

The last instruction Jesus gave his Apostles must have seemed incredible: "Go out to the all the world and tell the Good News." Can you imagine this? Eleven Apostles watch Jesus ascend into the heavens; they think it's over. But with no time to wonder, "What do I do next? Do I return home? Take up fishing again? Reintroduce myself to my wife?" With no time to wonder, they hear Jesus say, "Now, here's what you do: Go out to the whole world and tell the Good News." And then, he's gone.

Well, here I stand today to tell you confirmation candidates the same thing. Just as you think you've finally completed the program, that you've jumped through the last hoop, I'm here to say there's one more. There's just one more thing you must do. Go out into the world and change it.

When I was a kid I used to dream how neat it would be to have a protective shield no one could break through. Then I could change the world--I could change anything.

Well, Pentecost gave the Apostles a shield. The Holy Spirit came to them with power, and it changed their lives. They were no longer afraid to go out in public, no longer afraid to say what they thought, no longer afraid of dying. They had the Holy Spirit and nothing could stop them.

The sacrament of confirmation conveys that same Holy Spirit to us. The Holy Spirit comes to us like a shield. Some won't know how to use it; others will never pick it up. But the Holy Spirit is yours. The Spirit is yours for life.

The symbol of this Spirit is an oil we call chrism. It's olive oil and balsam. You can smell chrism; its aroma sweetens the air. Once a year every bishop blesses chrism for his diocese. Chrism is one of the most sacred substances we have next to the Eucharist itself. It is so special, that we use chrism for only three sacraments: baptism, confirmation, and priesthood. These are the only sacraments you can receive only once in your life. Chrism is powerful with the Holy Spirit; it is so strong we hoard it. It is perfumed to excite you with the joy of the Spirit. It is oil to remind you of its staying power. It's not water, which rolls off your skin. Oil rubs into the skin; it becomes part of us; it stays, once and for all.

You will always have the Spirit with you. And you will need him. You will want to love God, but the world will tempt you to love yourself first. You will want sexual responsibility, but the world will tempt you to sex outside of marriage. You will want justice, but the world will tempt you to lie and cheat to get ahead. Through it all, you will have a power within you, a protective shield if you choose to pick it up. The Holy Spirit will help you in your fight against the world.

In the closing scenes of *The Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy wants to go home to Kansas. No one has figured out why Dorothy or anyone would want to go to Kansas, but she asks the good witch how can she go back, and the witch responds all she has to do is click her heels three times. She said, "Do you mean that after all I've been through, I had the power to return home inside me all the time?"

Each of us has the power to do what is right, to change the world. That power is within us, and its name is the Spirit of God.