

INSTALLATION HOMILY

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI BASILICA CATHEDRAL

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Uno de los símbolos más hermosos y conocidos de Cristo en nuestra Iglesia es la del Buen Pastor, una imagen que se repite veces en las lecturas de hoy. Otra imagen parecida es la del cordero, ya que Jesús, nuestro Buen Pastor, se convierte en el “cordero del sacrificio” al morir por nosotros en la cruz. Este regalo sublime del Señor en el Misterio Pascual comenzó con la misma entrega de sí mismo en la Encarnación. Ustedes y yo estamos llamados a renunciar a nosotros mismos por nuestro Señor Jesús de la misma forma que Él se hizo uno con nosotros. También, como sus discípulos, el Señor nos llama a entregarnos uno al otro para que seamos el Cuerpo de Cristo, la Iglesia. Me gustaría reflexionar en lo que esto significa para nosotros en el día de hoy al ser instalado como su arzobispo y sobre todo, al haber sido llamado a ser uno con ustedes de ahora en adelante.

In the autumn of 1993 I began a sabbatical in Rome at the Institute for Continuing Theological Education at the Pontifical North American College. While there I met a priest who became a dear friend, Father Norm Smith. He and I were enthralled with our first professor, Father Paul Cioffi, SJ. He was a vibrant teacher who had a deep and contagious love for the Lord. He also loved life, and he loved Rome and he really loved ice cream! He knew where to get the best gelato throughout Rome and would often lead us on after-dinner walks to a nearby gelato store. His main passion, however, was liturgical spirituality. One of the great images he developed for us was that of the Lamb of God. He pointed out how the early Christian churches always depicted a lamb, often on the ceiling of the transept. Being eager students, Father Norm and I spent much of our three months looking for the best gelato in town and, more importantly, for the image of the lamb in every church we entered.

The lamb, according to Gerhart Ladner, an expert on early Christian art, “is one of the oldest and most frequently repeated pictorial inventions of pastoral iconography.” Evoking the image of the suffering servant in Isaiah who was the “lamb silent” and of

the lamb in the Book of Revelation who is the only one who can open the book with seven seals (the key to all history), the image of the lamb in our churches points to the Good Shepherd in today's Gospel who cares for the sheep so much that he laid down his life for them, becoming the lamb of sacrifice. Just as in the Incarnation, when the Son did not deem equality with God something to be grasped, but out of sheer love became one of us, so does the Good Shepherd bring that sacred mystery to fulfillment as he lays down his life for his friends, becoming the lamb of sacrifice, one with us. Indeed, it is precisely as the Lamb of sacrifice that Jesus fulfills his role of Shepherd, leading us through the cross to the Father, at whose right hand he sits. The early Church had no problem at all in calling Jesus "the Shepherd" and "the Lamb" in the same sentence. The Easter Sequence sings this truth with great joy and clarity: "The Lamb as redeemed the sheep." This is the heart of human history and the history of each human being: Christ has redeemed us by laying down his life for us and raises us up to new life. And this is the heart of the Gospel and the first priority of the Church, called to proclaim this Good News. This explains why many of the early Churches depicted the Lamb with four streams of water flowing from its side above four rivers, representing the four Gospels, bringing waters of life to desert places, to beautiful desert places like here in the Southwest.

Not surprisingly, then, when I came to Santa Fe a few weeks ago and took the tour of our beautiful cathedral, the first thing I looked for was the image of the lamb. And there it was! I did not have time to look for an ice cream store but that will come later! For now, I was content. The connection was made. I was grateful to be standing here in this place, in this portion of the vineyard of Santa Fe, where the supper of the lamb has been celebrated for over four hundred years, as the people of God give thanks for the life giving waters that flow from the lamb of God and as they rejoice in the salvation that is ours in our Lord, Jesus Christ, crucified in weakness and risen in glory.

Not only have we celebrated and rejoiced at the great miracle of God becoming one of us through the incarnation and through the paschal mystery but another great miracle has taken place here. We, the people of God, have imitated the savior and as he became one with us, so we become one with him through the action of the Eucharist. Jesus Christ is by nature plural and we are made one with him through Word and Sacrament, each time we celebrate this Eucharist. As St. Augustine says, "Behold what you are, become what you receive." (And in another place, "You, however, are the Body of Christ and His members. If, therefore, you are the Body of Christ and His members,

your mystery is presented at the table of the Lord, you receive your mystery. To that which you are, you answer: `Amen'; and by answering, you subscribe to it. For you hear: `The Body of Christ!' and you answer: `Amen!' Be a member of Christ's Body, so that your `Amen' may be the truth.")

