AND JESUS CAME AND SAID TO THEM, “ALL AUTHORITY IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH HAS BEEN GIVEN TO ME. GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU. AND BEHOLD, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS TO THE END OF THE AGE.”

Spiritual directors regularly urge those committed to their charge to develop a close, personal relationship with God. In this way they will experience the comforting, strengthening presence of God as they move through the days of their lives. But when we contemplate God as He is revealed in Sacred Scripture, we cannot but ask, “who are we that God should be mindful of us? Who are we to presume to develop a personal relationship with Him?

Bear in mind the essence of God! God is from eternity to eternity the great I AM. Through a word heaven and earth came into being. Indeed, the more we know about the universe the greater this act of creation becomes. Through Him the planets run their courses. He controls the forces of nature. Seed time and harvest continue. Kingdoms and empires rise and fall at his command. He numbers our days. He judges mankind with righteousness and truth.

The vivid, biblical descriptions of God’s glory overwhelm our hearts and minds. Remember the numinous presence of God in the dark cloud, the lightening and trumpet blast at Sinai. Remember the incredible power of the angels, His messengers of salvation and destruction. Call to mind the vision of Isaiah! “I saw the Lord, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!” And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said, “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips; and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!” No one on his own can look on the face of God and live!

Well might we ask, “How can such as we seek to build a close personal relationship with the all-holy, all-knowing, all-powerful God as He is revealed in Sacred Scripture? In truth we cannot! But God has built a golden bridge to unite Him with fallen mankind. The golden bridge that unites God and mankind is the covenant of faith and love, established first between God and Abraham, the man of faith, and in the fullness of time between the Son of God and His followers. All who believe in the Blessed Trinity, and all who look in faith to Christ for redemption and follow in His ways are the children of God. As God’s beloved children it is possible to develop a close personal relationship
with God.

The glory of God fills the world, and we dare never forget the grandeur and splendor of God. Yet as Christ Himself reminds us in His high-priestly prayer on the night of His betrayal, He will glorify the Father of love and mercy by offering Himself as the perfect and all-availing sacrifice for the redemption of the world. God's great glory is revealed most clearly in His love for His fallen creation. As is always the case, God takes the initiative and enables us to have a most precious relationship with Him.

This glory of love is revealed in the closing words of our Lord to His disciples just before His ascension. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given Him, and it is in the power of that authority that He commands His apostles to spread abroad His love and to go and make disciples of all nations.

To make our relationship with God doubly sure Christ instituted the Blessed Sacrament of Holy Baptism. When we receive the waters of rebirth we are marked with the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We bear His name and are His children, united with Him in family love and devotion. The relationship is God's precious gift to us, and He is with us in our going in and going out, in our waking and sleeping. In every moment of our lives we can experience the comforting, guiding and inspiring presence of God. In the assurance of that presence we can move forward with confidence and joy knowing that all things work together for our good. This is why our hearts can rejoice on this Feast Day of the Holy Trinity, the God who receives us into His family.

Today we are also celebrating the Apostolic Rite of Holy Confirmation. It is the rite that reminds us of the way in which the Church, the communion of saints, continues from generation to generation.

From the beginning of the Church's history infants and adults have been brought to the waters of Holy Baptism. In that blessed water, connected with the Word of God, children and adults alike are reborn. They are no longer merely descendants of Adam and Eve, they are children of God. Loving parents and teachers and pastors teach them by word and example all that Christ taught His original disciples. Through Sacrament and Word and prayer and corporate worship they grow in faith and holiness of living. When the Church through the Pastor deems the child or adult sufficiently instructed and an active participant in corporate and private worship, they are invited to receive Holy confirmation. In this rite the confirmands not only confess their faith in the Triune God, but they kneel and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands and anointing with blessed oil. In this way we know and believe that the Church of Christ will continue until the end of this present age. We who are here this morning are living proof that the Church has continued and will continue to the end of the age.

When this sermon has come to an end, let us all pause for a moment and remember the day of our confirmation, and give thanks that we have been baptized and confirmed and have a personal relationship with God who daily sees us safely through the vicissitudes
of life in this world. Let us also pray that the Holy Spirit who has led us and established a relationship with us will descend upon Crystal who will be confirmed today. Finally, let us praise God that His Church exists now and will continue until the return of our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.