



The Holy See

HOLY MASS AND CONFERRAL OF THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS

*Saint Peter's Square
Fifth Sunday of Easter, 28 April 2013*

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*Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Dear Confirmands,*

I would like to offer three short and simple thoughts for your reflection.

1. In the second reading, we listened to the beautiful vision of Saint John: new heavens and a new earth, and then the Holy City coming down from God. All is new, changed into good, beauty and truth; there are no more tears or mourning... This is the work of the Holy Spirit: he brings us the new things of God. He comes to us and makes all things new; he changes us. The Spirit changes us! And Saint John's vision reminds us that all of us are journeying towards the heavenly Jerusalem, the ultimate newness which awaits us and all reality, the happy day when we will see the Lord's face – that marvelous face, the most beautiful face of the Lord Jesus - and be with him for ever, in his love.

You see, the new things of God are not like the novelties of this world, all of which are temporary; they come and go, and we keep looking for more. The new things which God gives to our lives are lasting, not only in the future, when we will be with him, but today as well. God is even now making all things new; the Holy Spirit is truly transforming us, and through us he also wants to transform the world in which we live. Let us open the doors to the Spirit, let ourselves be guided by him, and allow God's constant help to make us new men and women, inspired by the love of God which the Holy Spirit bestows on us! How beautiful it would be if each of you, every evening, could say: Today at school, at home, at work, guided by God, I showed a sign of love towards one of my

friends, my parents, an older person! How beautiful!

2. A second thought. In the first reading Paul and Barnabas say that “we must undergo many trials if we are to enter the kingdom of God” (*Acts 14:22*). The journey of the Church, and our own personal journeys as Christians, are not always easy; they meet with difficulties and trials. To follow the Lord, to let his Spirit transform the shadowy parts of our lives, our ungodly ways of acting, and cleanse us of our sins, is to set out on a path with many obstacles, both in the world around us but also within us, in the heart. But difficulties and trials are part of the path that leads to God’s glory, just as they were for Jesus, who was glorified on the cross; we will always encounter them in life! Do not be discouraged! We have the power of the Holy Spirit to overcome these trials!

3. And here I come to my last point. It is an invitation which I make to you, young confirmandi, and to all present. Remain steadfast in the journey of faith, with firm hope in the Lord. This is the secret of our journey! He gives us the courage to swim against the tide. Pay attention, my young friends: to go against the current; this is good for the heart, but we need courage to swim against the tide. Jesus gives us this courage! There are no difficulties, trials or misunderstandings to fear, provided we remain united to God as branches to the vine, provided we do not lose our friendship with him, provided we make ever more room for him in our lives. This is especially so whenever we feel poor, weak and sinful, because God grants strength to our weakness, riches to our poverty, conversion and forgiveness to our sinfulness. The Lord is so rich in mercy: every time, if we go to him, he forgives us. Let us trust in God’s work! With him we can do great things; he will give us the joy of being his disciples, his witnesses. Commit yourselves to great ideals, to the most important things. We Christians were not chosen by the Lord for little things; push onwards toward the highest principles. Stake your lives on noble ideals, my dear young people!

The new things of God, the trials of life, remaining steadfast in the Lord. Dear friends, let us open wide the door of our lives to the new things of God which the Holy Spirit gives us. May he transform us, confirm us in our trials, strengthen our union with the Lord, our steadfastness in him: this is a true joy! So may it be.