

## **May 20, 2018: Consecration of Our New Altar**

Dear Parishioners,

It was our great privilege and joy to have Archbishop Sartain here to consecrate our new altar this past Sunday. The consecration of an altar is a beautiful liturgy with rich symbolism that demonstrates the supreme importance of the altar within our church. The prayers for the consecration of the altar referenced Abraham and Moses, who both erected altars of sacrifice to God, and the Temple in Jerusalem which housed the altar of sacrifice. When Jesus came as the Son of God, his sacrifice on the cross became the altar, the sacrifice, the priest, and the Temple. His sacrifice on the cross inaugurated the new and everlasting sacrifice and covenant which will be sacrificed to the Father until the end of time. The altar therefore represents Christ and his perpetual sacrifice on the cross for the salvation of the world. Every time the Mass is celebrated, Jesus becomes both the priest and victim. We are joined to him in that ever present sacrifice of the Eucharist.

Archbishop Sartain reminded us that when we celebrate the liturgy it is never “once upon a time” it is always “now”. The act, the person, the mystery of Christ is made present in the words and actions of the Church’s Liturgy. In the consecration rite of an altar, the material object of wood and stone is dedicated to the sacred purpose of the sacrifice of Christ which occurs every time the Mass is celebrated on it. This is why we often refer to the Mass as the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

During the consecration of the altar, the Archbishop poured Chrism oil in the center and on the four corners of the altar. This is the same oil used at Confirmation, Ordinations, and Baptisms. Then, slowly, and with much care, he rubbed the Chrism into the stone and his last gesture was a big cross in the center. Then wicks with incense were placed at the four corners of the altar and in the center, then these were lit by the Archbishop. These pods of burning incense represent the five wounds of Christ and have been made permanent in the stone. After the incense was burned the altar was dressed with the linens and the first sacrifice of the Mass was celebrated there.

Before the actual consecration of the Altar, three relics of saints were sealed into the back of the altar. We are happy to have two Americans whose relics were in the former altar, St. John Neumann and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, as well as a new relic of the Martyr St. Victor. We ask for their intercession on our parish. We are happy that the former altar was able to be divided; one half has become an altar which holds the tabernacle in the Church and the other half will be altar in the rectory chapel.

I want to thank Sonny Tremoulet again for his design and building of the altar and providing the materials. He is an amazing master craftsman. I would also like to thank the Women’s Association for purchasing the beautiful fabric for the altar linens and thank Rose Helen for making the beautiful altar linens. She is an amazing seamstress and lace maker.

In Christ,

Father Vincent