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Book: **Baptism and Confirmation**

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## **BAPTISM AND CONFIRMATION**

**Abstract:** The academic paper entitled. “Baptism and Confirmation” is the summary and analysis of the book *Baptism and Confirmation*. This book was published by Theological Publications in India. It has been written by Puthanangady, Paul, Cyprian Illickamury, Kurian Valuparambil and P.T. Mathew. It is meant for the students of theology as text book and for the professors as a source book. The main content of the book is on baptism and confirmation. From the very beginning, the continuity of the topic is maintained and developed logically. The initial chapters will provide the readers a broad idea with regard to the ceremony of initiation and then proceed by distinguishing how the sacrament of initiation is different from other religion. Then the authors make use of this thread to connect the historical and theological development of the first two of the sacraments of initiation in the Church. In order to make it clear they take examples from different liturgical traditions such as Latin Rite, Syro Malabar Rite and Syro Malankara Rite. The authors did not forget to include the canonical interpretation of the sacraments of initiation. This is the overall evaluation of the content of the book.

### **1. Introduction**

It was under the decision of CBCI ‘The Theological Publications in India’ has published a text book on baptism and confirmation for the B.Th. students in order to ensure the quality and precision of the content. This academic work is an attempt to summarize and review the book *Baptism and Confirmation*.

Christian life has its beginning with an encounter with Jesus Christ. This encounter happens when each one of us takes part in the holy sacraments of the

Church, the mystical body of Christ. It is though baptism and confirmation a candidate becomes part of the mystical body of Christ, is saved from the original sin and receives the robe of glory. There are ceremonies of initiation in each religion in accordance with its tradition. Apart from other religion the rite of initiation has got a special significance in Christianity. The sacraments of initiation will not be repeated and these sacraments make an indelible character in the recipient. Christian life ought to consist in the constant growth in the awareness of the person's membership in Christ and in the Church, the mystical body of Christ. In this sense the study of Christian initiation is an unavoidable part of theology.

This book review is an attempt to summarize the historical and theological developments the sacrament of initiation in the Catholic Church. The summary of the book is subdivided into eight titles in order to comprehend the gist of the entire book.

## **2. Summary of the book**

Social scientists recently found the universal similarities in each society how they incorporate a new member. It means each society practices its own rite of initiation. Here we will be moving forward with the rite of initiation in the selected world religion and finally we will see how the sacrament of initiation is performed in Christianity. The following points with the subtitles begin with 2.1 to 2.8 are the summary of each chapter in the book *Baptism and Confirmation*. I have tried to include my personal reflection also with the same.

## 2.1. Sacraments of Initiation

The etymological meaning of the word ‘initiation’ comes from the Latin word ‘*Initium*’ and it means a new beginning.<sup>1</sup> A person is separated from one social and religious status and incorporated into another by this process. It is an encounter with not only with the world but also God. Generally every society practices rituals with regard to every stage of human life.<sup>2</sup> In Indian religion this rite of initiation is well celebrated. Let us go through few examples from selected Indian religions.<sup>3</sup> In Hinduism they use the term *Samskara* in order to substitute the word sacrament.<sup>4</sup> It sanctifies a person from within. *Upanayana* is an example of initiation rite seen in different religious tradition in India. *Upanayana* (thread ceremony) initiates a boy into *Brahmacharya*, one of the four ashrams in Hinduism. In Buddhism they practices similar initiation rituals. The naming ceremony, circumcision and so on are some of the initiation ceremonies in Islamic religion. When we observe the Jewish practice we will wonder how this religion has influenced the Christian practices. Before get into the Christian rite of initiation it is necessary to go through the Jewish rites of initiations.

Jewish rites of initiation had a great influence in developing the initiation rites in the Christian tradition. Rites of initiation are considered as the entrance to a community as well as religion. It is also considered as a public acceptance of a new member who accepted the faith of the community. The main ritual of initiation among the Jews is circumcision. It is associated with puberty and

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Puthanangady, Cyprian Illickamury, Kurian Valuparambil and P.T. Mathew, *Baptism and Confirmation*, (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2010) 1.

<sup>2</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 3.

<sup>3</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 4-7.

