

## CHRISM MASS

April 11, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As I begin my second year with you as your bishop, I praise and thank God, and I thank all of you for your prayers and support that I received throughout the grace-filled year of new experiences of last year. I want to assure you that throughout the past year I have held you up in prayer: the laity, religious men and women, the deacons and their spouses and in a special way, the presbyterate of this Diocese, my brother priests. Within my first year, I have sensed a unity between us. Praise God, it has been a good first year!

As we gather for this annual Chrism Mass and anticipate Holy Week, I welcome all of you to our Cathedral of the Annunciation. As we do so, let us take into consideration the proclamation of Holy Scripture this evening.

In the first reading from the Prophet Isaiah, we heard: “The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to send glad tidings...to give them oil of gladness....”

Responsorial Ps.

We heard the Lord of Israel saying in respect to David: “I have found David, my servant; with my oil I have anointed him, that my hand may be always with him, that my arm may make him strong”.

2nd Reading - Book of Revelation

We hear that: “Christ has made us a line of kings, priests to serve his God and Father.”

And finally, in the Gospel of Luke:

As Jesus reads from the prophet Isaiah we hear him proclaim that the passage he read is fulfilled and finds its purpose in him - He is THE Anointed One who has come into the world.

This evening’s readings refer to the potential and transforming power of the act, and gift, of “anointing.” What is the meaning and purpose of anointing?

“ANOINTING”

Definition - verb - “to smear or rub with oil, apply oil to, to spread oil over, to consecrate.” To make sacred - impart a permanent character as in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation & Holy Orders (Ordination).

Consecrated to do what? To evangelize, to witness to the faithful and loving relationship we have with Jesus, the Christ - the Messiah - THE Anointed One - the Lord! We encounter him in the Sacraments by way of signs and symbols. This evening is a celebration immersed in symbols. It is here in this Cathedral, our mother church, that we gather as a diocese to celebrate the annual Blessing of the Holy Oils of anointing at this Chrism Mass.

#### In the Sacrament of Baptism-

Our journey with Christ, and with one another as his body, the Church, begins with the waters of our baptism. In Baptism we are anointed with the Oil of the Catechumens and Holy Chrism.

We hear the following words in regard to anointing the one to be baptized with the Oil of the Catechumens: “We anoint you with the oil of salvation in the name of Christ our Savior; May he strengthen you with his power...” Then immediately, after the individual is baptized, a second anointing is administered with Holy Chrism with the following words: “God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people. He now anoints you with the Chrism of salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life.”

#### In the Sacrament of Confirmation-

As adults, and the youth of our diocese, step forward with their sponsors to receive the sacrament of Confirmation, the bishop pronounces the name of the candidate and says, “\_\_\_, be sealed with Gift of the Holy Spirit.” As these words are spoken, the bishop dips his thumb in a vessel of Holy Chrism and marks the forehead of the candidate with the sign of our salvation, the cross.

#### In the Sacrament of Holy Orders-

As the bishop anoints the hands of a newly ordained priest, the following words are prayed as he smears the consecrating oil of Chrism on the palms of the hands of the priest: “The Father anointed our Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. May Jesus preserve you to sanctify the Christian people and to offer sacrifice to God.”

#### In the anointing of a bishop-

As the Holy Chrism is poured on his head, the words spoken are: “God has brought you to share the high priesthood of Christ, may he pour out on you the oil of mystical anointing and enrich you with spiritual blessings.”

#### And finally, in the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick-

As we approach our brothers and sisters who seek the healing presence of the Lord in the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, you, my Brothers, become ministers of healing and hope modeled by Jesus, the True Physician and Healer. As the sick person is anointed by the priest with the Oil of the Infirm, he says: “Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit...May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up.”

Brothers and sisters, we will use these sacred oils to initiate, to free the human being from Original Sin, to heal, to empower with the Holy Spirit, and to consecrate for the sake of service to the community.

As we recall our anointing as the faithful disciples of Jesus, we will witness, not only the blessing of the oils, but also the Renewal of Priestly Promises. As we prepare for the procession of the oils and witness the blessing of the Oils, the priests gathered here will have the opportunity to renew their priestly promises. As your bishop, in union with my brother priests, we will

recommit ourselves to grow in holiness as we respond to the call to be servant leaders, to serve you: God's people - a leadership modeled in the Gospels by our High Priest, Jesus. It is a call that cannot tolerate an attitude of clericalism. It must be a call that fosters, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, humility and the desire for chastity.

May the Holy Spirit empower us, at this renewal of our promises, to be the *evangelizing* presbyterate we are called to be for our Diocese of Stockton. For all of us who are baptized: priests, deacons, religious men and women, and God's faithful people, the laity, let us never forget that it is through the *sacramental anointing* of baptism that we are called to be "priest, prophet, and king." May the Anointed One - Crucified and Risen, lead us as he sends us, men, women and children to be the missionary disciples of evangelization in this day and age. May we consecrate ourselves to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Star of the New Evangelization, as she guides and protects us along the way.

I'll close tonight with a prayer that I recently came across: "Lord, source of all holiness, draw me as your bishop, in unity with the priests and deacons, closer to Christ through the Eucharistic mystery; may we grow daily in the grace of our ordination. Teach Christ's Religious men, women and the laity to be devout and attentive at the altar of his word and of his body, so that they may bring into their daily lives the grace they receive through faith and sacrament. Amen."