



Archdiocese of San Antonio
Most Rev. Gustavo García-Siller



Sacrament of Confirmation 2014

I will speak directly to those who are to be confirmed today. Of course, it is okay for all of you to listen in!

In a few moments I will lay my hands on each of you and call down the Holy Spirit upon you, the same Holy Spirit whom you received in Baptism. The Spirit will come into your lives in a new and powerful way. Your gifts of the Holy Spirit will be increased, the same Spirit who will strengthen your faith and help you to be generous in your service to others. Your bond with the Church will grow stronger, challenging you to take your rightful place in helping to carry out the Church's mission and ministries! Your witness to the Lord Jesus will be made more effective, so that you will be faithful to the gospel by your lives.

Recently, Pope Francis spoke about the Sacrament of Confirmation. He pointed out that, in effect, through the anointing with the oil called sacred Chrism, we are conformed, in the power of the Spirit, to Jesus Christ, who is the true anointed one, the Messiah. "It gives us a special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith... to confess the name of Christ boldly, and never to be ashamed of his Cross." The Holy Spirit gives us the strength to go on!

I mentioned that your **witness** to Jesus will be made more effective from today on. Allow me to explain what this means, borrowing words from what Pope Francis told the young people at World Youth Day last July.

First, Jesus says: Go and make disciples of all nations. He did not say: Go, if you like to or if you have the time! You are sent – not to dominate or overpower others,

but to love them as God loves them. We are to show respect for every human being, with no exceptions. There are no borders, no limits. Jesus sends us to everyone with the message of the gospel – the message of God’s compassionate love.

Second, Jesus says: Do not be afraid. You are not too young. Do not say you are not ready yet. “I am with you to deliver you.” The risen Lord will walk by your side, if you allow him. He will guide you and help you overcome whatever obstacles you meet. Believe this! And also remember that you are not walking alone. We are sent together! We go as a community of faith, a worldwide Church. We are a family; we walk together as brothers and sisters in the Lord.

Third, Jesus says: Serve others. Jesus practiced what he preached. He said he did not come into the world to **be served**, but to **serve** – and to give his very life for his Church. What will you do? Do you know the corporal works of mercy? Feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned. Jesus says that when we serve the most needy or vulnerable of our sisters and brothers, we serve Christ in them.

So, the Sacrament of Confirmation is a significant milestone along your journey way as young Catholics. You are taking on new, important responsibilities, and God will provide you with all you need for your journey. Through prayer and reflection – and this Sacrament -- you are being led towards a personal commitment to faith in Christ and awakened to a new sense of belonging to the Church.

I urge you always to keep in mind what happens to you here today. Draw near to God each day and pray – pray for guidance, for strength, for the needs of your family, friends, and the world! Thank God for his blessings and praise him, ask his forgiveness!

May Our Lady, the Mother of the Church, help all of us to realize a new zest for life and for the gospel of her beloved