

The Dedication Mass

One more week! I am getting very excited! I have been “homesick”. The Trinity community has been amazingly gracious, and their worship space is beautiful. It has been like a very long trip though, and I am ready to go home.

I am also looking forward to the Dedication Mass itself. I don’t think many of us have had the opportunity to be at a “Dedication of a Church and Altar” celebration. Our church will be unusual in that this will be its second dedication. It was, of course, dedicated when it was first opened. There are specific conditions for dedicating a church again – it must have a new altar, and the space must have been “notably altered.” We meet both of those!

Let me share some of the things you can expect at this Mass, so you are ready for them when they happen. This first Mass might feel a bit strange. When we enter the church, we will **NOT** bless ourselves at the font, as it has not yet been blessed. Blessing of the font is part of the Dedication Mass. Similarly, we will **NOT** genuflect as we enter the pew, as the tabernacle will be open and empty because the altar is not yet blessed.

THE OPENING

The Dedication of a Church and Altar is reserved to the office of bishop. Naturally, Bishop Knestout will be our celebrant. The Mass will start with a procession that will include the relic to be deposited below the altar mensa (stone top). Immediately after the procession and greetings, the bishop will bless water and there will be a sprinkling rite as we do during the Easter season. This will include the font, the ambo, the crucifix, and the altar.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Liturgy of the Word will proceed as normal, but instead of the assigned readings for that Sunday, we will hear some beautiful readings about the building of church. The first reading from Nehemiah recalls the re-opening of the temple in Jerusalem. The second reading from 1 Corinthians reminds us that we are God’s temple. The Gospel tells the story of Jesus giving Simon a new name, “you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.” Mt 16:18

DEDICATION AND ANNOINTING OF THE ALTAR

After the homily and the creed, we will sing the Litany of the Saints, followed shortly by the deposit of the relic of St. Sabbas in the place prepared for it. The service continues with the anointing of the altar. The prayer begins by reminding us of the altars of Noah, Abraham, and Moses and how Jesus offered himself on the altar of the cross. This is followed by a very moving supplication asking God to sanctify our own altar. The bishop anoints the altar with Chrism, which was consecrated during Holy Week for baptisms, confirmation, and to “adorn with the splendor of holiness the places and things signed by sacred oils” (USCCB).

The altar is incensed by the bishop. The altar servers will wipe the altar and cover it in preparation for the celebration of the Eucharist. Seven candles will be placed upon it. In Scripture, the number seven represents perfection and completion (Gen. 2:2; Rev. 1:4). Following an invocation from the bishop, the candles are lit.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

This part of the Mass will proceed as usual, but it will be very special as the first Mass in which our parish will come together as one to this “new table” of the Lord to celebrate the Eucharist.

Psalm 100

Shout joyfully to the LORD, all you lands;
serve the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful song.

Know that the LORD is God
he made us, we belong to him,
we are his people, the flock he shepherds.

**Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
his courts with praise.**

Give thanks to him, bless his name;
good indeed is the LORD,
his mercy endures forever,
his faithfulness lasts through every generation.

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Liturgy & Worship



RESURRECTION

CATHOLIC CHURCH