

Confirmation

Intro. Imagine what the apostles and disciples were feeling on that first day of the week. Their teacher and friend, Jesus, had been arrested, tortured and crucified by an angry mob. Then some of the women who went to the tomb to complete the burial rites told them an incredible story of a man dressed in white sitting in the empty tomb who told them the Lord was risen. Now they were locked in a room, and terrified that any minute someone would be pounding on the door, screaming for *their* blood. They were just a little bit on edge.

I. These days we are anxious about many things. So much has changed. We have never had a Confirmation like this. Masks, spacing between us, fewer people able to be here. One thing you don't have to be anxious about is I am not going to call on

you to answer questions like many of us did at our Confirmation or read your letter in front of everyone. I did read some of your letters and after talking with Ms. Sandra, one of the common themes you were asked to comment on was how your faith has grown. You mentioned you came to some different or new understandings of your faith and the Catholic practice of it. A lot of people will be glad to hear that, especially Ms. Sandra and Ms. Nonie. Also your family will be glad to hear that. You are no longer kids and your understanding of faith must grow. Fourteen or fifteen years ago at your Baptism your family started you on this journey. On that day your family and godparents promised to introduce you to the Lord. The community of the parish also made a commitment to help you by word and example to know the Lord. In the years after, other

people took up the work of teaching you *things* about God and not just in your religious education classes. Neighbors, friends and even strangers taught you about the Lord. In the last several years you have been challenged to *know* him, to *feel* his presence in your life through prayer, scripture and sharing your experiences with each other. Don't stop learning about your relationship with God. It can guide you through some of the tough times ahead. Yesterday on your retreat, you heard people your own age talk about how the Lord has touched *their* lives. It was hard for some of them to do that but they felt the tug of the Holy Spirit to encourage you on your journey. Today there is a very real possibility that you could receive a jolt of the Holy Spirit like the first disciples did on that Pentecost day. It has happened before. It could happen a few days or weeks from today.

Watch for it; a moment when some insight into your life or the Lord's presence in your life flashes in your heart. The disciples didn't seem upset about the hurricane force wind blowing through the room or the appearance of "tongues as of fire" on each of them. Instead they were suddenly completely calm. Something came over them; the Holy Spirit. Then they burst out of their lockdown and into the streets, astounding themselves and others by their confidence in and through the Holy Spirit. They broke down barriers of race and culture by speaking all languages. God's Word is for everyone.

Concl. In a moment we will renew the Baptismal promises made of you by your families years ago. You will be asked to take on a larger responsibility for your faith. It is yours now. As days and years pass, you have to decide like I did and others have

done, whether you want this faith enough to practice it without being told to. We who gather here and on live stream and those not here, have done our job for better or worse. Like runners in a relay race, parents and church have given you what you need at this step on your journey. Now it is the Holy Spirit who will give you strength as the first disciples received it and went forth to tell others about the Lord Jesus. This pandemic has caused a lot of pain. It has also caused us to join together in appreciating and supporting the many people who work to keep us safe, informed and serve every day. I believe that is the Holy Spirit at work in a clear way. Go forth and make disciples for the Lord by your words and lives.

Fr. Michael Pendergraft

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