

Confirmation Retreat Closing Prayer

INTRODUCTION

As we come to the end of this retreat, let us take a few moments to reflect on what we have seen, heard and learned these past weeks and today, in preparation for the days ahead. Soon you will be sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. You will be sent forth, fully clothed with the Holy Spirit's wisdom and power – to live as Jesus' witnesses before a world that hungers for signs of God's love. Let us enter this time of prayer in song, praising our God with the angels and saints. Please join in singing...

OPENING PRAYER

Let us begin our prayer, marking ourselves with the sign of our faith: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

And let us pray...

God our Father, you are never far from your children. You long to fill our lives to overflowing with the grace we need to live as your daughters and sons. Beloved Father, open our hearts and minds now as we pray, that we might more fully believe and understand the wonders you desire to work in our lives by the power of your Holy Spirit. We make this prayer to you through Jesus, our Lord, through whom you give us all that is good, holy and true. Amen.

And now, let us be attentive to God's word.

READING

A reading from the Gospel of Luke

While they were talking... Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.

Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you – that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

The word of the Lord,

Thanks be to God

REFLECTION

What does this reading from St. Luke's Gospel tell us about the Holy Spirit? We can take three main points from this story:

- The Holy Spirit, sent by God the Father, raised Jesus from the dead. The Holy Spirit will also raise us from the dead to share in the resurrection of Jesus. At the end of time, the Holy Spirit will give us glorified bodies, to share in the fullness of Christ's risen glory.
- The Holy Spirit inspired the Bible's writers. Everything they wrote points to Jesus. God's word leads us to Jesus, and Jesus leads us to the Father. A spirit that leads us away from Jesus is false.
- The Holy Spirit was promised by Jesus to his apostles and disciples: *Stay here in the city until you have been clothed with the power from on high.* The Spirit gave them wisdom and power to be Jesus' witnesses. He will do the same for you at your Confirmation.

These are beautiful things to think about: The Holy Spirit will raise us from the dead. The Holy Spirit continues to speak to us and lead us to Jesus through God's word. The Holy Spirit fills us with wisdom and power to live as Jesus' witnesses.

God can never leave us alone. He sends us the Holy Spirit to help us at each step of the way on this lifetime journey to our home in heaven. The Holy Spirit gives our parents the gifts to be good parents. He gives our teachers the gifts they need to be good teachers. The Spirit gives our priests and bishops the power to forgive sins and change ordinary bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus – to be our spiritual food, to keep us strong along the road to eternal life. The Spirit fills every one of us with gifts to help one another on this journey to eternity. God wants to give us everything we need to live in his peace and joy now and forever.

God's word is full of the Holy Spirit's revealed truth. The Holy Spirit will open the eyes of your heart to the truth of God's word. Let God's word and the Church's preaching about God's word guide you through life on safe paths that lead you to peace, joy and eternal happiness. Do not listen to any spirit but the Holy Spirit. He will guide you to a deeper love for Jesus and for your neighbour. All other spirits are false and lead people away from God.

God wants to shine through you! This is really what it means to be Christ's witnesses. People will recognize us as his witnesses when we shine with the kindness, friendship and truth of his Gospel. People will recognize us as his witnesses when we stand up for what is good and true. People will recognize us as his witnesses when we defend human life from conception until natural death. And the great news is, we have the Holy Spirit to help us make that happen. We are never alone!

God has chosen you to shine with the love of Jesus, with the help of the Holy Spirit! So call on the Holy Spirit often. He is our great Helper. Never be afraid to ask... *Come Holy Spirit!*

Optional: Former Student Testimony or Music Video

At this point, it might be useful to have a former student come in to talk for 5 minutes about what it was like to be Confirmed, and how she or he relies on the Holy Spirit in their daily life.

Another option might be to show a music video about the Holy Spirit. There are some Good videos by some Christian praise & worship bands on YouTube.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

(If possible, it might be helpful to have students get together in groups to write up intentions for the prayer of the faithful during retreat time [when this prayer is used as part of a retreat]. Otherwise, the prayers below can be used)

1. Let us pray for the Church. That all believers in Jesus who share a common Baptism might be of one heart and mind in the Holy Spirit.

We pray... *Lord, hear our prayer.*

2. Let us pray for the world. That all God's children might open their hearts to the gift of peace that the Holy Spirit offers them every day.

We pray... *Lord, hear our prayer.*

3. Let us pray for those who suffer without hope in our families, communities and world. That all who follow Christ might show them his love, to be a light of hope for them in their darkness.

We pray... *Lord, hear our prayer.*

4. Let us pray for our parents, grandparents, pastors, teachers and sponsors. That the Holy Spirit might give them the wisdom and courage to help us grow as followers of Jesus.

We pray... *Lord, hear our prayer.*

5. Let us pray for ourselves. That the Holy Spirit might open our hearts to receive His gifts at Confirmation. That we might continue to grow as Christ's disciples, walking with Jesus day by day in Wisdom, Knowledge, Understanding, Right Judgement, Fortitude, Reverence and Wonder and Awe.

We pray... *Lord, hear our prayer.*

6. For all our own intentions....

We pray... *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Let us unite all the prayers we have spoken and those remaining in our hearts, and with one voice, bring them before the Father, using the prayer that Jesus taught us: ***Our Father...***

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray. God our Father, in the fullness of time, you sent your Son Jesus to be born of the Virgin Mary by the power of your Holy Spirit. We ask you to open these young people's hearts to the power of your Spirit. Open their eyes to the wonders that you seek to do in their lives. Grant them a deep trust in your Spirit's presence with them each day. Bless them with the Spirit's joy and peace, so that everything they are and do gives glory to you. And like Mary, may they be open to your word. May it take root and grow in them each day of their lives, by the power of your Spirit. We make this prayer to you in the name of Jesus, your Son. Amen

And may Almighty God bless us: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

CLOSING SONG:

Please join in our closing song...