

Session F—Afternoon of the Third Day

Fifth Talk

Important Information for the Speaker

Many of the earlier talks ask the speaker to adopt the point of view of “what do pastors need to tell Catholics because Catholics’ spirituality depends on it.” This talk should be given from a different point of view, not the point of view of what Catholics in general need to know, but of what pastors in particular need to know about the relation to the apostles’ pastoral ministry of the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. That may not have been covered sufficiently in their training, since post-Trent seminaries sometimes did not pay enough attention to how to foster discipleship and to the hierarchy of Christian truths rather than to specifically Catholic and Orthodox dogmatic theology.

This is a 40-minute talk.

Goals

To ensure that pastors understand:

- That the power for their pastoral ministry comes from the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- That receiving the Spirit is meant to empower us by giving us the appreciation of the divine indwelling whose role in our spirituality this retreat has emphasized.
- That since Catholics receive the Holy Spirit in Confirmation, pastors can rely on the Spirit to make their proclamation of the greatness of the Great News bear fruit.
- That while presbyters should rejoice in their ministry, their greatest joy should come from an appreciation of the Gift of God that the Spirit gives all Christians.

Checklist for the Speaker

To achieve these goals, the speaker should ask himself: As a result of my talk, how well will the retreatants appreciate Catholics’ need to grasp the following points, and how well will the retreatants understand how to present these points?

1. At Pentecost, the apostles already had the power to celebrate the Eucharist and forgive sins. But their pastoral mission needed another power that Jesus told them to wait for.
2. Pentecost empowered their pastoral ministry by fulfilling the prophecies of a new heart by which God will cause us to do his will out of love and joy, not out of servile fear.
3. Included in those prophecies is the promise that receiving the Holy Spirit will give all people a personal knowledge of God.
4. John’s gospel and Paul’s epistles teach that receiving the Spirit is meant to give us an awareness of the real presence of divine life in us.

5. When we preach the reality of the Trinity in us, we can count on the grace of Confirmation to give Catholics the appreciation of the Gift of God that spirituality requires.
6. Scripture teaches that receiving the Spirit is meant to do for us what the Synoptics portray the descent of the Spirit at Jesus' baptism doing for him.
7. Baptism alone causes love and joy, but Confirmation causes sufficient love and joy for us to form the mature and definitive intention of dedicating our lives to full discipleship.
8. The Spirit overcomes fear, but that is not the core of what he does throughout the Acts of the Apostles. "Soldiers of Christ" really means the confirmed will share Jesus with others joyfully out of love.
9. We can tell teenagers that Confirmation will let them do God's will joyfully because they want to, but they needn't understand the meaning of "full discipleship" at that age.
10. We should take joy in our exalted ministry, but take incomparably more joy in the Gift of God that we share with all Christians.

If any of the points in this checklist are things the speaker does not wish to include in his talk, for the sake of teamwork the speaker should (1) inform the rest of his team of the specific points he does not wish to cover (2) inform the rest of the team what he plans to do instead, and (3) get the consensus of the team for his plan.

If there is a consensus about not covering those points from the checklist, the team can do one of two things instead. (1) They can agree to cover the points in other talks and work out which talks will cover them and how. (2) They can agree not to cover the points at all, since the checklist is not infallible. But before choosing (2) each member of the team should read the paragraphs in the "Explanation of the Outline" and in the Appendix that explain those points and why they were considered pastorally important in the first place.

So checklist points should be deleted from the retreat only if the entire team understands why they were originally considered important from a pastoral point of view, whether or not they are important from any other point of view. The reason why they were included in the first place *may not always be obvious*, especially to alumni of post-Trent seminaries. For example, the reason may concern cultural conditions unique to us but so prevalent that we hardly notice them. (See, for example, the discussion of the phrase "children of God" in Section II.5 of the "Expanded Outline" and the "Explanation of the Outline.")

Since the team's discernment of whether to delete a checklist point, and what to cover instead, will take time, a speaker who does not wish to include a checklist point should give the rest of the team ample advance notice.

