

**HOMILY OF ARCHBISHOP CHRISTOPHE PIERRE, APOSTOLIC NUNCIO  
 MASS FOR THE RESTORATION OF SAINT TURIBIUS CHAPEL  
 PONTIFICAL COLLEGE JOSEPHINUM, COLUMBUS, OHIO  
 MONDAY, APRIL 24, 2017**

My brothers and sisters, I greet you with joy in the name of the Risen Lord on this occasion of the rededication of Saint Turibius Chapel. I wish to welcome my brother bishops, Members of the Board, benefactors, Msgr. Schreck, the seminary faculty and students. As the Chancellor of the Pontifical College Josephinum and as the Apostolic Nuncio, Holy Father's personal representative in this country, I wish to express his personal closeness to all gathered here.

Our first reading spoke of a *new heaven and a new earth*. At this stage, the forces of death have been vanquished; the author reflects on the closeness of God to His people in the new Jerusalem, which far surpasses the earthly city below. The new city is to be the *dwelling of God with men*. ... *They shall be His people and God will be with them*.

Today, the Church is called to be a visible sign of the closeness of God to His people. Whether it is a parish church or a seminary chapel, the physical building is a reminder of God's presence among us – of his desire to be close to us. Part of the Church's mission is to help people experience the tenderness of God. Pope Francis has emphasized mercy to remind people that God is close to them; that He cares for them; that He loves them. *He shall dwell with them and they shall be His people*. He promises that *he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more*.

Until that day, we have the task of making God known in the world. If the world is filled with misery and suffering, we are consoled by the words: "*Behold, I make all things new*." To those who suffer or to those who lives appear ruined by sin, there is the hope in God of restoration and glory. The restoration of this chapel is a sign of the greater things God has in store for us!

In contemplating this restored mural, with Christ the High Priest at the Center, with Our Lady, St. Joseph, the angels and saints, one cannot help reflect upon how heaven and earth are united in the sacred liturgy. As Saint Paul says in the letter to the Ephesians: *You are no longer strangers and sojourners but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God*. He continues saying that the Church is *built upon the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus as the capstone*.

It is not just that God is with us, but there is a whole communion of saints exhorting us to our heavenly home. Each time the liturgy is celebrated here, the *whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord – a dwelling place of God in the Spirit*.

The Second Vatican Council teaches that "In the earthly liturgy, by the way of foretaste, we share in that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, and in which Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle." (*SACROSANCTUM CONCILIIUM, CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY*, 8) This holy place, filled with beauty, possesses an architecture and spirituality of communion. As a seminary chapel, it will serve to shape and form our future priests into men of communion.

Our belonging to a communion – having citizenship with the saints – should remind us of our call as Catholics to build a culture of encounter and communion so that the Church herself might grow more fully into a holy temple in the Lord. I hope that some of the saints in the mural – Miguel Pro, Rose of Lima, and John Neumann – will remind you of this responsibility to welcome the stranger as fellow citizens with the saints.

Here you have a Mexican, a Peruvian, and a Bohemian. We are enriched by their presence. Miguel Pro, a Jesuit priest of Mexico – the place of origin of many immigrants to this country – provides us with an example of priestly courage in bearing witness to the Kingship of Christ. Rose of Lima, a Peruvian woman committed to a life of penitence, teaches us the value of total consecration to God and communion with the bishop, who was in her case, Saint Turibius. John Neumann, the only American bishop to be canonized, was rejected because he was Bohemian; through his commitment to holiness, catechesis and the Eucharist, he overcame the prejudices of others. In Christ, they were no longer strangers but true citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem.

They also exhort us to enter more deeply into prayer – and this chapel is certainly a house of prayer – even when it is a struggle. The Holy Father says:

“The saints are men and women who enter fully into the mystery of prayer. Men and women who struggle with prayer, letting the Holy Spirit pray and struggle in them. They struggle to the very end, with all their strength, and they triumph, but not by their own efforts: the Lord triumphs in them and with them.” (HOMILY FOR THE CANONIZATION OF SEVEN SAINTS, 16 OCTOBER 2016)

This mural, evoking the heavenly Jerusalem and its liturgy, is a sign of the communal character of the vocation to the priesthood. In speaking of seminary formation, the new *Ratio Fundamentalis* says:

“This formation has an eminently communitarian character from the outset. In fact, the gift of the priesthood is a gift God gives to the Church and to the world, a path to sanctify oneself and others that should not be followed in an individualistic manner, but must always have as its point of reference a specific portion of the People of God. Such a vocation is discovered and formed within a community.” (CONGREGATION FOR CLERGY, *THE GIFT OF THE PRIESTLY VOCATION*, 8 DECEMBER 2016)

Your worship as a community of priestly formation should form you into shepherds who have the “smell of their sheep.” Communal, liturgical worship compels us to go forth in a pilgrimage of faith– “walking with our people, sometimes in front, sometimes in the middle and sometimes behind: in front in order to guide the community, in the middle in order to encourage and support; and at the back in order to keep it united and so that no one lags too far behind, to keep them united.” (POPE FRANCIS, “MEETING WITH CLERGY, CONSECRATED PEOPLE AND MEMBERS OF DIOCESAN PASTORAL COUNCILS”, 4 OCTOBER 2013)

Today’s liturgy reminds us of God’s desire to build a spiritual temple in the world, a community that worships Him *in spirit and in truth* (John 4:23-24). In the Gospel, Jesus’ dialogue with the Samaritan women speaks of this. In answering her, Jesus confirms the Law of Moses which the Samaritans had rejected. At the same time, He desires to open both the Jews and Samaritans to the new Revelation, which He brings in His very person. With the coming of the Messiah, God is truly with us, and the new and definitive covenant has begun. True worship of the Father means acceptance of the Son and offering sacrifice with right heart in the power of the Spirit.

As Catholics, we offer this worship at Mass, which will be celebrated many times in this restored chapel. At each Mass, bread and wine are changed into His Body and Blood. Eucharistic worship also transforms every aspect of our lives. St. Paul says: “*Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God.*” (1 Cor 10:31) Christians in their actions are called to offer true worship to God. There is a Eucharistic nature to Christian life. Each day we are progressively transfigured to reflect the image of the Son of God – to show his glory – just as this

Chapel does – and to draw others to faith in Him. Like Saint Peter and with his successor, we must *put out into the deep – for a big catch*. Our worship here calls us to go out of ourselves as missionary disciples and evangelists.

At the end of Mass, the deacon says: “*Go forth. The Mass is ended.*” ... But how do we go? Do we go with joy? The Eucharist is the sacrament which nourishes Christian joy. It is the strongest sacramental sign of the Paschal Lordship of Christ, recalling his Paschal Victory over sin and death. In the Eucharist, Christ is among us. God is close to His People. The joy that He has won is preserved and shared. The Eucharist is not incomplete or fading like the pleasures of this world of which we partake to try to experience joy; it is a lasting joy. Joy is fruit of the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus breathed on the Apostles on that first Easter, when they rejoiced to see the Risen Lord!

Pope Francis reminds us that “the joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew.” (POPE FRANCIS, APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION *EVANGELII GAUDIUM*, 1)

Today, this Chapel of Saint Turibius is born anew! At its heart is Christ, who waits for you in the Tabernacle, who longs to be a Priest and Victim for you upon the altar, who gives the gift of joy in your heart for the task of evangelization, and who says: *Behold, I make all things new!*