

Installation Homily
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Bishop of Rockville Centre (Long Island, New York)

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We celebrate today the Memorial of St. John Bosco, the great 19th Century mystic of Catholic education and the formation of young people.

He once made a visit to St. Peter's Basilica in Rome with his Salesian companions and humbly and serenely pointed to the niche in the Basilica where his statue would one day be placed after his canonization.

Similarly today, St. John Bosco points us to the nature of love. He writes: "Where true love is the guiding principle, no one wants anything but the glory of God and the salvation of souls."

This simple sentence drives to the heart of the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on the universal call to holiness and mission that is the logic of every person's baptism.

You and I are called to be men and women of communion and mission. We are called to be saints.

The Letter to the Hebrews points to these saints as "a great cloud of witnesses" who decisively reject sin, who run the race on this earth keeping their eyes fixed on the Face of Jesus, and who embrace the mysterious power of the Cross.

This great cloud of witnesses at their moment in the crossroads of Church and World History were prophetic Heralds of Christ's joy, mercy and healing presence.

They were prophetic Heralds of unity and Eucharistic communion within the Church and prophetic Heralds of dynamic worldwide mission.

They followed the spirit of Jesus in Mark 5 as he compassionately healed the daughter of Jairus and the woman afflicted with hemorrhages.

And we, in our moment of history, do the same. In *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis writes: "Sometimes we are tempted to be that kind of Christian who keeps the Lord's wounds at arm's length. Yet Jesus wants us to touch human misery, to touch the suffering flesh of others. He hopes that we will stop looking for those personal or communal niches which shelter us from the maelstrom of human misfortune and instead enter into the reality of other people's lives and know the power of tenderness."

Pope Francis and the American novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald have something in common. They both warn us against the pursuit of "artificial paradises." Fitzgerald would warn us in *The Great*

Gatsby, a novel fictionally set in this Diocese of Rockville Centre, of the trap of American consumerism.

Pope Francis comes to similar conclusions at the beginning of *The Joy of the Gospel*. He writes: “The great danger in today’s world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience... That is no way to live a dignified and fulfilled life; it is not God’s will for us, nor is it the life in the Spirit which has its source in the heart of the risen Christ.” (2)

Fitzgerald’s green light at the end of the Long Island dock symbolizes that the American dream of consumerism is actually a soul-stunting nightmare.

That fading Green Light must surrender to another light, the cosmic Red Light of the sanctuary lamps that shine on the Tabernacles of our parish churches in Nassau and Suffolk counties and in every part of the world – where we celebrate the real presence of Jesus Christ, the real presence of Jesus, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Eucharist.

The cosmic power of the Catholic Mass and the Word of God that streams from the Body and Blood of Christ are what make us men and women of unity and communion rather than men and women who provoke short-sighted division and polarization.

Pope Francis helps us understand the relationship between Eucharistic communion and mission and the symphonic Splendor of Truth in the Catholic Church’s prophetic witness to the world.

The Holy Father emphasizes that “each truth (of our Catholic faith) is better understood when related to the harmonious totality of the Christian message; in this context all the truths are important and illumine one another.” (39)

So often when there is polarization, we have focused on one dimension of the Splendor of Truth but failed to see how it may be gloriously connected to other truths of our Catholic faith in a mystic symphony.

We have, for instance, recently celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the documents of the Second Vatican Council and we have rediscovered how the truths expressed in *Lumen Gentium*, *Gaudium et Spes* and the *Declaration on Religious Freedom* illumine each other.

The symphonic truths of the four sections of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* are not only mutually illuminating but mystically cross-referenced just as the teachings of Blessed Paul VI’s *Humanae Vitae* (1968), St. John Paul II *Familiaris Consortio* (1981) and Pope Francis’ *Amoris Laetitia* (2016) are mutually illuminating and enriching.

Pope Benedict XVI reminded us in the Foreword to *Jesus of Nazareth* (volume 1) about “canonical exegesis” and how we Catholics are called to see each individual biblical passage in its relation to the entire arc and contemplative flow of the Sacred Scriptures.

When we discover, for instance, how Catholic Social Justice teaching flows from the Articles of the Creed, or when we see the connection between what Avery Cardinal Dulles called the “New Apologetics” and our living out of the Beatitudes and the Corporal Works of Mercy – that’s when our faith ignites and expands.

In his documentary films *Catholicism* and *Pivotal Players*, Bishop Robert Barron has illustrated the New Evangelization possibilities of this holistic approach in presentations that combine theology, spirituality, liturgy, art, music, biblical reflection, the lives of the saints, and every dimension of visual and spiritual beauty.

As the Red Sanctuary Tabernacle Lamps of the World burn brightly in unity today, we remember with St. John Paul II that every Mass “has a cosmic significance. Every Mass is celebrated on the Altar of the World.” (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*)

We celebrate this Mass globally here today at St. Agnes Cathedral on the Altar of the World and every war-torn, hunger-stricken area of it.

We rejoice today that the more global and Catholic we are in our outlook in the Diocese of Rockville Centre, the more effective we will be in our local Church spreading the *Joy of the Gospel* and the *Joy of Love*.

