

Bishop Jaime Soto – Homily for Saturday,  
March 13, 2010

*Dedication of Good Shepherd Church, Elk Grove*

“The Son of Man has come to search out and save what was lost.”

The Lord Jesus has come as the Good Shepherd to search out and save what was lost. He comes now to this place to save us. As he did with Zacchaeus long ago, he comes to us with that humble and holy request: “Good people of Elk Grove, hurry. I mean to stay at your house today.”

You have worked hard with as much haste as reason, resources, and local regulations would allow. The Good Shepherd was patient while also eager to come to this place. With a joyful thrill you have opened to the Good Shepherd the doors of this new home. You will lay a splendid table before him, pouring precious fragrant oil upon this altar so that the Good Shepherd can save you by laying down his life for you.

We do not blush or hang our heads in sorrow when they say, “He has gone to a sinner’s house as a guest” because we know that he comes to save us, each one of us. The kindly Shepherd knows each one of us. He told us, “I know mine and mine know me.” (Jn. 10.14) He knows us and loves us. Here we will come to know Him, love Him and serve Him. We see the wounds of His love in His pierced hands and side. From His sacred heart, pierced for our sake, pour forth both water and blood. That living water will brim over the baptismal fount and the cups placed on this altar will overflow with His precious blood.

The Good Shepherd is the divine guest and we are honored to receive him. This place now becomes an honored home where the Shepherd will continue to gather His flock. He also enters here to continue the work of building God’s spiritual house. What has been so far accomplished is only the beginning. Heed carefully the words of Peter in the second reading today, “Come to him (Come to Christ). ... Let yourselves be built

into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

Zacchaeus was quick, upon receiving the Lord Jesus in his home, to vow that he would serve the poor and reconcile himself to all that he had offended. May this community be as quick to do the same. Into this altar we will place a relic of St. Vincent de Paul, the great apostle to the poor. May the gentle smile of that holy priest inspire a gentle reverence and cheerful generosity as you reach out to welcome and care for our brothers and sisters who are poor. When you look on them may your hands hold them as you would hold Christ.

To my brother priests I entrust the wise and merciful ministry of reconciliation through the sacrament of Penance. Theirs is a sacred duty that is to be exercised with patience and compassion. Together with them, we must all be attentive and hospitable. Opening our hearts as well as these doors to welcome our brothers and sisters who seek to be saved by the loving embrace of their Good Shepherd. Each time a brother or sister crosses the threshold of reconciliation and peace, the words of Jesus must ring in our hearts, “Today, salvation has come to this house.”

The goodness of our Good Shepherd now fills this place. May that goodness and mercy always abide in this place and in your hearts, “so that you may *always* announce the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”