<sup>4</sup> “*Samskara* helps to sanctify the person by awakening consciousness of the divine dimensions of the life process.”

admission to adult community. This rite has been slightly adapted from the Canaanites of Palestine or Egypt.<sup>5</sup> Circumcision has its root from the Abrahamic time. It is a ritual of cutting the foreskin of the penis. It was given at the eight day after the birth of the child. Jesus also underwent this initiation ritual. Apart from circumcision, they also practiced proselyte baptism which is done for purification. Proselyte baptism was very common in the Qumran community. As it is stated, it is considered as the purification ceremony and later its meaning has been widened. The gentiles were accepted to Jewish community through the same. John the Baptist has been giving the baptism of repentance to the people.<sup>6</sup> Christian baptism is well rooted in the Jewish rites of initiation. We will find a leap of meaning when we compare both Jewish and Christian rites of initiations.

Christian initiation is to be understood from Jewish rites of initiation. Christian initiation is an act by which we share in the life of Christ. It is a new birth in Jesus Christ. Earlier, the three sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist were done together in one liturgical celebration. The Oriental and Eastern Churches still continue the same practice.<sup>7</sup> But in the Latin tradition, generally it is given separately. At the same time, in the case of adult baptism, it is given together. The dynamism of Christian initiation is not a mere admission or change of religion but a life in Christ and beginning of life in faith. Therefore it is true to say that it is an initiation into Christ, Trinity and the history of salvation. It leads the recipient three levels of operations such as to Christ, to the Church and to Trinity.<sup>8</sup> How is

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<sup>5</sup> Gen 17: 10-14; Ex 12: 43-48; Lev 12:3

<sup>6</sup> Baptism of Essenes (Qumran community)

<sup>7</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 21

<sup>8</sup> *The initiation leads one to three levels of operations: first of all, it is an entrance into the world of the risen Christ (Gal 2: 19-20); secondly it is an entry the community of faith (Eph 3: 1-6) and finally an entrance into the Trinitarian community (1 John 1: 1-4).* 23-29

it possible? It will be explained further with proper references from the Sacred Scripture and from the teachings of the fathers of the Church.

## **2.2. Sacrament of Baptism**

The second chapter of the book *Baptism and Confirmation* explains how the sacrament of baptism has been developed gradually. Johannine baptism has got a significant shift in meaning when it is being practiced in the early Church. As it is of the Johannine Baptism, the sacrament of baptism in Christianity is also not repeated. Many symbolic expressions are explained in order to find the meaning of baptism administered by John the Baptist (JB). For example, Symbol of Jordan: JB administered this in the eastern side of the river.

It was the place where Israelites under Joshua (Joshua chs 3 & 4) and Elijah crossed the river (2Kngs 2: 1-18). Its meaning: people have to cross the river once again to enter the Promised Land; baptism anticipates final judgment and promise salvation; by baptism he insisted on a strictly ethical life oriented to the law and with emphasis on justice and love (Lk 3: 10-14). JB symbolically chooses the dress and appearance of Elijah as Jews were expecting his return soon.<sup>9</sup>

People who approached John the Baptist expressed repentance and desired to be free from sin (Ps 51:7), and they were looking forward to a future cleansing. John contrasted his baptism with that of the one who is to come (Jesus) who will baptize with Holy Spirit and Fire (Mk 1:8; Mt 3: 11; Lk 3:16).It is how the Johannine Baptism becomes a link to the Christian Baptism.

Jesus' baptism at Jordan has a significant role in the sacrament of baptism in the Church. It symbolizes the manifestation of trinity and declaration of the Son ship of Jesus. It is also the time when John the Baptist says to the people about the

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<sup>9</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 32

nature of baptism that they are going to receive in the future. He indicates this difference saying: “I baptize you with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” (Lk 3:16 cf Mt 3:11). Later after the resurrection of Jesus his disciples began to baptize people in the name of Jesus (Acts 2: 38; 8: 16; 10: 48; 19: 5; 22:16). The name of Jesus was the baptismal formula of the apostolic time. The Trinitarian formula was the later development (Mt 28: 18-20). It is the result of Trinitarian development of the Christological confession. Water is understood as symbol of chaos, destruction and death (Gen 1:2) as well as a symbol of renewal, fulfillment and new life (Is 44:3; Ex 36: 24-32). It is the spirit that brings renewal and fruitfulness from the water of chaos. Baptism in the name of Jesus expresses three things: 1. the acceptance of the Kingdom of God, 2. accepts faith in Jesus and 3. Reception of salvation.<sup>10</sup>

