

Lent Reflections on the Stained-Glass Windows





Confirmation

Thursday in the Third week of Lent.

Reading: Acts 2:14-21

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all *ye* that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, **I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh:** and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: and it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Commentary

The Christian initiation rite consists of a disciple being baptised with water in the name of the Holy Trinity, the laying on of hands for the coming of the Holy Spirit into their life and receiving Holy Communion within the fellowships of the Church. As time went on, and more and more babies and children were being baptised, the one initiation rite, understood as the one action of the Holy Spirit, was split up into its three components.

Confirmation (the 'laying on of hands' by the Bishop) is a sacrament of Christian maturity. In it the promises made in baptism are 'confirmed' and the prayer is that the confirmand may be strengthened by the Holy Spirit, become more deeply connected to the church and empowered to continue on our journey of faith. In both Anglican and Catholic editions of *This Is Our Faith*, we read that in confirmation,

We are on a journey to wholeness, peace and perfecting love...
We have said 'yes' to his invitation to be part of the visible, living, breathing, Spirit-filled body of Christ. It is only through the action and lives of Christians that the Holy Spirit, through faith and the sacraments, can show what the Church is truly called to be, the living body of Christ. Just as Jesus had invited his followers to join him, it was only after they had received the Holy Spirit that they were able to go out and pass on the Good News about the kind of life Jesus had revealed to them.

The roundel window connected to this sacrament refers to the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples, filling them with the courage to go out into the world and proclaim the good news. God was fulfilling His ancient promise to 'pour out his spirit upon all flesh.'

Today, Bishops are the successors of the apostles and they administer the sacrament of Confirmation in which we reaffirm our baptismal promises for ourselves, and the Bishop prays that we receive the seven gifts of Holy Spirit (Is 11:2f; 1 Cor 12). These are: *wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, godliness and awe.*

Infused in confirmation through the laying on of hands and anointing of the Spirit, these gifts equip us to cope with the struggles of life, fight against temptation and to be witnesses of our faith in the world, at work, at home and in the wider culture.

Meditation

Think back to your confirmation.

What can you recall about the day?

What did the day signify for you?

Give thanks to God for that day.

Reflect on your life.

Identify moments when your faith has been confirmed in the world, at work, at home and in the wider culture. Identify moments when it has been undermined in these places.

In what areas do you need to mature or be strengthened?

It is the practice of some to take a confirmation name, usually the name of a biblical figure or a saint they admire, to act as a guide in how to best live out their calling to proclaim the way of Christ. Identify a saint who you admire and ask them for their prayers to help you on your journey of faith.

Pray the Sarum prayer below slowly and meditatively.

Prayer

God be in my head,
And in my understanding;
God be in mine eyes,
And in my looking;
God be in my mouth,
And in my speaking;
God be in my heart,
And in my thinking;
God be at mine end,
And at my departing.
Amen.

The Sarum Prayer