Christian's conscience must conform entirely to the teaching of the Church. A true and completely Catholic conscience, not merely a sincere and subjectively upright one, is required if each Catholic's life, lived in conformity to conscience, is to contribute to the revelation of God in Christ which ought to be extended to all humankind through the Church. The words of the Gospel must account for the lives of Catholics, which must cohere together to provide a single, consistent witness of faith and faithfulness. Dissent from the Church's teaching and moral subjectivism among Catholics interfere with Christ's effort to communicate by means of His living members. Nonbelievers look at the Church in disarray and are unimpressed or, if they are of ill will, are gleeful. They can say: Catholics say Jesus should be followed and that Christian life is a sharing in divine love, but they cannot agree about what they believe, and they obviously do not love one another.

75 J. How is discernment of spirits to be practiced?

One who undertakes his or her personal vocation in a fully apostolic spirit must be bold and creative. It is not enough to conform to the standards of conventional morality. A Christian ought to take for granted that the standards and aspirations common in the culture are more or less gravely perverse. Even within a more Christian culture, not everything can be accepted without reflection and discrimination. Moreover, the general formation each person receives must be supplemented by personal insight and commitment. For this personal work, every Christian requires not only the strength of the Spirit to proceed without false prudence to undertake the great work of Christ, but

also the light of the Spirit to discern his or her personal role and responsibilities.

The grave need for personal guidance by the Spirit, nevertheless, itself creates a problem: How can one recognize what comes from the Holy Spirit? How can one distinguish between His inspirations and those which come from other sources? This problem is the question of the discernment of spirits. Scripture itself teaches the need for such discernment (cf. 1 Jn 4.1-6; 1 Cor 12.3, 10). In these passages, solid faith according to the norm of apostolic teaching is taken to be a standard by which one can discern.

It is important to be clear about the sort of problem discernment presents. It is not a problem of knowing what is true or false in matters of faith or what is right and wrong in matters of morality. These questions can be settled by the Church's teaching and by a direct, reasoned application of it. The problem of discernment is one of recognition. One needs to be able to recognize one's own good and bad motives. Moreover, without judging others, one needs to be able to form a probable opinion as to whether one can rely upon and cooperate with them. For example, a person who is thinking of marriage must judge whether the prospective spouse is being completely forthright and is likely to live up to the responsibilities of married life.

The recognition in which discernment consists is only required when one is living within (and can take for granted in forming one's life) the structure of Christian faith, moral teaching, and Church order. Taking all this for granted, one must practice discernment if and only if there is an important judgment to be made in a unique or fresh instance, concerning whether something concrete should be taken to have one or another significance for one's Christian life.

One practices discernment first by using the indications of one's faith, Christian moral conviction, and ecclesial life; then by a prayerful preparation and close attention; and finally by following one's inclination or predominant impression. In chapter twelve, section G, I discussed briefly the use of discernment in the matter of one's personal vocation.

From the New Testament, one can gather the following guidance concerning the manner in which one uses for discernment the framework of one's Christian life. First, one must ask what faith suggests with respect to the alternatives. For instance, what sort of attitude toward Jesus and His self-oblation does the person in question have or the possible commitment suggest? If the attitude is not in accord with His reality as faith makes it known, then something is wrong. Second, what fruits are to be expected? Are they good or bad in the light of Christian moral teaching? Does what must be judged seem to conduce to genuine charity, to generous love of neighbor? Or is it rather attractive because of its promised gratification? Third, which alternative offers the prospect of building up the Church, of making her apostolic work more effective?

Whatever meets all of these criteria can be recognized as probably coming with the endorsement of the Holy Spirit. One can reach moral certitude by applying further, subjective criteria. Does the prospect of accepting and acting upon one's tentative discernment give one a sense of light, joy, and peace? Do various signs in experience seem to confirm the discernment? Does one have a sense that in it one recognizes God's will? If so, then one can proceed with confidence. Of course, these subjective criteria never can be applied prudently to anything where there is the slightest counterindication from faith, Christian morality, or the requirements of Church order.[17]

K. What forms of prayer and devotion are appropriate to the apostolate?

Obviously, all sound forms of prayer and devotion are in some way appropriate to every confirmed person. But this sacrament is specifically concerned with the profession of faith which leads to the fulfillment of one's personal vocation as one's individual share in the apostolate. The question here is: What forms of prayer and devotion are especially appropriate in Christian life considered from this special point of view?

