

“Feeling the Tug”

Confirmation Sermonette 5766

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New Orleans, Louisiana

My precious Confirmands and dear friends,

It's amazing how tomorrow's events can make today's statements look so foolish! But, one never knows what the next day brings.

For instance, I looked back at my sermonette at last year's Confirmation on May 15, 2005. I was amazed to read my own words. How ironic they seem now after what we have all been through. I said to last year's Confirmands:

Confirmands, right now, your own 'wisdom' constitutes everything you think you need to know about your place in the world. That's all about to change. You're not going to believe how much smarter your parents and teachers (and even Rabbi) are going to seem in just a few more years.

And then, speaking to the Congregation, I said with such "insight": "And parents of our Confirmands, relax, smoother waters are ahead!"

How wrong I was on that one!

I was right, of course, too accurately on target, when I predicted to last year's class that change was in store for them. Change has been the chronicle of each of our lives. And you, this year's Confirmands, have dealt with more dramatic convolutions of fate than any class in the 136-year history of Temple Sinai.

You have witnessed greater suffering, uncertainty, and dislocation than a teenager ought to bear. It has been altogether unfair. But, out of your experience, you have also grown and matured at an accelerated rate.

No one in this room would have wanted you to grow from such an experience. Nevertheless, you (and we) are not the same people we were this time last year.

I wish so much that our year together had not been so cut short. But, we made the best of what we were given. Two of you commuted biweekly from your evacuation homes in other states! I appreciate the devotion all of you and your parents displayed, too.

This Confirmation evening is deeply symbolic. It declares to all of us that you are engaged in a wonderful pilgrimage, a personal search for yourself, for truth, and for your calling in life.

Smart, loving, kind, talented – we are confident that you have such fantastic gifts with which to make this crucial journey. I would only remind you – and you would expect nothing less from me as both your rabbi and your friend – to take your Judaism along with you on this adventure!

I've always liked the story of the little fellow whose most prized possession was his kite. He made it himself, and, on its inaugural flight, he let out more and more string, until he could only see a tiny speck floating in the sky.

That's when a fellow walked up to him and asked what he was doing. "I'm flying my kite. I made it myself," he said.

And the man looked up and then asked, "If you can't see it, how do you even know it's up there?"

The boy replied, "I'm as certain that that kite's up there as I am of anything in the whole world, because I can always feel it tugging on the string, right here."

However your world grows, turns upside down, or goes topsy-turvy in the years ahead, there will always be that tug of faith, of your Judaism, your identity with your People, and the presence of God, to serve as an anchor.

In joy and in trial, and every moment of life in between, just pull in the line and feel the tug on your heartstrings.

Your faith is your most prized possession. Celebrate it. Continue to study it. Practice it, because with it, you will never be alone, no matter where your journey leads you.

And now, we ask you, the distinguished members of Temple Sinai's Confirmation Class of 2006-5766 to RISE and, together, offer your Confirmation Vow.