

**Homily for the Installation of Father Joseph Havrilka as Pastor of St. Clare's, Altamont,
St. Anne's, Edgewood, and St. Mary's, St. Elmo**

St. Clare Catholic Church, Altamont, IL

Votive Mass of Jesus Christ, Eternal High Priest – July 27, 2020

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

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 Joseph Havrilka as Pastor here at St. Clare's, as well at St. Anne's in Edgewood and St. Mary's in St. Elmo.

We have heard our Gospel reading so many times – in fact, we get the institution narrative portion at every Mass – that I wonder if we still allow these words of Our Lord to strike us afresh? The Mass we offer today, yes, for the installation of Fr. Havrilka as your new pastor, but specifically a votive Mass of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Eternal High Priest, offers us a key to reading anew this tremendous passage. We, like the apostles that surrounded Jesus, have gotten familiar with the words and actions that came before this moment. For them, that was the different parts of the Passover meal – the prayers, blessings, different kinds of food, and recollection of the Exodus, when God victoriously brought His people out of slavery in Egypt. We, similarly, are familiar with the preparation, actions, prayers, readings, and other pieces that

make up the first half of the Mass. But then we, like the apostles, get to the moment when these words are said: “He took bread, and when He had given thanks He broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. And likewise the chalice after supper, saying, “This chalice which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”¹

Today perhaps we might just focus on that word “covenant”. The word in Greek is *diatheke*, in Latin, *testamentum*. Much could be said about what a covenant is, but today we are invited to read it in light of this Mass celebrating Christ’s priesthood. Jesus is our true, high priest, that is, He offers *the fundamental* sacrifice of His Body and Blood that reconciles us and reunites us with God. We are united really, truly, physically, and sacramentally with His Body when we receive Holy Communion. This must be a reminder to all of us to make sure the Eucharist is the “source and summit” of our faith and the center of our lives. To make sure we approach this altar ready to encounter God. As we say “Amen,” we are agreeing to be in covenant with the Trinity, is that what we mean by it?!

¹ Luke 22:19-20.

Of course, these words must also be a reminder to your new pastor, that to give to His people the sacrifice of Christ's Body and Blood is the *best* way he can exercise his priesthood, and pastor Christ's flock here at St. Clare, as well at St. Anne's in Edgewood and St. Mary's in St. Elmo.

As we gather today for this Mass, we mark the beginning of a new chapter in the life of the parishes of St. Clare's, St. Anne's, and St. Mary's with the Installation of your new Pastor. It is a great joy for me that Father Joseph Havrilka has accepted the call to serve as the local shepherd of the Catholic communities of faith here. Today in a particular way he is entrusted with the pastoral care of all of you as an *Alter Christus*, another Christ, shepherding your souls in the name of God, and in collaboration with me, your bishop, a servant of the Lord.

At the same time, I also wish to express my deep appreciation to Father Christudasan Kurisadima for his dedicated ministry as your Parochial Administrator for the past two years. Our prayers go with him in his new assignment as Parochial Administrator at St. Louis in Nokomis, St. Mary's in Farmersville, St. Maurice in Morrisonville, and St. Raymond in Raymond.

Father Joseph Havrilka was ordained in 2005 and served as Chaplain at St. Anthony's Health Center in Alton from 2007-2009, as Parochial Administrator and then Pastor at Mother of Dolours in Vandalia and St. Joseph's in Ramsey from 2009-2013, and until this summer as Pastor of Mother of Perpetual Help in Maryville as well as Canonical Administrator of St. John Neumann School in Maryville. Fr. Havrilka will now serve you as pastor as we continue forward into 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 The prophet Micah put different words on this same truth: holiness is "to do justice ... love kindness ... and walk humbly with your God".

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.” To grow in God’s grace is precisely to become holy, that is, and to know the love of Jesus Christ and pass on that love to others.

In 2017 we concluded our Fourth Diocesan Synod, in which we focused on discipleship and stewardship. In addition to the clergy and consecrated religious who participated, delegates from each of our 129 parishes in this Diocese voted overwhelmingly to adopt a dozen declarations intended to set the direction and tone for the pastoral ministry of this local Church for at least the next ten years.

The first of these declarations proclaims a new mission statement for all of us as members of this Diocese: “The mission of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield in Illinois is to build a fervent community of intentional and dedicated missionary disciples of the Risen Lord and steadfast stewards of God’s creation who seek to become saints. Accordingly, the community of Catholic faithful in this diocese is committed to the discipleship and

stewardship way of life as commanded by Christ Our Savior and as revealed by Sacred Scripture and Tradition.”

To further this mission, the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois is committed to implementing the Four Pillars of Discipleship and Stewardship, namely, **hospitality, prayer, formation, and service**. In other words, we will **invite** people proactively to join us in prayer, especially Sunday Mass; we will **provide** well-prepared celebrations of the sacraments and other occasions for **prayer** as signs of hope and paths of grace to heaven; we will **study** the Bible and **learn** more about Jesus and our Catholic faith; and we will **serve** each other, especially those in need, by practicing charity and justice.

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. 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.

Thanks to the leadership of Father Kurisadima, your parishes have already begun to take steps to implement the goals of our Diocesan Synod. 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.

I pray that all of you will work with Father Havrilka 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 Our Lady of St. Clare, St. Anne's, and St. Mary's, I urge you to strive for holiness, to work and pray with your new priest. 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>.