

“God is With You Wherever You Go”

John 21:1-14

Jesus has been crucified and resurrected. Having already experienced the resurrected Jesus twice, he comes to them a third time after a night of fishing with no luck.

Jesus is preparing breakfast on the shore as the sun is rising. He shouts to them to cast their net on the right side of the boat. Their nets are overflowing when they join Jesus for breakfast of fried fresh fish and bread.

God is with them wherever they go just as Jesus has been with our confirmands as their parents and grandparents, as Divinity and their teachers have taught them and exemplified for them what it means to be a follower of Christ.

I share with you excerpts from their faith statements as they prepare to affirm their baptisms in the Rite of Confirmation.

Owen Ochocki

Luke 6:31 . . . “Do to others as you would have them do to you.” I chose this because I personally think that if you treat others with respect, respect will be given back to you.

The Redeemer Crisis Center reminds me that there are some people that are less fortunate enough to not have the latest gadgets. We have to be thankful for what we have and to be blessed with a family that cares for you because some people grow up without a father or a mother. Being able to help out one another is a great thing to do because some people need the assistance in their life. We do not know what certain people are going through and have to respect them.

I have written a lot of sermon notes in the past but my favorite was on January 27, 2019. It was the 3rd Sunday after Epiphany. It asked me what I will remember about the sermon and I said through our baptism we are a child of God and will forever worship him. This always reminds me that we shall always worship him and obey him.

Through out the years of confirmation and Sunday School, I've learned that god is always with us and that you can always talk to him when needed. I've learned to understand God, and how to understand myself more. I have to thank my confirmation teachers that taught me a lot during confirmation.

Logan Mudra

The Bible verse I chose is in Isaiah 43:2, that stated, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you." This means that when you pass through all of your life challenges, God will always be with you and help you get through tough situations.

Some things that I will remember about the sermons are that we should follow God and Jesus Christ. Another thing I remember from the sermons and from Sunday School is that we should all be part of the church and to be on a committee which is a group of people that help out with running the church. A really important sermon that I was taught was called, "If Christ has not been raised, our faith is futile." Things that I remembered from this sermon are that Christ died on the cross to protect us and saves us from sin.

What I believe about Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit is that Jesus is our savior and he saved us from sin. I believe Jesus was the son of God and was born by the Virgin Mary. I believe that

God was the creator of this amazing world. Finally I believe that God is with us because he watches over us and helps us through all of our challenges.

One way that I thought about my religion and my beliefs was when my grandfather passed away. When my grandfather and my family were all at Myrtle Beach we kind of noticed that he was getting ill. When we got back to Ohio we made a doctors appointment and eventually we found that he had pancreatic cancer that was the size of a golf ball which devastated me. During that time we did not really go to church because we were going to my grandparent's house to take care of him with my grandma. During that time my grandfather was sick, I was thinking about where he would go when he passes away. I was thinking about if he was going to Heaven or somewhere else, but I did not know where. Weeks later he passed away and I thought that he was going to go to Heaven. A week or so later, my family and I all went back to church and work.

Rebecca Dinin

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." (Deuteronomy 31:6) This verse means a lot because God will be with you always no matter what.

Something that I will always remember from the sermon is that the pews at church are like a buddy bench, also you will also have someone to help you in tough times. I will also remember that Jesus is very loving to everyone that he meets.

I believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross to save us. I believe that God did a lot of amazing things such as creating everything around me. Lastly, I believe the Holy Spirit is a way he communicates with us in hard times.

My faith has changed a lot since starting Sunday school. It has taught me that it's important to help others when they are in need. It has also taught me that showing love and compassion might be what someone needs to make their day.

When I first started band in 5th grade I was especially nervous because it would be the first ever concert in band. I was just stuck on what to do so I decided to use my faith to help me through it. What I learned is that sometimes you will need to use your faith in situations that you may be nervous about what may happen.

One of my favorite things that I have done in confirmation was serving the meal at Redeemer. I love how they were so loving and caring about young people. I also love how they appreciate all the help they get to help get through it and make it a little bit better.

My second thing that I liked about confirmation was going to nursing homes. I didn't realize that they get visits from many people because they were "forgotten" by their family. I also remember that they were so happy to see young people.