Baptism has been interpreted progressively from the very beginning. Baptismal theology is expanding in the case of the other branches of theology. Acts distinguishes between baptism of water and baptism in spirit. Baptism of the Spirit can even precede water baptism (Acts 10: 47; 11:16).<sup>11</sup> Baptism is seen in such a way in the apostolic times. Later the Fathers of the Church have developed it in accordance with the ecclesiastical situation. In the Early Church, baptism was administered in the running water by immersion. *Didache*<sup>12</sup> recognizes baptism by immersion or by infusion. It may be done in flowing water or in still water and it speaks of both Trinitarian formula and also the formula ‘in the name of the Lord’. *The Shepherd of Hermas*<sup>13</sup> also explains baptism as the foundation

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<sup>10</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 32

<sup>11</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 38

<sup>12</sup> Teaching of the Twelve Apostles - Jewish Christian document from 2<sup>nd</sup> century

<sup>13</sup> Jewish Christian document of mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century



of Christian life. **The Odes of Solomon**<sup>14</sup> speaks of the service of renouncing the devil facing the West, and declares their allegiance to Jesus facing the East. It also speak of crowning the newly baptized with garlands and giving them milk and honey symbolizing reception to them in the Promised Land.<sup>15</sup>

Here the teachings of the fathers of the Church become very significant, because these teachings bridge the continuity of the progress in the field of baptismal theology. **Tertullian** in his *De Baptismo* presents a developed theology of baptism.. A priest or deacon can baptize with permission of the bishop. In case of necessity even laity (but not a woman) can baptize a person.<sup>16</sup> **Cyprian** argued that the validity of baptism depends on the right faith and worthiness of the minister. But Pope Stephen was against Cyprian's stand. He argued that baptism administered in the name of the Trinity is valid. Thus, Rome and Alexandria accepted the baptism of heretics as valid. The controversy subsided with the death of Pope Stephen and Cyprian.<sup>17</sup>

Baptismal theology got its field widened in the medieval time. It has got its beginning with St Augustine. St Augustine (354-430) introduced the theory of the baptismal character and effects to defend Donatists. For Augustine, baptism is a consecration or dedication which once given cannot be destroyed or repeated. The fourth and fifth century theologians were more concerned with precision and clarity on the understanding of baptism. In the following centuries, it became more ceremonial and solemn. During this period came theological, catechetical and symbolic explanations on the meaning of various ceremonies.<sup>18</sup> **Pseudo Dionysius** has presented baptism clearly. **John Damascene** emphasized the

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<sup>14</sup> Jewish Christian document of mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century

<sup>15</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 40

<sup>16</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 43

<sup>17</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 44

<sup>18</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 45

relation between baptism and the death of Christ. The Scholastic period is actually based on the early and medieval theology. Theology of baptism began as its seminal form from the apostolic period and it has got expanded meaning from 2<sup>nd</sup> century onwards. Baptismal theology has reached its peak point with scholastic interpretation. **Hugh of St Victor** (1096-1141), *De Sacramentis christianae fidei* (The Sacraments of Christian Faith) developed sacramental theology in line with Augustine. **Peter Lombard** (+1164) explained the meaning of baptism including the form, institution and purpose of the institution of baptism. **Alexander of Hales** (+1245) has tried to synthesize the existing theory methodically.<sup>19</sup> When it comes to the high scholastic period it is better to say that the theology is raised to the zenith of systematization with **St. Thomas Aquinas** (1225-1274).<sup>20</sup> He can be considered as the face of the scholastic theology in general. He gave more clarity to the theology of the sacraments. He made use of Aristotelian 'cause and effect' theory to distinguish the theology of the sacrament of baptism from other sacraments. The issue with regard to the validity of the sacrament (in the context of heretics) logically solved at this time. The effects of baptism such as grace, charism, character etc are defined in his time. Sacraments are the visible signs of the invisible grace of God. A person receives grace through baptism. Scholastic period is the time when the catholic theologians ruminated on these things.

