



### SUNDAY REFLECTION

At Eucharist we participate, not as isolated individuals but as members of the believing community. To break bread with Jesus and to share the cup symbolize our involvement in the lives of the community. Too often we are tempted to confine that involvement to the liturgical actions in our place of worship. However, Eucharist implies that we continue to celebrate this central act outside the place of worship where we are to listen to the concerns of our sisters and brothers and act upon them.

C. S. Lewis wrote of his unhappiness at becoming a Christian, 'kicking, struggling, resentful,' and added, 'I did not see then what I see now, the divine humility which will accept a convert even on such terms.'

Hindsight is a great thing. We think that an event in our lives has a certain meaning, for good or bad, and months or years later we look back and see that, in fact, it worked out quite differently to what we thought. Sometimes we can see the hand of God at work in things, answers to prayers, and surprising outcomes. God calls Abraham 'to a land that I will show you,' and when He later calls Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac: He directs him to a 'mountain that I will say to you' (Gen. 22:2). Abraham's life is suspended between these two promises of God to show him where to go, where to live, what to do. In the meantime he takes many a wrong turn but in the end God molds out of him a suitable source of blessing for Israel. 'I did not see what I see now ...' No, but when we look back we can see the hand of God more clearly.

It was to show Peter, James and John with whom they were dealing that they were brought up the mountain to see the Transfiguration. In Lent, this Gospel is particularly close to the mystery of Gethsemane and Holy Thursday. Moses is there as a witness: he was told that he could not see God's face but only his back (Ex. 33:20-23), and here he is, looking at the face of God-in-Christ, transfigured in glory. Moses' presence on the mountain with Peter teaches Peter a lesson about himself: it is in humbly following the Lord from behind that all of a sudden we see his face.

On Holy Thursday, after Jesus' arrest, Peter will follow behind Jesus at a distance, then run away, his last mention in St. Matthew's Gospel showing him weeping bitterly. But it is said that in Rome there are many frescoes of Peter denying Christ, painted in the third century because it was a source of such hope to the Christians who struggled with faithfulness in persecution: they saw that even Peter's denial was used to good by God in the years after. 'I did not see what I see now ...'

**STEWARDSHIP:** "Bear your share of the hardship for the Gospel," St. Paul tells Timothy in today's second reading. What sacrifice is asked of me for the sake of the Gospel? How willing am I to bear my share?

## **READINGS FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT**

**15 MAR '20**

**Ex. 17:3-7:** On the journey through the desert after crossing the Red Sea the people of Israel are blessed with living water, and learn that the greatest need of all is to trust in the Lord.

**Rom. 5:1-2, 5-8:** Such is our Lord's love for us that it was while we were still sinners and giving no sign of conversion that He gave His life for us.

**Jn. 4:5-42:** In this very human story of a very human woman who attracts all the attention of the Lord, we learn to worship in spirit and in truth.



## LENTEN DISCIPLINES

**Prayer** Put the Bible on your pillow. Read one line before going to sleep each night and again on waking up.

**Fasting** Pick one activity of your day that you enjoy. Decide not to satisfy yourself by doing that until you have done something kind for someone else.

**Almsgiving** Each time someone (including God!) is nice to you or does you a favor, do something right away for someone else.

## LENTEN WEEKDAY REFLECTIONS

### Monday 9 Mar

*"Do not treat us according to our sins, O Lord."*

Dan. 9:4-10: Daniel acknowledges and confesses the Nation's guilt before God.

Lk. 6:36-38: As we treat others, so shall God treat us.

This is not advocating that we are the measure of morality. Rather if we expect God's loving-kindness, we should at least demonstrate it to others.

### Tuesday 10 Mar

*"I will show God's salvation to the upright."*

Is. 1:10, 16-20: This again is God's appeal to His listeners to 'set things right' and to readdress the wrongdoing and injustice. If matters are cleaned up, then there will be cleansing and promise of good things. If matters are not put right, there will be destruction.

Mt. 23:1-12: Shun legalism and hypocrisy. True piety avoids mere formalism and empty display.

Often the Pharisees, especially in Matthew's Gospel, get an unfair bad press. They are set up to exemplify external self-righteousness and legal nit picking. Such negative depiction of the Pharisees has to be seen in its historical roots and is not a justification for demonizing any group. History is replete with examples of the destructive abuse or name calling and stereotyping.

### Wednesday 11 Mar

*"Save me in Your love, O Lord."*

Jer. 18:18-20: Jeremiah laments that his good efforts are met with a plot to kill him.  
Mt. 20:17-28: Jesus announces His impending death and yet His disciples misunderstand and end up squabbling among themselves.