Victoria Vegh

Romans 12:21 "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." To me, this verse means that you shouldn't let the evil take over your life by making you do bad things to people, but take over evil by doing good things in the world. From class, I remember when we watched War Room and how the characters in this movie fought the evil by praying to God in sort of a "Prayer War." I also remember how we went to serve a meal at Redeemer Crisis Center and we fought the evil by doing good for the hungry people in Cleveland. I also remember the sermon where Pastor Doug was telling stories about WWII; I find stories about wars quite interesting.

I believe that God created the world, animals, and humans, in his vision. I believe that Jesus Christ came to earth through the virgin Mary and saved us from our sins by dying on the cross, and then rising from the dead three days later. I also believe that the Holy Spirit can work through us to do good in the world in order to serve God.

My faith has changed a lot since I've started Sunday School. For example, before I was in Confirmation Class, I used to just sit and be bored in church, but now I stand and sit when I'm supposed to, say all the dialogue on the screen, and pay attention to the sermons. I believe that this shows respect toward God.

I believe that in the Lord's Prayer, we are saying that God is our Father and that God's kingdom comes in prayer. That God provides for our needs. That God forgives our sins if we ask in prayer. And that he gives us grace to forgive people who sinned against us. In the Ten Commandments, God is telling us that He is the only God. Not to use His name in vain. Honor Sundays. Respect your parents. Don't kill people. Honor our spouse. Don't take what is not ours. Don't tell lies about your neighbors. Don't be jealous. And also don't be jealous of what your neighbor has.

Madison Chmura

“For with God nothing shall be impossible.” Luke 1:37

I picked this verse because it has meaning to me. To me, this means that when you are going through something difficult or challenging, God will always be there by my side. In his eyes, nothing is impossible. Even when I don't believe in myself I know that he does believe in me. I

remember when I was trying to memorize the Ten Commandments, Apostles Creed and the books of the bible, I was so nervous to say them in front of the entire class.

I was able to do it because even though I didn't realize it at the time, God was there with me and helped me through it.

My faith changed a lot during Sunday school and confirmation classes. Before, I didn't really have an interest in going to Sunday school because I thought it would be boring and I didn't fully understand faith. Now I do understand much better and when we learn about things that relate to my life or something I find interesting, I remember it and it sticks with me. This changed how I view church and Sunday school. It has made my faith grow.

Does my faith help me? Yes it does! My faith helps me when I have any doubts. Doubts that make me wonder if God is with me all the time. I mean he can't be with everyone all the time, right? He sure can and is! When I think of my faith and what I believe in, my doubts disappear.

When we helped serve meals at the Redeemer Crisis Center, we helped many people who possibly hadn't eaten a meal in a couple of days. From one of my sermon notes, I wrote . . . "Jesus said when we serve others, we are actually serving him". Doing things for other people is something that needs to happen more often. Even if you don't really want to, God wants you to and by doing for others you are doing right by God.

Mason Brunecz

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13. This means that whenever or wherever Christ will strengthen me and anything I do.

I still remember Mrs. Revilock and Mrs. Marko's class and how it took such a long time to be able to sing all the books of the Bible.

Every Sunday they would add one or two more books on the board to sing, the little lesson booklets we got every Sunday, and the little chairs we sat in. But, my favorite part was doing all the cool arts and crafts projects in their class we did.

A couple years ago I lost my grandfather; during hard times like that one, my faith helps me in lots of ways. Like sometimes I will talk to God when I'm alone and tell him about things that I'm having a rough time with and it will help me work my way through those problems faster. This is how my faith helped me during hard times and difficult situations.

The Biggest thing for me was going to the Redeemer Crisis Center. Both of the times I went were around Christmas time. In Sunday school we would load up the cars that we are going down there with all of the Christmas presents. When we arrived, after the long, fun car ride we would put the gifts and presents on the pews upstairs. Then we would go in the gymnasium and move a ton of stuff around and organize it all. After that we would serve the meal to the people that came to eat and once done we would hand out gift bags, hats, and scarves then clean up and head back.

Charles Edward Parsons

(Ephesians 6:15) "As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace."