As I am installed today as your twelfth bishop, I am grateful to God for calling me to become one with you as together we become one with Christ at the Supper of the Lamb. I am eager to listen to you and learn from you how God has been working in your midst, calling you to new and ever deepening life. Taking my cue from Pope Francis, I realize there will be times when I lead from the front of the flock and other times from behind but for now, my place is squarely in your midst, giving thanks for your willingness to receive me and assuring you of my desire to serve you to the best of my ability. And I take comfort in knowing that while I will miss the Church I called home for eight years in the Diocese of Salt Lake City, their love and support will enable me to open myself to you, my brothers and sisters of this pilgrim Church in the Southwest, for years to come. As T.S. Eliot said so beautifully in *Little Gidding*, "We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time." God has blessed me with many "starting places", represented by my mother and family here today, friends and colleagues from San Francisco, Utah and now New Mexico. The Franciscan Fathers Escalante and Dominguez, came from New Mexico through Utah much of the way to California. I am retracing their steps but only in the opposite direction. But from whatever direction, my starting places nourish me and sustain me as I return to them again and again. And they include my dear dad who, with Father Gene Konkkel, Father Len Calegari and so many other family and friends in the Communion of Saints, is praying for all of us at this moment. (Dad is probably tapping Gene's shoulder and with a wink and smile wondering how this blockhead ever ended up here! But I am sure he is also saying, "that's my boy!")

And so, I want to hear your voice and recognize Christ in you. I am eager to listen to the 19 Native American Pueblos in New Mexico and to learn from them. I want to listen to the songs of Los Hermanos Penitentes, a brotherhood of deeply spiritual men who helped keep the faith alive when no priests were present in this area and who are still active today, especially in northern New Mexico. I am anxious to hear from the over 200 mission churches in the archdiocese, each of which has a reason for its existence and is built on the deep, multigenerational faith of a particular community. I desire to learn how La Conquistadora, Our Lady of Peace, our intercessor and symbol of

reconciliation, helps us to integrate the diverse cultures of the Archdiocese: the multi-generational New Mexicans, Native Americans, Hispanics, Latinos, Caucasians and recent immigrants from Mexico. I have much to learn from the communities of religious women who founded hospitals and schools and I want to be inspired by Servant of God Sister Blandina Segale whose cause for canonization originated here.

I resonate with the disciples at the Transfiguration who said, “Lord, it is good for us to be here.” And while that is most certainly true for us today, it is not good for us to be here only! We, the people of God, are called to go forth from this place to point out the Lamb of God to others, especially those who are suffering. Like St. John the Baptist, the Friend of the Bridegroom, we are all commissioned by our baptisms, and some by our professions of vows and our ordinations, to discern the presence of God in the public square and to lead others to the Good News that has found us and taken hold of us. We are the ones who recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd and we are the ones called to bring hope to the world, inviting others into the fold through our evangelization, our living of the Gospel. Like the Good Shepherd who searches out the lost sheep, we also are called to look for those who have not heard the Gospel, who long for the life giving waters that have poured over our heads. In this year dedicated to those in Consecrated Life we do well to imitate our sisters, priests and brothers whose passion it is to make Christ the center of their lives. As they dedicate their bodies to Christ through chastity, we are called to be physically present to those in need. As they surrender their wills to Christ, we are called to live our lives with the intention of making the Gospel heard by all, and as they live lives unencumbered by wealth and possessions, we are called to be single-minded in our dedication to Christ’s call. Having been nourished at the Eucharist, we “go forth to live the Gospel by our lives.”

What does this mean for us here in Santa Fe and throughout the archdiocese? Well, I’m not sure yet... but I have an idea!

First and foremost, it means that we are dedicated to the premise that Jesus Christ is in everything and is everywhere. That is the gift of the Baptist: in the midst of the distractions of life, he alone saw the Lamb of God. As Jean Pierre de Causaude says in his classic, Abandonment to Divine Providence, “Faith sees that Jesus Christ is lives in everything and works through all history to the end of time, that every fraction of a second, every atom of matter, contains a fragment of Christ’s hidden presence and secret activity.” Or as St. Athanasius put it, “The Word of God, incorporeal, incorruptible

and immaterial, entered our world. Yet it was not as if he had been remote from it up to that time. For there is no part of the world that was ever without his presence; together with his Father, he continually filled all things and places.” This certainly captures the essence of Jesuit spirituality and Pope Francis’ clear conviction: we find God in all things. And when we do, we are called to point him out to others, especially those who are suffering. In doing so, we bring them evangelical hope, that is, we remind them that they are not alone. Christ is there with them, in the midst of it all, and he will never abandon them.

Having heard the voice of the Shepherd, we go forth to help others whose pain and suffering have made it difficult or impossible for them to hear Christ calling them. As Cardinal Reinhard Marx recently said in an interview, “The task is to help the people to live. It is not, according to “The Joy of the Gospel,” about how we can defend the truth. It is about helping people to find the truth. That is important.” This does not mean that the truth is not crucial. It is. And the Church bears the awesome responsibility of preserving and cherishing that truth. But communicating that truth is a process, a journey, and we are called to journey with others as together we plumb its depths.