**Reformers** rejected the traditional catholic teaching of the objective efficacy of the sacraments expressed in the phrase *ex opera operato*. Luther, Swingli and Calvin were the pioneer reformers who rejected the Catholic Theology from many perspectives.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 53

<sup>20</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 54-55

<sup>21</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 56-57

### **2.3. Teaching of the Church on Sacrament of Baptism<sup>22</sup>**

Few Catholic teachings on the sacrament of baptism were discussed in the previous paragraphs. The third chapter of the book primarily focused on the same. Church teachings on sacraments are for defending its faith and at the same time explaining its truth. Early teachings were against the heretic teachings on the validity of baptism. Letter of Pope Stephen I to Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage insisted on the validity of the sacraments of heretics (in AD 256). The first General council of Nicaea (AD 325) Canon 19 ruled that baptism of Paulinists<sup>23</sup> is to be rebaptized. The efficacy of baptism was addressed in the Council of Trent in 1547 (Canon 4). The necessity of infant baptism is also justified.<sup>24</sup> Pope Innocent II (1130-1143) explains that the baptism of desire can remit original sin and lead to salvation (ND 1408). These are some of the Catholic teachings on Baptism.

### **2.4. Christian Baptism: Sacrament of the Church**

Christian baptism is the sacrament of the Church. It is through baptism the proclamation of the Gospel (*Metanoia* –the conversion of the heart) and acceptance of Christ happens. It is a mystery. It is instituted by Christ.<sup>25</sup> Since it is a mystery, symbols are required to unfold the mystery. Water, immersion, anointing, exorcism etc are some of the matters in which symbolic meanings are attributed. Some those symbolic meanings are explained here. Water is an essential symbol of Baptism.<sup>26</sup> It symbolizes death, new birth, salvation, purification and presence of the Holy Spirit. Exorcism symbolizes the denouncing of Satan. Blessed oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit. Even each action in the

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<sup>22</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 73-80

<sup>23</sup> Followers of Paul Samosata who denied the divinity of the Son and therefore the sacrament is not in the name of the trinity

<sup>24</sup> Council of Trent (1547) justifies the legitimacy of infant baptism against Anabaptists.

<sup>25</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 82

<sup>26</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 85

sacrament in fact carries meaning. Humans can understand the divine mysteries with the help of symbols, because his language is very limited in understanding the divine mysteries. The rites of initiation in different rites are also explained in this chapter.<sup>27</sup>

## 2.5. Theology of Christian Baptism

The fifth chapter entitled, “Theology of Christian Baptism” welcomes the readers to the specific meaning of baptism. Here the authors explains the term such as ‘effect’, ‘character’, ‘grace’ and so on received in the baptism. Baptism is a sign of response to the call of conversion. Here they explain how *metanoia* happens in the recipient.<sup>28</sup> Through baptism one is incorporated into the community of believers (the Church), the mystical body of Christ.<sup>29</sup> Vatican II has taken this concept of the people of God into ecclesiology to explain the Church more obviously. Baptism enables one to take part in the Pascal Mystery, because it is present in the baptism. In other words it is through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ one person takes part in the salvation. Therefore baptism is the door to this salvation. It means our journey towards God begins with baptism. So it is true to say that a believer take part in the destiny and mission of Christ with baptism. The II Vatican Council has specially emphasized this duty of evangelization of all baptized Christians.<sup>30</sup> According to Moses Bar Kepha (in his Commentary on Baptism ) the baptized persons becomes white and shines in the knowledge of god and in the light they received from baptism, putts off the old man and putts on the new man, acquires beautiful form and adornment,

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<sup>27</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 91-136

<sup>28</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 139

<sup>29</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 141

<sup>30</sup> In the Decree on the Mission we read: “As members of the living Christ, all the faithful have been incorporated into Him and made like unto Him through baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist. Hence all are duty-bound to cooperate in the expansion and growth of His Body, so that they can bring it to fullness as swiftly as possible (Eph 4:13)(No.36) P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 148-149.

receives the robe of immortality and incorruptibility, dwells in heaven as luminaries after resurrection and will shine as the Sun of righteousness with the righteous ones in the kingdom of heaven.

