

**Installation Mass for Father Gilberto Vallejo
September 28, 2019**

My dear brother priest, Father Gilberto Vallejo, and sisters and brothers of the parish community of St. Brigid. I come this evening to share with you in the ceremony of installation of your newly appointed pastor. This ceremony reminds us of the importance of the ministry entrusted to Father Vallejo, as your shepherd of this flock in the archdiocese of San Antonio. It entrusts him with the spiritual and temporal responsibilities a pastor accepts as he makes his profession of faith and pledges his allegiance to the office he assumes. It is with great joy that I, as your archbishop, share this moment with you.

The history of this parish has been blessed by Father Peter McKenna, your founding pastor, Bishop Thomas Flanagan, Father Leslie Vance, and Father Stuart Juleen. Each of these priests gave totally and faithfully to their ministry to help build this parish community into what it is today.

As we prepare for this transitional moment, I feel the opening words from the first letter of St. Paul to Timothy well serve as the ‘heart and soul’ of this new ministry. He says; “But you Man of God, pursue righteousness, devotion, faith, love, patience and gentleness. Compete well for the faith”. Yes, these words fully summarize what the Lord expects of you as his priest, even when the challenges in ministry come upon you, as they will. You must be gentle with sinners, as the Lord is with us. You must practice patience when people ‘test’ you by challenging the tenets that the Church believes and teaches. Your faith cannot waver, as this is the foundation of your spiritual life. You must be a man of devotion, beginning and ending your day with prayer, by saying: “Praise be Jesus Christ, now and forever!” In short your life and ministry must be parallel to the love Jesus

has for you. You must be the 'voice of God' when you see injustice and neglect of your sisters and brothers. You must be an 'alter Christus'- another Christ!

As we heard in the Gospel from St. Luke, you must recognize the person lying at your doorsteps 'covered with sores' of neglect and abuse; the one who would eat the scraps that fall from those who are better off. You cannot stand by and do nothing! All it takes is a little kindness and food.

You may not be able to solve all the problems, but you can do little things with great care, which will raise the 'fallen' to a greater sense of dignity. We, as Church, must be dependent upon one another, as we are dependent upon God.

We are all people in need, especially of God's love, forgiveness, and spiritual nourishment that we discover as we ponder over the Word of God, the sacraments of reconciliation and Eucharist. You, my brother have been chosen to administer the sacraments with great love and devotion. When you celebrate the Eucharist, do it with great reverence, as this will create a greater spirit of reverence with your parish community. And have a great devotion to our Blessed Lady, your Mother, our Mother, who watched over her Son Jesus, and helped form him into the person he became, one who always said 'yes' to the Father, as she did to the Angel Gabriel.

So, my brother, I entrust you to Our Lady of Guadalupe and to your parishioners of St. Brigid. They have opened their hearts to you. May you open your heart to them.