We celebrate this Mass as men and women of communion and mission asking for a rebirth of the New Evangelization, asking for dramatic missionary growth in the Diocese of Rockville Centre and in every Diocese of the world.

Pope Francis put it this way 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.” (11)

And so we celebrate this Mass today asking the Holy Spirit for new and creative approaches to the New Evangelization and the dynamic use of Television (thank you Telecare and EWTN!) and Social Media.

We celebrate this Mass today asking the Holy Spirit for new and creative approaches to raising awareness and a new enlightenment of the common good that the sanctity of human life at every stage of life is the foundation of every human right, every dimension of human freedom, every effort we make to welcome the stranger and the persecuted refugee family, and every effort we make to protect the environment.

We celebrate this Mass today asking the Holy Spirit for new and creative approaches to strengthening and deepening the missionary dimension of marriage, family, and parish life and for new approaches to pastoral and strategic planning that are both Spirit-driven and data-driven,

and that break through a tired and broken “us vs. them” self-referential mentality and cultivate a mutual support and communion between the mission of the Diocese and the mission of every individual parish.

We celebrate this Mass today asking the Holy Spirit for new and creative approaches to Hispanic ministry, evangelization and the opportunity to expand the number of Latino families in Catholic education and for new and creative approaches to vibrant Catholic identity, academic excellence, enrollment, marketing and governance in Catholic education.

We celebrate this Mass today asking the Holy Spirit for new and creative approaches to a rich harvest of vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

We celebrate this Mass today asking the Holy Spirit for new and creative approaches to supporting as “Heralds of Mercy” the survivors of clergy sexual abuse and every form of abuse and for new and creative approaches to living our belief as Catholics that Mercy is the beating heart of the Gospel and the Church’s mission to the poor, the hungry and the suffering on earth.

Radiating the Joy of the Gospel in the mission of the Church also relies on a commitment to ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, charity and cooperation. We are so grateful for the presence of our ecumenical and interreligious representatives today as well as our public servants who serve the common good in local and state government.

We are all grateful for the presence of Pope Francis’ representative in the United States, Archbishop Christophe Pierre, who before becoming papal nuncio to the United States last Spring had been the papal nuncio of Mexico. We are grateful to Archbishop Pierre for all his guidance and in a special way the insights he has gained from his years in North America about how to live the vision of *Ecclesia in America* even more deeply.

We are all grateful for the presence of our Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops here today. The gathering of bishops for the installation of a new bishop goes back to the earliest centuries of the Church and is a manifestation of Christ’s prayer that his apostles and their successors may be one.

We are all grateful for the presence of Timothy Cardinal Dolan, our Metropolitan and all the Bishops of the Empire State who are present here today.

One of my favorite moments with Cardinal Dolan, among many, was when he served as the President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

He led the Bishops with great insight, great charity and a great sense of humor. I can remember during a voting session at one of the USCCB meetings that Francis Cardinal George, the Archbishop of Chicago, and all his auxiliary bishops from Chicago, were sitting together right across the aisle from me.

Cardinal Dolan, as the USCCB President, began his instructions to all the Bishops about the vote in this way: “Fellas, as you prepare to vote, if you find that you are short on ballots, you just might want to check with the Bishops from Chicago.”

No one laughed louder or longer than Francis Cardinal George whom we remember today. Cardinal Dolan is an icon of Pope Francis’ the *Joy of the Gospel* but he is also an icon of the *Laughter of the Gospel!*

I thank God for Bishop William Murphy and his episcopal leadership in the ways of global peace and justice and especially here in the Diocese of Rockville Centre. I am grateful for his generous friendship, wisdom and counsel along with the shared wisdom and counsel of our auxiliary Bishops, Bishop Robert Brennan, Bishop Nelson Perez, Bishop Andrzej Zglejszewki, Bishop John Dunne and Bishop Emil Wcela.

I am also so very grateful to everyone who worked so hard in so many ways to plan this Installation Liturgy and all the events and hospitality around it.

I thank my brothers Bishop Edward Cullen and Msgr. Alfred Schlert, the priests, deacons, religious and lay people of the Diocese of Allentown for the privilege of serving them in “holiness and mission” these past seven and a half years. I was doing pretty well at the press conference here on December 9th until I got to the paragraph on the Diocese of Allentown. You all know how much you will always mean to me.

I thank the Bishops of the Diocese of Wilmington (Delaware), Bishop Robert Mulvee who ordained me a priest in 1989, and Bishop Fran Malooly who generously shared so much of his pastoral wisdom with me, and I honor the memory of Bishop Michael Saltarelli, who mentored and taught me so much. I also thank the People of God of the Diocese of Wilmington who were the instruments of the Holy Spirit in forming in me the heart of a parish priest.

I am so grateful today for the love and support of my deceased convert Protestant minister parents Oliver and Marjorie Barres, my four sisters, Margaret, Mary, Catherine and Clare, my brother Bill, their spouses and my many nieces and nephews. I remember my nephew and godson John Oliver Cotter who died on May 2nd, 2008 and is especially remembered with my parents at this Installation Mass. I also remember the soul of Fr. James Halligan, my first spiritual director and father in the priesthood.

