

OK, so before you receive Communion, let's understand what just happened here.

We know that many things we do in the Christian faith come from the roots of Christianity which is Judaism—Jesus was Jewish (at least his mother was for sure).

At about 13 years old (remember Confirmands) we saw and read where Jesus read for the first time from the Hebrew Scriptures in the synagogue. I mentioned to you how that was similar (for Jesus) to your being Confirmed. Jesus reading the scriptures at 13 is a rite of passage that Judaism calls his Bar Mitzvah (or Bat Mitzvah if it's a girl)—Bar meaning son, and Bat meaning daughter and Mitzvah meaning commandment. At 13 they are now sons and daughters of the commandments. What does that mean?

Well, under Jewish Law, children under 13 are not obligated to observe the Ten Commandments, although they are encouraged to do so as much as possible to learn the obligations *they will* have as adults.

For us as Christians, that would mean that youth under the age of 13 would not be expected to keep Jesus' great commandment in the New Testament—the commandment that actually combines the 10 commandments into *one* two-part commandment, to love God and your neighbor as yourself. We as your elders wouldn't hold you accountable to that, prior to 13 years of age.

Then at the age of 13 (12 for girls) in the Jewish tradition, children **now** become obligated to observe the Ten Commandments. The bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah ceremony is what *formally marks the assumption that now these sons and daughters have an obligation to observe the commandments.*

For you as newly confirmed disciples, likewise, you too are now expected to live *into* having said Yes to the life and love of Jesus Christ, that is, his teachings and his salvation. Your parents answered for you at your baptism, and now you have answered for yourselves. It's a huge rite of passage.

Like the Jewish tradition, where they give to those who have been bar mitzvah'd, a small black box with scripture in it, which they are to strap around their arm—called a Tefillin—we too, in the Christian tradition have placed around your neck a stole inscribed with your specific scripture passage, marking your rite of passage

into leadership in the life of the church, and into a focused spiritual growth for yourselves, such as Jesus did.

When you depart today, you will first stop back at the Altar to retrieve two symbols that will take you into your new journey of faith. It is our hope that this Water Drop (blue glass drop), which you will pull from the waters of your baptism and this Cross, will inscribe into your memory the significance of today.

The Water Drop symbolizes the water of your baptism, where you were called, claimed, and named by God. The Water Drop is so that you remember Who you are and Whose you are (especially in times of troubled waters).

The Cross is the symbol of Christ's salvation and a reminder to you that this cross be the only cross you need bear, for all your burdens are to be placed at the foot of the Cross of Christ—so often in life we make the mistake of taking on what belongs to Jesus and the kingdom of heaven..

I pray your confirmation experience, along with this worship ceremony/Rite of Passage, your friendships with one another, and your symbols today will remain in your heart and mind all the days of your life. God Bless you.

(Communion)