

***Radiant like the Autumnal Larch***

Homily for September 25, 2021

Sydnee and Amelie I am so pleased the two of you are being confirmed this morning on a day when your grandparents Ray and Rita can be with you from the Maritimes. Welcome Ray and Rita as you are here to sponsor your granddaughters on their Confirmation day.

Each of you, Sydnee and Amelie wrote a letter in which you expressed why you want to be confirmed and why you chose your confirmation saint. Sydnee, you chose Saint Rita and explained: “The reason I chose her out of thousands and thousands of saints, is her love for everyone. Even though she lived a lonely, painful life, she carried out her duties as a servant of God”. In Luke 6:27 it says “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you”. Saint Rita truly believed in helping everyone, even if it was hard sometimes. It is a special name for me now because I’ve researched about her, and I find her life so fascinating. I feel like she is in me, praying and watching out for me as I continue along the confirmation path”.

Amelie, you chose Saint Veronica of the Veil. Of her you wrote: “I learned that she wiped Jesus’ face with a cloth as he carried the cross, and the imprint left behind then had mysterious healing power. This woman had great faith, and was one of the many Saints who died for her belief rather than denying God. I chose her because I find Veronica’s story inspires me to become a better person, and to help others if they are suffering like Jesus did. Just like Jesus left an imprint of his face upon her cloth, Saint Veronica has put an imprint on my heart. This is now a special name for me because I feel like she is a saint I can look up to more than ever, and she will always be by my side, listening to anything I have to say. She taught me to love others above myself, and inspired me to help people suffering, not only by wiping their face, but by helping them along with their burden, like Simon did with Jesus’ cross. Saint Veronica is a figure I will now look up to along my faith journey.

Thank you for writing such thoughtful and personal explanations of why you chose saints Rita and Veronica. One of the characteristics of the saints is their deep relationship with Jesus. In the Responsorial Psalm this morning there was this beautiful phrase:

***and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,***

This captures what we see in the saints. Their radiance is like the beauty of the Larch trees when they are illuminated by the autumnal sun. People do not go in the thousands to see the Larch trees at night, but during the daytime hours. What makes the larch trees radiant is when the dappled light illuminates those golden needles. This is what we see in the saints; their radiance emanated from the light of the Son of God, Jesus Christ. In being confirmed today Amelie and Sydnee you are saying that like those larch trees, like saints Veronica and Rita I want my life to be captured by the light of Jesus, so that I too can be radiant over the goodness of the Lord.

Such goodness is only possible when we are daily open to the work of Jesus in our lives. In a few minutes I will say to you both, using your saint's name "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit". What is a gift? Something that is freely and lovingly given to us. It is up to us to receive the gift, unwrap it and then make it part of our lives. When you are sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit there is an imprint that Jesus will impart to your souls. Just like on your confirmation certificates. Here is the seal of St. Peter's Parish, authenticating this document. So too in your confirmation you are affirming so as to authenticate for yourselves you want to live out your baptismal promises that were made on your behalf by your dad Simon and mom Raeann.

This will happen as you remember that like Saints Rita and Veronica you are to walk closely with Jesus, through a life of prayer, participating in the sacraments, especially the Mass and Reconciliation, and by remembering that you too are saints in the making, as are we all here today.

Such people know that like the larch trees in late September we are to be radiant as the goodness of the Lord shines into our lives as she did in the lives of St. Rita and Veronica.