A baptized person gets the chance to participate in the Trinitarian life. It is through baptism one shares the priesthood of Christ and is cleansed of the sinful past. Therefore baptism is necessary and it should be given at the early age if possible. The canonical explanations for the infant baptism are also explained in this chapter. Infant baptism is practiced in the Western, Eastern, Oriental, Anglican, Lutheran and Presbyterian Churches. The Anabaptists<sup>31</sup> are against infant baptism. Infant baptism existed from the beginning of the Church. It is general practice of religious traditions that the child born is considered as belonging to the religion of the parents.<sup>32</sup>This is made visible by the sacrament of baptism. Children receive the gift of faith from God through the parents as if they receive life from their parents. Therefore Sacrament of baptism helps the child to grow in the faith received from parents and to become members of the Church. Baptism is a sacrament of faith by which we receive the grace from God. It is our responsibility to grow in this faith at the earliest.

## **2.6. Sacrament of Confirmation: Origin and Development**

The Sixth chapter of the book deals with Confirmation and its origin and development. The origin and development of the theology of the sacrament of confirmation begins only with the end of the second century, because baptism and confirmation were given as a single sacrament in the early Church. Due to several reasons it was separated (Spread of Christianity, Adult baptism, infant baptism, Availability of the Bishop and so on). The sacrament of confirmation is also

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<sup>31</sup> Anabaptists originated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It includes Baptists, brethren and Pentecostal groups. Some Pentecostal Churches are practicing infant baptism.

<sup>32</sup> Christian parents are united in the same faith and love that is firmly rooted in the mystery of Christ. Child born of this Christian union shares in the relationship, which parents have towards Christ, namely their faith.

called *Chrismation*, because the essential rite of the sacrament is anointing with chrism. It is called *Confirmation* because it confirms and strengthens baptismal grace. Confirmation was not considered as a specific rite in the early Church, but it was separated due to the availability of the Bishop and several other significant reasons.<sup>33</sup> The life of grace is often represented with “**anointing.**” The **imposition of hands** is also an element of the sacrament of confirmation. In OT imposition of hands was a symbolic gesture with different meanings.<sup>34</sup> Three categories of people are anointed in OT such as Priests, Prophets and Kings. The same is seen in Jesus too. When we say Jesus Christ, it symbolizes the fulfillment of the said OT prophecies.<sup>35</sup> Anointing signifies the mystical and personal sanctification of the baptized.

Now let us have glance at the historical development of the sacrament of confirmation. In the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century there was no separation between the two. The separation began with catechumenate in 3<sup>rd</sup> century. In the west anointing is reserved to the bishop. The ecclesial character is shown in the east by the use of *Myron* blessed by bishop and in the west by imposition by a bishop.<sup>36</sup> Where as in the East there was anointing before and after baptism.<sup>37</sup> These are some of the

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<sup>33</sup> “Till 3<sup>rd</sup> century confirmation was not considered as a specific rite separate from baptism. In the West confirmation as a separate sacrament has been stressed only from the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The Synod of Elvira calls confirmation the completion of baptism. This is reaffirmed by the constitution on the Liturgy of Vat II (SC 71).” P. Puthanangady et al., *Baptism and Confirmation*, 179

<sup>34</sup> P. Puthanangady et al., *Baptism and Confirmation*, 180-181

<sup>35</sup> *It seems that the anointing has its origin probably among the Jewish Christians who were familiar with anointing of priests and kings in OT. As Christ himself is anointed by the Trinity at his baptism in Jordan, Christians also ought to be anointed with Christ (2 Cor 1:21-22; 1 Jn 2: 20-27) so that they may share in his priestly and royal dignity.*

<sup>36</sup> *The first reasoning for the imposition of hands reserved to bishop was given by Cyprian of Carthege (+258) citing Acts 8:14-17 (baptism of Samaritans by Philip and giving of the Holy Spirit to them by Peter and Paul). P. Puthanangady et al., *Baptism and Confirmation*, 183.*

<sup>37</sup> *In the beginning instead of anointing after baptism there was the imposition of hands by the Bishop (Didsascalialia). It was replaced with the anointing with Myron. It meant participation in*

examples with regard to the administration of the sacrament. Here the authors specify the reasons for the separation of baptism and confirmation. The Church limited to a particular area has been widening its reach with the rule of Constantinople. The Church has spread to the rural areas and infant baptism also began in the Church. Since the post baptismal rites were reserved to bishop, the separation between baptism and post-baptismal rites was become an exception rather than a rule. Later, both rites were considered as two separate sacraments. **Peter Lombard (+1160)** introduced the idea that in ‘sacrament of confirmation the spirit is given for strengthening.’<sup>38</sup> **St Thomas Aquinas** followed the same thought. The Church’s dogmatic statements on confirmation is made clear here as part of the efforts toward unity with the separated Eastern Churches in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. The seventh session of the Council of Trent (1547) counted confirmation among the seven sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ.

