

Homily 19th Sunday A 2020

Apart from the early weeks and months after birth, our lives evolve by asking questions - question after question after question. One of the key words is WHY! We don't just want answers to our questions, we want to know the how and the reasoning behind the answer. Unfortunately, we are not always good at answering the why. The why question looms large when we encounter natural catastrophes, illness and war; and we address the Why to God. We ask the question *where is God in all this?*

Having been created by God it is no wonder that we turn back to God when faced with these difficult questions. However, our hearts, minds and soul are continually seeking God, as St Augustine said: "*Our hearts are restless until they rest in thee my God!*" **When we** hear of Jesus curing the sick and disabled and today of his walking on water and calming storms, we believe that God could correct all the errors humankind has made, as well as the natural disasters, in an instant. Yet, even if that happened, we would still wish for an experience of God like Elijah, who had spent his whole life fulfilling God's will. He, too, wanted an experience of God that would confirm God's presence.

Despite the fact that through the Church we are given the sacraments to help us recognise how God is present and works in our lives, we have a deeper yearning for something more personal something deep within us that yearns for that unique experience that we can call our own. For Elijah, God was found in the gentle breeze. The special sacrament we are given to help us have this experience of God is Confirmation.

We are blessed with the gifts of the Spirit, already present in our lives but strengthened in a special way through Confirmation. There are times in our lives when we rejoice in the presence of God especially in times of success and joy. God's presence is far from clear when faced with catastrophe and tragedy, or threatening illnesses. It is therefore important that we learn to see how God is present in what we call the ordinary events of our lives, in the day to day. We will soon discover that nothing is ordinary, nothing is mundane. Everything will speak to us of God's presence if we allow it.

It is not necessary that we find God in a gentle breeze like Elijah. For us it may be in a smile, a greeting, in friendship, or in silence or the sound of the sea. But, most of all, it is in the discovery of how God lives, works and is present within us that is truly important. The gifts of the Spirit in Confirmation are given to us to do that.

The Church understands Confirmation as bringing to perfection the grace we received in Baptism. In receiving the Holy Spirit our relationship with God and in particular Jesus Christ is both strengthened and deepened, and, as a result, with each other in the Church. It is an invaluable help in our ability to bear witness to our Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds and in our ability to be Good News.

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Final thought . . .

Little Susie was watching her father, a pastor, write a sermon.
"How do you know what to say?" she asked.

Pastor "Why, God tells me."

Susie "Oh, then why do you keep crossing things out?"