

Whether it's something as challenging as a wedding or as simple as a family meal, preparation is key to a successful presentation.

In much the same way, preparation is important to the celebration of every liturgy at Our Lady of the Rosary. As many of you may know, the deacons at OLR serve as sacristans for each Mass, and in that role, we prepare for each liturgical celebration by (among other things):

- Checking the sound system
- Assuring that the candles are filled and lit before Mass begins
- Preparing the missals, lectionary, Book of the Gospels and universal prayers
- Preparing chalices (for the wine), ciboria (for the hosts), and cruets, water pitcher, purificators, towel and patens for the credence table in the sanctuary
- Preparing for any special services including baptisms or confirmations

After Mass, the deacons make sure that the vessels used during the mass have been purified and that everything has been stored in its proper place.

Appropriate preparation helps to create the sense of the sacred that is important to the celebration of each Mass. Even more important is the care that deacons take in preparing the homilies that they offer each month.

The homily is an integral part of the Mass that should reflect on the scripture readings of the day. The intent of the homily is to “break open the scriptures” to help focus on the message offered in each day's readings and to encourage listeners to apply principles of their faith in their daily lives.

If we listen carefully, we can hear the voice of St. Justin Martyr, who referenced early versions of the homily in his explanation of Christian practices around the year 155. At their gatherings, St. Justin wrote, after “the memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets” had been read, the presider would then challenge the congregation to “imitate these beautiful things” (CCC 1345).

We deacons are mindful of the need for adequate preparation to make the homily meaningful to those attending mass at OLR. Preparation begins with reading and re-reading the passages of Scripture, supported by prayer, to identify the main theme(s) of the readings – the message that will prove useful to all of us.

Biblical commentaries and references in the Catechism can assist in identifying themes of the readings in the preparation of the homily. Then comes the challenge of putting thoughts on paper in a way that will reveal the important message of that day's readings, including ways we can apply that message in our lives as followers of Jesus.

In the homily and in the celebration of the Mass, adequate preparation is key to the presentation of the Eucharist as the source and summit of our faith. We, as deacons at OLR, want to do all that we can to accomplish that goal and are gratified to be able to assist the parish in these ways.

In Christ,
Deacon Jerry