

Bishop Arthur N. Tafoya celebrates Grand Junction Deanery's Confirmations

By Ginny Revel

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE OF CATHOLIC LIFE

GRAND JUNCTION - Forty-six confirmation candidates from six parishes gathered at St. Mary, Montrose April 19 to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation with Bishop Arthur N. Tafoya. Fathers Nathanael Foshage, Paul Montez, Steve Murray, Don Malin, and Mike Walker concelebrated the liturgy with Bishop Tafoya.

Approximately 400 family members and friends gathered to witness the celebration of the Confirmation Rite.

Bishop Tafoya asked the confirmation candidates if they were ready to respond to the call of God by generous surrender to God's will? He said, "what is happening tonight happened to the disciples. Jesus said I will send you the Holy Spirit and transformation took place. You are committing the rest of your life to be faithful to God with the help of the Holy Spirit."

A reception was served in the parish hall following the liturgical celebration.

The next evening, Friday, April 20, Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church in Grand Junction was filled to capacity with Confirmation candidates, their sponsors, and family, relatives, guests and parishioners for the solemn Rite of Confirmation. Bishop Arthur Tafoya presided, with Fathers Jim Plough, Mike Smith, John Farley, Edmundo Valera and Mark Bettinger concelebrating the Mass.

In the first centuries Confirmation generally comprised one single celebration with Baptism. Among other reasons, the multiplication of infant baptisms all through the year, the increase of rural parishes, and the growth of dioceses often prevented the bishop from being present at all baptismal celebrations.

In the West the desire to reserve the completion of Baptism to the bishop caused the temporal separation of the two sacraments.

"The reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For "by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit," said Bishop



Left: Yvonne Kuta, St. Mary's Montrose, Director of Faith Formation, poses with Bishop Tafoya at a reception following the Confirmation Rite. Right: A confirmandi and her sponsor pose with Bishop Tafoya at St. Mary's in Montrose on April 19, 2007.



Tafoya. "Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed."

Although Confirmation is sometimes called the "sacrament of Christian maturity," we must not confuse adult faith with the adult age of natural growth, nor forget that the baptismal grace is a grace of free, unmerited election and does not need "ratification" to become effective. St. Thomas reminds us of this: "Age of body does not determine age of soul."

Even in childhood one can attain spiritual maturity: as the book of Wisdom says: "For old age is not honored for length of time, or measured by number of years. "Many children, through the strength of the Holy Spirit they have received, have bravely fought for Christ even to the shedding of their blood.

A candidate for Confirmation who has attained the age of reason must profess the faith, be in the state of grace, have the intention of receiving the sacrament, and be prepared to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ, both within the ecclesial community and in temporal affairs.

Bishop Tafoya greeted the candidates before the ceremony, reminding them of the importance of this sa-

cred occasion. He spoke of the reverence and enthusiasm with which the confirmandi should embrace their reception of the Holy Spirit.

He also encouraged them to approach all the sacraments, and especially the Eucharist, with proper conviction (a resounding "Amen") and awe.

The administration of this sacrament by the bishop demonstrates clearly that its effect is to unite those who receive it more closely to the Church, to her apostolic origins, and to her mission of bearing witness to Christ.

"From that time on the apostles, in fulfillment of Christ's will, imparted to the newly baptized by the laying on of hands the gift of the Spirit that completes the grace of Baptism.

For this reason in the *Letter to the Hebrews* the doctrine concerning Baptism and the laying on of hands is listed among the first elements of Christian instruction. The imposition of hands is rightly recognized by the Catholic tradition as the origin of the sacrament of Confirmation, which in a certain way perpetuates the grace of Pentecost in the Church."

Refreshments and confirmation cake were served in the Immaculate Heart of Mary Fellowship Room after the Rite.

Bishop blesses oils for anointing

Priests from the Diocese renew their priestly vows. The ambo is incensed



Chrism Mass Continued from 1.

sibilities so that they can experience the power of Christ's victory on Easter.

The evening celebration of the Mass of the Lord's Supper is a remembrance of the "triple gifts of the ministerial priesthood, the Eucharist and the new commandment of love," he said.

"In the upper room the Redeemer wanted to anticipate, in the sacrament of bread and wine changed into his body and blood, the sacrifice of his life," Bishop Tafoya said.

Good Friday, he said, is "a day of penance, fasting and prayer, of participation in the Passion of the Lord."

In many places across the Diocese of Pueblo, Good Friday also includes a celebration of the Stations of the Cross, allowing Christians to walk with the Lord on the path toward his crucifixion.

Holy Saturday is the day of "great silence," when the liturgy is not cel-



ebrated during the day.

"With the inflation of words and images in the media and the world" all around us, the bishop said, modern people especially need a day of silence, particularly to prepare themselves for the Easter Vigil.

At the vigil, he said, "the veil of sadness that enveloped the church because of the death and burial of the Lord is ripped apart by the victory cry: 'Christ is risen. He has defeated death forever.'"

First Eucharist Family Retreat held at IHM



Second grade First communion class. The children practice in anticipation.

By Ginny Revel
SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE OF CATHOLIC LIFE

GRAND JUNCTION- In preparation for their First Communion, fifty-nine second graders participated in the First Eucharist Family Retreat at Immaculate Heart of Mary parish in Grand Junction. The children set aside the afternoon of Sunday, April 22, to prepare for this most important sacrament.

Father Mark Bettinger, Pastor, opened the retreat with a Blessing of the Children. Together with their family, the First Communion candidates practiced the proper, reverent manner in which to receive the precious Body and Blood of Jesus in the Eucharist.

Jill Mountain, IHM Director of Faith Formation, encouraged the children to receive Jesus "with open and loving hearts."

The afternoon session also included family reflection time on the Gospel passage to be read at the Mass celebrated on the child's First Eucharist Sunday. This was followed by time fashioning a sacred craft item. The afternoon concluded with a special prayer.