

# Decide!



Lately Archbishop John C. Wester and several of the priests (including moi) of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe have been going around celebrating the sacrament of confirmation, in which our belief is that God's Spirit imbues the young people being "confirmed" with a special grace and a spiritual seal enabling them to more effectively go out and spread the Gospel of Jesus by their words and actions ... to be more of the "light of the world" that Jesus calls His disciples to be. (Matthew 5:14). This sacrament is largely based on Acts of the Apostles 8:14-17, but has other bases as well.

The youth are thereby encouraged to take greater charge of their own faith, seeking to learn what and why we have believed what the Church has believed for these 2000 years. But regardless of its origin and effect, one thing I've emphasized in the homily (sermon) as our young ones cross this important threshold into greater spiritual maturity is the importance of having the integrity and courage to make the necessary decision: cooperate with the grace given ... or not. Make the informed choice and to stick to it, come what may.

Those who are my age and older remember the time when one's word was his/her bond—such becoming an obligation of honor and integrity ever present. And while this personal code of conduct often seems abandoned in our day, it is something that any person can revitalize in his own life, to his great credit. But this entails sticking to the decision and obligation, determination buttressed by that old adage: "The strongest person is he who masters himself."

In our day, living up to such a code is difficult, as one is often ridiculed for not seeking one's own greatest immediate advantage and profit instead. But ... is honor of so little worth? We love movies that show persons standing by their decisions and promises; can

we not realize that these movies simply manifest on screen what we know is good in our hearts?

Yes ... to be a light to others certainly takes courage and strength and dedication, as we tell the youth being confirmed. But with such persons who can be counted on their word also becomes a beacon of hope in an often hope-less world—that there still IS someone who can be



*By Very Reverend Glenn Jones  
Vicar General, Vicar for Priests, Vicar for Clergy*

trusted regardless of immediate personal gain. Who does NOT want friends and family such as that?!

This thought becomes especially poignant during this past Memorial Day weekend when we remember those who said "yes" to self-sacrifice, and paid for it with their lives. We need remember that, regardless of the politics beyond their control, the American military men and women ... police, firefighters, etc., ... volunteer that greatest of sacrifices: that of their lives. Each person signing onto such professions knows that he may be called to give that ultimate sacrifice, and yet making the decision to do so and standing by it. For many, the blank check offered has been cashed ... and thus our continued freedoms dearly purchased.

Honor and glory forevermore  
To this good man gone to rest;  
Peace on the dim Plutonian shore;  
Rest in the land of the blest.  
(Peter Cooper)



*Very Rev. Glenn Jones and Rev. Eulalio Arteaga y Piñon, pastor with confirmandi at Sacred Heart, Clovis.*

Now, scripture tells us: "The wise will inherit honor..." (Proverbs 3:35), which we might restate that as: "Those who are honorable are wise." Yes, being dishonorable may help one accumulate more money, attain more an immediate advantage, etc., but what can replace personal honor—that one thing which no one can take from us, and yet so many discard for a mere pittance.

In the movie "Troy", Achilles challenges two Greek soldiers who hold captive his love interest at their king's command. Achilles warns: "I have no quarrel with you, brothers, but if you do not release her, you will never see home again. Decide!" Likewise, decision for an honorable life is a decision and challenge facing us daily ... multiple times each day. Let us make those good decisions even in—and especially in—difficult circumstances, remembering a popular gloss on Shakespeare: "A coward dies a thousand deaths. The brave one, only once."

God give us men! A time like this demands  
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and ready hands.  
Men whom the lust of office does not kill;  
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;  
Men who possess opinions and a will;  
Men who have honor; men who will not lie.  
(Josiah Gilbert Holland)

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