



Allocutio



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Allocutio: The Holy Spirit gives us Confidence

What we need is confidence. That's all. And that is what we need the Holy Spirit to do for us: give us confidence. Because I believe deep down that in Ireland the faith is there. I believe all of us here have some sense of God, that we do believe in Jesus and that we have it in us to radiate among our peers the Kingdom of God.

Our problem is fear. But at this moment in Ireland I believe the Mother of God is close to us. She knows that we have suffered recently from many things. Like the disciples who were put through the mill by the events of Good Friday and the days that followed she knows that our sense of where we are is unclear. She is that quiet calming influence among us who is praying with us for direction on the road we are to take. Anxiety and depression are not what we need and Mary wants us to avoid those roads.

As you know the person of the Trinity whom we have as our Patron in the Legion is the Holy Spirit. That is why red is the colour of the Legion. Why the Holy Spirit? Because he is the friend of Mary, the one who overshadowed her and by whose power she conceived Jesus. She prayed with the disciples before Pentecost so that the Spirit would come upon these men whose confidence needed building up. And if we turn to her we will receive through her prayers the many gifts of that same Spirit.

Let me share my own experience. A few years ago I felt some anxiety about elections that were coming up. One good thing I did was I just turned off the radio and didn't listen to the news for four weeks! But I had this anxiety and tried to finger it and I identified the source as a concern about abortion being brought in. I turned to Mary and asked her to look after things and once I turned to her a great calm came over me. Of course, peace is the gift of the Spirit. And as it turned out the two parties who, from what I've heard, stated they would not bring in abortion legislation did best in the elections.

Our diocese is discerning how to deal with the future. But while structures are important there is also the great challenge to pass on our faith. And we've got to begin to confront that seriously before time runs out. And let me tell you we have it in us to do it. We seem however to be just lacking a bit of confidence.

What is in our way? Well we may be lacking a bit of faith. And I wonder is that a mixture of lacking faith in ourselves as well as in God? We worry lest we have all the



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right answers, whether we'll make fools of ourselves, whether we have the right personalities and so on. We fear we may say the wrong thing. And not least we have that Irish guilt thing about us being unworthy because we are sinners. Let me tell you this: if we wait till we have it all together we'll never start because, and sorry now if I insult you all, none of us in this life will ever have it all together.

Oh yes, humility is important. We don't have all our facts at finger-tips; we have short-comings in our personalities; we should listen to others lest they have some truth to share. But we have to have faith too that once we set out to bring the Gospel of peace and love to others in all the ways that we can then it will have an effect. As Our Lord says, "Don't hide your light under a bushel". Or as it says in the prophet "For just as the rain and snow come down from heaven and do not return there before watering the earth making it bring forth and sprout ... so shall my word that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it."

We are in a pre-Pentecost phase at the moment, liturgically and really. Let's beg Our Lady for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon us. The run up to Pentecost wasn't an idle time for the disciples or Our Lady. The disciples were reflecting over all they had been through. They were looking at what good they had received from Jesus, they were noting the differences the whole experience of Jesus had on them. May the Holy Spirit guide us to identify the basic goods that our faith has brought to us so that we can share that with others.

But then we have to go out with it to others. Home, street, workplace, club. And I notice we have to do it soon or it may be too late. I also notice with the young people that they are open to receive the Gospel. They are looking for lights to guide them. And they are looking for sincerity. May the Holy Spirit give us courage.

We could learn from Frank Duff who brought real faith to so many others. He himself always carried in his heart a positive disposition of friendship to all people and he in his way really lived out those words of Our Lord, "Whatever house you enter, let your first words be: Peace to this house!" If people find in us a spirit of genuine friendship and goodwill, even if they are odd as two left feet or if they be negative souls who moan and gripe about things, we can already begin to open doors to their hearts. Once we keep in mind that this other person—no matter how deformed or disfigured—is a child of God whom the heavenly Father loves surely we must greet them with love and peace. And it



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is interesting that the early apostles themselves did the same; they made excuses for those who killed Jesus. As Peter said to them on Pentecost: you did not know what you were doing!

May the Holy Spirit come to us all and help us befriend every other person in our hearts. May he help us to have no doubt about the huge value of the Gospel for every other person.

May he help us so to love them that we will be eager to want them to know the Good News.

May he help us overcome our inhibitions about sharing our faith.

May he guide us wisely in the way we share it.

May he fill us with a true joy especially in our trials.

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Amen.

Amen.

Fr Paul Churchill