

The Confirmation Conversation
The Gifts that Keep on Giving

Will the Diocese of Dodge City decide to celebrate Confirmation in conjunction with First Communion? Will it stay the course, with parishes celebrating confirmation for 8th through 11th graders? With no decision announced yet by Bishop Gilmore, who is, by the way, busy celebrating Confirmation in parishes, this series ends after looking at the issue from a variety of perspectives.

But first, I offer one last look at Confirmation, from the wider perspective of Christian mission. The Catechism teaches that one receives the full outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Confirmation just as the apostles did at Pentecost. Recall that Peter wasted no time. He immediately set about preaching, baptizing, healing, and breaking bread. That was the Christian mission, and he and his companions chose to accept it.

Today, also empowered for Christian mission, are the newly confirmed. Many are cradle-Catholic teenagers. Plenty more are adults and children, bright and shiny new Catholics, confirmed at Easter Vigil after participation in the RCIA. They, too, stand empowered for Christian mission. And whether they know it or not, each individual possesses spiritual gifts that are unique to him or her. Moreover, each one of them (and us!) can exercise those gifts, so that God's love and presence becomes tangible to others.

Sometimes, one's gifts--called *charisms*--are quite obvious. If you sing or play music both well and joyfully, and your music brings others closer to God, you likely have a charism of music. Maybe you are an enthusiastic teacher, and your students share that you lead them to spiritual growth. You likely have a charism for teaching.

Some charisms can be difficult to recognize and name. Perhaps you are drawn to quiet opportunities to serve God in humble ways, such as cleaning the church or performing other tasks people think just 'happen.' If that brings you happiness and builds up the Church, it could be a charism of service.

Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4 all include references to spiritual gifts. We are to discover and recognize our gifts, so that we can do God's work in the world. Parents and catechists can discuss this with children of all ages, including the newly confirmed. RCIA catechists can talk about gifts and mission in their remaining sessions with neophytes.

As an aid to seekers of God's purpose for themselves, our diocese will sponsor *Called and Gifted*, a workshop that guides individuals through the discovery, discernment, and development of their charisms. The May 9 workshop concludes with mass celebrated by Bishop Gilmore. To learn more and to register, visit www.dcdioocese.org.

Among us are neophytes and lifelong Catholics who are fresh from the Sacrament of Confirmation. Their presence lends a sense of urgency to our mission. Our gifts, perhaps dormant, can be channels of God's love. We need only open our hearts. Like Peter, let us waste no time.

Trish Keller of St. Dominic Parish in Garden City has addressed the possible changes in the administration of the Sacrament of Confirmation in the Dodge City Diocese. Your comments are still welcome at st-domoffice@st-dominic.org.