Finally, I would like to say a word to my brother priests of the Diocese of Rockville Centre. On February 13, 2016, Pope Francis, with Archbishop Pierre present, said these words to the Bishops of Mexico: “The first face I ask you to guard in your hearts is that of your priests...”

My dear brother priests of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, know that I am doing precisely that. I am looking forward to seeing your faces for the first time and experiencing the grace of Jesus that flows through your priestly faces, young and old, priestly faces illumined by your daily

pastoral charity and zeal, priestly faces illumined by hours upon hours spent in silent contemplation before the Blessed Sacrament and those Red Tabernacle Sanctuary Lamp lights.

Through the decision of our Holy Father Pope Francis, I have been sent to serve the Church of Rockville Centre.

I look forward to discerning together with you our priests, our deacons, religious and laity, the movement of the Holy Spirit in our parishes, parishes that are schools of prayer, holiness and the New Evangelization.

As I said at the press conference on December 9, I have a passion for parish life and will always have the heart of a parish priest. I am looking forward to experiencing the vibrant, welcoming, New Evangelization parishes of the Diocese.

I recently came across a copy of Msgr. Phil Murnion's *Do's and Don't's on Beginning a Pastorate* published by the National Pastoral Life Center and *Church* magazine in 1991. Msgr. Murnion showed a number of kindnesses to me as a young parish priest including publishing a reflection on the spirituality of the priesthood.

Msgr. Murnion had a passion for the realities and possibilities of the American parish and his do's and don'ts reflect real parish experience and love for parish evangelization.

My favorite advice he gives is repeated in the Dos section which includes a total of 40 points. Point 5, Point 14 and Point 37 are all composed of a single word: "Smile."

Msgr. Murnion understood the need to radiate the Joy of the Gospel and the Church's mission and he wanted parish priests of all ages to experience and live that joy as they lay down their lives for the people they serve.

Vibrant parish life inspires and equips our families to bring their Catholic faith into the neighborhood, the workplace, the public square and every inch of our global society.

At the World Meeting of Families, Pope Francis said that "Families transform the World and History." Our families need their parish family. The parish family needs each and every family.

And so I appeal on this day of my Installation as the fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre to every inactive Catholic in the Diocese to come back to the power of the Word of God, the power of the Sacrament of Penance, the power of the Catholic Mass.

I am so very sorry if you have been hurt or disappointed by the Church in any way and we stand here today to support you, to love you and to listen to you.

In turn, I am asking every active Catholic of every age in the Diocese of Rockville Centre between January 31st (today) and Ash Wednesday (which is March 1st) to invite one inactive Catholic friend or family to come with you to Mass and to gently, humbly, compassionately,

non-judgmentally witness to the beauty of your intimacy with Christ and your love for the mission of the Catholic Church and how it has enriched and inspired your life.

The power of these gentle and compassionate invitations are enormous. They always plant a seed of grace. And now's the time to make these invitations. Let's all do it together and realize that it is the kindest thing any of us could do for anyone.

A word to the children, youth and young adults of the Diocese: I am ecstatic about your futures in Jesus Christ and the way you, in the words of Pope Francis, "shake up the Church and the World" with your enthusiasm and desire to dedicate your lives to Jesus and the mission of the Catholic Church in the World. I cannot wait to meet you. I cannot wait to serve you.

Please join me in thanking our young people of the Diocese of Rockville Centre for their witness and deep desire and determination to carry the mission of the Catholic Church into the future.
(pause)

A nuestros hermanos y hermanas hispanos: Su presencia, su intimidad con el Padre, el Hijo y el Espíritu Santo, su deseo de ser discípulos misioneros que irradian la alegría del Evangelio, su tierna devoción a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, la Estrella de la Evangelización, enriquece todas las dimensiones de la vida de la Iglesia y todas las dimensiones de la sociedad americana.

Así como San Juan Diego desplegó humildemente la bella imagen multicolor de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Así también nuestro Señor Jesucristo, Rey del Universo providencialmente ha desplegado en la Iglesia de los Estados Unidos de América, la rica tilma multicolor como testimonio de nuestras familias hispanas, testimonio que, en palabras del Papa Francisco, "transforma el mundo y la historia".

Sepan cuánto todo el Pueblo de Dios en la Diócesis de Rockville Centre aprecia y atesora ese testimonio y cuán fuertemente estamos con ustedes y junto a ustedes. ¡Adelante!

To our Hispanic brothers and sisters: Your presence, your intimacy with Father, Son and Holy Spirit, your desire to be missionary disciples who radiate the joy of the Gospel, your tender devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Star of Evangelization, enriches every dimension of the Church's life and every dimension of American society.

Just as Saint Juan Diego humbly unfurled the beautiful multi-colored image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, so too has our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe providentially unfurled in the Church of the United States of America the rich multi-colored tilma of witness of our Hispanic families, a witness which, in the words of Pope Francis, "transforms the world and history".

Know how much the entire People of God in the Diocese of Rockville Centre appreciates and treasures that witness and how strongly we stand with you and beside you.

¡Adelante!