

Chrism Mass 2017 Homily

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Bishop of Rockville Centre (Long Island, New York)

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This morning we celebrate our Holy Week Chrism Mass 2017 and together we pray for *dramatic missionary growth* in the Church of Rockville Centre.

Let me begin by thanking all of our priests today. I am inspired by your selfless Good Samaritan priestly service to the People of God. I am inspired by the fraternal way you support and encourage each other.

I am inspired by "your priestly faces illumined by your daily pastoral charity and zeal and illumined by hours upon hours spent in silent contemplation before the Blessed Sacrament."

At this moment of Church history in the United States, I am particularly inspired by your Simon of Cyrene solidarity and support of our refugee and non-documented immigrant families who face so much uncertainty and anxiety.

Your gentle tenacity, your Good Samaritan follow up, your comforting, prophetic and prayerful presence to our families is one of the Catholic priesthood's finest hours on Long Island.

Please join me in thanking the priests of Rockville Centre for this extraordinary witness to our Catholic teaching on the dignity of the human person and the sanctity of every human life and family.

We also once again thank our Bishop Emeritus, Bishop William Murphy for all he has taught us and for all he has modelled for us as priests in particular the joyful way he has always carried the Cross of Christ. We pray for him at this Chrism Mass today as he prays for all of us in the Eternal City.

We thank our auxiliary Bishops, Bishop Brennan, Bishop Andrzej, Bishop Perez, and our auxiliary Bishop Emeritii, Bishop Wcela and Bishop Dunn for all of their fraternal support to us.

The Chrism Mass is also a time to honor our jubilarians who celebrate priestly milestones and give thanks to God for the graces experienced in their faithful living of the priesthood.

The Chrism Mass offers us the opportunity to pray for the souls of Bishop Kellenberg, Bishop McGann, Bishop McHugh and the souls of all the deceased auxiliary bishops and priests who have served in the Diocese of Rockville Centre since 1957 and those who served the Church on Long Island before the founding of the Diocese.

We remember in a special way at this Mass the priests who have died since our last Chrism Mass in 2016.

I want to thank all of our permanent deacons, both active and retired, their wives and their families who are serving our parishes with a great spirit of prayer and New Evangelization pastoral dedication.

We also pray for the souls of permanent deacons and their wives and family members who have died and in a special way for those deacons and their family members who have died since our last Chrism Mass.

Chrism Mass 2017 is a good time to step back and to survey the global landscape of the Catholic Church since we first met Pope Francis on the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica on March 13, 2013 more than four years ago.

So many phrases of Pope Francis have inspired and captured the imagination of the Church and the World and reawakened in us in the Church of Rockville Centre a conviction that *dramatic missionary growth* is not only a possibility but an expression of the very nature and daily reality of the Universal Sacrament of Salvation.

Think of Pope Francis' short phrases and images which reflect his daily prayer and preaching, and his global missionary spirit. These phrases so often have broken through our defenses and opened us up to conversion.

These phrases have helped move so many of us from an anesthetized, bored, flat or disengaged Catholicism to the spirit of paragraph 14 in *The Joy of the Gospel*: "Jesus can break through the dull categories with which we would enclose him and he constantly amazes us by his divine creativity. Whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new

meaning for today's world. Every form of authentic evangelization is always 'new.'"

Consider again a brief selection of Pope Francis' phrases and images which help lead us to the original freshness of the Gospel and new paths of New Evangelization creativity:

"The smell of the sheep"

"A community of missionary disciples"

"The Church as Christ's Combat Field Hospital" "Break through Global indifference"

"God's word is unpredictable in its power"

"The Church urgently needs the deep breath of prayer" "Families transform the world and history"

"The Joy of Love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church"

"Jesus knows the anxieties and tensions experienced by families and he weaves them into his parables"

"Mercy is the beating heart of the Gospel"

"Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life"

"What would happen if we were to treat our Bible as we treat our mobile phone?"

From *Aparecida* (2007) to *The Light of Faith* (2013) to *The Joy of the Gospel* (2013) to *Laudato Si* (2015) to *The Year of Mercy Documents* (2015-2016) to *The Joy of Love* (2016) to his provocative daily homilies, Pope Francis is challenging you and I to be the Church we are called to be. He wants us to be holy. He wants us to be missionary. He wants us to be Good Samaritans of mercy and forgiveness. He wants us to be instruments of *dramatic missionary growth*.

We have spoken a number of times of his prayers and sacrifices that you and I might be healed from any mediocrity or lukewarmness we may be experiencing in the priesthood. We open ourselves to that process, to that conversion as we renew our priestly promises today at this Chrism Mass.

On May 13, 2017, we will celebrate the 100th Anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima and her desire to reveal the love of her Son at a moment of grave crisis in world history. We priests enter the lives of so many families at times of crisis and we ask Our Lady of Fatima to help us and guide us.

Today at this Chrism Mass, we priests invite Our Lady of Fatima even more deeply into our experience of the priesthood. We ask her to intercede for us that we may be effective instruments of the Divine Mercy who combat sin and evil and help to lead the people we serve to conversion and holiness.

We ask Our Lady of Fatima to help us to be champions of the rosary, champions of the joyful, sorrowful, glorious and luminous mysteries streaming through our lives and the lives of the people we serve.

Today we celebrate the consecration and mission of Catholic priests around the world and in the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

We celebrate the torrent of mercy that flows from the fragrant Chrism anointing of priests at Ordinations. We celebrate the subsequent day-to-day fidelity that flows from that anointing expressed in the pastoral charity of priests, their prophetic missionary spirit and their practice and symphonic orchestration of the spiritual and corporal works of mercy in their parishes to the world.

We celebrate the mystery of a priest's ontological identity and mission and its relationship to the sacramental oils of Christ's mercy.

All priests in the Diocese of Rockville Centre and in the universal Church, all priests in history are united in the Anointing of Chrism that transforms their being and their destinies.

In his 2014 Chrism Mass homily, Pope Francis said that we priests "are anointed down to our very bones...and our joy which wells up from deep.