

ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER
Office of Evangelization & Catechesis
1300 S. Steele Street
Denver, Colorado 80210
Tel. 303.715.3260

OUR MISSION

The Office of Evangelization & Catechesis provides support, training and resources to catechists, evangelists, pastors and directors of religious education in order to help them fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) and teach the Catholic faith in complete fidelity to the *Magisterium* under the direction of the Archbishop.

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Here in the Archdiocese of Denver, as you know, confirmation can take place as early as sixth grade or as late as eleventh grade. (75% of the parishes in this archdiocese confirm in eighth or ninth grades). The wide range of ages indicates that there's no "correct" age for confirmation. As the Catechism says, quoting St. Thomas Aquinas, "Age of body does not determine age of soul." [1308] Confirmation at an earlier age stresses the primacy of grace and God's initiative while confirmation at a later, presumably more 'mature' age emphasizes the importance of one's personal responsibility where he "completely submits his

intellect and his will to God." [Catechism, no. 143] Regardless of when confirmation takes place, however, it's important to highlight the unity between it and baptism.

We'll be continuing our conversation on confirmation Thursday, June 30 at 10:00 a.m. at the John Paul II center. This is a follow up to the meeting we had on May 5 where I received a lot of valuable input. The purpose of these meetings is to develop a set of guidelines to help parishes prepare youngsters for confirmation. I hope you can come. If you plan to come, please call Ursula at 303-715-3260 or write her at ursula.jimenez@archden.org so that we can make sure we have a room that's big enough. You're input is invaluable and appreciated.

REGISTER TODAY!

BEGINNINGS RCIA Training

With the North American Forum on the Catechumenate.

August 4-6

St. Thomas More

8035 S. Quebec St., Centennial

Find Registration form attached.

FINANCIAL AID AVAILABLE - Call 303-715-3260

For more information about
North American Forum go to www.naforum.org

FOR ALL CATECHISTS

2011 CATECHETICAL CONGRESS

"DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME"

Drawing from this year's Catechetical Sunday theme, we invite you to this training for new or seasoned catechists. Great speakers will give you tools and resources, and help you sharpen your skills.

Saturday, August 27

Renaissance hotel (3801 Quebec St., Denver)

Find Registration form attached

Finest Wheat

A newsletter for the New Evangelization
June 2011

Inside:

- The unity between baptism and confirmation
- We have a treasure
- Formation Opportunities during the Summer

Pope Benedict's prayer intentions for June 2011



General intention: "That priests, united to the Heart of Christ, may always be true witnesses of the caring and merciful love of God."

Missionary intention: "That the Holy Spirit may bring forth from our communities numerous missionary vocations, willing to fully consecrate themselves to spreading the Kingdom of God."

*We encourage you to include these intentions
in the prayers of the faithful.*

The unity between baptism and confirmation

-James Cavanagh, Metro Area Director



Epoxy is potent adhesive that has lots of different uses. It's composed of two parts: a resin and a hardener. When the two parts are combined, a chemical reaction takes place that produces a material that's solid, strong and durable. Resin and catalyst are two parts of one product. Without a catalyst to harden it, resin remains just a gooey liquid, good for nothing. Resin and catalyst go together.

Sound knowledge of the Catholic faith is more important than ever. Our children are growing up in an unsteady and confusing world dominated by secularism and the "dictatorship of relativism." Only the Catholic faith has the spiritual, moral and intellectual wherewithal to combat the tidal wave of relativism eroding Western civilization. Knowledge of the faith is not irrelevant. Nor is it simply a personal opinion that has no bearing on the 'real world'. On the contrary, the Catholic faith involves matters of fact that have life and death implications in this world and the next. Knowledge of the Catholic faith is not only necessary for the salvation of our children's souls; it is imperative for the salvation of society. Knowledge alone, of course, does not guarantee that a person will embrace the faith or love God. But faith, first given in baptism, is enriched and strengthened by knowledge as well as the grace of confirmation. Confirmation is, so to speak, the 'catalyst' that activates the grace of baptism, solidifying the life of God in the soul, making it strong and resilient.

