

“Confirmation” - Pentecost 2011

Tom, Megan and Esther, it has been a pleasure to prepare you for this day and, Esther, I am especially grateful to Adele, with whom you have spent extra time in preparation for baptism. Bl. John Henry Newman once wrote that ‘great acts take time.’ Well, this morning is a great act and I am grateful to God for the time that you three have given to prepare for this day. You have been serious in your intent and great fun to be with. And let’s not forget Will and Chris, who joined us for our evenings together to support you. Their friendship and kindness have been an essential part of this great act.

Too many here, you three will seem awfully young and so you are in years lived. But years lived have nothing to do with real youthfulness or with being wise. I know old young people and stupid old people. Let me explain.

One of the youngest and wisest people I know is a monk in his late-seventies. What makes him so young and wise has nothing to do with the years he has lived but the choices he has made. He has consistently chosen to do the kind thing, the selfless thing, the loving thing, and by doing so he has become a young and wise man. A theologian once described Our Lady as ‘younger than sin.’ Do you understand what he meant? What makes us tired and old in our souls is pride, envy, lust and all that jazz. What gives us life and makes us as young as God made us to be is being like Christ. And the person who chooses to do what is good grows in wisdom for he is like a traveller in a foreign land, who having chosen to go beyond himself, sees many new sights and understands the world far better. There is no greater adventure than living a life of virtue. You are young, our three Musketeers, but remember the Apostle, St John, was younger than you when Jesus called him to follow Him and St John was the only one on Good Friday, who did not run away.

But I do not have it in me to be young and wise on my own. I need someone else to help me; we all do. That is why the Holy Spirit wants to come into our life. He is not a thing or a bit of extra divine help. The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity and wishes to be our friend, our guide, our counsellor. Ask Him to show you how to be young and wise. Let Him guide you to lands beyond yourself.

Tom, in Confirmation, you are taking the name Christopher. As you know, it means ‘Christ bearer.’ That is what all three of you are to be: Christ bearers. No one has lived more beautifully or wisely than Christ. So why don’t we all study Him? And then when you realise He is the Son of God, shouldn’t we want even more people to know Him? HBO has a new programme on called ‘*Games of Thrones*.’ All my students are talking about it. The Son of God has appeared and spoken to us. Why don’t we chatter about that as well and infinitely more often? Tom, Megan and Esther bear Christ to others. Carry Him by your deeds and conversation into other people’s lives. Act with the enthusiasm of the young and speak with the sensitivity of the wise. What a great day this is!