

# Installation of Msgr. Woy

## Introduction

When a homilist begins by quoting an advertising slogan for a life-insurance company, he is probably watching too much television and should quickly repent. Nonetheless, I begin with the slogan of Mass Mutual: “Who matters most to you says the most about you.” When I first heard that catchphrase, it stayed with me. It didn’t induce me to buy life insurance from Mass Mutual but it did make me think and pray. Who matters most in my life? What does that say about how I’m living my life?

These are questions we should ask ourselves on this Feast of Christ the King & on this day when Msgr. Woy is installed as Pastor of the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen.

## The Feast of Christ the King

So who matters most? If a reporter asked us that question outside this Cathedral church, we’d probably answer that God matters most, and we’d be right. But here we have to stop and think. We routinely say that God matters most but do our lives reflect this statement? Isn’t it often the case we become so busy, so preoccupied, so distracted, that the Lord takes second or third place? Does God matter most when we are not able to make room for him in our busy days? Does he matter most when we are don’t make it to Mass on Sunday?

The Feast of Christ the King reminds us that Jesus should matter most. It is to him that we owe our complete allegiance. It is not an allegiance of fear but an allegiance of love. Our King is not a mighty ruler but a shepherd who loves us. Ezekiel points this out in this evening’s first reading: “The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up, the sick I will heal ...” Our King does not possess the trappings of royalty but rather a liberating love that rescues us from the sins that promise happiness but deliver misery and from the prospect of death that

overshadows our lives.

Today's feast is an invitation to open our hearts more widely to Christ, to ensure that his love is what truly rules our lives. How convinced we must be that Jesus Christ loves us; that he gave his life to save us; that he lives at our side each day to enlighten, strengthen and free us! (cf. EG, 164). But how do we bring that conviction down to earth?

Years ago, Fr. Pedro Arrupe, the former Superior General of the Society of Jesus, described what life is like when the love of Jesus comes first: "Nothing," he said, "is more practical than finding God, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you will do with you evenings, how you will spend your weekends, what you read, whom you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in Love, stay in love, and it will decide everything."

### **Seeing Christ in the Poor**

But the Gospel brings us another message. Once we have fallen in love with God, we can no longer ignore the poor. Love will open our eyes to the fact that there was "no room in the inn" (Lk. 2:7) for the one we claim as our King. Love will open our eyes to the truth that "the Son of Man had nowhere to lay his head" (Lk. 9:58). The Lord identified with us in our poverty - our physical poverty and our spiritual poverty.

Once his love overtakes our heart, we will see his image in the poor. We will see Christ our King in those who hunger and thirst, in those who are poorly clad, in the stranger, and in the prisoner. Whatever we do for them, we do for Lord. If the Lord matters most, the poor will also matter most in our lives. And, as St. John of the Cross said so famously, "In the evening of our lives, we shall be judged on love alone."

### **The Installation of Msgr. Woy**

This evening it is my privilege to install Msgr. Woy as your new pastor. A long-time resident at the Cathedral rectory, he was no stranger to you and he has been “on the job” already for about five months. You already know him as a good and dedicated priest who loves the Lord deeply and who has proven his love by generously shouldering so many responsibilities in this Archdiocese. He is priest who keeps the Lord at the center of his life and because of that it is clear that you, the parishioners of Mary Our Queen are also at the center of his life. The Lord and you matter most to him.

You sense this in how the Gospel is preached and the liturgy is celebrated. You sense this in the care and attention that is being given to the Cathedral school, indeed, a blue ribbon school, in renewed efforts to reach out to parishioners, to attract many back home to the faith, and in emphasis on young people and youth ministry, and much, much, more. Msgr. Woy, with your parish family and friends, we thank you!

Happily, Msgr. Woy also came to this parish as a package deal. I was happy to assign with him the newly ordained Fr. Andrew DeFusco and it’s my understanding that the two of them are quite a team! What also makes me happy is that more priests are living in the Rectory, such that it is a community of prayer and priestly fellowship. With so many role models of priestly life and ministry, I am confident there will be priestly vocations from our Cathedral parish!

### **Conclusion**

On this feast of Christ the King, we turn to Mary, who is our Queen. We ask her intercession for Msgr. Woy, Fr. DeFusco and indeed this entire parish family – that we might open our hearts as never before to Christ’s love and manifest that love in our daily lives with such convincing force that many will be lead to follow Christ and with us acknowledge him as the King of Love, our Shepherd!

May God bless us and keep us always in his love!