

**Homily for Encuentro Hispano Diocesano
27th Sunday of Ordinary Time - Cycle A
October 4, 2020**

**St. Boniface Church
Edwardsville, Illinois**

**† Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois**

Mis queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo:

Es bueno que estemos aquí para alabar a Dios en éste, el Encuentro de la Diócesis de Springfield en Illinois. La palabra “encuentro” viene de nuestro encuentro con Cristo, y es a nuestro Señor y Salvador al que encontramos en este lugar sagrado, en la eucaristía, en nuestros corazones y en nuestros hermanos y hermanas. Estoy muy agradecido de que hayan venido para encontrar a Jesucristo nuestro Señor.

Hace tres años que tuvimos nuestro Cuarto Sínodo Diocesano sobre el tema de ser discípulos. La primera proposición del Sínodo anunció una nueva declaración misional para todos los miembros de la Diócesis: “La misión de la Diócesis Católica Romana de Springfield en Illinois es construir una comunidad ferviente de discípulos misioneros comprometidos del Señor Resucitado y administradora perseverante de la creación de Dios, que quieren ser santos. De modo que la comunidad de

fieles católicos en esta Diócesis, está comprometida a ser discípulos y administradores como lo ordena la Sagrada Escritura y la Tradición.”

Para impulsar esta misión, la Diócesis de Springfield en Illinois se compromete a promover los Cuatro Pilares de la vocación a ser discípulos y administradores: Hospitalidad, Oración, Formación y Servicio. En otras palabras, invitaremos a las personas a rezar con nosotros, especialmente la Misa Dominical, facilitaremos la recepción de los sacramentos y la oportunidad para la Oración como señal de esperanza y caminos de la gracia hacia el cielo. Estudiaremos la Biblia para conocer mejor a Jesús y nuestra Fe Católica, prestaremos Servicio a cada uno, especialmente a aquellos en necesidad practicando caridad y justicia.

Muchos de ustedes ya están muy familiarizados con lo que significa ser discípulos de Jesucristo. Para ser un discípulo, comenzamos por encontrarnos con Cristo. Esto puede suceder en la Santa Misa cuando lo reciben en la Sagrada Comunión. Puede suceder en la familia cuando usted ve a su propio hijo o hija y se maravilla de la bondad de Dios. Es en el Encuentro que nos damos cuenta de que, sin Cristo Jesús, no somos nada y no tenemos nada.

Jesús, entonces hace algo extraordinario y nos invita a entregar nuestra vida a Él. Él quiere ser la piedra angular que establecemos como la base de nuestra vida. Como escuchamos en las Escrituras:

*La piedra que los constructores rechazaron
se ha convertido en la piedra angular;
por el Señor se ha hecho esto,
y es maravilloso en nuestros ojos?*

Aprendemos a confiar en Él para todas nuestras necesidades. Él nos alimenta a nosotros mismos para fortalecernos en este viaje. Él nos invita a dar todo lo que somos a Él. Cuando aceptamos esta invitación, la vida tiene un nuevo significado y propósito. Muchos de nosotros nos vemos atrapados en nuestra vida diaria de llevar a los niños a la escuela, pagar los gastos, poner la cena en la mesa y despertarnos al día siguiente sólo para repetir todo de nuevo. Esto puede drenarnos e incluso pesarnos. Hay Uno que sufrió, murió y resucitó para darnos una nueva vida; no tenemos que esperar esta nueva vida hasta después de morir. Podemos comenzar a vivir en la santidad de Dios en esta nueva vida aquí y ahora mismo.

Es convirtiéndose en su discípulo que uno es capaz de encontrar esa vida. Comenzamos orando y sirviendo a los demás. Entonces, comenzamos a ver que cada persona fue creada por Dios. Entonces, vemos a Jesús en cada persona. La Santa Madre Teresa de Calcuta dijo: "Cuando cuido a la gente más necesitada, cuido a Cristo mismo." Entreguemos a Jesús nuestras manos para alimentar a los pobres, démosle el corazón para amar a nuestros enemigos y darle a Él nuestros pies para llevar a los que lloran. Éstas son maneras muy verdaderas en que podemos estar en la piedra angular que fue rechazada por otros pero recibida por nosotros. Cuando nos damos la bienvenida unos a otros, damos la bienvenida a Cristo mismo y entonces verdaderamente seremos Sus discípulos.

¡Que Dios nos dé esta gracia! Amén.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

Today, as we gather for our Encuentro Mass, our Gospel reading has much to tell us about three distinct topics. As always, the Gospel has much to tell us about people. Specifically, it has much to tell us about Jesus. Ultimately, it has much to tell us about God.

