

FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE: Confirmations

Confirmations at Our Lady of Grace

By Stephen Somerville

Regular readers may recall my column of a few weeks back regarding the baptism of my sister-in-law Cindy and my seventeen-year-old nephew Brock at the Campus Church on Bathurst Street, in the southern portion of Aurora.

The ceremony itself was very moving emotionally.

Each of the individual stories for finding the Lord was truly compelling, but a couple stood out for me.

One gentleman spoke of the hardships in his life and ? based on what he told the audience via his video testimonial - he has had enough dark times for three lives. This man spoke of how the Lord has helped him overcome these obstacles and how blessed he is to have the family that he does.

As I listened to this man's testimonial, I had a large lump in my throat, and I tried to wipe away some tears without anyone seeing me.

My sister-in-law Cindy's testimonial was also very heartfelt, and I was very happy and proud to witness her baptism.

On Saturday, April 26, I had the honour and privilege of being the ?sponsor? of Matthew McDougall, a Grade 8 student at Our Lady of Grace Catholic School, who was going through the rite of Confirmation.

I was very happy to do this for his father, Bob, and mother, Mercedes. It seems only yesterday that I was watching Matthew learn how to play hockey, and now here he is, a nice and clean-cut young man of 14 who also happens to be an excellent hockey player for one of the York Simcoe Express squads.

The celebrants were asked to gather downstairs in the basement of the church at least one half hour before the 11 a.m. ceremony was to begin.

We then proceeded up the stairs and marched to the front of the hall ? all probably 50 of us ? in front of a packed church.

I later told one of the adults that marching in with all eyes on us reminded me of the last time that I had done this in this church, back on June 12, 1999 ? my wedding day. I remarked that this time it felt ?way better!?

Father Joe Gorman then opened the proceedings by welcoming everyone in his usual light hearted way.

There were a number of hymns sung by the assembled and reading of various scripture passages by the students.

As I looked around, I could not believe how nice and cleaned up these kids looked and the huge smiles on the faces of the relatives of the celebrants.

Father Joe then gave the Homily; I think he was spot on in his message to both the students and those in the audience. Father put the ceremony into perspective when he stated that this day is a continuation of the spiritual journey that began for all of you many years ago at your baptism. He then said, and I paraphrase, that you will have your good days and your bad, but the Lord will be with you and the people in these pews will always be there for you.

Then it came time for the actual Confirmation Rite, and I know that a number of the students were a bit nervous because Father Joe had promised them earlier that he would be individually asking them some tough questions in front of the 800 people in the audience.

In the end, he simply asked a number of questions to the celebrants en masse, to which they were required to answer ?I Do.?

Then the students and their sponsors were called up to the front and they were individually anointed with Chrism.

Communion was then had by all; and then the ceremony ended with the Recessional Hymn.

Bedlam then ensued as many families rushed to the front to get pictures of their children at the altar.

It was quite the spectacle!

I congratulate all the Confirmation celebrants that day and hope that this was a very special day in their individual spiritual journey. I also offer a special shout out to Bob, Mercedes and their daughter, ?Princess Emily?, for allowing my family and me to participate and bear witness to Matthew's very special day.

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