

**Homily – Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord
Confirmations at Our Lady Queen of Peace, Kenedy – April 8, 2024**

It gives me great joy to celebrate Mass and Confirmations here in Kenedy, on a day as special as today, marking the moment when Jesus took his own flesh from Mary's body. From that moment she is the Queen of Peace because Jesus is the Universal King.

In the middle of Easter, when we celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord and prepare to receive the Holy Spirit, the Church today presents us with the occasion to celebrate the mystery with which it all began: the Incarnation. The liturgical moment helps us see the mysteries of our salvation from a cosmic perspective. The creator of the universe has become one of us, not only to forgive our transgressions against Him, but so we may share in his own divine life and mission.

Mary, who committed no sin for which to be forgiven, becomes the first fruit. Before anyone else, Mary receives God's revelation of Himself as all tenderness, compassion, and mercy. The immaculately conceived Virgin is filled with grace, becoming for us a perfect image of God's own tenderness, compassion, and mercy. Thus, she is fully prepared to become the Mother of God. The Holy Spirit overshadows her. At the Annunciation, in Mary's womb, God begins the adventure of being Man.

Through the angel, God says to Mary: *"Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you. (...) Do not be afraid..."* All confusion turned into peace and serenity, and not because she completely understood everything, but because she knew that God was walking amid humanity to save it from within. From then on, Mary kept in her

heart anything she did not understand, to talk about it only with Him, her Child, her God.

Mary always trusted God and continued to trust Him. She did not hesitate the slightest to continue trusting the Lord, so she surrendered herself in God's hands: *"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."* All hope is fulfilled through her, so she becomes the Mother of Hope. As we are saved, by the Lord's will Mary also becomes our Mother.

As our Mother, Mary raises us to become more like her firstborn Child, our Lord. She teaches us to find Jesus in our own lives and learn from Him. Pope Francis has said that God (quote) *"humbled himself to the extent of burdening himself with our sufferings and sin, and therefore he asks us to seek him not outside of life and history, but in relationship with Christ and with our brothers and sisters. Seeking him in life, in history, in our daily life. And this, brothers and sisters, is the road to the encounter with God: the relationship with Christ and our brothers and sisters."* (end of quote).

Today, those being confirmed are also filled with the gift of the Holy Spirit. After the example of Mary, you are called to trust the Lord, who is truly present within you since the day of your Baptism. By the work of the Holy Spirit and with his gifts, Christ also wants to reveal Himself to the world through you as all tenderness, compassion, and mercy.

May Our Lady of Guadalupe, who bears her Son Jesus in the flesh and joined herself to his sacrifice, help you always bear witness to our shared faith, hope, and love.