The Gospel depicts Jesus at prayer especially when He must make decisions relevant to His personal vocation (cf. Mk 1.35-38, 6.46, 14.32-42; Lk 3.21-22, 6.12; and so on). We also learn in the New Testament how necessary prayer is to the Christian life of witness (cf. Acts 1.14, 4.31; Rom 1.9, 12.12; and so on). Vatican II teaches that meditative prayer is essential for our participation in the apostolate:

Only by the light of faith and by meditation on the word of God can one always and everywhere recognize God in whom "we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17.28), seek His will in every event, see Christ in all men whether they be close to us or strangers, and make correct judgments about the true meaning and value of temporal things, both in themselves and in their relation to man's final goal (AA 4). In this brief statement is outlined an appropriate program of prayer directed toward the fulfillment of the responsibility of the confirmed Christian.

First, one must recognize God's presence. He always is present, but we tend to forget this fact. We must not do so. The works of God are a gift of the God of works. We must always remember from whom come all our responsibilities, powers, acts, and merits. Moreover, we must always remember that the value of our lives, especially insofar as they are apostolic, is in their contribution to the fulfillment of everything in Christ, not in their visible, thisworldly results, even when these results seem to have supernatural significance. Only by keeping one's heart set upon heaven can one proceed in important apostolic work with faithfulness in hardship, patience in frustration, and resignation in failure to God's will.

Second, one must seek God's will in every event. Nothing which has happened can have happened without God's permission. If it happened to us, God wishes us to understand in faith what meaning He wishes us to attach to it. In the given facts thus reflected on one finds one's personal vocation. In the signs of the times, studied in faith, one sees the misery of sin and the possibility of redemptive work, given today to us as our task.

Third, one must see Christ in everyone. In some He is present as at work, in others He is present as in need, and in many fellow Christians He is present in both of these ways. The apostolic life is a life of service and cooperation in service. To consider others with faith is an important form of prayer; only in this consideration does

one see the full demands and opportunities of one's apostolate.

Finally, one must judge aright about the meaning and value of temporal things. One must develop a conscience which is fully formed at the level of moral truth, not determined by childish compulsions and inhibitions, not restrained by social conventions which fall short of Christian truth. Without the light of the Spirit, one cannot solve one's problems and reach sound judgments. Of course, in many cases, reflection reveals some need for one's work. In prayer one confidently asks for everything necessary.

When one considers various spiritual and devotional practices in relation to the life of Christian witnessing, certain of them are especially relevant. Important uses of retreats, days of recollection, and regular spiritual direction are to discern and confirm one's vocational commitments, to examine one's fidelity to them, and to find out how better to fulfill them. Christian comradeship must be cultivated whether on an individual basis or in the organized form of a sodality, confraternity, religious congregation or order, fellowship of priests working together, or otherwise.

Such comradeship is not limited to fellow Christians who are still living. An extremely important aspect of the life of Christian witnessing is familiarity with a circle of saints, whose lives are studied for inspiration, whose help is sought in prayer, and whose work is carried on in one's own apostolic life.

20 L. How is the sacrament of orders related to confirmation?

Baptism, confirmation, and holy orders all confer an identification with Jesus and a specific role in the Church by which one shares in His priesthood. The baptized share receptively, while the confirmed share in the profession of faith and apostolic work of Jesus. The sacrament of holy orders further specifies the role of those who receive it. They are designated for specific ecclesial service to the Word and the sacraments (cf. AA 6). Through the bishops--and thus through the priests who partly share in the episcopal office--Christ Himself preaches and administers the sacraments (cf. LG 21; PO 2).

By sacred ordination and by the mission they receive from their bishops, priests are promoted to the service of Christ, the Teacher, the Priest, and the King. They share in His ministry of unceasingly building up the Church on earth into the People of God, the Body of Christ, and the Temple of the Holy Spirit (PO 1). Acting not simply in the name of Christ but in the very person of Christ, the ordained priest offers sacrifice and forgives sins by the very redemptive act of Christ Himself (cf. PO 2; LG 10). [18]

The difference between acting in Jesus' name and in His person consists in this: All the faithful in living in communion with Jesus extend and carry out His redemptive act, for as a social act it needs to be completed by the cooperation of all. But only the ordained execute those performances which over and over again express and make present the one same personal redemptive act of Jesus, the act which He first perfectly expressed in the self-oblation of the Last Supper (together with the consequences He then foresaw).

In specifically sacramental acts, the deacon, the priest, and the bishop serve as living instruments by which Jesus in glory makes Himself personally present as the one who does what only He himself can do (cf. PO 12). In particular, in doing what they are ordained to do in remembrance of Christ (cf. DS 1752/949), bishops and priests do not merely recall what Jesus did in the past but make present and effective for us now what He makes Himself by His own personal commitment (cf. PO 13).

