

7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter  
May 20, 2007  
Confirmation Sunday

Acts 16:16-34  
Revelation 22:12-14.16-17, 20-21  
John 17:20-26

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Jesus is standing in front of his latest confirmation class, the disciples. Pretty soon, they won't be coming on Wednesday nights for class anymore. They are going to be on their own.

OK. Not exactly confirmation class, but it was the disciples. And it is true, in the next heart-beat, Jesus is going to be gone from them. He launches into a prayer, almost a prayer of desperation. He wants so much for them to be united. He wants them to be united with each other and united with God. Certainly this is my prayer for you, that you be united together in community, the community of faith, and united with God.

Why would Jesus want them to be united with each other?

One reason is because they will be stronger as a group. They will need each other. Their lives are going to be threatened. They are frightened and scared, and it is going to get worse.

What about this confirmation class? You do not have the Roman government breathing down your neck, but you have other threats to your

lives, threats that are just as dangerous. You have choices to make – big choices.

Sixty years ago when students were asked what made life stressful, what got them into trouble, the list was 1) talking out of turn in class, 2) chewing gum in class, 3) getting out of order when standing in line. The same list today is 1) alcohol and drug use, 2) violence in schools, including violence with weapons, guns), 3) suicide and 4) pressure to have sex in a relationship.

That is a very different list. That list is just as threatening to your lives as a government with an army occupying your home town. While your circumstances are different from the early disciples, the concerns and prayers of Jesus are easily applied to today. Being rooted in the community of faith, being rooted and connected to the love of God and to other people who also love God will keep your life healthier and happier. Jesus still wants you to stay tuned to each other and tuned to God. All of that is for your benefit, but there is a bigger reason for this prayer.

There is a bigger reason for God wanting you to stay connected to the community of faith and to God's will. There is a bigger reason why Jesus was concerned about the faith of the disciples... it was and is so that

the world may believe. It is because God so loved the world. That is why Jesus came in the first place. Yes, God so loves you, but the bigger picture is that God so loves the world.

Jesus wanted the disciples to be one with each other and with God so that they can be witnesses to the WORLD. Jesus knows it is up to the disciples now to share the good news. They cannot do that if they are divided from each other. They cannot do that if they are separated from God. They have to stick with each other and stick with God, and then there is some hope that the rest of the world will see God's love at work in them, and that's what Jesus is concerned about.

On this confirmation Sunday, we focus on you. You come to confirm your faith, to say "Yes" to the promises made on your behalf at your baptism. This day is about you and your faith.....and it is about so much more.

This day is about the job God has for you. It is about the promises you make to so reflect God's love as individuals and as a community that people will say "Hey, I want to be connected to that!"

The really cool thing is that you are already doing this. I have never had a confirmation class in which so many people want to bring friends. I

usually have at least one person drop out of confirmation over the years of the program – at least one in a class. I have never had so many join up, start coming to class on Wednesdays and say, “I want to be confirmed!” Cool! This is your job, and you are already doing it. It is your call to connect other people to the love of Christ and the community of faith and draw them into the circle of God’s mercy and love.

This is the message of the text from the Revelation passage as well. Come. Come. Let everyone who is thirsty, come. Let anyone who wished to take the water of life as a gift, come. Anyone who is troubled, come. Anyone who feels left out, come. In the community of faith, it is our job to welcome one another and whoever comes to the door looking for the waters of life.

Those waters were poured out for you in your baptism. You come today to claim the promises of those waters for yourselves. May they wash you again with God’s mercy and keep you doing what you are already doing, sharing the love and good news of God in Jesus Christ. Amen.