Brief Outline

- I. "Stay in the City, Until You Are Clothed with Power from on High" (Lk 24:49).

- II. Jeremiah's promise of God's law written on our hearts means that the Spirit enables us to obey God out of love; not coercion, for God's law of love will be our heart's desire.
- III. As the continuation of the Spirit's descent at Pentecost, Confirmation is the sacrament of Christian joy; it enables us to do God's will joyfully out of love.
- IV. If we pastor properly, the Spirit will give Catholics the joyful desire to bring the Gift of God to all human beings.
- V. The source of the overflowing joy the apostles showed at Pentecost was receiving the same Spirit that gave all the other Christians in the Acts of the Apostles overflowing joy.

Expanded Outline

- I. "Stay in the City Until, You Are Clothed with Power from on High" (Lk 24:49).
 - A. The apostles already had the power to celebrate the Eucharist and forgive sins. But their pastoral mission needed another power that Jesus told them to wait for.
 - 1. The descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost empowered their *pastoral* ministry, which is necessary for the fruits of their sacramental ministry.
 - 2. St. Paul says, "Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the Great News" (1 Co 1:17). He was sent for the pastoral work needed to achieve the foundational sacrament's goals.
 - B. What did the Spirit do for the disciples on Pentecost to empower them?
 - 1. First, the descent of the Holy Spirit fulfilled the prophecy of Ezekiel 36:26-27:

I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts. I will put my Spirit within you and make you live by my statutes, careful to observe my decrees. (NAB)
 - 2. Second, by fulfilling Ezekiel's prophecy of a new heart the descent of Spirit the fulfilled Jeremiah's earlier prophecy:
 - a. I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel . . . not like the covenant which I made with their fathers. . . . I will put my law within them, *and I will write it upon their hearts* No longer shall each man teach his neighbor . . . saying, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. (Jr 31:31-34)
 - b. Ezekiel develops Jeremiah's promise of God's law written on our hearts into the promise of a new heart which is his own Spirit living in us by which God himself will cause us to obey him.

- c. Joel's prophecy that the Spirit would be poured out on all, men and women, young and old, servants and masters (Jl 3:1-5), echoed Jeremiah's promise that "they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest."
 - 3. When St. Peter promised the Holy Spirit to the Jerusalem converts, those devout Jews would have understood that these well known and long awaited prophecies would be fulfilled in them.
- II. Jeremiah's promise of God's law written on our hearts means that the Spirit enables us to obey God out of love, not coercion, for God's law of love will be our heart's desire.
 - A. Because we will do God's will out of love, we will do it joyfully, not out of coercion or fear of punishment, since doing God's will is what we most want to do.
 - B. Love comes from knowing how good the object of love is. Essential to the joy the disciples had at Pentecost was a personal knowledge of God.
 - 1. Jeremiah's prophecy promised a personal knowledge of God because the knowledge would go beyond just accepting what other people said:

No longer will each man teach his neighbor . . . saying, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. (Jr 31:31-34)
 - 2. The Gospel of John and Paul's epistles say that receiving the Spirit is meant to cause an awareness of the real presence of God in us.
 - a. The speaker should quote and or hand out this from Jn 14:16-20

I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor . . . , the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; **you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you. . . . In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.**
 - b. "In that day," the day that I send the Counselor, the Paraclete, "you will know" that I am divine ("I am in my Father"), and you will know that you are dwelling in me ("and you in me"), and you will know that I am dwelling in you ("and I in you").
 - c. The speaker should quote this from Gal. 4:6:

Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father! (read: "Daddy!")."

d. This consciousness of God's fatherhood and our sonship is awareness of our participation in the life of God himself.

4. We know how good God is to the extent that we know his love for us is. Receiving the Spirit shows us how great God's love is by making us aware that he has given us his own glory.