The Church teaches that confirmation is necessary to complete and strengthen baptismal grace [Catechism no. 1285]. The New Testament attests to the unity between baptism and confirmation. We see it at Pentecost when Peter tells the crowd "Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38). Later, in Acts 8, Peter and John go from Jerusalem to Samaria to lay hands on those who had been baptized but had not yet received the Holy Spirit. Through the laying of hands, the Samaritans re-



The Baptism of Christ and The Confirmation by Nicolas Poussin

ceived the Spirit, were confirmed in the apostolic faith and perfected in their bond with the universal Church. The close connection between baptism and confirmation is also reflected in the baptism of the Lord himself. After he came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended upon him. Immediately after his baptism the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to do battle with the evil one.

All who are baptized into Christ receive the Holy Spirit and, like Christ, are led into the "wilderness" of the world to spread and defend the faith and fight against evil. The special grace imparted in confirmation is necessary for the divine life sown in baptism to take root and grow. Something comparable happens in the natural life. Fertilization of the human egg and its implantation in the womb are distinct biological processes that mark the beginning of life. Both must happen for nascent life to develop. Fertilization and implantation are like a key and a lock, or a violin and a bow: two parts of a single event. In the same way baptism and confirmation are two parts of a single supernatural reality that leads to eternal life. As Jesus said, "I came that they might have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). The divine life given at baptism must be firmly rooted in the womb of Holy Mother Church to flourish and grow. Without the spiritual "implantation" of confirmation the divine life remains undeveloped. The special grace given at confirmation promotes the growth of God's life in the soul, bringing it to maturity. A seed can lay dormant for many years. But once exposed to warmth and water the latent life in the seed will spring forth. Likewise, confirmation is necessary to 'activate' the grace given at baptism.

The close connection between baptism and confirmation would seem to argue in favor of receiving the sacrament sooner rather than later.

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We have a treasure

-Ursula Jiménez, Coordinator

Today kids grow up with all kinds of new technology. The sights and sounds of TV, video games, cell phones and iPods are a huge part of their young lives, which makes trying to teach them anything a real challenge. Regular class work is often terribly boring for them. If you are lucky they will pay attention for the first 20 minutes. You can either compress everything you want to teach in that short time, or be creative and engage them for the rest of the class. You will need to change activities, be entertaining and extremely resourceful.

This is the general picture of education. When it comes to catechesis for confirmation it is even more challenging, since many of the kids are not really interested in being there. We have to be really creative so our message can overcome all the obstacles. As always, the first one who has to be evangelized is myself. From there I can go to evangelize others.

First I should think about how I see my faith. Does my Catholic faith inform and influence my whole life? Do I see my faith as nothing more than a set of rules I have to follow so I won't go to hell? Or do I see my faith as the way to fulfill myself and be really happy? The answers to these questions are very important in order to evaluate what we are transmitting to our children. If we just teach content the way someone teaches math, kids will receive the knowledge as just that: impersonal knowledge that has no relation with themselves. Even if I have the best of intentions, as I'm sure we all do, what we are trying to transmit and teach our children will never appeal to them.

We must help the children in our classes develop a relationship with the Lord Jesus. We need to evaluate if the knowledge we are giving them is helping them to grow in their relationship with the Lord. Faith must be fully integrated into life. We must understand it in our minds, adhere to it in our hearts and finally demonstrate it through our actions. If our children's faith does not have these three elements something's wrong with our catechesis.

We need to be certain that our message is the most important one; a message that responds to the deepest yearnings of our children's hearts. Jesus is the only one who can bring true freedom and happiness to their life. The Lord Jesus is a

personal answer to life's most important questions. He has to be experienced not just understood. We have a treasure that we have to transmit faithfully. This is really hard

but it is something that should permeate our catechesis. In order to do that, we have to be very creative and willing to enter into their lives and worlds, into their "codes." Insofar as we are able to understand and relate with them we can translate what we are teaching into their languages, whatever it is.

God's grace in the sacraments is abundant. At confirmation all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are powerful and truly transformative. But if the hearts of our students are not open to receive them, either because they don't want to or because they don't know, they will be "receiving the grace of God in vain" and there won't be any fruit. That is why catechesis for confirmation is so important. It's to help our children to understand the faith, be able to make a commitment and most of all to be open to the grace of God and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.



"But we hold this treasure in earthen vessels" 2 Cor. 4,7

DRE meeting - Confirmation guidelines: a discussion

Thursday, June 30th

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

John Paul II Center

(1300 S. Steele St., Denver) - Room 123

Please RSVP at 303-715-3260 or at

ursula.jimenez@archden.org