This third Passion prediction follows a basic pattern. Firstly a clear statement by Jesus of His fate, followed by a story indicating a misunderstanding by the disciples (who often are looking for 'what is in it' for them), and it concludes with a corrective teaching by Jesus. This heightens the pathos of the passion. If we cannot alleviate suffering, at least we can be sensitive to it in others and express our empathy.

#### **Thursday 12 Mar**

*"Happy are they who have placed their trust in the Lord."*

Jer. 17:5-10: In wisdom fashion, Jeremiah contrasts the fate of the one who places trust in God and not in human reliance.

Lk. 16:19-31: This is the frightening parable of 'Dives' and the poor Lazarus. While Lazarus, after his torment, finds rest in the bosom of Abraham, 'Dives' is somewhat reconciled to his pain and even exhibits some 'redemption' in his desire to warn others. But they have had sufficient warning already. They will not get another chance.

Jeremiah ponders on the dark side of the human heart, and the 'Dives' story too realistically gives expression to this darker dimension of human social interaction. This re-enforces the need for universal human redemption.

#### **Friday 13 Mar**

*"Remember the wonders the Lord has done."*

Gen. 37:3-4, 12-13, 17-18: Jealously over the father's love for Joseph provokes his brothers to seek to slay him. But in the end it is easier to sell him into slavery.

Mt. 21:33-43, 45-46: A property owner dispatches his slaves to collect his share of the produce. They are abused and killed. Hoping that his son would be respected, he sends him. The son too is slain. This story mirrors the destiny of Jesus as the slain Son, and describes the Father as one, who will punish the slayers and hand over the property (kingdom) to more productive tenants.

What we have, we have on loan. We are accountable for our use or misuse thereof.

#### **Saturday 14 Mar**

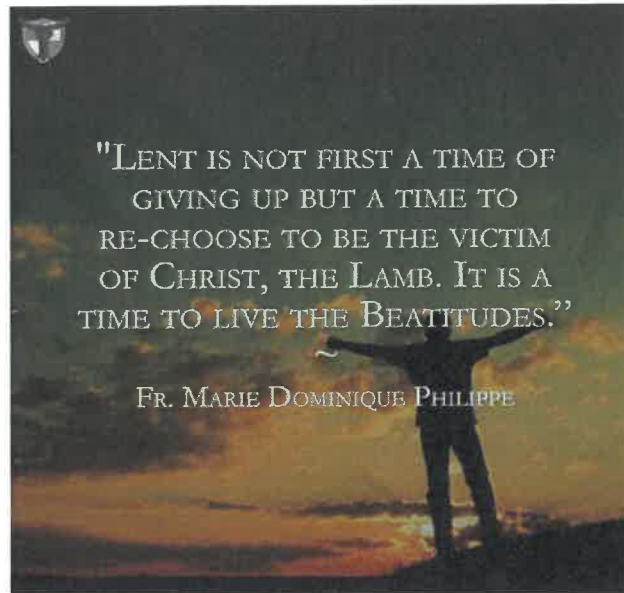
*"The Lord is compassion and love."*

Mic. 7:14-15, 18-20: Micah praises God's constant clemency and readiness to forgive.

Lk. 15:1-3, 11-32: The Gospel presents the parable of the 'Prodigal Son'. Commonly this parable is understood to demonstrate the loving forgiveness of God (represented by the father) in the face of the younger foolhardy, selfish son now come to his senses.

While both readings focus on the forgiveness of God, some scholars argue that the main focus of the Gospel is on the older, angry son, who was resentful of the Father's embrace of his

repentant younger brother. Sometimes we seek to play God and interpret who is worthy of forgiveness, as if our forgiveness could compare to God's



## CONFIRMATION

This past Tuesday evening 44 teenage members of our congregation along with those of Prince of Peace, St. Luke's and Holy Family received the sacrament of Confirmation at the hands of Bishop Knestow. Obviously and appropriately there was a lot of congratulatory handshakes, hugs, photography, misty eyed parents and relatives and teens caught in the midst of this probably breathing a sigh of relief that it was all over, while hopefully also wondering what just happened. Good question for them as well as for ourselves who were confirmed whenever. Is this just an antiquated cultural ritual or is it something deeper and more relevant to the life and identity of an individual and the community to which they belong?

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC):

It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace (Roman Ritual, Rite of Confirmation (OC), Introduction 1). For "by the Sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed" (LG 11; cf. OC, Introduction 2). (CCC #1285)

**OK!** What does this actually mean to the recipient of the sacrament? How does it and does it actually touch our lives, have a lasting, meaningful impact of who I am, my Christianity and the way it is expressed. Or was it just an opportunity to celebrate a rite of passage and eat some more cake.

