

**Homily for the Installation of Father Michał Rosa as
Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish
Effingham, Illinois**

July 10, 2017

**† Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois**

Reverend Fathers, Deacons, consecrated religious, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ: It is good for us to be here today for this Mass and Rite of Installation of Father Michał Rosa as pastor of Sacred Heart Parish.

In our Gospel today we hear two separate accounts of people who had great faith in our Lord. The first account is that of an official approaching our Lord and asking him to restore his deceased daughter to life. The second account, while our Lord was on his way to the official's home, tells of a woman who touched the tassel of His garment, hoping to be cured of the hemorrhages that had plagued her for many years. In these accounts, we see not only the willingness of our Lord to give aid to those in need but also the remarkable faith of the official and the woman.

After hearing this Gospel, the question that we must ask ourselves is whether we would do as the two people in the Gospel did, and ask our Lord for help in times of need, either big or small, or if we think we can go

it alone. You see, if we are to live as Christ's true disciples we too, must daily rely on the grace of God to assist us in our lives. We must have the faith to believe that no matter what we encounter, that our Lord is greater than any form of brokenness or chaos we may experience due to our human frailty. By His grace we can overcome the suffering that is a part of our human condition so that we may be witnesses to the working of the Lord in the world today.

Today at this Mass we mark the beginning of a new chapter in the life of Sacred Heart Parish with the Installation of your new Pastor. I am very pleased that Father Rosa has accepted the call to serve as the local shepherd of the Catholic community of faith here at Sacred Heart Parish in Effingham. I am deeply grateful to you, Father Rosa, for the way you have faithfully served the people of our diocese for the past three years as parochial vicar of Saint Anthony of Padua, Sacred Heart and Annunciation Parishes. At the same time, I also wish to express my deep appreciation to Father Christopher Brey, the Dean of the Effingham Deanery, for his dedicated ministry as Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish for the past three years.

Father Rosa will now serve you as pastor in this Third Millennium of Christianity, so I think it is fitting to call to mind a theme suggested by our

late Holy Father, the Great Pope Saint John Paul II, in his Apostolic Letter, *NOVO MILLENNIO INEUNTE*, "On entering the New Millennium," which I quote as follows (nos. 30-31): "First of all, I have no hesitation in saying that all pastoral initiatives must be set in relation to holiness."

We grow in holiness by following Jesus as His disciples. Closely related to the notion of discipleship is the concept of stewardship. In the First Letter of St. Peter, he writes of stewardship in these words: "As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace."¹

In the Fall of 2015, I published my second pastoral letter, entitled, *Ars Crescendi in Dei Gratia*, Latin for "The Art of Growing in God's Grace." In it, I wrote, "The art of growing in God's grace is the key to growth in the Church. Building a culture of growth in the Church starts with inviting people to experience the love of Jesus Christ."

Over the course of the years leading up to the publication of my pastoral letter, I gave much thought to how we could, as a diocese, begin a process of strategic planning for growth in the Church. The growth envisioned is far more than just a quantitative increase in the number of people or the amount of money available to our parishes and the diocese. It

is also essential to ensure that we give significant attention to the qualitative growth that will guarantee sustainability for generations that follow.

In my pastoral letter, I said that we must do four things to build a vibrant community of saints:

1. Invite people to join us in prayer, especially Sunday Mass (hospitality);
2. Study the Bible and learn more about Jesus and our Catholic faith (formation);
3. Provide the sacraments as signs of hope and paths of grace to heaven (prayer); and
4. Serve those in need by practicing charity and justice (service).

The verbs in these four action items correspond to the four pillars of stewardship and discipleship that we have begun talking about in our diocese: hospitality, formation, prayer and service. We can all communicate more broadly the message of invitation.

Through prayer, discernment, and consultation with others, it has become evident that the Lord is inviting us to embrace more fully our call to discipleship out of which necessarily follows a life of stewardship.²

Stewardship recognizes that everything we have comes from God. We are stewards whether we recognize it or not and whether we like it or not. Stewardship from God's perspective is that He has given us gifts to be used not just selfishly for ourselves, but to be shared with others. Becoming a disciple means making an intentional decision to accept the Lord's call to follow Him and live the discipleship and stewardship way of life.

I am aware that such a plan for growth is ambitious, but it is one about which I am very optimistic, especially given what this diocese has to offer and the many ways in which various groups are already poised to contribute to that growth. A key group that is essential to this plan for growth is the priests of our diocese, especially our pastors. But they cannot do this alone. They need the help and cooperation of all parishioners. To be able to put into practice the mission of Jesus, we need to be part of a team supporting each other.

Our priests are at the very heart of our journey forward. As Catholics, we rely first and foremost on God's grace. This grace comes to us through the sacraments of the Church of which the priests are the ministers. In a special way, it is the priest who celebrates the Eucharist for us, feeding us with the Bread of Life, nourishing and strengthening us for this journey.

Without the Eucharist, this way of life will never succeed. Without priests, we will not have the Eucharist. Therefore, we need our priests for this journey. I am very grateful for the fidelity with which our priests serve the diocese. They are men committed to the building up of the Kingdom and to the salvation of the souls of those in our diocese and beyond. Their example of tireless dedication is an inspiration to me and to all of us of how we are likewise called to serve the Lord as committed disciples of Jesus Christ. It is their joyful, humble example that is, I believe, one of the major factors contributing to the growth in the number of seminarians studying for the priesthood in our diocese. They too, are signs of hope and encouragement to us as we continue this journey.

I pray that all of you will work with Father Rosa in seeking to be intentional disciples of the Lord and good stewards of the gifts entrusted to us for the growth of the Church as we journey together toward our inheritance in the glory of Heaven.

Therefore, dear parishioners of Sacred Heart Parish, I urge you to strive for holiness, to work and pray with your new pastor. Support him, help him, pray for him, and most of all, love him as he loves you and as Christ calls us to love each other. May God give us this grace. Amen.

¹ 1 Peter 4:10.

² United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, 1992, p. 8; <http://www.usccb.org/upload/stewardship-disciples-response-10th-anniversary.pdf>.