

Homily – Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Installation of Fr. Chris Muñoz at St. Joseph, Honey Creek – October 20, 2024

“Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you” (Ps 33). This verse, dear brothers and sisters, reminds us of a profound truth: God’s mercy is ever-present, especially when we turn to Him in trust. Today, as we welcome Father Chris as your new pastor, this verse takes on new significance. The Lord, in His great mercy, has answered your prayers, sending you a pastor to guide and shepherd this parish, reflecting the care and compassion of Christ Himself.

In the readings today, we encounter the figure of Jesus, the suffering servant, who perfectly models what it means to serve. Isaiah speaks of a servant who carries the sins and burdens of others, offering himself for their salvation. In the same way, a pastor is called to serve, not for his own gain, but for the good of the people entrusted to him. Your new pastor, following the footsteps of Jesus, is here to walk with you, to share in your joys and sorrows, and to lead you in faith.

The Letter to the Hebrews reminds us of the kind of priest Jesus is: one who is close to God but also deeply in touch with the struggles of humanity. A pastor must embody this same closeness – bringing people to God while remaining close to them in their daily lives. Your pastor is here to stand with you in times of difficulty and to rejoice with you in moments of blessing, always pointing to the mercy and love of God.

In the Gospel, Jesus teaches us about true greatness – not in seeking power or prestige but in becoming a servant. He reminds us that leadership in His Church is about service, humility, and

sacrifice. Just as Christ came not to be served but to serve, so too all of you are called to serve one another with a heart full of mercy and compassion. Pope Francis invites us to *“ask ourselves: do I know how to recognize the face of Jesus in the smallest? Do I take care of my neighbor, serving generously? And do I thank those who take care of me?”*

As we celebrate this moment of new beginning, let us give thanks for the mercy of God that has brought us together. Let us trust that with your new pastor, this parish will continue to grow in love, faith, and service to one another. Together, you will be a community that reflects the heart of Christ, who is always with us, guiding us with His mercy.

May the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe bring God’s blessings upon your community and your pastor, granting all of you wisdom, strength, and a heart open to the needs of others. And may the Lord’s mercy be upon you all, as you place your trust in Him.