Called to such a noble role, those who fulfill it are themselves ennobled. God might well have redeemed humankind without such intimate human cooperation. He chose to use it, evidently as a blessing to those called to the priesthood. From this point of view, their service, which ought altogether to be directed to others, is most necessary not for others but rather for themselves. By God's grace and their own freedom, all people can be saved. But a priest cannot be the saint God calls him to be without being a mediator of salvation to others in a perfect and holy way.

As minister of Christ, the priest is especially called upon to deny himself and to fulfill the demands of Christ's priesthood, not the ideals of some sort of personal priesthood, which could not possibly be Christian (cf. PO 12). This priestly way of life will lead to sanctity, provided only that the priest centers his whole being upon Christ, by striving to be like Him and to do His work faithfully (cf. PO 13 and 14). Perfect and meek obedience, chastity (in the Latin Church by celibacy), detachment from goods of this world, and a fraternal spirit are especially required for priestly life, because these are the virtues which make possible complete liberty for dedicated service to Christ and His Church (cf. PO 15, 16, and 17).

In his guidance to Timothy, Paul laid down a simple program appropriate to the priestly life, still valid today:

. . . devote yourself to the reading of Scripture, to preaching and teaching. Do not neglect the gift you received when, as a result of prophecy, the presbyters laid their hands on you. Attend to your duties, let them absorb you, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch yourself and watch your teaching. Persevere at both tasks. By doing so you will bring salvation to yourself and to all who hear you (1 Tm 4.13-16).

A priest's work is to prepare himself fully for his preaching and administration of the sacraments, especially to prepare himself by meditation upon the Scriptures and the Church's teaching. He should absorb himself in his work, giving himself entirely to it, and seeking holiness as a most important part of it. A priest who is not holy--or, at least, striving for holiness--is worse than useless, for either his words and deeds diverge, or he perverts the Gospel to accommodate his own sinfulness.

An individual priest's life might be considerably easier or considerably harder than the lives of most dedicated laypersons. In either case, every priest ought always to have the mind of St. Paul: "My entire attention is on the finish line as I run toward the prize to which God calls me--life on high in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3.14).

Notes to chapter thirty-three

1. See The Rites, p. 296.
2. St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologiae, 3, qu. 63, art. 2.
- 5 3. Ibid., qu. 72, art. 5 and art 6.
4. The Rites, p. 298.
5. Ibid., pp. 291-292.
6. Ibid., p. 307.
7. See Austin P. Milner, O.P., Theology of Confirmation, No. 26, Theology Today,
10 ed. Edward Yarnold, S.J. (Hales Corners, Wisconsin: Clergy Book Service, 1972), pp. 98-
99.
8. Ibid., pp. 70-73.
9. Ibid., p. 101.
10. See The Rites, pp. 291-292.
- 15 11. Ibid., p. 292.
12. Milner, op. cit., pp. 90-92.
13. Someone who rejects this line of argument will, if consistent, reject the his-
toricity of chapter four of Acts; once this is done there will be no good reason to ac-
cept any part of the book as anything but fabrication. Of course, many nonbelievers have
20 taken precisely this position, but there is no good reason for a believer to accept it.
Moreover, a denial of the historicity of Acts will leave Christianity emerging at some
later time with totally inexplicable vitality and momentum.
14. See The Rites, pp. 194-324.
15. Ibid., pp. 301-302.
- 25 16. See National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Sharing the Light of Faith: National Catechetical Directory for Catholics of the United States (Washington, D.C.:
United States Catholic Conference, 1979), #119, p. 69.
17. See Jacques Guillet et al., Discernment of Spirits (Collegeville, Minn.:
Liturgical Press, 1970), pp. 44-53; Committee for Pastoral Research and Practices,
30 National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Statement on Catholic Charismatic Renewal
(Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1975), pp. 1-3; St. Ignatius
Loyola, The Spiritual Exercises, trans. Lewis Delmage, S.J. (New York, N.Y.: Joseph F.
Wagner, 1968), #313-#336, pp. 152-164. It is easy to make too much of discernment as
it is conceived by Ignatius, in whom it is more a psychological problem than anything
35 else. He clearly assumes that all the important questions have been settled; his only
concern is with sorting out the reactions of a person who is moved to enthusiasm and
depression.
18. See John Paul II, Dominicae Cenae, 8 (L'Osservatore Romano, English edition,
March 24, 1980, p. 7).