In the following paragraphs of the chapter six the authors try to explain how the Holy Spirit comes to the recipient through confirmation. Baptism confers the Holy Spirit. Through baptism we are incorporated into the body of Christ and participate in the Spirit. Whereas it is through anointing the baptized are penetrated with the Holy Spirit and made conformed to Christ. Imposition of the hands meant that they participate in the power and grace of the Holy Spirit as in Pentecost. They are also appointed as witnesses of Christ. It is through confirmation the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit happens as if it happened on the day of Pentecost. It deepens the baptismal Grace. Therefore we will be united to Christ, given the gifts of the Holy Spirit and able to call God *Aabba*. We share in the mission of Christ through the Holy Spirit.

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*the priestly and royal power of Christ, sealing of re-birth in Christ and reminded the baptized persons that they have put on Christ. This anointing was always considered as completion of the rite of initiation and not as a separate sacrament. P. Puthanangady et al., Baptism and Confirmation, 184.*

<sup>38</sup>P. Puthanangady et al., *Baptism and Confirmation*, 186

The Christian sacraments become meaningful with the Holy Spirit. The word *Samskara* in Hinduism is defined as something which helps to purify one person by awakening the divine consciousness through the life process. When we consider this particular definition in the context of sacraments of baptism and confirmation, it is clear that it is the Holy Spirit who makes these sacraments valid and non-repeatable. We become part of the mystical body of Christ through Holy Spirit. We die and get new life in Christ through Holy Spirit. It is Holy Spirit who ensures the effects of the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. That is why Jesus Christ instructs the disciples to stay Jerusalem until they receive the Holy Spirit. The robe of Glory is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Therefore it is true to say that Holy Spirit has significant role in the sacraments of baptism and confirmation.

## **2.7. Sacrament of Confirmation: Different Ecclesiastical Traditions**

The seventh Chapter entitled, “Sacrament of Confirmation: Different Ecclesiastical Tradition” gives the reader an idea on how the sacrament of confirmation practiced in different liturgical rites in the Catholic Church. Here the authors explain the offices and ministers in the celebration of confirmation. Confirmation is the completion of the process of initiation into the mystical body of Christ. It is the duty of the bishop to give confirmation in the early times, but it was changed later.

## **2.8. Theology of Confirmation**

The theology of confirmation is understood in the whole economy of salvation. The final chapter of the book *Baptism and Confirmation* discusses the theology of confirmation based on the sacred scripture. The spirit of God in the Old Testament is dynamic. The Holy Spirit is the breath of life.<sup>39</sup> The Spirit is

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<sup>39</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 210



compared to water in the Old Testament to express our dependence on the life-giving power of God as if we depend on water to sustain our life. Holy Spirit is compared to wind. It comes, purifies and strengthens us. Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. The authors make a long discourse on the Holy Spirit to develop the theology of confirmation, because the work of the Holy Spirit is very evident in the sacraments. They explain how the Holy Spirit acts in the sacrament of Confirmation. In the West this anointing is done on the forehead of the baptized with the words, “Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit” whereas in the Eastern Churches of the Byzantine rite this anointing is also done on other parts of the body with the words, “The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit”. It means that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are confirmed in the recipient at the time of this sacrament with the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>40</sup>

The effects of Confirmation are also explained well in this chapter. The effect of Confirmation is a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit as if it happened at the time of Pentecost. This outpouring makes an impression on the soul an indelible character and creates a growth in the grace received at the time of Baptism. It roots the recipient in divine sonship, binds him to Christ and to the Church and reinvigorates the gifts of the Holy Spirit in his soul. It gives a special strength to witness to the Christian faith.<sup>41</sup> At confirmation the Holy Spirit comes with his fullness. It means- in modern terms- we are installed with his gifts and charisms that enable a faithful to accomplish the mission given by Jesus Christ. It enables us to witness Jesus in the world.