I have given them the glory you have given me. (Jn 17:22; and see Rm 8:30; Ep 1:5-6; 2 Co 9:14-15)

C. The conscious appreciation of the Gift of God that spirituality depends on is promised by Scripture as an essential part of what the Holy Spirit did at Pentecost.

1. Pastors need to know that they can count on the Holy Spirit to back up their proclamation of the indwelling of the Trinity. As the baptizer in the Spirit, Jesus gives those who repent and believe the appreciation of God's indwelling that Catholic spirituality relies on.

2. Not all Christians need an overwhelming experience of the kind the Spirit gave throughout the Acts of the Apostles. (Sts. John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila say that not all Christians need "infused contemplation.")

III. As the continuation of the Spirit's descent at Pentecost, Confirmation is the sacrament of Christian joy; it enables us to do God's will joyfully out of love.

A. In fulfilling Ezekiel's prophecy, Pentecost gave the apostles a change of consciousness, a new awareness that moved them to joyfully proclaim the Great News out of love for all their fellow human beings.

1. Since God is love, his real presence in us is the real presence of his personal love for all he has created to share his glory.

2. By appreciating how great God's gift is, the apostles at Pentecost knew how much everyone created to receive that gift deserve our love. They knew how great is the destiny for which each person is made.

They long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!
(2 Cor 9:14-15)

B. The pastoral dimension of our presbyterial mission presupposes and relies on our confirmational empowerment.

1. Jesus' public ministry only began after John's baptism, which each gospel associates with the prophecy of Pentecost.

a. Mark and Luke portray Jesus, not the crowds, as hearing "You are my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." In Matthew Jesus,

not the crowds, as seeing the Spirit descend on him.

- b. The authors are saying that when their readers received the Spirit, their new awareness of sonship was a participation in Jesus' human awareness of sharing God's own life. The historicity of the gospels and the theology of Jesus' human knowledge are not at issue here.
 - c. What the gospels portray as beginning Jesus' public ministry is the same work of the Spirit that began the apostle's ministry.
- C. Confirmation gives the whole royal priesthood, clergy and lay alike, the joyful desire to bring the Gift of God to all human beings.
- 1. Baptismal grace also allows us to act out of love of God and neighbor and joyfully desire to share Christ with others.
 - 2. Specific to the sacrament of Confirmation is sufficient awareness of the greatness of God's gift for us to lovingly and joyfully form, at the proper time, a mature and definitive intention of sharing Christ with others as our life's mission.
 - 3. Or we can describe what is specific to the grace of Confirmation as the ability to make a mature choice of the "full discipleship" described in such places as Lk 14:26-32.
- IV. If we pastor properly, the Spirit will give Catholics the joyful desire to bring the Gift of God to all human beings.
- A. This is the true meaning of being "soldiers of Christ." We work for the salvation of souls out of love, not out of militancy or obedience of a servile kind.
 - a. Love, and joy based on knowing God's love, were the essence of the Spirit's work.
 - b. Perhaps the apostles were fearful before Pentecost, but in the other descents of the Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles fear played no role. But profound joy did.
 - B. The most important thing for pastors to do is NOT to preach about confirmation, but proclaim the glory of being Christian as a gift freely bestowed by Jesus. The Holy Spirit will back us up.
 - C. Pastoral advice: We should tell our teenagers that confirmation enables us to obey God joyfully because we want to.

But don't expect them to understand that obeying God joyfully will mean dedicating their whole lives to saving souls. The Spirit will lead them to that in due time.

- V. The source of the overflowing joy the apostles showed at Pentecost was receiving the same Spirit that gave all the other Christians in the Acts of the Apostles overflowing joy.
- A. Priests should take joy in their great ministry. But a Christian’s basic joy does not come from his ministry but from the Gift of God that all Christians share (ask them to read Scripture quote 7).
- “Do not rejoice so much that the devils are subject to you as that your names are inscribed in heaven.” (Quote 7, Lk 10:20; NAB).*
- B. Jesus doesn’t mean to take no joy in our great vocation, but to take incomparably more joy in the divine life that all Christians share.

