

Homily – Chrism Mass

April 11, 2017

At a time when the people of God were living in great darkness, God sent them a prophet who brought light -- good news -- to the downtrodden, the neglected, the poor. God does not abandon his people! He will bring those who are scattered and divided into one flock. The prophet's inspired message brings hope to the broken-hearted and the oppressed, to the captive and the blind.

Near the beginning of his ministry, Jesus enters the synagogue at Nazareth as a **prophet** sent by God. He uses the words of the anonymous prophet and makes them his own: "Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." This sums up the whole gospel message – and describes the mission and ministry of his Church. Today, as missionary disciples, how are we to continue Jesus' work in the world today?

First, we remember that God gives us all we need to carry out this sacred responsibility. We bless oils that remind us of God's care for us throughout our lives. We are anointed in baptism, confirmation, and holy orders and share responsibility for proclaiming the Lord Jesus and his gospel in word and deed.

Second, we re-commit ourselves to teaching and acting upon the social doctrine of the Church, which is based on the gospel. Doing this faithfully and constantly today is a great challenge. We face enormous, seemingly intractable obstacles to reaching out effectively to the poor, the needy, the downtrodden, the immigrant, the refugee, the addicted, the elderly. We must confront racism, bigotry, sexism, and callous disregard of the poor with the revealed truth about every human life, which is created in the “image and likeness” of God and, therefore, has innate dignity and rights – from conception to natural death – at all stages, and in all circumstances!

Third, we must carry out our mission in ecclesial unity – the unity that Jesus prayed for at the Last Supper. Our archdiocesan theme this year is United as Church – both at the local and at the archdiocesan level – as well as in communion with the Church throughout the world under the Petrine leadership of Pope Francis.

The people of Nazareth responded to Jesus’ proclamation of his prophetic mission by rejecting him. They closed their minds and hearts to his message. My dear sisters and brothers, in the Lord: What is our response to him and the gospel this evening?