

**Feast of Pentecost  
(Graduation Mass)  
May 31, 2009**

**Readings: Acts 2:1-11; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13; John 15:26-27; 16:12-15**

**Follow Your Own Path**

What a wonderful morning. We celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, and we also gather to honor our graduates. How fitting that these two celebrations occur on the same day.

We have all our happy, smiling, graduates with us here this morning. And for me it is a bittersweet; I'm happy for their success in reaching this milestone, but I'm sad because we're losing six of our youth group members.

Our graduates have much in common; they are all young and bright. But each of them is unique person. They have different personalities, skills, and talents; that's part of what makes youth group fun and exciting. And all of our graduates have all received different gifts from the Holy Spirit. They are all called to serve God and His Church and our society in different ways. We heard St. Paul tell us that we are all members of the one Body of Christ. And so we are equally important even though we may have different functions and individual purposes. St. Paul says: *"To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit."* We all benefit society in different ways. For example, being a doctor is a fine profession, but if everyone of us became a doctor, who would build and maintain our homes, who would grow and prepare our food, who would build and maintain our cars, who would build our roads and generate our electricity, and who would teach our children. We all need to know what our calling, our vocation, is.

Our graduates move on to new stage of their journey through life today. And, as they do, I encourage them to continually try to identify and determine their purpose in life so that they can become the best version of themselves. We spent some time this last year in youth group talking about this concept. Last fall, we gave each of our seniors a copy of Matthew Kelly's book, *The Rhythm of Life: Living Every Day with Passion & Purpose*, to help them prepare for taking this step and knowing what God is calling them to do uniquely. I hope you graduates found it helpful.

Life is a journey, and on that journey you will have a lot of choices to make every day. Your paths will all be different, but your final destination, your final goal, must be a common one. And that final destination that you must always keep in mind is, of course, heaven. You will be faced with many obstacles and distractions along the way, but you must remain focused. You must follow the Spirit of God, not the spirit of the world. St. Gregory the Great said: *"Anyone who is determined to reach his destination is not deterred by the roughness of the road that leads to it. Nor must we allow the charm of success to seduce us, or we shall be like a foolish traveler who is so distracted by the pleasant meadows through which he is passing that he forgets where he is going."* On your journey through life, enjoy all the beauty of God's creation that He has given to us, but never forget where it is that you are ultimately going.

Be prepared with an accurate moral compass. Look to the Church to provide you with good maps that point out the dead-ends, the one-way streets, and the roads that lead to dangerous and risky travel. Do not travel in darkness, but instead search out the light of

truth. Turn on your headlights, if you will, so that you can make good decisions and determine what is the right thing for you to do, not merely what is pleasant or convenient.

You must avoid simply following the herd and going down paths that will put your faith and salvation in danger. Here are a couple of quotes to consider. The first comes from the Old Testament book of Exodus:

- ***“Neither shall you allege the example of the many as an excuse for doing wrong”*** (Exodus 23:2).

The next comes from the great philosopher, St. Augustine:

- ***“Wrong is wrong, even if everyone else is doing it. Right is right, even if no one else is doing it.”***

And the last comes from my father. I first remember hearing it about 50 years ago:

- ***“If everyone else jumped off the bridge, would you jump off the bridge too?”***

The last question came from my father when I was about eight years old. I wanted to wear an inappropriate shirt to school and defended my decision with the common claim: “Everyone else is doing it.” He taught me an early lesson about making good decisions.

And up until this point in your lives, you have had your parents to look over you and help keep you on the right path. But now you will need to take greater responsibility for determining your own course through life. Look to the Holy Spirit to help give you guidance in charting that course. Jesus tells us in the gospel that the Spirit will be your Advocate and will guide you to all truth. The spirit of the world might lead you to fun. But the Spirit of God will lead you to ultimate happiness. Let the Holy Spirit be like a quiet little GPS unit helping to guide you when you reach a fork in the road of life. Let the Spirit guide you down the correct path, even if it doesn’t look like the most pleasant or most-often chosen. Let the Holy Spirit give you the strength to do what you know you ought to do, not just what you want to do.

**Deacon Joe Hulway**