Explanation of the Outline

Why These Points Are Important for Priests to Know and This Retreat to Teach

Section I.

The apostles were ordained before Pentecost. They already had the power to celebrate the Eucharist and forgive sins. But their pastoral mission needed another power that Jesus told them to wait for. Luke twice cites obedience to the Lord, not fear, as the main reason the disciples stayed in the cenacle:

“Stay in the City, Until You Are Clothed with Power from on High” (Lk 24:49; Ac 1:4).

The descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost empowered their *pastoral* ministry, which is necessary for the fruits of their sacramental ministry. Their pastoral ministry is what unleashed the power of their sacramental ministry.

Once again, this retreat calls attention to St. Paul’s statement that

Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the Great News. (1 Co 1:17)

Paul knew that the *operato* power of baptism took care of itself; it didn’t need any help from him. He was sent for the pastoral work needed to unleash the power of the baptism and the subsequent sacraments, the work needed to achieve the sacraments goals.

What did the Spirit do for the disciples on Pentecost to empower them? Our training, both catechetical and theological, too often under emphasizes what Scripture says about the promised work of the Holy Spirit. St. Peter told the Jews celebrating Pentecost that they were witnessing the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy of God pouring out his Spirit on all humankind. Those devout Jews would have known that Joel’s prophecy completes a prophecy of Ezekiel, which in turn completes a prophecy of Jeremiah.

The descent of the Holy Spirit fulfilled the prophecy of Ezekiel 36:26-27:

I will give you a new heart and place a new spirit within you, taking from your bodies

your stony hearts and giving you natural hearts. I will put my Spirit within you and make you live by my statutes, careful to observe my decrees. (NAB)

Ezekiel associates receiving the Spirit with a receiving a new heart through which God himself will causes us to fulfill his law. Devout Jews would have recognized that prophecy as a further development of Jeremiah's promise of the New Covenant:

I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel . . . not like the covenant which I made with their fathers. . . . I will put my law within them, *and I will write it upon their hearts* No longer shall each man teach his neighbor . . . saying, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. (Jr 31:31-34)

Ezekiel develops Jeremiah's promise that God will write his law on our hearts into the promise that God will give us a new heart which is his own Spirit living in us, and through which God himself will cause us to obey his laws.

And notice that Joel's prophecy that the Spirit would be poured out on all, men and women, young and old, servants and masters (Jl 3:1-5), echoed Jeremiah's promise that "they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest." These prophecies were well known to devout Jews and their scribes. St. Peter was explaining what happened at Pentecost as the long awaited fulfillment of these prophecies.

Section II.

The effect of receiving the Holy Spirit is that we are enabled to obey God's will spontaneously out of love, not just out of fear or coercion. That is what Jeremiah's prophecy means by our having God's law written on our hearts. Doing what God wants will be what our hearts most desire. Because we will do God's will out of love, we will do it joyfully, not out of coercion or fear of punishment, since doing God's will is what we most want to do.

As a conscious act, love is a response to the goodness seen in the object of love. We need an appreciative awareness of God's goodness in order to respond to God with the love he deserves. Such an appreciative awareness is a promised result of receiving the Spirit. We will have an awareness of God's goodness sufficient to make us want to do his will just because his goodness is so great.

A personal awareness of God, including God's personal presence within them, is essential to the joy the disciples had at Pentecost. Jeremiah's prophecy, which Pentecost fulfilled, promised a personal knowledge of God because the knowledge would go beyond just accepting what other people said:

No longer will each man teach his neighbor . . . saying, "Know the Lord," for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. (Jr 31:31-34)

The Gospel of John and Paul's epistles confirm that receiving the Spirit is meant to cause such an awareness in Christians. John 14:16-20 says:

The Father . . . will give you another Counselor, In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you."

Paul refers to receiving the Spirit as a conscious experience in Galatians 3:2-5; if it was not a conscious experience, the point of his argument would have been lost on the Galatians.

Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? . . . Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh? Did you experience so many things in vain? . . . Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? (Ga 3:2-5).

And the consciousness Paul associates with empowering reception of the Spirit is Trinitarian and filial, just as it is in the gospels. Receiving the Spirit is meant to make us conscious of divine sonship, i.e., of having divine life:

Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” (read: “Daddy!”; Ga 4:6).

You have received the Spirit of sonship. When we cry, “Abba! Father!” it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our Spirit that we are children of God (Rm 8:15-16).

In the last two texts, Paul is again arguing from his readers’ conscious experience of their sonship; otherwise, he could not expect them to understand what he was talking about. Paul’s readers were conscious of having received the Spirit, and receiving the Spirit made them conscious of God’s fatherhood and their sonship. So it made them aware of the existence of the Trinity and their participation in the Trinity’s life. Consciousness of being God’s child is consciousness of sharing his life; so it is also consciousness of God’s living in us.

And this consciousness went beyond that of faith, since Paul tells the Galatians that we acquire it only through faith, which therefore must exist already. So this consciousness goes beyond that of faith but does not replace faith; rather, it presupposes faith.

Notice that the awareness expressed by the cry “Abba! Father!” is awareness of the same thing expressed by God’s words, “You are my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased,” to Jesus at his baptism: divine Sonship. Paul is saying that receiving the Spirit makes us aware of the same possession of God’s own life that the Synoptics portray Jesus becoming aware of at his baptism.

Also, if the empowering reception of the Spirit did not include a consciousness that went beyond faith, Paul could not have expected his readers to understand him when he called the Spirit a “pledge” (also translated “deposit,” “down payment,” and “guarantee”) “of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it” (Ep 1:14; 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5). The word translated “pledge” does not mean a merely verbal promise but something of concrete physical value given as proof of the intention to pay fully later. Giving a deposit is for something is the precisely the opposite of asking the receiver to rely solely on faith in your promise to pay. If Paul was asking his readers just to make an act of faith that they had received the Spirit, there would be no point in calling it a pledge. That would be like the buyer of a house or car telling the seller, “You don’t have to ask me for a partial payment first because you can have faith in me when I say I intend to

pay fully; isn't my promise to pay fully as good as a down payment?" (Paul is probably also referring to the experiential dimension of receiving the Spirit when he says the pledge has been "put in our hearts" [2 Cor 1:22; Rm 5:5].)

Love comes from knowing of the goodness of the object of love. Receiving the Spirit taught the disciples how good God is by revealing how great his love for us is. The Spirit taught them how great God's love is by showing them that he has given them his own glory. "I have given them the glory you have given me". (Jn 17:22). And

He destined us . . . to the *praise of his glorious grace*. . . . We . . . have been destined . . . to live for the *praise of his glory*. (Ep 1:5-6, 12)

The second talk, Session B, said that spirituality depends on an appreciative awareness of the greatness of the Gift of God. Now we can see that Scripture promises us that appreciative awareness as an essential part of what the Holy did at Pentecost. The third talk, Session C, said that the divine indwelling is an entirely free and unmerited gift that we obtain by accepting Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior. The appreciative awareness of the divine indwelling is also a free unmerited gift obtained by repentance and faith. Now we can see how that appreciation comes to us: through the sending of the Holy Spirit which began at Pentecost.

So pastors can count on the Holy Spirit to back up their proclamation of the indwelling of the Trinity. As the baptizer in the Spirit, Jesus gives those who repent and believe the appreciation of God's indwelling that Catholic spirituality relies on. But pastors should not promise all Christians the kind of overwhelming experience that the Spirit gave throughout the Acts of the Apostles. We know this from the teaching of Sts. John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila. They are Doctors of the Church due to their teaching on that kind of experience, which became known as "infused contemplation," that is, infused awareness of the presence of God within us.

