

Archbishop Lori's Homily: Confirmation at Holy Family Parish

5th Week of Easter

Holy Family Parish, Davidsonville

May 20, 2017

First, my warmest congratulations to all of you who are receiving Confirmation today here at Holy Family. I know you have been preparing for this important day. You've studied your faith; you've practiced your faith; you've prayed; and you've served those in need.

And let me share something with you. I've been confirming wonderful young people like you for a long time and it brings me a lot of joy to do this. I also know that a lot of people work really hard to make your Confirmation a really nice event. And it should be a truly wonderful . . . something you'll always remember. But it's not like a graduation when you finish your studies and leave your school returning only occasionally, say for a reunion or an alumni event. As Pope Francis says, Confirmation is not 'the sacrament of goodbye!' - goodbye to the Lord and to the Church, goodbye to the Mass and the sacraments. Instead, I'm confident you're thinking of Confirmation as 'the sacrament of hello' - a new beginning and not an end, more like a commencement than a graduation. After all, Confirmation perfects your Baptism, your initiation into the Church. It is meant to make you fully a member of the Church, not a part-time member That's why, in a few minutes, you'll renew your baptismal promises.

Today's Scripture readings help you to understand all this. In fact, they tell us three things you need to know on your Confirmation day and three things you need to remember for the rest of your life

First, is that Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit as he began his ministry and you are being anointed with the Spirit as you embrace an unknown future. When

Jesus left home and began his ministry, he went to the synagogue in Nazareth for what you might call his inaugural speech. And when he stood up to speak, he chose the words of Isaiah from our 1st reading: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me..." You may not be ready to make your inaugural speech or choose a career; but in this Sacrament the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you. Welcome the Holy Spirit whom will receive as I extend my hands over you in prayer and anoint you with Holy Christ. Ask the Spirit to guide you in making sure your life is headed in the right direction. Ask the Spirit's help in the decisions you'll be making for the rest of your life.

Here's the second thing to know: The Holy Spirit connected the Apostles to Jesus and the Holy Spirit will keep you connected to Jesus. We saw this in the reading from the Acts of the Apostles. The Apostles were Jesus' closest followers. They thought they knew Jesus as they listened to his preaching, saw the miracles he worked, and shared his friendship. But they didn't really know Jesus until after he died, rose from the dead, ascended into heaven - and sent them the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The coming of the Holy Spirit opened their eyes. They not only understood what Jesus taught but they were connected to him, so connected that they wanted to be like Jesus in every way. As they became more like Jesus in the Holy Spirit, the more they were filled with joy. So today, welcome the Holy Spirit who will keep you connected to Jesus by daily prayer, Sunday Mass, and regular use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The Spirit will help you to become more like Jesus in your daily life - to love what Jesus loved and to reject what Jesus rejected. Instead of being greedy, aggressive, and self-centered, you'll find true happiness by imitating the gentle, merciful, and loving spirit of Jesus.

Here's the third thing to know. The Holy Spirit filled the Apostles with so much joy and courage, that they were no longer afraid to speak about Jesus publicly. The Holy Spirit will also make you courageous and joyful witnesses to Jesus. When the Spirit came upon them at Pentecost, Peter and the other Apostles went out and started preaching the Gospel and winning over thousands and thousands of people for Christ. Nothing and no one could stop them. They were happy even to suffer persecution for Christ. You may not yet know what vocation God has in mind for you but know that he has some definite work for you and you alone to do. Whatever that it is it will involve bearing witness to Jesus with joy and courage. Many of you may

be called to marriage and family, others to the priesthood or consecrated life, or still others to some special form of service in the world. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you and help you accept whatever the Lord will ask you to do to advance his mission in the world.

Three things to know and to remember:

1. Like Jesus, you are being anointed with the Holy Spirit.
2. The Holy Spirit keeps you connected to Jesus and makes you want to be like him.
3. The Holy Spirit will guide you to accept your true vocation and mission from God.

May the Spirit fill your hearts today and every day of your lives!