

**The “Seal” of the Spirit and Confirmation
(7th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B)**

2 Corinthians 1:18-22—The “Yes” of Christ and the “Seal” of the Spirit

1. Accusation: some are accusing him of vacillating insincerity, telling the Corinthians both “Yes” (“I will visit”) and “No” (“I will not”) (1:17).
2. Integrity: “our word to you has not been Yes and No” (1:18; cf. Matt 5:36-37)
3. The “Yes” of Christ: “all the promises of God find their Yes in him” (1:20)
4. The “Amen”: we “utter the Amen through him” (1:20)
5. “Seal” of the Spirit: God has “put his seal (Greek *sphragizō*) upon us” (1:22)
6. Anointing: not “commissioned” but “anointed” (Greek *chriō*) us (1:22)

Now he who has established us with you in Christ and has anointed us (Greek *chriō*), is God, who also hath sealed (Greek *sphragizō*) us and given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts. (2 Cor 1:21-22, Author’s trans.)

The Living Tradition

St. Ambrose: So recall that you have received *a spiritual seal*, “the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of piety, the spirit of holy fear” [Isa 11:2-3], and preserve what you have received. *God the Father sealed you; Christ the Lord confirmed you, and gave a pledge, the Spirit, in your hearts*, as you have learned in the lesson of the Apostle [cf. 2 Cor 5:5]. (Ambrose, *The Mysteries* 7.42)¹

¹ In Saint Ambrose of Milan, *Theological and Dogmatic Works* (trans. Roy J. Deferrari; Fathers of the Church 44; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1963), 20.

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (7th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B)

1. How is the anointing later known as “confirmation” a “seal” of the “Spirit”?

For Further Reading

1. Saint Ambrose of Milan, *Theological and Dogmatic Works*. Trans. Roy J. Deferrari; Fathers of the Church 44; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1963.
2. Stegman, Thomas D., S.J. *Second Corinthians*. Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2009.
3. Aquinas, St. Thomas. *Commentary on the Letters of Saint Paul to the Corinthians*. Translated by F. R. Larcher, O.P., B. Mortensen, and D. Keating. Edited by J. Mortensen and E. Alarcón. Lander, WY: Aquinas Institute, 2012.
4. Bray, Gerald, ed. *1-2 Corinthians*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament VII. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999.