

Sunday 22-B

Installation of Father Eduardo Quintero

St. Ann, Abbotsford

2 September 2018

Dear Father Eduardo, Father Rosemond, Father Richard, Deacon Larry, dear Carmelite Sisters, and dear parishioners of St. Ann's Parish:

Introduction

After a few remarks on today's Gospel, Father Eduardo Quintero will be installed as your new pastor. His installation is the first formal act of the Archdiocese of Vancouver entrusting this Parish of St. Ann to the Congregation of the Missionaries of St Charles, more commonly known as the Scalabrinians, after their founder Blessed John the Baptist Scalabrini. Father Eduardo tells me that his picture was enshrined at the entrance of the church last Sunday.

So now the parish adds yet another patron who, like every Saint, is an example of a "living Gospel," embodying the spirit of Jesus. Bishop Scalabrini was a pastor with a sensitive and open heart – a model for Fathers Eduardo and Rosemond.

But, even more, he is a model for all parishioners. Bishop Scalabrini worked, along with the Congregation he founded, to lessen the material and spiritual wounds of those men and women forced to leave their homeland to seek a better life elsewhere. He supported them by defending their fundamental human rights and by striving to ensure in their new home that they had pastoral accompaniment in their own

language. Moreover, he and his missionaries sensitized the communities which received the migrants to offer them a respectful, open and supportive welcome. Scalabrini was convinced that, through their presence, migrants – whether temporary workers or permanently settled are a visible sign of the universality of God’s family For this reason, St. John Paul II referred to him the “Father of migrants.”

Bishop Scalabrini’s example and intercession will, I pray, inspire your parish community to continue and increase its ministry of outreach to the many migrants here in the Fraser Valley.¹

Father Eduardo’s ministry of serving as your spiritual father and shepherd follows upon that so faithfully – and joyfully – offered by Father Hien Nguyen. I am grateful for his dedicated ministry, as I know you are, and we need to pray for him as he begins his tenure as rector of the Spirituality Year at our Seminary of Christ the King.

But why is Father Eduardo being installed? Hasn’t he already been your pastor for nearly two months? Indeed, he has. Although the Church does not prescribe a Rite of Installation as canonically necessary, it is a public way for your parish family to recognize and welcome his appointment as your shepherd.

So, what are Father Eduardo’s responsibilities to this parish

¹ Cf. St. John Paul II, Address to Pilgrims (10 November 1997).

community as its pastor? What can you expect from him? And what can you hold him accountable for?

As pastor, he is to faithfully celebrate with you and for you the Church's Sacraments, above all by offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. In the Rite of Installation it becomes clear how he accompanies you from the rebirth of Baptism to the rebirth to eternal life. He is also to proclaim to you forcefully, persuasively and in full fidelity to the mind of the Church the challenge of the Word of God as a rivetting "two-edged sword." And, lastly, as your shepherd and spiritual father, he is to work with your vibrant and prayerful community, ensuring that each of you assumes their responsibilities. Together you work to build up your parish as a living cell in the Body of Christ; that is, he will encourage you to be "missionary disciples" who serve one another and the wider community in justice and mercy. Collaboration and unity of purpose are the hallmarks of a parish that is truly living the Gospel.

Father Eduardo undertakes his mission by offering you the care of his spiritual fatherhood. More than a leader or guide, more than coach or a distant cultic figure, he is your spiritual father whose principal responsibility before you and before God is to lead you on the sure path of salvation that will take you to the Father's house.

And he will be able to accomplish all this – and I know he will – with the support of your prayers and your spirit of collaboration.

In his apostolic exhortation, “The Joy of the Gospel,” Pope Francis challenges parishes to be communities whose members have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and, because of that, reach out and bring the Gospel to those around them – first of all, of course, to their own families, but also to their co-workers and neighbours near and far. The Church is calling Father Eduardo to lead all of you together – and each one individually – in responding to this call of the Holy Father to be a parish that is “completely mission-oriented.” Guided by your spiritual father, Father Eduardo Quintero, St. Ann’s Parish, like every other parish in the world, is being called to bring the joy of the Gospel to those who have not yet recognized God’s love for them.

The Gospel: Hypocrisy

In the Gospel, one word stands out and stings: “hypocrite.” It’s a designation none of us likes to hear. We know that we are not living the Gospel to the full, that we remain sinners, that we fall short of what Jesus wants of us. But falling short, an awareness that we do not always practice what we preach, is not what the Lord is upset about in today’s Gospel.

It’s something else. He takes on the hypocrites; that is, those whose outer actions are blameless – and they are proud of it – but whose heart is far from the Lord (cf. Mk 7:6-7).

Jesus warns us about being scrupulous in observing human,

external practices of piety and thinking that because we carry this off, we have fulfilled the Law. Jesus condemns those who think and act in this way, those who compliment themselves on how well they observe all the details of human law.

And the Lord goes to the heart of the problem “This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me” (Mk 7:6), he says. People can become obsessed with mere external observance and forget it is the heart that gives the Law its true meaning: “You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition” (Mk 7:8). The secondary, the external, displaces what is primary and internal.

Jesus’ Word of Truth

The Lord speaks directly about the “inside” and the “outside” of the human person, about the true source of good and evil in us. It is not what comes from the “outside” (observance of certain traditional ritual practices) but from the “inside” (the heart, the conscience) that tells us whether we are acting in conformity with God’s will. “For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person” (Mk 7:21-23).

All external activity is empty and hypocritical unless it comes from the heart. “It is not the person who behaves in a pious fashion who is

pleasing to God; it is the one who is good from his heart. What use are all possible external practices if they are hollow within?”

“‘Hypocrisy’ is what Jesus calls such behavior. There was nothing he attacked so strongly. For it is not appearance that counts before God but reality; not the way someone presents himself, but what he really is. Jesus always loved and praised what is genuine.”²

The mere external observance of the Law, even the sacred Law of God cannot save us if our hearts do not rest in God, in wanting to do the right thing. “We could ask ourselves: where is my heart? Jesus said: ‘Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.’ What is my treasure? Is it Jesus, is it his teaching? If so, then the heart is good. Or is my treasure something else? Thus it is a heart which needs purification and conversion.”³

The bottom line is: there is no fooling God. Hypocrisy is foolish because it assumes we can hide ourselves from the God who knows our hearts. He knows the struggle within us. He embraces our interior self with its fragilities. To pretend that there is no battle going on within us is to live in delusion. Pretending, by strict conformity to rules, laws, customs, and traditions out of fear, may look good, but eventually that

² Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, *Behold, God's Son! Encountering Christ in the Gospel of Mark* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007), 114.

³ Francis, *Angelus* (30 August 2015).

will result in a confusion and disorder in our souls and in our lives.

Conclusion

We now proceed to the Rite of Installation.

_ J. Michael Miller, CSB

Archbishop of Vancouver