

Aspetti pneumatologici della celebrazione della confermazione. Giovanni Zaccaria.
Dissertationes Series Theologica - XLIV. Rome: EDUSC, 2013. Pages, 431.
Paper, € 22,00. ISBN 978-88-8333-311-8.

Focusing squarely on the Roman Rite's *Ordo confirmationis*, Giovanni Zaccaria guides the reader through the wide selection of sources contained in that narrow volume. He offers a thorough study of its euchology, lectionary and rubrics. The approach seems obvious, yet it came to light only after a doctoral student pursued it.

Zaccaria shows a steady hand navigating through the main material. For example, when presenting the presidential prayers, he explains the purpose of these orations, the sources from which they are drawn, as well as their biblical allusions. He singles out words and phrases that merit comment, inviting the reader into a deeper study of deceptively short texts.

For the lectionary analysis, the author takes up each reading one by one, including the responsorial psalms. He even makes remarks about the verses for the gospel acclamation, a subject almost no one addresses. Zaccaria conducts a true liturgical reading of the pericopes - moving beyond biblical exegesis into an explanation of why each passage pertains to confirmation. Throughout his treatment of the lectionary, he continually refers back to the presidential prayers, comparing and contrasting themes.

For the rubrics, Zaccaria reflects on key gestures (handlaying and signing the forehead), as well as on chrism. These explorations contain solid insights, though the author conflates the two handlayings of the rite - the first one preceding the confirmation

prayer, and the second accomplished as the bishop anoints the candidate's forehead. In his Apostolic Constitution on Confirmation, Pope Paul VI said that the first handlaying does not belong to the essence of the sacramental rite, yet that is the one that Zaccaria treats.

By balancing all these different components of the ceremony, the author makes a unique contribution to the study of confirmation. In fact, a version of this part of his work would serve as a useful pastoral tool for homilists, catechists and liturgists preparing for the sacrament.

Zaccaria stumbles out of the starting blocks, however. He opens the dissertation with a survey of the history of confirmation, a road laid with traps. He locates the *Apostolic Tradition* in early third century Rome, an opinion that serious scholars discount today. He assumes that the early evidence supports initiation at the Paschal Vigil, but this is not at all clear from the data. He suggests that second-century baptismal documents containing no evidence of confirmation simply omitted any reference to its practice, which is highly speculative. He places the biblical origins not at Pentecost, but at Acts 8 and 19, the two exceptional instances when apostles imposed hands on a few Christians with questionable baptisms. His historical survey neglects to treat sources from the East, especially Syria, which placed anointing before baptism. Perhaps Zaccaria felt he had to include a chapter on history, but the rest of the book is far better than its opening.

Concluding remarks interpret confirmation as a perfection of the common priesthood shared among all the baptized. The author also recommends that the conferral

of confirmation precede first communion. The conclusions remind the reader that the book explores confirmation under only one of its many guises: the sacrament that a bishop confers on someone who was baptized in the Catholic Church as an infant. On other occasions when a priest administers confirmation, it always precedes first communion, such as when he baptizes or receives into the full communion of the Catholic Church an adult or of a child of catechetical age. Nonetheless, Zaccaria's focused study is fine work by a scholar hoping to shed light into the misty corners of confirmation debates.

Paul Turner is pastor of St. Anthony Catholic Church in Kansas City, Missouri.

"Book Reviews." *Worship* 90 (January 2016):80-82.