But they also told the members of their communities that not all good Christians receive infused contemplation. Ultimately, what counts in the Christian life is doing the will of God, not our interior experiences. Relative to doing the will of God, everything else is an aid, a means to that end. Infused contemplation is a tremendous aid for doing the will of God, but not everyone needs that aid. Still, doing the will of God does require an appreciation of what Jesus has done for us, since the Christian life is a conscious response to what he has done for us. So all Christians receive the kind of appreciation of the Gift of God that they need for the particular Christian life that God has prepared for us to lead, even if that appreciation does not come in the form of an overwhelming experience like infused contemplation.

Section III.

As the continuation of the Spirit's descent at Pentecost, Confirmation is the sacrament of Christian joy; it enables us to do God's will joyfully out of love.

In fulfilling Ezekiel's prophecy of a personal knowledge of God, Pentecost gave the apostles a change of consciousness, a new awareness that moved them to joyfully proclaim the Great News out of love for all their fellow human beings. Since God is love, his real presence in us is the real presence of his love for all humankind.

By appreciating how great God's gift is, the apostles at Pentecost knew how much everyone created to receive that gift deserve our love. They knew how great is the destiny for which each person is made.

They long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God in you.
Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift! (2 Cor 9:14-15)

The pastoral dimension of our presbyterial mission presupposes and relies on our confirmational empowerment. When Jesus told the apostles to wait for power they did not yet have, even though they had been ordained, he was referring to the kind of power the gospels portray Jesus himself receiving at his baptism by John the Baptist. Jesus' public ministry only began after John's baptism, which each gospel associates with the prophecy of Pentecost. What the gospels portray as beginning Jesus' public ministry is the same work of the Spirit that began the apostles' ministry.

Mark and Luke portray Jesus, not the crowds, as hearing the words "You are my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." The Father's words are addressed to Jesus. In Matthew, the Father's words are addressed to others, not to Jesus. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." ut Matthew portrays Jesus, not the crowds, as seeing the Spirit descend on him.

The point here is not the historicity of the baptism accounts. Nor is it the theology of whether Jesus' human consciousness of his Sonship grew. The point is that the authors knew their readers would recognize what the synoptics portray happening to Jesus at his baptism, where Pentecost is prophesied, as the same thing that happened to them when they received the Spirit. The synoptics portray Jesus as acquiring a human awareness of his divine sonship, which consists of the presence in him of God's own life. So the synoptics are prophesying what their authors knew had already occurred: that the receiving of the Holy Spirit would give Christians an awareness that they had divine life.

Confirmation gives the whole royal priesthood, clergy and lay alike, the joyful desire to bring the Gift of God to all human beings. We already live God's life by faith, hope and love at baptism. The gift of faith can give us a joyful awareness of God's love, and receiving the Holy Spirit in confirmation presupposes faith. So we can act out of love of God and neighbor and joyfully desire to share Christ with others before confirmation.

But specific to Confirmation as a sacrament in addition to baptism is sufficient awareness of the greatness of God's gift that we are able to lovingly and joyfully make a mature definitive choice of sharing Christ with others as our life's mission. Confirmation gives anyone the grace needed to make, at the proper time, the kind of conscious lifetime choice of mission that the apostles could not make with the kind of awareness of God's goodness sufficient for such a definitive choice until Pentecost. And Luke 4:1-21 has Jesus explain his undertaking of his public ministry as the work of the same Spirit he received when he became conscious of his divine sonship at his baptism.

Another way to put it: Specific to confirmation is the grace to make a mature choice of the "full discipleship" described in such places as Lk 14:26-27.

If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children

and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. . . .
Whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

(Whatever Jesus meant by “hate” in this passage, we should note that it doesn’t mean something that we apply to others and not to ourselves. Jesus explicitly states that we only “hate” our mothers or children in a sense in which we also “hate” our own lives. And whatever that kind of “hate” is, it must be compatible with the commandment to love others as we love ourselves, which remains the second greatest commandment.)