The Authors also state the canons with regard to Baptism and confirmation. For example, canonically only a baptized person can receive other sacraments, (Canon 677.1, 2) regarding the minister: ordinarily by a priest; on necessity others

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<sup>40</sup>P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 214

<sup>41</sup> P. Puthanangady *et al.*, *Baptism and Confirmation*, 217

till the parents, (Canon 680) An aborted fetus, if it is alive and if it can be done, should be baptized, (Canon 681.2) “An abandoned infant or a foundling, unless his/her baptism is certainly established, should be baptized, (Canon 681.3) those who lack the use of reason from infancy are to be baptized as infants and so on.

### **3. Analysis and Conclusion**

The seven sacraments in the Catholic Church were not introduced suddenly. The number of sacraments and its present form were developed through centuries. These sacraments are essential for salvation. The book entitled “Baptism and Confirmation” gives the history of the growth and development of the first two of the three sacraments of initiation such as ‘Baptism’, ‘Confirmation’ and ‘Eucharist’. Since it was a text book meant for the course of theology the authors have succeeded in compiling the vital information with regard to the concerned topic. The language and the presentation style are brilliant and therefore any reader can get an obvious description on baptism and confirmation.

Here I am interested in explaining some of the interesting features that lead me to like this book. As I have stated above this is a textbook meant for the students of theology. Therefore the content as a whole will be rich and comprehensive. From the very beginning, the continuity of the topic is maintained and developed logically. The initial chapters will provide the readers a broad idea with regard to the ceremony of initiation and then proceed by distinguishing how the sacrament of initiation is different from other religion. Then the authors make use of this thread to connect the historical and theological development of the first two of the sacraments of initiation in the Church. In order to make it clear they take examples from different liturgical traditions such as Latin Rite, Syro Malabar Rite and Syro Malankara Rite. The authors did not forget to include the canonical

interpretation of the sacraments of initiation. This is the overall evaluation of the content of the book.

Now I prefer to say something with regard to the significance of this book in the present situation. The Sacraments are essential for salvation and living as a true Christian. Among these seven sacraments the sacraments of initiation have a vital role in the life of the faithful. Baptism is the foundation of all other sacraments, because one becomes eligible to receive other sacraments by receiving this sacrament only. Baptism makes a person a part of the mystical body of Christ and takes part in the divine life. It symbolizes the purification from the original sin and new birth in Christ. Now I will explain how this book significant this century. We live in a society where protestant churches grow like mushroom. They criticize the infant baptism and sometimes the people of God may mislead by the protestant teachings. This book provides a logical answer why infant baptism is important by explaining its sociological and theological significance. In this book it is clearly stated that though many protestant denominations, such as Lutheran, Methodist and Anglican and so on criticize the Catholic Baptism with a different theology all of them have accepted baptism as a sacrament. But its acceptance has got little difference in the meaning and this deviation of meaning is explained in this book correctly. This book gives a detailed description of the rituals of baptism and confirmation. It explains how to choose godparents in accordance with the canon law and explains the importance of the godparents. It addresses a list of commonly raised doubts on the said sacraments. All these are explained from both historical and theological perspectives. Therefore without any doubt I can refer this book to any person who is interested in studying a bout growth and development of the sacraments of initiation.

Baptism and Confirmation and Eucharist are the sacraments of initiation in the Catholic Church. Baptism enables a person to take part in the salvific mission of

Jesus Christ and Confirmation strengthens the work of the Holy Spirit in a Person. Both this happens with the help of the Holy Spirit. I would like to specify the role of the Holy spirit in these two sacraments. It is stated clearly in the book '*Baptism and Confirmation*' that each one of us becomes part of the mystical body of Christ through Holy Spirit. One dies and gets new life in Christ through Holy Spirit. It is Holy Spirit who ensures the effects of the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. That is why Jesus Christ instructs the disciples to stay Jerusalem until they receive the Holy Spirit. The robe of Glory is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Therefore it is true to say that Holy Spirit has significant role in the sacraments of baptism and confirmation.

#### **4. Bibliography**

Puthanangady,Paul, Cyprian Illickamury, Kurian Valuparambil and P.T. Mathew, *Baptism and Confirmation*, (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 2010).