

Adult Confirmation Mass, 30 July 2020

St Mary's Metropolitan Cathedral, Edinburgh

Homily of Archbishop Leo Cushley of St Andrews & Edinburgh

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

These wonderful readings that we have just heard (*Isaiah 61: 1-9; Luke 4: 16-22*) tell us that the Holy Spirit was active long ago and moved people to heroic witness and great deeds.

But they also tell us that the great deeds of God are not just something that only took place in the past, or that they no longer touch the present.

On the contrary: instead, they tell us that the Holy Spirit has been active throughout Salvation history and continues to be active to this very day, even now, on this very night.

In the first reading, the Prophet Isaiah declares "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, he has sent me to bring the good news to the poor*". There is a sense here of the transforming presence of God and there is a sense of mission. There is a sense of being made into a witness, something that all of us who have already received the Sacrament of Confirmation, the gift of the Spirit, are called to do, all of us, without exception.

And then, in the Gospel passage we have just heard, Jesus, in his hometown's synagogue, is handed the Prophet Isaiah – and he chooses to read out the very same text we heard in the first reading. Then, to all

those gathered around him with great expectation, Jesus turns and says, "*This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen*". It was a turning point, a key moment that many present would have treasured for the rest of their lives, for in that moment the Spirit moved Jesus to speak and to act in His name.

The Spirit was active then, and He is active now. That beautiful text was fulfilled in the time of Isaiah; it was fulfilled in the time of Christ; and it is being fulfilled now. It is as true tonight as it was in that day when Christ stood in the very midst of His people. Tonight, you too are about to receive the same gift of the Holy Spirit that descended upon Christ and Him on His father's business. And you too will receive God into your heart and soul, and He will remain with you forever to guide you. He will inspire you to be witnesses to God and his goodness in everything you do in your lives. You are therefore about to become quite literally *christs*, anointed ones, anointed with the Spirit just as Jesus was at the start of his ministry.

My dear friends, as you are confirmed tonight, God's Spirit will come to live in you. In the coming days and years, open your minds and hearts. Learn to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, that will now dwell deep within your heart; learn again to pray; learn to pray by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and learn to pray as a Christian ought to pray, in the Holy Spirit, through Christ, to the Father. And learn to listen for the inspiration of the Spirit guiding you in your lives, in whatever you do, to be witnesses always to God's goodness.

And the God of all good will be with you.