So what is the Sacrament of Confirmation all about? Is it just a nice maturity ritual within the Catholic Church? Is it simply your own adult decision to be Catholic? Is it your graduation

ceremony from religious education classes?!? No, it's not any of these. Nada, zip, zero. Do not pass GO, Do not collect \$200.

We have to admit it, Confirmation can be confusing at times. If you look across all the dioceses of the U.S. you will find that the sacrament can be conferred at any age between 7 and 16. The name can also be misleading. At times the sacrament was presented as if it were some rite of passage from adolescence into adulthood. Or at other times it was viewed as the individual's opportunity to publicly accept the faith, confirm their belief in this particular faith. While there is an element of truth in these, none of them gets to the heart of Confirmation. Confirmation is not so much about you confirming your choice to be Catholic; rather, it's about God and the Holy Spirit confirming you!. It's much more, something that God does to you and your eternal soul than something you do for God or even yourself

Like Baptism, Confirmation changes your soul. You receive a spiritual character (an indelible mark) on your soul. And this marking becomes a permanent source of grace for you throughout eternity. It's God's way of making a permanent commitment to you by deepening His covenant commitment made to you at Baptism. In other words, at Baptism, God said to you, "You are my son"; "You are my daughter." Now that you have grown and matured in your faith, God says, "I am deepening my bond with you and empowering you to live out your baptismal calling to a greater degree." God knows we need help to live out our baptismal dignity and calling. He knows we cannot do it by ourselves. Therefore, He gives us the fullness of the Holy Spirit in Confirmation so as to provide all we need to live as we are called. What a grace!

To understand this precious and life-changing gift from God, let's begin with an understanding of the promise of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures as well as the institution of this Sacrament in those same Scriptures.

### **What Scripture Reveals**

Scripture reveals this wondrous gift of Confirmation in many ways. It's seen in a veiled way in the Old Testament, promised by Jesus in the Gospels, and made fully manifest in the Acts of the Apostles. Below are some Scriptural references to Confirmation. They help set a good foundation for our understanding of this sacrament.

**Isaiah:** Is. 11:2 speaks of the Holy Spirit resting upon the promised Messiah. This is Jesus, the Son of God. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit and, as a result, will manifest in His very person all the glorious gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the LORD...

Isaiah 61:1-3 says the following:

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the afflicted, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, release to the prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the LORD and a day of vindication by our God; To comfort all who mourn; to place on those who mourn in Zion, a diadem instead of ashes, to give them oil of gladness instead of mourning, a glorious mantle instead of a faint spirit.

Both of these passages reveal that the Messiah will be filled with the Holy Spirit. These passages also reveal the effects of the Holy Spirit. Jesus certainly lived these perfectly, since He

was perfectly one with the Holy Spirit. But for our purposes in reflecting upon the Sacrament of Confirmation, we should see these gifts and effects of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Messiah as invitations to each of us to also receive these same gifts and these same effects. We are to be Christ to the world and, thus, allow the Holy Spirit to act in us in the same way the Spirit acted in Jesus.

This fact is seen in the following passage from the prophet Ezekiel:

I will put my spirit within you so that you walk in my statutes, observe my ordinances, and keep them. (Ez. 36:27))

**Gospels:** Mt. 3:16 and Jn. 1:32-33, both speak of the baptism of Jesus. At that baptism, we read that the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove. It's true that the Holy Spirit was already fully alive in Jesus' life; so, truth be told, Jesus did not receive the Holy Spirit at this moment. He was already one with the Spirit and the Father. This manifestation of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus at His baptism took place so that all of us would witness the manifestation of this unity through the eyes of faith. It was a physical and historical manifestation of what was already there.

This episode took place, in part, to reveal to us that there is a Holy Spirit waiting to descend upon us also. Such an outpouring takes place in Baptism, but it also takes place through the unique and total outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation. Jesus' witness reveals our own calling in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

The fact that we are all called to receive the Holy Spirit is also made clear in the Gospels. Here are a few passages that reveal this sacred fact:

For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that moment what you should say. (Lk. 12:12)

Whoever believes in me, as scripture says: "Rivers of living water will flow from within him." He said this in reference to the Spirit that those who came to believe in him were to receive. There was, of course, no Spirit yet, because Jesus had not yet been glorified. (Jn. 7:38-39)

But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. (Jn. 16:7)

**Acts of the Apostles:** The Acts of the Apostles records the activity within the early Church, after Jesus ascended into Heaven. This is the KEY to understanding the actual Sacrament of Confirmation. Up until this point, we see many promises of the Holy Spirit; and we find, in the Old Testament and in Jesus' own words, many insights into the effect of the Holy Spirit. But here, in the Acts, we see these promises being fulfilled. We actually see the Spirit descending upon humanity and working wonders in the lives of those receiving the Holy Spirit. This takes place at Pentecost and is recorded in Acts 2:1-4:

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together.

