

Confirmation ReSourcesReSourcesResourcesResourcesResources

A quick look at a few examples that are hard to beat. by Bob Kloos

The Catechism

"A candidate for Confirmation who has attained the age of reason must profess the faith, be in the state of grace, have the intention of receiving the sacrament, and be prepared to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ, both within the ecclesial community and in temporal affairs." #1319, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Article 2, The Sacrament Of Confirmation.*

When Beacon Street is invited to provide an extended retreat just prior to the bishop's arrival for the Sacrament of Confirmation, the expectation is that I will show up with hands on, interactive, thought-provoking, mission-driving, Gospel-centered, Spirit-focused, gifts related stuff . . . that works. In most instances, our ministry is experienced and capable enough to do just that. But early on, shortly after introductions are behind us, I reach for a big stick - the definition of a Confirmation candidate as spelled out in the Catholic Catechism. It is the undisputed trump card. The primal resource. When I lay that down, everyone has to throw down his or her hand.

Our parish contact is often just hoping for a good day. The Catechism asks, instead, for everything the candidate has to offer. Anyone willing to present her or himself to the bishop must first of all be faithful, graceful, and mindful of what it means to invite the Holy Spirit to take over. That seems pretty clear to me, but I'm not with the candidates that day for the sake of *my* clarity. So I sometimes ask them if they think they possess the faith of a martyr, the fullness of grace like Mary, and the intention equal to that of a fifteen-and-a-half year-old determined to get a temporary driving permit. It gets quiet.

It is at this point I call to mind the wisdom of DRE's I have long admired who have chastened my enthusiasm with the gentle reminder: "You must leave something for the Spirit to do." So I back off a little on the profession of faith and allow them to find their own way through the twists and turns of an Apostle's Creed. I even try to put them at ease with the fact that grace, regardless of the fullness, is all gift. It is all God's doing. We are

instruments of peace: Jesus' hands and feet, his voice and his deeds. But I hesitate backing down on their need to have the proper intention. The intention to receive the sacrament is the will to pray "Come Holy Spirit." That intention is enough to "renew the face of the earth."

I often find myself standing before some very talented young men and women, abundantly gifted. And already many of them have demonstrated how responsible they are by their acts of charity in the community, service to elderly members of the family, and involvement at their school. To hold those examples high, to the acknowledgement and admiration of their peers, is to suggest this kind of discipleship and witness is within the reach of all who have the right intention. This takes us to the final statement regarding the candidate: "be prepared to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ, both within the ecclesial community and in temporal affairs."

"Disciple" is an Old English word that literally means "to take apart," that is, to grasp or analyze thoroughly. It means to be a pupil of Jesus, to follow closely and observe carefully so as to imitate. And to be a witness at the same time is to acknowledge that disciples *will be* observed, watched because of *what* they do and *how* they do it. And where will the disciple be witnessed? Everywhere. At worship, in school, among friends, while serving, at study, on the field, and on the sidelines.

Having played this card early in the game, it is time to move on to the next trick. "Who likes chocolate?"



Equal Exchange

When I produce 3.5 oz chocolate bars from Equal Exchange, all the kids sit up and take notice. I ask them to form random groups of five or six and decide which of the three varieties they want: milk chocolate, dark chocolate with almonds, or very dark chocolate. (Equal Exchange has several other varieties of chocolate available on their web