

**Homily Outline for the Chrism Mass
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
April 16, 2019**

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

The complete video of this entire homily is available online at:

<https://www.facebook.com/BishopThomasJohnPaprocki/videos/2183035031790230/>

- I. Burning of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris
 - A. Many people who have never been to Paris are familiar with Notre Dame Cathedral thanks to Bishop Robert Barron's *Catholicism* series.
 - B. Thirty years ago then-Father Robert Barron gave me a personal tour of Notre Dame Cathedral, so it is heartbreaking to see the damage done by the fire.
 - C. I am confident that Notre Dame Cathedral will be rebuilt.
 1. Millions of dollars have already been pledged for the rebuilding.
 2. Experience of growing up in Chicago with a keen awareness of how the city was rebuilt from the ashes of the great Chicago Fire of 1871.

- II. Mindful of St. Francis of Assisi's experience at the church of San Damiano.
 - A. He heard the Lord's message to "rebuild my Church," not just the physical structure, but the community of the Church as well.
 - B. In light of recent scandals and shocking revelations of the sins of priests and the hierarchy, we are called not just to rebuild Notre Dame Cathedral, but the community of faith in Paris, throughout France, in the United States and across the world.

- III. Blueprint for rebuilding the Church can be seen in the Scriptures for Holy Week
 - A. The reading of the Lord's Passion from the Gospel of St. Luke starts with the narrative of the Last Supper.
 1. Jesus says one of His apostles will betray Him; another will deny Him.
 2. St. Luke tells us that an argument about who was the greatest broke out among them while they were eating. This was during the first concelebrated Mass with Jesus the High Priest and his hand-picked bishops!
 3. After the Last Supper was finished, Jesus took them out to pray with Him, but they fell asleep!
 4. The Gospel readings for Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week are all about Judas: his plotting to betray Jesus; bargaining with the high priests for a sum of money for his betrayal; and objecting to spending money on perfumed oil for Jesus' feet, not because he was concerned for the poor, but because he was a thief (and this was Jesus' hand-picked treasurer).

- B. What do we learn from all this?
1. Judas recognizes his sin, but does not believe he can be forgiven, so he kills himself.
 2. Peter recognizes his sin, and weeps bitterly.
 3. "My brothers in the priesthood and the diaconate, my brothers and sisters in Christ, when we see our sins we should weep bitterly and not fall into some kind of rationalization or complacency about them. We should weep bitterly that we will never commit those sins again. And that is the real story of this Holy Week. Because those weak, sinful, frail men on whom Jesus would build His church, at the beginning of all this, that passion narrative, are so seemingly unsuited for the task. By the time Jesus rises from the dead, they are completely different; they are completely changed, and they are alive and on fire with the spirit and they go out and change the world by proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ."

IV. Connection to the blessing and consecration of the oils.

- A. First reading from Isaiah today is about the "Anointed One."
- B. In the Gospel, Jesus says that this Scripture passage is fulfilled in Him, that is, He is the "Anointed One," the Messiah, the Christ.
- C. Symbolism of the oils is from the ancient Olympics: olive oil as source of strength.
 1. Oil of the Sick symbolizes the spiritual, physical and emotional strength and healing needed by those who are ill.
 2. Oil of Catechumens symbolizes the strength need by those about to be baptized so they can resist the temptations of the Devil, who will try to divert them from the path to holiness and union with Christ.
 3. Sacred Chrism consecrates building and people to Christ: altars and churches are consecrated, i.e., set aside for worship of God; people are consecrated and share in the priesthood of Christ through anointing at Baptism and Confirmation; priests and bishops are consecrated and share in the ministerial priesthood of Christ the High Priest through ordination.
 4. On Good Friday, we recall how Christ sacrificed Himself on the cross to save us from our sins.
 5. On Easter Sunday, we will celebrate the new life that He has promised to us through His resurrection.
- D. May God give us this grace. Amen.