"As shoes for your feet . . ." We all remember the proverb of sowing seeds, some are eaten, some grow strong, and some are choked by thorns. With this proverb we know there will be thorns

along all paths. If one is not prepared to proclaim the gospel of the lord and they leave for their journey bare foot, surely they'll step upon thorns, bleed, and crawl back home crying for their mother.

Now if one sees that there could be a few problems they might prepare a little, equipping themselves with tennis shoes. And when they set out they will step upon the thorns and step away unscathed. But surely, they will get a small rock or two in their shoe and continue on. They will take many more steps each with growing annoyance, anger, impatience, and pain, until finally they give up where they are for they cannot bear such pains any longer. The one who is prepared on the other hand will know that many difficulties will plague their path so they wear the boots of fortitude, allowing them to travel down the path without any hiccups, getting to their destination, spreading the Gospel of the Lord. In three paths only one successful, so one can assume that it might not be as easy as it seems. That if one is prepared they might go through life with fewer problems. This method of preparation has a special name: Prayer.

What I remember from meditations in class are the discussions and the debates about how to view something or how things fit together. Many a time did we have one question evolve into a five-ten minute discussion. What I most enjoyed was intellectual competition, where the class is split into groups to do a certain task. Activities ranged from writing information down on a chalkboard to racing to see who could answer a question first. Always, I found a competition of fact memorization to be thrilling if not annoying when you have the answer on the tip of your tongue and you just can't remember.

One experience in life that has deepened my faith is taking a leadership position in Boy Scouts. It has taught me a lot about God's job, being a shepherd. In Boy Scouts I think that I have a difficult time leading and teaching my patrol. This has proven God surely must be an immortal being as no mortal could have the patience to lead the human race. God is called a shepherd and we are called his sheep, and we are some stupid sheep.

We are just so bad at following his word and while some of it is our fault, most of it is our human nature. So if it feels like God isn't guiding you, he is. The problem usually lies in us not wanting to be guided.

Faith is the counterbalance to anger and irrationalism that every human needs. Faith is amazing because it is a set of rules to follow to be a good person that was not created by another human. If it was created by a human it would have an innumerable amount of flaws. Faith to me serves as the angel on my shoulder, pointing the correct decision out, helping me progress as a human being. Faith is one of God's greatest gifts to us, one that gives a way to reason and a way to live.

Alyssa Perez

The Bible verse I chose is Joshua 1:9 "I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." To me this means that God is always watching over me and protecting me wherever I am.

No matter what I do, God will always forgive me. I chose this verse because it is so true and when I read it, I really felt connected to God. When I was little, I used to believe everything that came out of my teachers and parents mouths about God, but I never really thought about what it

meant to me. As I began to grow my faith here at Divinity, I began to really understand what it means to have a strong relationship with God.

As I went to different Sunday school classes each year, I realized how big of a part my religion plays in my life. One thing I remember learning in Sunday school was that the Bible is the roadmap of life. I learned this in Mr. Spanagel's class in fifth grade. I didn't fully understand what this meant until the beginning of seventh grade when I started Confirmation class.

Confirmation class helped me understand that the solution to any problem can be found in the Bible. I have learned that prayer can help solve any sort of problem that I face in life.

I remember a few years ago when my grandpa was sick and in the hospital all the time, before and after each time I would visit him, I would pray to God that he would be okay for at least one more day so that I could see him again. Prayer is the one thing that kept my mind at peace when he passed away after being in Hospice care. I knew that this only happened because it was in God's master plan; because God knew what was best for my family. So the thought of knowing that my grandpa and I will soon meet again when we both have eternal life has kept me grounded. I know that even when I feel like not a single soul in the universe is with me, God is.

My faith helps me in my everyday life in so many ways. Whenever I am faced with a decision, I ask myself what Jesus would do and it helps me make the right decision. But even when I make the wrong decision, God forgives me and still stands by me, because his love is unconditional for me and for all of his children. Whenever I am having a bad day, God helps me by knowing that he is always watching over me and protecting me. My faith has helped me gain a better understanding about what life is really about. I am so happy to have had grown my faith so

much at Divinity, and to have had amazing teachers that helped me learn more about God each time I came. I am excited to continue to grow my faith here in the years to come.

May the peace of God . . .

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