

Thirty Second Sunday in Ordinary Time
Installation of Fr. Edward Sheridan as Pastor of St.
Anthony's Parish, East Northport
Bishop John Barres
November 8, 2020

Cuando nos reunimos para la Misa, venimos *a amar al Señor con todo nuestro corazón, con toda nuestra alma y con toda nuestra mente*. Venimos a adorar a Dios. Venimos a escuchar Su Palabra. Venimos a ser fortalecidos e incendiados por Su Cuerpo y Su Sangre. En esta Misa en particular, venimos también con alegría a celebrar la Instalación del P. Edward Sheridan como nuevo pastor de la parroquia di San Antonio.

Desde su llegada en agosto, nuestra parroquia ha descubierto rápidamente que el P. Sheridan es un sacerdote excepcional. Como sus predecesores, está lleno con la Alegría del Evangelio, la Luz de Cristo y la caridad pastoral llena de compasión. Está comprometido con el Esplendor de la Verdad de la enseñanza católica y las Obras de Misericordia Espirituales y Corporales.

Es un ferviente defensor de la Educación Católica y el énfasis decisivo de la Iniciativa “Estrella de la Mañana” para que muchas más familias católicas hispanas en Long Island sean parte de la experiencia de la Educación Católica especialmente aquí in Trinity Regional Elementary School. Se dedica con devoción a nuestros jóvenes.

Él es *un campeón y un amigo de la comunidad hispana aquí en San Antonio*. ¡Está emocionado con nuestro nuevo portal web de la Red de Fe Católica - CFN en Español!

Y está dedicado de manera especial a ser un instrumento de santidad y misión para la gente a la que sirve tan celosamente. Él está ya promoviendo vocaciones

al sacerdocio y la vida religiosa y se comprometerá también a hacerlo en nuestra comunidad hispana tan evangelizadora.

Apoyemos todos juntos al P. Sheridan con nuestras oraciones y le agradecemos su liderazgo pastoral y su caridad.

On this Thirty Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, we celebrate together the Installation of Fr. Edward Sheridan as your pastor, the pastor of St. Anthony's parish.

We also pray in a particularly intense way for the future of our nation and our commitment to witness courageously and compassionately to the truths of our Catholic faith in every public square that God providentially places us in.

Today the Church presents us with the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins and the Bridegroom from the 25th Chapter of the Gospel of Matthew.

In his three-volume biblical commentary and masterpiece on the Gospel of Matthew, Fr. Leiva-Merikakis writes: "The very center of the parable is readiness and willingness to engage in a wedding celebration, and the only practical consideration concerns providing oil to generate light. This *light* acts as the symbol both of the glory of God's love irrupting into our world in the person of Christ the Bridegroom and of the wholehearted joy with which (we) reciprocate God's (love). The oil in the lamps brought by the wise virgins, in turn, symbolizes (our) necessary self-surrender, which provides the essential 'fuel' enabling the fire of God's love to take hold on earth and produce an abundance of light. "(Vol. 3, 772)

Contrast for a moment the wise virgins and the foolish virgins. Fr. Leiva-Merikakis writes: "This parable thus takes the virtue of fidelity for granted. The crucial focus falls on *whether or not fidelity is accompanied by practical wisdom or prudence* – the follow-through that puts fidelity into concrete practice in the way one actually feels, perceives God and the world, and lives. Can one be 'faithful' in theory or desire only, or must fidelity, in order to be real, immediately be translated in a way of being and concrete deeds? Or, to put it in a way more in keeping with our context: What benefit would a bridegroom derive from a bride who *intended* to give herself to him some day but never in fact *does so*?" (779)

The parable teaches us that we are called to be vigilant and existentially prepared for the Bridegroom at every moment. We are called to love the Lord with all our mind, heart, soul and strength in our thoughts, words and actions.

Every present moment of being vigilant in the presence of God builds on every prior present moment and provides the foundation for every future present moment.

The call is to full conversion in the present and full existential alignment with the will of God. When we squander a present moment, we turn immediately to Jesus and the Divine Mercy to reestablish the momentum and rhythm of our response to God.

We are called to have faith in the Holy Spirit – that the Spirit can break through our hardened conversion defense mechanisms and our pitched and stubborn resistances to grace whether those resistances express themselves in pride, envy, gluttony, sloth, lust, greed or anger.

This parable – when read, meditated, prayed, contemplated and lived -- rekindles our strength, our perseverance, our belief that the Bridegroom can lead us through our failures, falls and weaknesses to a heroic and courageous spirit of holiness and mission that lights the world.

Your new pastor, Fr. Edward Sheridan is an exceptionally vigilant Churchman. He comes to St. Anthony's bringing a lamp, a full supply of oil and a love for the Lord and the Mission of Mercy of His Church.

The Holy Spirit led this IBM executive step-by-step and moment-by-moment to the Catholic priesthood.

Fr. Sheridan is a non-stop and creative evangelizer. He builds unity and communion in the parishes he serves. He has a deep pastoral sensitivity and compassionate priestly charity. Already, you are aware that he is a champion of Catholic Education, Trinity Regional Elementary School and the *Morningstar Initiative*.

He will be bringing to the attention of the youth of St. Anthony's the example of the recently beatified Blessed Carlo Acutis who encouraged all young people to be a baptismal "original" bathed in holiness and mission rather than a bland and sterile "photocopy" that slavishly trods the boring, predictable and cowardly path of sin and self-destruction.

Fr. Sheridan has a gift for the formation of seminarians and young priests. His brother priests treasure his fraternal spirit and consider him a priest's priest.

He knows how to enter situations filled with conflict and turmoil and find grace-filled ways to bring people together with the Joy and Peace of the Gospel.

What I love about Fr. Ed is that he is up for anything, has a great sense of the adventure of evangelization and is always willing to try new things. You will find him exceptionally open to your creative ideas and inspirations for Catholic Evangelization.

He models for us Matthew 25. He is a vigilant and alert Good Shepherd. Fr. Ed knows and loves parish life. He agrees with Pope Francis that “the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers” and lives “in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters.” (*Evangelium Gaudium* 28)

On October 31, 2020, we celebrated the Beatification of Fr. Michael McGivney, Parish Priest and Founder of the Knights of Columbus. One of his biographers, Douglas Brinkley, described the relationship he had with his parishioners: “(Fr. McGivney) loved his parishioners. The only thing he liked better than working with them on grand plans and projects, was standing back and watching them work together under the light of Christ.”

I love that description. It captures a good deal of the priestly identity, charisms and gifts of your new pastor.¹

The parish priest pastor finds the oil that lights his lamp of witness in front of the red sanctuary lamp that reveals and opens us to the Eucharistic presence of Jesus Christ and the rhythm of the sacrificial Eucharistic action at the Catholic Mass.

When a priest surrenders his existence and his priestly identity to hours and hours of silent contemplation in front of the Eucharistic Lord, the Lord turns that priest into a pastoral artist, a pastoral artist whose prayerful, luminous face reflects the Face of Christ and naturally and humbly evangelizes.

Please join me in recognizing and thanking one of these priest pastoral artists, your pastor Fr. Edward Sheridan.

¹ I am indebted to Cardinal Joseph Tobin for his fine October 31, 2020 Beatification homily which I drew on in this section of the homily.