

Today's the day you all you Confirmand start speaking in tongues, doing great miracle healings, casting out demons and prophesying in the name of God, right? That would be really something, something very, very unusual. Well then, what do we expect the effect of this sacrament to be? What is it going to do? Certainly not something that your families will be sitting watching you intently waiting for it to happen. That's one of the difficulties with the Sacrament of Confirmation. After a baby is baptized, it grows up as we would expect. After First Communion the person, whether a child or adult, goes from not doing something to doing something that is receiving the Lord in the Eucharist. With Confirmation, you could imagine the conversation, "Did it work?" "I don't know. I can't tell." Any outward sign of the sacrament's effect is often not visible for some time, even a number of years. And we treat that as normal. I was Confirmed when I was 8 years old. "O yes, this one's going to be a priest." The only thing my parents could tell at that age was that I was going to be a royal pain, which I already was.

To get a handle on this, let's begin with what it means to confirm something. Google says it is to establish the truth or correctness of something. Just before leaving for vacation I like to confirm my travel reservations so that I know I have a seat on the plain and that when I get to my hotel they won't say, sorry we don't have you in our computer and I'm left sitting out on the curb with my suitcases wondering where to go next. Not a good situation to be in.

So what are we Confirming today? That you all showed up? Certainly it's a bit more than that. We are confirming that since your Baptism you each have grown in the faith of Jesus Christ, so much so, that you are ready to take on a new role in the community of the faith. For all of you who are about to be Confirmed if you have grown in the faith since your Baptism such that you are ready to take on new responsibilities in the Christian Community please stand up. (allow a moment) There we've just confirmed that fact. You may sit down.

Now, what is that new role or responsibility? The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that the Sacrament of Confirmation empowers one to witness to the faith. Before you grab your Bible and head for the nearest street corner to do some preaching, we probably should say the witnessing can take on many different forms. And this is why the outward signs of the effects of this Sacrament are often delayed for some time. The type of witness you will be called to give may not become apparent for many years. Certainly my priestly vocation wasn't ready to manifest at age 8. Besides being a priest, I've been a PSR teacher, I've been a coach, a day school teacher, a mentor, a counselor and a friend to many different people all under the umbrella of the Catholic Church and each in their own proper time. If we are listening, the Holy Spirit will prompt or nudge us to step up to do things when the time is right. Only one is a vocation, but many of the things we may be asked to do, can do great good for other people. Witnessing is about living out our call to be a disciple of Jesus. When we try to live as He calls us to live and speak the message of His love and forgiveness to others when we get that nudge at the time we get the nudge, we are fulfilling the mandate to witness we receive through Confirmation. The nudge may be to a lifelong commitment, to marry that person or to love all people enough to forgo marriage, the vocations to married life, religious life or single life for

the sake of God's Kingdom. It can be a nudge to get involved, like be a PSR teacher, or it can be a nudge for this moment, like give that homeless person a few of dollars.

Confirmation is a long-haul kind of sacrament in which we realize that at any moment, maybe today or maybe not today, maybe not or it might be this week or even this year, but there will be points in our lives when we will feel that nudge that says "okay, it's time. God needs you to step up and do..." and what you need to do will be right in front of you. That's what you commit to today, to be on call for whenever the need arises. Those of you who are about to be Confirmed, if you are ready to commit to be on call to do whatever God asks you to do when the need arises, please stand up. (pause) Now I will ask you to reaffirm your baptismal promise and make an act of faith before you are Confirmed.