And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

Immediately after being filled with the Holy Spirit, the Apostles went out into the streets and began to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus with boldness and confidence. And another amazing

thing happened. They were also given the gift of tongues! With this gift they spoke the Gospel in their language; but, miraculously, all who were gathered heard them speak in their own native language. A close reading of this Scripture reveals that the Apostles were heard in at least fifteen different languages. Of course, everyone was confused and was wondering how this had happened.

At that, Peter stood up and revealed that it was a fulfillment of the Prophet Joel who said: "It will come to pass in the last days," God says, "that I will pour out a portion of my spirit upon all flesh. Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. Indeed, upon my servants and my handmaids I will pour out a portion of my spirit in those days, and they shall prophesy. And I will work wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below: blood, fire, and a cloud of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the coming of the great and splendid day of the Lord, and it shall be that everyone shall be saved who calls on the name of the Lord." (Acts 2:17-21)

Peter then went on to proclaim the truth about Jesus to all who were there. He spoke of the fact that Jesus was the Messiah who came into the world from the Father, suffered, died, was buried and rose on the third day. Peter then called everyone to repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And even though there were some who were deeply confused and even angered at Peter for speaking these truths, he did not back down, because he was now empowered by the Holy Spirit.

One of the best ways to understand the effects of the Holy Spirit as given in the Sacrament of Confirmation is to read the entire book of the Acts of the Apostles. Look especially at the fear and timidity the Apostles experienced before Pentecost. They were afraid of being arrested and persecuted and suffering the same fate as Jesus on the Cross. But after Pentecost (Confirmation), they were suddenly bold and filled with incredible gifts and charisms and became powerful instruments of the Gospel. They were now able to carry out the mission they were given by Jesus.

The same is true for us. We may want to fulfill our Christian calling, but all too often we are afraid. Let's face it. We are often afraid to let our faith in Christ move from our heart to our mouths and actions. There is often a fear that paralyzes us and keeps us from confidently and openly allowing our faith to be made manifest for all to see.

Take, for example, the fact that so many are embarrassed to make the sign of the Cross and say grace before their meal in a restaurant or in any other public setting. Or the fact that it's hard to post something about our faith on Facebook or other social media. We are often afraid to speak of our love of Christ and to practice our faith openly in our social circles. Why is this? It's because the Gift of God, the Gift of the Holy Spirit, has not taken hold. Even if we have received the Sacrament of Confirmation, we can still be timid. This tells us that we must open ourselves up all the more to let the effects of the Holy Spirit become active in our lives. Fear must be cast out and confidence must take its place.

Perhaps the best way to start down this road is to understand, more fully, the actual effects of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation. With a proper understanding of these effects, we can more easily allow the Holy Spirit to do what He wants to do. So let's look at what He wants to do.

**To Be Continued**



**PASTOR'S SCHEDULE**  
**EVENTS WEEK OF 7 - 15 MAR**

Saturday 7 Mar

8:30 a.m. Mass  
10:00 a.m. Pvt Celebration  
10:30 a.m. Pvt Celebration  
1:30 p.m. Confession  
5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass 2nd Sunday of Lent Confirmation

Sunday 8 Mar 2nd Sunday of Lent

7:00 a.m., 8:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. Masses 8:00 p.m. Mass Brig

Monday 9 Mar Day Off

6:30 a.m. Mass  
7:00 a.m. Confession  
8:30 a.m. Mass  
1:30 p.m. Appointment

Tuesday 10 Mar

6:30 a.m. Mass  
7:00 a.m. Confession  
**8:30 a.m. Mass Cancelled**  
9:30 a.m. Meetin  
5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. St. Brides

Wednesday 11 Mar

6:30 a.m. Mass  
7:00 a.m. Confession  
8:30 a.m. Mass  
5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Indian Creek Mass

Thursday 12 Mar

6:30 a.m. Mass  
7:00 a.m. Confession  
8:30 a.m. Mass  
5:00 p.m. Confessions  
6:30 p.m. Mass  
7:00 p.m. Lenten Lessons

Friday 13 Mar

6:30 a.m. Mass  
7:00 a.m. Confession  
8:30 a.m. Mass  
5:00 – 8:30 p.m. KoC Fish Fry  
5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Adoration & Confessions  
7:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross

Saturday 14 Mar

8:30 a.m. Mass

1:30 -4:30 p.m. Confessions  
5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass Third Sunday of Lent  
Sunday 15 Mar Third Sunday of Lent  
7:00 a.m. 8:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m. Masses 8:00 p.m. Brig Mass