Maturity is needed for a choice to be morally definitive. But this theology of mission is fully compatible with confirming infants, just as the theology of salvation is compatible with baptizing infants. The choice need not first happen at the time of confirmation or at any dramatic moment in someone’s life. Our job is to continuously yield to the Spirit, surrender to it, accept our new heart, and follow the law written on it.

But do not forget that, as Aquinas tells us, the baptized can obtain the graces of confirmation before receiving the actual sacrament, just as nonChristians can obtain the graces of baptism by desire.¹ (The permanent character that is a grace of these sacraments may be an exception requiring the administering of the sacrament.)

Section IV.

If we pastor properly, the Spirit will give all Catholics the joyful desire to bring the Gift of God to all human beings. Sharing Christ with others out of love and joy is the true meaning of being “soldiers of Christ.” Confirmation moves us to work for the salvation of souls out of love, not out of militancy or obedience of a servile kind. Love, and joy based on knowing God’s love, were the essence of the Spirit’s work. Perhaps the apostles were fearful before Pentecost, but in the other descents of the Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles fear played no role. But profound joy did.

For the fruits of the Spirit to be achieved, the most important thing for pastors to do is NOT to preach about confirmation. Rather, we must proclaim the glory of being Christian, and proclaim this glory as an entirely unmerited gift freely bestowed by Jesus. But pastors can trust the graces of confirmation to make their proclamation of the greatness of the Great News bear fruit. If we preach the true greatness of the Great News, the Holy Spirit will give Catholics the appreciation of it that they need.

Pastors should tell our teenagers that confirmation enables us to obey God joyfully because we want to. But we needn’t expect them to understand that obeying God joyfully will mean dedicating their whole lives to saving souls. That could appear frightening to them at that stage in their lives. We can count on the Spirit to lead them to that in due time.

The apostles were ordained before Pentecost. So the source of the overflowing joy they showed at Pentecost was not ordination but receiving the same Spirit that gave all the other Christians in the Acts of the Apostles overflowing joy. Priests definitely should take joy in their

great ministry. But a Christian's basic joy does not come from his ministry but from the Gift of God that all Christians share.

Do not rejoice so much that the devils are subject to you as that your names are inscribed in heaven. (Lk 10:20; NAB).

Jesus doesn't mean to take no joy in our great vocation, but to take incomparably more joy in the divine life that all Christians share.

Usable Quotes

Obedience not Fear Was the Disciples' Motive for Waiting Quotes:

1. Remain here in the city until you are clothed with power from on high (Lk 24:49).
2. On one occasion when he met with them, he told them not to leave Jerusalem: "Wait, rather, for the fulfillment of my Father's promise . . . Within a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Ac 1:4-5).

The Spirit Makes Us Aware of the Awesomeness of the Gift of God Quotes:

3. I will ask the Father and he will give you another Paraclete — to be with you always: the Spirit of Truth On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you (Jn 14:16-20).
4. Because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts crying, "Abba! Father!" (read: "Daddy!"; Ga 4:6).
5. You have received the Spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our Spirit that we are children of God (Rm 8:15-16).

Jesus Explains What Happened at His Baptism:

6. And Jesus, full of the Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit for forty days in the wilderness. . . . And he returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee. . . . And he came to Nazareth . . . He went to the synagogue There was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it is written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. (Is 61:1-2)

And he closed the book . . . He began to say to them: Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing. (Lk 4:1-21)

Ezekiel and Jeremiah:

7. A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. (Ezk 36:26-27)
8. The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel . . . not like the covenant which I made with their fathers. . . . I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts No longer will each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying “Know the Lord,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. (Jr 31:31-34)
9. I have given them the glory you have given me. (Jn 17:22; and see Rm 8:30; Ep 1:5-6; 2 Co 9:14-15)
10. They long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift! (2 Cor 9:14-15)
11. Do not rejoice so much that that the devils are subject to you as that your names are inscribed in heaven (Lk 10:20; NAB).

Endnotes

¹

ST III, q.72 a. 6 ad 1 and 3; q. 73 a. 3.