

commitments necessary to legitimate sexual involvement. In all instances, fornication is immoral since the individuals involved have not pledged themselves to the promises that are implicit in the sex act; they have made no binding pledge to be faithful to one another and to care for one another; they are endangering the well-being of any children they may conceive. Human relations are notoriously fragile and susceptible to dissolution for the weakest of motives. We need the bonds of marriage to help us be faithful to the promises implicit in sexual relations.

Many who are abandoned by their premarital lovers become less trusting and giving in future relationships, and may endanger their future marital relations. Sexual intercourse outside of marriage is also often accompanied by the sin of contraception, which in itself suggests the de facto temporariness of pre-marital relations.

### ***Catechism of the Catholic Church §§ 2353, 2390-1***

2350 Those who are engaged to marry are called to live chastity in continence. They should see in this time of testing a discovery of mutual respect, an apprenticeship in fidelity, and the hope of receiving one another from God. They should reserve for marriage the expressions of affection that belong to married love. They will help each other grow in chastity.

2390 In a so-called free union, a man and a woman refuse to give juridical and public form to a liaison involving sexual intimacy.

The expression "free union" is fallacious: what can "union" mean when the partners make no commitment to one another, each exhibiting a lack of trust in the other, in himself, or in the future?

The expression covers a number of different situations: concubinage, rejection of marriage as such, or inability to make long-term commitments. All these situations offend against the dignity of marriage; they destroy the very idea of the family; they weaken the sense of fidelity. They are contrary to the moral law. The sexual act must take place exclusively within marriage. Outside of marriage it always constitutes a grave sin and excludes one from sacramental communion.

2391 Some today claim a "right to a trial marriage" where there is an intention of getting married later. However firm the purpose of those who engage in premature sexual relations may be, "the fact is that such liaisons can scarcely ensure mutual sincerity and fidelity in a relationship between a man and a woman, nor, especially, can they protect it from inconstancy of desires or whim."

Carnal union is morally legitimate only when a definitive community of life between a man and woman has been established. Human love does not tolerate "trial marriages." It demands a total and definitive gift of persons to one another.

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Pamphlet 273

## **Sacrament of Confirmation**

The citizen receives his status, and his rights, on entering the world at his birth into the community; but he is helpless to care for himself; he must first grow to a certain level of maturity. He must be formed, educated, nourished, before he can take his place as an active, adult, member of society. In Baptism we become children of God; in Confirmation we arrive at spiritual maturity and become soldiers of Christ. We then appear before the Bishop of the diocese. He calls down the Holy Spirit, and prays that we may receive each of His gifts; he lays his hands upon us in the same way Our Lord and His Apostles did to the first Christians. The bishop signs us again with the Cross upon our foreheads, so that we may be able to profess Christ and not be ashamed of His death on the Cross; and he anoints us for the conflict, with chrism, in the name of the Holy Trinity; and at the same time he assures us of that peace which man is not able to give. Thus do you attain "the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). Thus are you assured that "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil.1:6). Rely upon the grace that has thus been given to you; it has made you capable of fulfilling every duty and overcoming every foe.

Consider your need of this Sacrament. It was certainly needed by the Apostles. Before the Ascension of Jesus they had already been fully educated by their Divine Master; they knew Him and believed in Him, they had ministered to Him, had instructed others, had performed miracles in His name, had been encouraged by His Resurrection. Yet they were incapable of doing their work as Apostles until the Holy Spirit descended upon them. They remained in

hiding, until a mighty wind shook the house they were in, and the parted tongues, like fire, rested upon them, and they felt the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). At once they were changed into different men, they went out and began their preaching, and the force of their words converted thousands to Jesus. They received the power of remembering all that Jesus had taught them, the gift of teaching without error, wisdom and strength for founding the Church, and fearless determination against persecution and torments and death. What are we without the Holy Spirit? Knowledge, talent, or opportunities are nothing without Him; we cannot profit by them; and with all our efforts we cannot command success. But with the Spirit of God you can do all things.

Consider the effects of Confirmation. The first is the general effect of increasing sanctifying grace in the soul. It further confers a permanent character or a special status in the spiritual universe, and, thirdly, the peculiar sacramental graces, which are required for the new life to which the soul has been raised and the new duties required of it. There are three special characteristics of the Holy Spirit, which correspond to three human needs. He is the Spirit of truth, of strength, of love. Truth is difficult to discover and more difficult still to maintain, against our own tendency to error and the hostility which fills our daily surroundings, and the sinister attacks directed against divine truth. We need great strength if we are to persevere in the numerous duties of a Christian life, in the unceasing conflict against the evil in ourselves and in the world, and in suffering for the sake of principle. We need help to love God and our neighbor in an age characterized by selfishness and a lack of love. You have those graces: it is only necessary to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of

timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control" (2 Tim.1:6-7).

### **Sacrament of Spiritual Adolescence**

Confirmation is the sacrament of our spiritual adolescence. You could almost say that it releases supernatural hormones to enable the teenager, the Christian adolescent, to overcome all the temptations associated with all of the new powers and the new desires that flood into the human soul during those early teen years. It's the sacrament of fortitude whereby we take courage, and we take courage to fight the fight. It's also called the sacrament that makes us soldiers of Christ. We're drafted, or hopefully we volunteer and enlist in Christ's army, and we become soldiers of Christ fighting the devil.

I believe that Confirmation is the most underrated of the seven sacraments. It gives to us the capacity to gain spiritual self-mastery. It gives to us a greater conformity to Christ so the glory of our sonship might be lived out morally at a time of increased temptations and opportunities and occasions for sin. And it releases the fullness of the Holy Spirit's power in us. We determine ourselves by choices and by actions and we need God's help to make the right choices to do the holy actions.

Let's face it. Modern life, like never before, presents us with greater temptations and trials and tests of purity and moral courage. The sacrament of Confirmation gives to human beings something more than natural virtue. It gives to them what is known as the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah 11, verse 2 describes these seven gifts: "wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, Godliness and the fear of the Lord." These gifts of the Holy Spirit are supernaturally infused into the spiritual soul to give that person powers to overcome

occasions and temptations to sin and to rise to a new level of holiness and glory.

Theologians can compare the natural virtues that we can develop by exercising our will to choose holiness. Theologians compare these natural virtues of the gifts of the Holy Spirit by comparing oars on a boat, you know, which we have to use with great effort to move the boat closer to God. If the boat is our soul, the oars are the natural virtues that we use to get closer to God. But the gifts of the Holy Spirit are like a sail. All we have to do is hoist the sail, and the Holy Spirit comes along and provides the energy and the drive that we need in the sacrament of Confirmation lived out to overcome impurity. But not just to overcome the negative, but to attain the positive and the constructive virtues of chastity, of self-mastery so that we can learn to give ourselves to the needy among us. That's what the sacrament of Confirmation is all about.

### **Premarital Sex or Fornication**

Fornication is the sin committed by those who engage in pre-marital sexual intercourse, whether these are the brief encounters of promiscuous sex, the acts of those who have lived together for a long time, or the acts of the engaged who anticipate soon being marriage. Some acts of fornication are manifestly wrong since they are loveless acts that cruelly exploit another. Promiscuous acts do not express love for another; they are directly solely to sexual pleasure. Even if the exploitation is mutual, it is wrong, for one should never risk harming another, or allow one's self to be harmed nor should one risk conceiving children one has no intent to care for.

Some who have sexual relations apart from marriage may avow committed love to one another, but in fact they have not made the