

St. Timothy Confirmation
February 8, 2009

Good afternoon on this auspicious occasion. I'm Jim Connors and I am with the St. Tim's parish council, and on behalf of the parish would like to say a few words welcoming the confirmandi to fuller membership in our parish.

But first, I normally would offer welcome to Bishop Campbell who is unable to be with us today due to a foot problem, please keep him in your prayers. Fr. Tim, you have proven to be a worthy substitute, and we appreciate and thank you for your service here today.

To the confirmandi, on behalf of the entire parish, we welcome you with open arms and open hearts.

The gift of the Holy Spirit allows us to do God's work on earth. We receive the Holy Spirit when we open our hearts and minds to God's word. The Spirit empowers us for service. Confirmation is not a "graduation" from involvement in the community, but the threshold to greater involvement through the Holy Spirit.

The sacrament of confirmation represents a change in your spiritual life. It is a beginning not an end, a start not a finish. It is a threshold to far greater things, an acknowledgment, of the Holy Spirit in each one of us. You have made a commitment to God to allow the Holy Spirit to participate in your lives.

Give Jesus an opening somewhere. He is asking you each to form that opening and he wants to work with you so that opening can reach the size that he intended. If you want to be his vessel, the vessel has to have an opening. Let the spirit fill that opening and guide you.

The strength that you receive from this sacrament will give you the courage to deal with whatever life throws at you, and the ability to meet its challenges with grace and dignity.

So we the parish issue a challenge to each one of you. Get involved in a ministry, a vocation, a club, a bible study, a team, liturgy, anything. Go to Mass when you do not have to, continue being a buddy to the first graders, practice random acts of charity and kindness, help your parents and siblings participate in the parish, make this parish grow spiritually and otherwise. There are many things each of you can do. Try some of them out. You will be doing God's work if you allow the Holy Spirit to act through you. That

is your challenge. You can do it with it what you choose. Fr. Tim, Rita Feige, your teachers, and others will not be checking on you. It is up to you.

Confirmation brings with it responsibility. Like most things in life, it is worth only what you put into it and how you respond. The apostles hid in fear after Jesus was crucified, but once filled with the Holy Spirit were willing to die for their faith. They took the gift that Jesus bestowed on them and used it in God's service.

Is this easy or always fun? Not really. Is it perhaps the most awesome thing to do God's work at this time in your life? Absolutely.

Given that the church is celebrating this year with Paul, I like to refer to Paul in Romans Ch. 12, verse 2, who had this to say, "Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect." He later adds:

For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another.

The parish hopes you accept the challenge of your faith. Let the Holy Spirit rock in your world. We look forward to seeing all of you involved in whatever way you find. Do not be afraid to ask for guidance. Be humble. Let the Spirit live.

If you allow yourself to be filled with the Holy Spirit instead of yourselves, you will make God smile, the world a much better place, and your parish a true home, your spiritual home. Fr. Tim likes it that we describe this parish as a family, and a family indeed it is. Support flourishes here. Your only obligation is to let it in and then give it back to someone else. What better way than to allow the Holy Spirit to invade your life in every respect?

So with that, we, your parish family, lay down the ultimate challenge. Do something with this sacrament, make it live in your life, be proactive in your faith, and make God smile.

To the confirmation class of 2009 at St. Timothy's let us give a warm welcome and round of applause from the entire parish. Congratulations.

Everyone is invited and asked to please join the confirmandi in a reception to immediately follow this Mass in the cafeteria. Thank you and may God bless you.

