

6th Sun. Easter 2026

+ “When the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?” (*Lk* 18:8). Will he find faith in our countries? This is an open question which clearly reveals the depth and the drama of one of the most serious challenges which the Church is called to face. It can be said that this challenge frequently consists not so much in baptizing new converts as in enabling those already baptized *to be converted to Christ and his Gospel*. In our communities we need to be seriously concerned about bringing the Gospel of hope to all those who are far from the faith or who have abandoned the practice of Christianity.¹ These words were spoken 23 years ago by Pope John Paul II in a letter to the countries of Europe, but they are even more relevant today and in our country too.

Despite the recent spike in Catholic conversions, it remains true that fallen away Catholics comprise the largest group of people in America behind active Catholics. And you add to that number those who profess no religious belief...well, you get what we have today. A society that lacks basic solidarity, one that lacks even basic morality; and with a Godless society you get a hopeless society. Our culture now gives the impression that unbelief is self-explanatory, whereas belief needs a sort of social legitimization which is neither obvious nor taken for granted. In some parts of the country it's easier to fit in as a non-believer...that's so backwards but we've grown accustomed to it.

It's why in the same letter, JPII said that the loss of Christian memory is now accompanied by a kind of fear of the future. Tomorrow is often presented as something bleak and uncertain. The future is viewed more with dread than with desire, it's why so many experience emptiness and are blind to the wonderful meaning of life. He said the signs and fruits of this are the diminishing number of human births, the decline in vocations and the refusal to make lifelong commitments. So while the average American does not lack material necessities, they're still suffering from the plague of loneliness.

¹ JP II, *Ecclesia in Europa*. 2003

It's no wonder people shrouded in this bleak outlook of the future and its corresponding despair justify murdering people when they are in too much pain, too old, or become a strain on society, or whatever other excuse they come up with for euthanasia. It's this hopeless and Godless outlook that make people think it's better to kill a baby than put him up for adoption. These blights on our society plus many more are the natural consequence of a people without hope.

Now we can't help but try to remedy this, it's in our DNA, but too often we go about in all the wrong ways. As a society we try to exalt the individual, boost his or her self-worth, but...it's done by promoting a vision of man apart from God and apart from Christ. It's led to the thinking that mankind is at the center of reality, a view which has *us* occupy the place of God. And so we forget that it is God who creates man, not the other way around.² Even for those of us who believe and ardently try to live out our faith, it's hard not to be impacted by the society at large.

So we can't excuse ourselves from our Lord's question in Luke 18, it's meant for everyone to ponder, "When the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?" We'd like to say yes in reference to ourselves, but we can't presume. God has written us love letters, the Holy Scriptures, yet they sit on the shelf collecting dust because we chose instead to read click bait on social media and watch mindless videos that we'll forget within the hour....God became man and died in the flesh for us, but we continue to sin, and to top it off, we get annoyed when we're advised to repent or do penance...He waits patiently and quietly for us in the tabernacle, hoping to see us walk in...but instead we turn on TV or play video games.

This is the age old story of man...man abandoning God. It's never God who abandons us. He never will, and He knows how fickle our human nature is, He sees the challenges we're up against, the threats against our faith and hope. So He's given us a specific sacrament to strengthen us in order to

² Ecclesia in Europa

keep the faith. A classic theology text book states, “when temptations or dangers to the faith are great or even extraordinary, this sacrament gives the right...the right, to obtain suitable help from God.”

That sacrament is the sacrament of Confirmation. And it’s what we heard about in our first reading.

Philip baptized people in Samaria, and when the apostles in Jerusalem hear this, Peter and John went to lay hands on them so they would receive the Holy Spirit. A couple things, this shows that the reception of the Holy Spirit is given through a special sacrament other than baptism; and that it requires a special authority to administer this sacrament. Otherwise, Philip would have done it, but instead Peter and John go down to Samaria.

“If ever there was a time demanding the diligence of pastors in explaining the Sacrament of Confirmation, in these days certainly it requires special attention...while very few seek to obtain from it the fruit of divine grace which they should derive from it.” That’s a quote from the Catechism of Trent, and it’s as timely today as it was 500 years ago.

Some people wrongly think Confirmation is when one chooses the faith for themselves...it’s not. That decision was already made at baptism and should be instinctively and regularly renewed after a person has reached the age of reason. A 4th century pope said it well, “In baptism man is enlisted into the service, in confirmation he is equipped for battle...confirmation arms and makes us ready for conflict.”³ This is why the Council of Trent teaches that by Confirmation, one becomes stronger with the strength of a new power, and thus begins to be a perfect soldier of Christ. It’s how we really lock in to our mission

Confirmation makes this possible because of the effects of the sacrament. It gives us a supernatural, spiritual strength. This enhanced strength allows us to keep the faith when our faith is

³ Pope Miltiades, 311-314.

threatened. Strengthens our will to do the will of God...strengthens our intellect to know the truths of our faith and to defend them. Besides strength, Confirmation gives an increase of grace. The presence of God in our soul is more intense and dynamic. The increase of grace is obvious in the lives of the Apostles, who were afraid to admit they even knew Jesus as he was being led to death. But then, after Pentecost, somethings different...they spread the Gospel to anyone who will listen...now undeterred by the threat of death.

More than just keeping the faith, the grace and strength we receive in Confirmation allows us to spread the faith. In our second reading, Peter tells us, "Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope." Confirmation makes us ready, and if we truly love the Lord we will want to tell others about Him. This sacrament is tailored for promoting the faith, spreading the Gospel and leading to Catholic converts. You were confirmed to bring others to Christ, or to bring them back.

In light of how I started this homily, the lack of Christian faith and hope in our world today, I challenge you...do something about it. If we don't, who will? We all have different people in our lives who don't know the truth faith, or people who have fallen away. They need God and the gifts He offers through His Church. Don't doubt the power and ability you possess, it's the power of the Holy Spirit which you received at Confirmation. Set for yourself the goal, that by this time next year, you will be responsible for one convert or revert to the faith. Don't wait till Sept. to tell them about RCIA...begin sharing your faith with someone this week, pray about it, and remember, God has equipped you for this mission.