

**Homily for the Installation of Father Steven Arisman as Pastor of  
St. Francis Solanus Parish, Quincy**

**Mass for Various Needs: For Priests – July 28, 2020**

**† Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki  
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois**

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ: It is good for us to be here today for this Mass and Rite of Installation of Father Steve Arisman as Pastor of St. Francis Solanus Parish here in Quincy, as well as the introduction of Fr. David Beagles as your parochial vicar.

As we gather today for this Mass, we mark the beginning of a new chapter in the life of the parish of St. Francis Solanus. Not only with a new pastor, but also the shift from the Franciscan priests who have labored here so long and faithfully over the past 160 years, to these two priests from our diocese now entrusted with this parish. Yet the Mass we celebrate today, and the words we hear in our readings, offer us the perfect reflection on this precise moment. St. Paul reminds all of us “what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake”. I offer these words with the same vigor that Paul wrote them to the Corinthians to all of us here today. All of us, as Christians, are called to center our lives on *Christ*. When other parts of our lives change. Whether that be in our work, our family,

our parish, or any other arena, we can have confidence and joy because He, Jesus, remains at the center of our lives. These are words of great hope!

I offer these words as well to your new priests as well. It is a great joy for me that Father Steven Arisman has accepted the call to serve as the local shepherd of the Catholic community of faith here, with the help of his newly-ordained Parochial Vicar, Father David Beagles. Today in a particular way each of them is entrusted with the pastoral care of all of you as an *Alter Christus*, another Christ, shepherding your souls in the name of God, and in collaboration with me, your bishop, all of us as servants of the Lord. They must keep in mind St. Paul's words as well, and Christ's own statement "I am the Good Shepherd." May they both take those words to heart each day as they assist Him in shepherding this parish into eternity with Christ.

I also wish to express my deep appreciation to Father Don Blaeser for his dedicated ministry as your Pastor for the past ten years, as well as to Fr. Bob Barko, who assisted him as Parochial Vicar. Our prayers and thanks go with them both, and for the many decades that they, and so many other Franciscan priests, served here at St. Francis.

Father Steven Arisman was ordained in 2014 and served as a parochial vicar at Ss. Peter and Paul Parish in Collinsville for the first year of his

priesthood, before being Parochial Vicar at St. Charles Borromeo in Charleston and Immaculate Conception in Mattoon from 2016-2017. He was then named Pastor of Our Lady of the Holy Spirit Parish in Mt. Zion and St. Isidore in Bethany, where he remained until this summer. Fr. Beagles, as you probably know, was ordained just a month ago, and will begin his priestly ministry here at St. Francis Solanus. Fr. Arisman and Fr. Beagles will begin serving at this parish as we continue forward into this Third Millennium of Christianity, so I think it is fitting to call to mind a theme suggested by our late Holy Father, the Great Pope Saint John Paul II, in his Apostolic Letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, "On Entering the New Millennium," which I quote as follows (nos. 30-31): "First of all, I have no hesitation in saying that all pastoral initiatives must be set in relation to holiness."

We grow in holiness by following Jesus as His disciples. Closely related to the notion of discipleship is the concept of stewardship. In the First Letter of St. Peter, he writes of stewardship in these words: "As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace."<sup>1</sup> The prophet Micah put different words on this same truth: holiness is "to do justice ... love kindness ... and walk humbly with your God".

In the Fall of 2015, I published my second pastoral letter, entitled, *Ars Crescendi in Dei Gratia*, Latin for “The Art of Growing in God’s Grace.” In it, I wrote, “The art of growing in God’s grace is the key to growth in the Church. Building a culture of growth in the Church starts with inviting people to experience the love of Jesus Christ.”

In 2017 we concluded our Fourth Diocesan Synod, in which we focused on discipleship and stewardship. In addition to the clergy and consecrated religious who participated, delegates from each of our 129 parishes in this Diocese voted overwhelmingly to adopt a dozen declarations intended to set the direction and tone for the pastoral ministry of this local Church for the next several years.

The first of these declarations proclaims a new mission statement for all of us as members of this Diocese: “The mission of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield in Illinois is to build a fervent community of intentional and dedicated missionary disciples of the Risen Lord and steadfast stewards of God’s creation who seek to become saints. Accordingly, the community of Catholic faithful in this diocese is committed to the discipleship and stewardship way of life as commanded by Christ Our Savior and as revealed by Sacred Scripture and Tradition.”

To further this mission, the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois is committed to implementing the Four Pillars of Discipleship and Stewardship, namely, **hospitality, prayer, formation, and service**. In other words, we will **invite** people proactively to join us in prayer, especially Sunday Mass; we will **provide** well-prepared celebrations of the sacraments and other occasions for **prayer** as signs of hope and paths of grace to heaven; we will **study** the Bible and **learn** more about Jesus and our Catholic faith; and we will **serve** each other, especially those in need, by practicing charity and justice.

Through prayer, discernment, and consultation with others, it has become evident that the Lord is inviting us to embrace more fully our call to discipleship out of which necessarily follows a life of stewardship.<sup>2</sup>

Stewardship recognizes that everything we have comes from God. Stewardship from God's perspective is that He has given us gifts to be used not just selfishly for ourselves, but to be shared with others. Becoming a disciple means making an intentional decision to accept the Lord's call to follow Him and live the discipleship and stewardship way of life.

Thanks to the leadership of Father Blaeser, your parish has already begun to take steps to implement the goals of our Diocesan Synod. A key group that is essential to this plan for growth is the priests of our diocese, especially our

pastors. But they cannot do this alone. They need the help and cooperation of all parishioners. To be able to put into practice the mission of Jesus, we need to be part of a team supporting each other.

I pray that all of you will work with Father Arisman in seeking to be intentional disciples of the Lord and good stewards of the gifts entrusted to us for the growth of the Church as we journey together toward our inheritance in the glory of Heaven.

Therefore, dear parishioners of St. Francis Solanus Parish, I urge you to strive for holiness, to work and pray with your new Pastor. Support him, help him, pray for him, and most of all, love him as he loves you and as Christ calls us to love each other.

May God give us this grace. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter 4:10.

<sup>2</sup> United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, 1992, p. 8; <http://www.usccb.org/upload/stewardship-disciples-response-10th-anniversary.pdf>.