

## Homily – Chrism Mass

March 27, 2018

In the synagogue at Nazareth, Jesus adopts the mission of an Old Testament prophet to describe his own mission and ministry. Jesus brings salvation through a message, not a social or political reform – through a word, not a war. He builds bridges, not walls, to the poor, the captive, the blind, the oppressed. He firmly states that God’s promises are being fulfilled **today! Today!**

Pope Francis has said that “Jesus, anointed by the Spirit, brings **good news** to the poor. Everything he proclaims, and we priests too proclaim, is **good news** -- news full of the joy of the Gospel – the joy of those anointed in their sins with the oil of forgiveness, and anointed in their charism with the oil of mission, in order to anoint others in turn” – with the oil of catechumens, the oil of the sick, the sacred Chrism.

The word of God is not a sound bite or a slogan. It is not an abstraction or a fantasy. When we read the gospel, we encounter Jesus, our brother, the Word of God, the crucified and risen Lord.

Listening carefully to the word of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we share responsibility for continuing Jesus’ mission and

ministry in the world today. We live in a world of exaggerated individualism, fierce competition for limited resources, a consuming preoccupation with possessions, power, and pleasure. We live at a time of chaos, divisiveness, polarization, neglect of virtues and, above all, disregard for gospel values. Respect for the truth is rare. We are bombarded by so-called “alternative facts” and bald lying in public life and on social media. Our social fabric is unravelling.

Like every generation, we need to listen attentively and with humility to the gospel and to proclaim it and the risen Lord boldly and faithfully. We also need to act upon the word of God and strive mightily to build up the kingdom of God – an environment of justice and peace, truth and sincerity, harmony and unity, mercy and compassion. We are challenged to bring good news “to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free.” As Pope Francis reminds us, “the truth of the good news can never be merely abstract. . . never be gloomy or indifferent.” The gospel needs to take deep root to produce fruit.

We rely on the wisdom and empowerment of the Holy Spirit to guide us and give us the courage to be faithful missionary disciples of the risen Lord. *Ven, Holy Spirit, Ven!*