

26th Sunday of Ordinary Time “We Are All Called to Evangelize”

Bishop Frank Schuster

My friends, it is an honor to be here to install your new pastor on behalf of Archbishop Etienne. I have known Fr. _____ his whole priesthood and I can tell you that you are getting one of our best. Please take care of him.

Amigos míos, es un honor estar aquí para instalar a su nuevo párroco en nombre del Arzobispo Etienne. Conozco al P. _____ desde el inicio de su sacerdocio y puedo decirles que están recibiendo uno de nuestros mejores testimonios. Por favor, cuídenlo.

I do not think we could ask for a better selection of readings for this weekend. Jesus has very high expectations for his disciples. Pastors are not princes. Pastors are not lords. Pastors are servant leaders who shepherd their flock with the heart of Jesus who laid down his life for his sheep. Having been a pastor for over twenty years myself, I am blessed to know in my heart how much my parishioners shepherded me over the years as much as I shepherded them. Parishioners need their pastors, yes! However, pastors also need their parishioners because we are not perfect. We need Jesus too.

The readings this weekend also remind us that the task of evangelization isn't just for our priests. All of us are called to evangelize. In the book of Numbers, the Lord commanded Moses to gather seventy elders into the tent for the blessing of the Holy Spirit. Eldad and Medad, although on the list, didn't go into the tent. The Holy Spirit, however, came to rest on Eldad and Medad outside the tent. Joshua questioned the inclusion of Eldad and Medad because they weren't in the tent. Moses responded, “Would that all the people of the Lord were prophets! Would that the Lord might bestow his spirit on them all!” These are very interesting words from Moses in the Book of Numbers! And we have the same thing going on in the Gospel reading.

The Gospel begins with John sharing with Jesus, “Teacher, we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow us.” Jesus replied, “Do not prevent him. There is no one who performs a mighty deed in my name who can at the same time speak ill of me. For whoever is not against us is for us.” Powerful words from our savior! There is urgency in the Lord's words in the Gospel reading. Salvation of souls is at stake.

My friends, the installation of a pastor is a wonderful day in the life of the local church. However, the invitation this Sunday is to not put everything on his shoulders. The priests serving this parish need you to help them because, when the Church uses the word “parish”, it doesn't mean just a building or a church property. A parish is a geographic boundary and every soul in it, not just the ones who self-identify as Catholic. Priests cannot serve every soul in a parish family's boundary by themselves. This is everybody's responsibility by our baptism. Think of all the ways we can share the Good News with the people around us as the missionary disciples Pope Francis calls us to be. Who can we invite to Church next Sunday? Who can I reach out to and give a helping hand in a time of need? The opportunities are exciting if we simply find the courage to act.

No creo que se pueda pedir una mejor selección de lecturas para este fin de semana. Jesús tiene expectativas muy altas para sus discípulos. Los pastores no son príncipes. Los pastores no son señores. Los pastores son líderes siervos que pastorean su rebaño con el corazón de Jesús, quien dio su vida por sus ovejas.

Las lecturas de este fin de semana también nos recuerdan que la tarea de la evangelización no es solo para nuestros sacerdotes. Todos estamos llamados a evangelizar. Piensa en todas las formas en que podemos compartir las Buenas Nuevas con las personas que nos rodean como discípulos misioneros que el Papa Francisco nos llama a ser. ¿A quién podemos invitar a la Iglesia el próximo domingo? ¿A quién puedo acercarme y echar una mano en un momento de necesidad? Las oportunidades son emocionantes si simplemente encontramos el valor para actuar.

Amigos míos, mi oración por Compañeros en el Evangelio es que este momento importante en la vida de la Iglesia nos ayude a crecer en nuestra vocación como Pueblo de Dios en el mundo en el que vivimos. Rezo para que este sea un tiempo de fortalecimiento, llamándonos a todos a hacer nuestra parte para compartir las Buenas Nuevas de Jesucristo con todos los que conocemos.

My friends, my prayer for Partners in the Gospel is that this important time in the life of the Church will help us grow in our vocation as a People of God in the world we live in. I pray that this will be a time of empowerment, calling us all to do our part to share the Good News of Jesus Christ to everyone we meet. May God bless you Fr. _____ as you take on this new role and may God bless this parish family in the days and months ahead.