

The Chaplain, Very Rev. Fr. Anthony Ekhaisomi,  
Other priests here present,  
The Principal, Sr. Elizabeth Uchendu, SSH,  
The Vice Principal, Sr. Gloria Ochie  
Sisters of this Community, and other Sisters here present,  
Invited Guests,  
Dear Parents,  
Staff and Students,

Glory be to Jesus!

### **Introduction**

We thank the Lord for gathering us this morning to celebrate this Eucharist and for the gift of our Catholic faith. Today we shall confer on a hundred and twenty five of our children the sacrament of Confirmation. I congratulate you dear candidates for persevering till this time. I am sure you have been preparing for this for some time now. It is our prayer that God who has brought you to this day will strengthen you to be good Christians and defenders of the faith, through Christ our Lord. I am also happy for the warm reception I have received since I entered this premises. The joy in your faces is an eloquent expression of the good rapport that exists amongst you. May I also use this opportunity to congratulate the management for the new hostel building and newly renovated basketball court which I shall bless after this Mass. I ask you to keep up the good work and not relent on your efforts at building up this community in mutual love and peace.

### **On the Readings (Acts 17:15.22-18:1; John 16:12-15)**

The Readings of today enjoin us to acknowledge God as the Supreme Being and allow His Spirit to guide us to the truth. In the first reading Paul tells the people of Athens, that God created the world and everything in it; that He is the Lord of all things and in God we live and move and have our being. This is a very important message for all of us Christians as we anticipate the solemnity of the Ascension tomorrow. God is in charge of everything. By the very fact that we are created by him means we belong to God; and by the very fact that he created the world also means the world is in the hands of God. We should therefore always let God take the lead in whatever we do. In our studies, let God take the lead. In

our relationships, let God take the lead; in our examinations, let God take the lead; in our families; let God take the lead. It is only when you recognise him as the Lord of all things and allow him lead you in all things that you will come to true happiness.

To Let God take the lead is to commit all our endeavours to Him in prayer. My dear students, you must learn how to pray. Prayer keeps you in a close relationship with God who made the heavens and the earth. In prayer you acknowledge God as the Supreme Being and he in turns protect and provide for all your needs. I therefore call on all of you today to remember always to pray for Nigeria, as a new dispensation in our political life begins today. That God will reign supreme in our land; that He will guide our leaders to make the right decisions and eradicate all causes of evil from our Land.

In the Gospel Reading, Jesus promises to send the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, to guide us. It is the Holy Spirit that will enable us acknowledge God as our creator. It is the Holy Spirit that will remind of us all that Jesus has taught us. It is the Holy Spirit that will inspire all our actions in the ways of the Lord. The Holy Spirit is the advocate, our counselor and will help us to be good children, staff and parents.

To show that we are under the influence of the Holy Spirit, we are to become witnesses and teachers in our homes, our work places, our classrooms, the play field and our dormitories. You are to carry out Jesus' instructions to be good children wherever you find ourselves. You must make conscious efforts to become the kind of person Jesus teaches you to be and become the kind of person the Holy Spirit inspires you to be. Love one another. Help your friends with their academic challenges. Avoid unhealthy competitions and rivalries, that leads to hatred and quarrel. Correct your fellow students in love. Treat your juniors with love, respect them, help them fetch water and teach them the right things to do. Do not bully your junior ones. When you do, you shut the Holy Spirit out of your life. Respect your seniors and your teachers and obey the school rules and regulations. Do not take what does not belong to you. Do not eat other people's food when they come late to the refectory. Do not make noise or sleep during mass. May God give you the grace to be truly open to His Spirit, who will teach us to do all things in love through Christ our Lord.

## **Sacrament of Confirmation**

The Sacraments are means of salvation which Christ has given us, and which are mediated through the Church. As our Catechism teaches us, they are outward signs that confer inward grace on the soul of those who receive them worthily. Confirmation together with the Holy Eucharist and Baptism make up the Sacraments of Christian initiation. In confirmation, the Bishop invokes the Holy Spirit on us, imposes his hands on our heads and anoints us with holy chrism saying: “Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.” This sacred rite gives us the grace to be strong and mature in the faith, without fear, to give testimony to Christ in the world, to share our faith with others through the exercise of our apostolate, and to defend the faith and the Church.

Today, through the imposition of hands and through the anointing with the Sacred Chrism, each of you will receive the Holy Spirit. God Himself seals you as His own special person, calling you to live a good and holy life. The sign of the cross I make over you should never be forgotten. It is your perpetual commitment to the Lord because the cross is Jesus’ sign of His perpetual love for you.

In addition, my dear candidates, with the imposition of hands and the anointing with sacred chrism you will be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit. This seal makes you soldiers of Christ and therefore enlist you in the army of the Lord. Strive to be true soldiers that the Church will be proud of. Continue to learn about the faith you have received in baptism so that it can be nurtured to maturity. Be prepared to defend the church anywhere and at any time. Be loyal to the Church and to her authority since no true soldier ever shows disloyalty to his superiors.

The Sacrament of Confirmation conferred on you obliges you to spread the Catholic Faith, moves you to be active in the apostolate according to your vocation in life, and makes you share your faith with others. A Christian is always in service. He is never on holidays from the practice of the faith. And so, in the days, weeks and years ahead, you will have many challenges and many opportunities. These would be challenges to your faith, and they would at the same time be opportunities for you to defend the faith you profess. At all times, think back to today and see with what joy you received this gift of God and how radiant the faces of the members of your family and the Christian community were.

We are grateful to God for the gift of our Catholic faith and for the gift of the sacraments. It is our collective prayer that God may preserve these daughters of ours in the one true faith handed on to us by the apostles, and that they may be faithful to the sacrament they are about to receive through Christ our Lord. Amen.

For those of us who have been confirmed, may the grace of the sacraments be renewed in your lives, and may you give to these candidates the support of your prayers and good examples.

### **Conclusion**

Before I end this homily I wish to thank our dear parents for the confidence reposed on us to train your children; and for your contributions and cooperation with the school authority. I wish to remind you that the task of building up the lives of our children does not stop in school. I implore to continually give your support to the moral, spiritual and social upbringing of your children by teaching them the right values at home. We all have a role to play if we desire to have a better society. May God give us the grace to assist each other through Christ our Lord.

I also wish to congratulate the SS 3 students who have just concluded their WAEC Examinations; and for the success recorded in your Jamb Examination and also pray that God will see you through as you prepare to begin the NECO exams through Christ our Lord. To all of us students, I encourage you to study very hard. Your parents invest a lot of money and energy to see that you attend a good school; you must show them appreciation by making them proud all the time.

Finally I thank the staff and sisters for the great work you do here training these young girls with the mind of the church so that they can become useful tools for societal transformation in the nearest future.

Once again, I wish to congratulate you my dear children for this bold step you are taking and I pray that the Lord may continually keep you strong in the practice of your faith and help you to be worthy ambassadors for Christ through Christ our Lord.

***May God bless you all !***