As is often the case, we hear our Lord preaching by using a parable. In this parable, we hear about a landowner who has built a magnificent vineyard for his workers. When the time comes for the harvest, the landowner sends multiple servants to collect the proceeds from the harvest, but the workers in the vineyard mistreat and kill each servant that the landowner sends. Seeing that no progress has been made through sending his servants, the landowner sends his son, to which the workers say to one another, "This is the heir, come let us kill him and acquire his inheritance."¹

At first glance, the parable contains so many elements that we might miss a substantial number of them. So, it is best to break it down into themes or topics. In staying with the order of the parable, let's first look at the three primary things that the parable is telling us about God. First, the parable tells us about God's trust in us. We hear that the landowner entrusted the vineyard to the workers. He did not stand over them to exercise a parental sort of supervision; rather he went away and left them to their task of producing wine. In the very same way, God entrusts us with His work here on earth. As a matter of fact, every task we receive is a task given to us by God to lead us and those around us closer to Him.

Secondly, it tells of God's patience. The master sent servant after servant to deliver his message to the tenants. He did not come with anger and seek revenge against the tenants when one messenger had been abused and mistreated. Quite the contrary, he gave the workers chance after chance to respond to his request. So, too, does our Lord bear with us patiently despite all of our sinfulness. As stewards of our Lord's vineyard, we are called to see that bearing fruit means repentance, true conversion, and, most importantly, actions that manifest that conversion.

Finally, it tells us about God's judgment. We see that at the end of the parable, the landowner took the vineyard from the workers and gave it to other people. In this we must recognize that God's harshest judgment is when He takes out of our hands the task which He has given us to do when we fail to live as His disciples and stewards of the many gifts that He has given to each of us.

With regard to what Jesus is telling us about ourselves in the parable, first and foremost, we hear our Lord explain to us the very nature of the privilege that we are given as sons and daughters of God. The vineyard was equipped with everything that the workers could have needed. The hedge, the wine press, the tower: all of these were given to the workers in

order to make their task easy and enable them to discharge it well. Through this, we must recognize that when our Lord gives us a mission or a task to do, He does not just simply ask us to carry it out without giving us the skills or tools with which to do it; rather, He also gives us everything we need to fulfill His will for our lives, that is, to live first and foremost as true disciples of Jesus.

The final piece of the parable that we should examine is what Jesus is telling His listeners about Himself. It is clear from the portion of the parable in which the workers beat and kill the son of the landowner who was sent to carry his father's message, that Jesus was keenly aware of what fate He would experience at the hands of those to whom He was sent. Moreover, our Lord is telling us that he would not simply die because He was compelled to die; rather, He willingly embraced His suffering and death on the cross out of love for each and every one of us.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, it is only fitting that after reflecting on each of these aspects of our Gospel today, we must ask ourselves what we should do better each day in response to our Lord's love and care for us so that we might not be like the workers in the parable today who squander the gifts that the Lord gave to them. Instead, let us

strive to unite ourselves more perfectly to Him through living the stewardship and discipleship way of life in the midst of the world and so contribute to the building up the kingdom of God on earth so that one day we might be worthy of receiving our inheritance of eternal life in Heaven.

It was three years ago that we held our Fourth Diocesan Synod on the theme of discipleship and stewardship. The first declaration of our Fourth Diocesan Synod proclaimed a new mission statement for all of us as members of this Diocese: "The mission of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield in Illinois is to build a fervent community of intentional and dedicated missionary disciples of the Risen Lord and steadfast stewards of God's creation who seek to become saints. Accordingly, the community of Catholic faithful in this diocese is committed to the discipleship and stewardship way of life as commanded by Christ Our Savior and as revealed by Sacred Scripture and Tradition."

To further this mission, the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois is committed to implementing the Four Pillars of Discipleship and Stewardship, namely, hospitality, prayer, formation, and service. In other words, we will invite people proactively to join us in prayer, especially Sunday Mass; we will provide well-prepared celebrations of the

sacraments and other occasions for prayer as signs of hope and paths of grace to heaven; we will study the Bible and learn more about Jesus and our Catholic faith; and we will serve each other, especially those in need, by practicing charity and justice.

As we now prepare to receive the bread of life and the cup of our salvation, may this Eucharist strengthen us to go out into the world, become missionary disciples to bring others to Christ, and be faithful stewards of God's creation who bear good fruit.

May God give us this grace. Amen.

¹ Matthew 21: 38