**A Shrine is a gift.** In this particular case the shrine is a gift for the parish, for the archdiocese, and for the Redemptorists.

And every gift comes wrapped. And in regards to a Shrine, the gift must be wrapped with the virtue of **Hospitality.**

We are here today to give thanks for the gift of the Shrine to St. John Neumann and to Bless some of the wrapping of our gift that helps us do hospitality well.

*Let’s explore this a little…*

**I said the shrine is a gift for the parish**. Every parish wants to be viewed at the place of welcome. Where people can drop in and visit with the believing community that makes up that parish. Drop in and pray to the Lord who is present in the Blessed Sacrament. But people don’t usually just drop into a parish. They may feel like since they are not members of that particular parish or have not been there for a while, it would be strange for them to just drop in. Even more so if they are not even Catholic. But a Shrine changes everything.

A Shrine screams “Welcome!” The reputation of a Shrines is that you can just drop in. You don’t have to be a member of that particular parish, you don’t even have to be Catholic. It is not viewed as strange that you would just stop by and walk around. Maybe just to look, maybe to say a prayer, maybe to seek a healing. It is even normal that you can just talk with anyone you meet.

Why? Because you are at a Shrine and that’s what people do. And so for the parish you have a great opportunity to welcome people and let them explore their questions about life, about God, about prayer. Every parish would love to be viewed in this way but because this parish has a Shrine and therefore this welcoming attitude is made especially easy. A Shrine is a gift for the parish

**The Shrine is a gift for the Archdiocese**. When the Archdiocese was pondering how to celebrate the Year of Mercy, where to place the Jubilee Doors, what immediately came to mind were Shrines. Because Shrines are known for being places of welcome, healing and forgiveness. That people who had been away from the Church for a long time would not feel awkward when approaching a Shrine. People would not be questioning why are you here? Who are you?

Shrines have a reputation of approachability and welcoming people who are searching and questioning. It can be a one-time interaction that helps the person remain anonymous and consider reconnecting with the People of God and their faith journey. And through especially the Sacrament of Reconciliation a shrine is a place to experience the Mercy of God. A Shrine is a gift for the Archdiocese.

**A Shrine is a gift for the Redemptorists.** We have many shrines throughout the world and they are great places for ministry. Our Shrine have international reputations. They help to make us known as a Religious Congregation. They give us opportunities to intact with people and celebrate spiritual moment with them. They help us talk about our wonderful confreres like St. John Neumann and the relationship he had with Jesus, the Most Holy Redeemer. He had a short life but, because of this Shrine, he is still able to minister with the People of God. Still able to help us to pray and still help us on our journey through life with healings. As Redemptorists we look to him to help us understand our charism as to be faithful as he was. A Shrine is a gift for the Redemptorists.

**I said that a Shrine needs special wrapping paper and it is the virtue of Hospitably.** In the past few years we Redemptorist have been doing a lot of talking about this gift. And as result of these discussions various changes have been made at the Shrine of St. John Neumann. First, a lot of redecorating, fix the pews, clean the walls, update the confessionals, paint, paint, paint! Make the entryways more welcoming. Put in a large Atrium so that people know they are welcome and help them slow down and wander around. The whole atmosphere is about being welcomed and don’t feel the need to rush.

We wanted to be able to tell the story about St. John Neumann and our Religious Congregation better and so the museum was restructured and the archives of the Redemptorist Province that St. John Neumann helped to get off the ground were moved here. We have wonderful stories to tell, stories about the Redemptorists, stories about St John Neumann and people healed, stories from Scripture about the Love of God and want a place to share them.

What is more welcoming than spending time with a meal, and so a large dining area was created. The reason for all of these changes was to help with our virtue of hospitality. The focus is to make people feel welcomed, whether they are parishioners, from the archdiocese, or Redemptorists from anywhere in the world. All are welcomed to pray and relax. And every change was made with this in mind.

A shrine is a gift and the wrapping paper for this gift is the virtue of hospitably. Today we gather to dedicate another section of this wrapping paper and to pray for all the people who will come into our midst.

**A Shrine is a gift.** For the parish, for the archdiocese, and for the Redemptorists.

And every gift comes wrapped. wrapped with the virtue of **Hospitality.**

We are here today to give thanks for the gift of the Shrine to St. John Neumann and to Bless some of the wrapping of our gift that helps us do hospitality well.

*Let’s explore this a little…*

***I said the shrine is a gift for the parish****.*

**Every parish** place of welcome. Drop in visit Pray/Blessed Sacrament

**Reality** Do not drop in Not parishioners, away for a while, not Catholic

**Shrine** Screams welcome! Reputation = drop in! walk around, pray, talk

**Parish/Shrine** welcome, explore questions about life, God, prayer

***The Shrine is a gift for the Archdiocese****.*

**Year of Mercy?**  Shrines! Known for welcome healing, forgiveness

**Away long time** first step in coming back remain anonymous

 Not questioning why are you here?

 Reconnect with the People of God

 Sacrament of Reconciliation

***A Shrine is a gift for the Redemptorists.***

**Many Shrines** World – great places for ministry International reputation

**CSSR**  Help make us known as a Religious Community

**Ministry** Interact with people

**Talk** About SJN About the Most Holy Redeemer

**SJN** Life short but still ministers through the Shrine

 Helps us to pray, seek healing/forgiveness

**CSSR** Look to SJN to help us understand out charism

**I said that a Shrine needs special wrapping paper and it is the virtue of Hospitably.**

**Discussions** Hospitality

**Result** Redecorate! Pews! Walls! Confessionals! Paint!!!

**Atrium** Welcome, slow down, relax

**SJN story** Museum

**CSSR story** Archives

**Meal** Sit down and get a bite to eat.

**KEY** Hospitality

**All welcome** Parish, Archdiocese, Redemptorists, from anywhere in the world

***A shrine is a gift and the wrapping paper for this gift is the virtue of hospitably. Today we gather to dedicate another section of this wrapping paper and to pray for all the people who will come into our midst.***