

Installation Homily

Once upon a time a new pastor had an energetic, out-going personality. He welcomed all the children as they streamed to the front for the children's liturgy blessing. One wee one began telling him how her father was sick once and had to go to the hospital. Concerned, the priest asked if her father was in church today. No, she replied. He was out golfing!

I would like to begin my homily with some news today. This homily will be short and there is a reception in the parish hall waiting. I have to tell you that, when I got the call, my first question was: "But who will come to St. Mary, St. Agnes and St. Paul? I heard a voice tell me. " hang tight, you're not in charge, don't worry, I'll answer that in my time.

I love the Parish of the Precious Blood with all my heart. I have been here for three weeks and I feel at home already. This was my first assignment as a priest; parochial vicar with Fr. Labrie as pastor. Sometimes I look up at the congregation and think , "I remember that baby's baptism," or, "I remember burying her husband," or, "I remember going to their house for supper.

I am excited at being here. I accept this assignment happily, because I know it to be God's holy will. Who knows what lies ahead here? God does! He has a beautiful plan—for us, for my priesthood, for this parish, for you and your families.

You may know that education is special to me. I trust that you will join me in fostering a program of faith formation that will include everyone regardless of age or background. I am committed to leading the formation to the best of my abilities. I also believe in celebrating liturgies not just attending liturgies. I will need your help. I will do my best to keep my homilies of tolerable length and to the point.

A wise old priest once told me: 'If you cannot strike oil in the first five minutes, better stop drilling.' My pastor friend, upon arriving in his new assignment had to put new sanitary hot air hand dryers in the rest rooms at his church and after two weeks took them out. I asked him why and he confessed that they worked fine but when he went in there he saw a sign that read, "For a sample of this week's sermon, push the button."

I plan to involve as many of you as you will allow me in furthering our work with the Christian Leadership Institute helping to focus on our parish vision, values and purpose. I invite you to especially keep in prayer our vision which reads, "we are a welcoming and affirming community of faith, guided by the Holy Spirit, embracing Pope Francis' call to live as intentional disciples, not only experiencing God's Mercy.

Today is the feast of St. James. You may wonder why there is a sea shell hanging from the ambo. The shell is the symbol of St. James seen in art. It is also the symbol of the Camino, the ancient pilgrimage his tomb in Santiago de Compostella, Spain, which I had the privilege to walk. On the feast of St. James, one of Jesus' inner circle, I rejoice in the faithfulness of the disciples. They were ready to let the Spirit enable them to overcome their many shortcomings, transforming them into the first apostles of the Good News of the Kingdom.

Thanks to them and their love of Jesus, their readiness to drink the cup he was about to drink, the faith has come to us and to billions of others throughout the world. I ask for gratitude, and for their sense of urgency in spreading the Gospel to the whole world.

We are always impressed by how often the Gospel portrays even those closest to Jesus struggling with questions of power and service. I look into my own heart, and dwell on Jesus' words on the Christian's attitude to such an important aspect of our life together. I ask for the grace to grow in my imitation of him to serve.

Prayer of Pilgrims on the Way

Be for us our companion on the walk,
Our guide at the crossroads,
Our breath in our weariness,
Our protection in danger,
Our home along the way,
Our shade in the heat,
Our light in the darkness,
Our consolation in our discouragements,
And our strength in our intentions.
We make this prayer in faith.

St. James, pray for us.

Holy Mary, pray for us.

Buen Camino!"