We help people live, for example, when we encounter strangers in our midst and we welcome them. Our first concern is not whether they have the proper documentation. Our first concern is to welcome them and show them hospitality, letting them know that we are one with them in Christ. When a Honduran youth flees to our country to escape almost certain death from gang violence or drug cartels, we are called to let him know that we care and that together we will try to find a solution for him. And that stranger is not always someone from another country. It can also be someone in our own family, our own parish, our own neighborhood. There are many who suffer in our midst from drug or alcohol addiction, fear of losing their employment, mental illness, bigotry or loneliness. Christ has called us to point Him out to them, care for them, be with them and thus represent the Shepherd to them.

There are many other issues that together, you and I must address. I am eager to join you now as together we help those caught up in the vicious cycle of poverty. I want to join my voice to yours as we speak boldly and courageously to ensure that the sanctity of human life is valued and upheld. I urgently desire to join you in our never ending vigilance to maintain a safe environment for our youth and vulnerable adults,

that is, an environment free from sexual, physical and emotional abuse. I also seek to learn more about solutions to the systemic poverty that afflicts many in New Mexico, especially among our youth.

In all of this, we are called not simply to point to the Good Shepherd but to enlarge the fold, to help others realize that we are one and that we give of ourselves to others not out of charity but because in Christ we are one fold, united in love and mercy. In this light, we are grateful to Pope Francis for announcing on March 13th last, the anniversary of his election, that the Church will begin a Year of Mercy beginning on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception later this year and concluding on November 20th, 2016, the Solemnity of Christ the King. As Pope Francis said in *Evangelii Gaudium*: “The Church which ‘goes forth’ is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice...and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast. Such a community has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of its own experience of the power of the Father’s infinite mercy. Let us try a little harder to take the first step and to become involved.” (n. 24) The Holy Father sees that this mercy is the antidote to what he calls the globalization of indifference which lamentably has deprived us of the ability to weep.

When I lived in San Francisco, I always enjoyed passing Mercy High School on 19th Avenue. The front entrance was emblazoned with a quote from Psalm 145: “His mercies are over all his works.” I sometimes fear we have forgotten this in our effort to promote justice and righteousness. Promoting justice without mercy is sterile: promoting mercy without justice is disingenuous. I know that sometimes showing mercy can be seen as a sign of weakness, or as a dear friend of mine says, of being “weak and spineless.” But in fact, mercy takes great courage and an unbending dedication to the truth and to justice. It is a sign of genuine strength and real power. As St. Francis de Sales puts it, “There is nothing as strong as gentleness and nothing as gentle as real strength. I wonder if we could substitute “mercy” for “gentleness?” What could be stronger than genuine mercy? Compassion, forgiveness and reconciliation can move hearts and change lives. I believe that when St. Pope John Paul II forgave Mehmet Ali Ağca in his jail cell after he tried to kill him, he did more to stem the tide of violence than the so-called justice of capital punishment. We need greater evidence of mercy in marriages, families, parishes, schools, workplaces, houses of government, indeed, throughout our society

and world. That is the true lesson of the Good Shepherd, that in his tender mercy he would seek out the lost sheep, even if it means abandoning all logic by leaving the other 99. We must always show mercy to everyone since God loves all his children, especially those who are most vulnerable, whose lives hang in the balance like a smoldering wick or a bruised reed, whether in the womb, living in the streets or far from home. We are called to be a merciful Church, a Church that goes out of its way and out of its comfort zone, to show all people that God's tender mercies are over all his works.

The Good News of Christ's mercy came to this enchanted land in 1598 and for these past four hundred and seventeen years the Supper of the Lamb has been celebrated and lived, sending us forth to give witness to the Lamb of God in our midst. I give thanks today that I have been called to join you as your Shepherd and brother. I have always appreciated St. Augustine's insight when he said in a sermon, "For you I am a bishop. With you I am a Christian." For a long time I saw those two roles or ways of life as separate. I realize now more than ever that they are inextricably woven into the fabric of my life. One informs the other and gives it life. I cannot be your bishop unless I am one with you. And I cannot be one with you unless you embrace me as your bishop. I look forward to the years ahead as we journey with each other in the process of becoming one with Christ and one with each other, giving glory and praise to God as we are called to the Supper of the Lamb.

Pause...

Por favor oren por mí para que yo continúe siguiendo a Cristo, nuestro Buen Pastor, al entregarme completamente a esta Iglesia peregrina de Santa Fe como su nuevo pastor. Que durante los próximos años, nuestro Dios del amor, bendiga y guíe nuestros pasos como testigos del Cordero de Dios presente en medio de nosotros y en todo el Suroeste.