

**Homily Outline for the Chrism Mass
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
March 26, 2024**

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- I. My dear Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, Consecrated Religious, brothers and sisters in Christ:
 - A. The American filmmaker and actor Woody Allen is quoted as saying that “80% of success is just showing up.”
 - B. I thought of that when I was reading the rubric introducing the Chrism Mass, which says, “This Mass, which the Bishop concelebrates with his presbyterate, should be a manifestation of the Priests’ communion with their Bishop.”
 1. I wondered: how do we manifest the Priests’ communion with me as their Bishop?
 2. The answer: 80% of manifesting your communion with me is just showing up, e.g., at this Chrism Mass, the Annual Meeting of Priests that we just had earlier this month, the annual retreat, concelebrating ordinations, and attending the Annual Convocation.
 3. It would not manifest a strong bond of communion if only 15-20 priests showed up for this Chrism Mass. That is why I am grateful that so many of you came to concelebrate this Mass with me.
- II. What is the other 20%? I would focus on the verbs in the Renewal of Priestly Promises that you will make after this homily.
 - A. Before looking at those verbs, I note that the Renewal of Priestly Promises begins with me addressing you as “Beloved sons.”

1. You are indeed beloved by me. That is hard to express to a group, but I do care very much for each one of you individually. I also pray for you every day, as I know you pray for me, at least in the Eucharistic Prayer!
2. Calling you “sons” may seem strange for those of you who are older than I am, but this term expresses a spiritual relationship, not a physical one. It is through your bishop, either me or one of my predecessors, that you were brought into your life as a priest.
3. In fact, a bishop is called to be father, brother, and friend to his priests.

B. Verbs mentioned in the Renewal of Priestly Promises:

1. Resolve - to be determined to do something
2. Renew - go back to the joy you felt on the day of ordination and make it new again
3. United with the Lord
4. Conformed to Him
5. Denying yourselves
6. Confirming your ordination promises
7. Discharge sacred duties
8. Teaching about Christ
9. Following Christ the Head and Shepherd
10. Not seeking any gain
11. Moved by zeal for souls

C. Then I turn to the people in the pews; one verb, two objects:

1. Pray for your priests
2. Pray also for me

III. Then we have the blessing of the Oil of the Sick and the Oil of Catechumens and the consecration of the Chrism

- A. Of these, the consecration of the Chrism is the most important.
- B. Blessings give praise to God for the gifts of His creation, while also invoking his goodness and grace upon the persons or objects to be blessed in the various events and circumstances of their lives.
- C. To consecrate means to make holy. Consecration is an act by which a thing is separated from a common and profane to a sacred use, or by which a person or thing is dedicated to the service and worship of God by prayers, rites, and ceremonies.
- D. All Christians are consecrated to God in the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. Priests and bishops are consecrated for sacred ministry in the Sacrament of Holy Orders.
- E. Thus, it is fitting that the Sacred Chrism, the oil consecrated through and with the Holy Spirit, is used Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation and in the ordination of priests and bishops.
- F. Thus, in our first reading tonight, the Prophet Isaiah speaks of being anointed with the “oil of gladness.”
- G. As we heard in the Gospel, this anointing was fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus Christ

- H. By our priestly ordination, we share in that anointing which enables us, with Christ, to “to bring glad tidings to the poor...to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.” (Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18-19).
- I. Our anointing equips us to announce the Good News of Jesus Christ “who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his Blood” (Revelation 1:5).
- J. His victory fills us with joy, and it is our privilege to share it joyfully with all of those to whom we have been called to minister through our sacred ordination.

May God give us this grace. Amen.