

SHOULD WE HAVE 'NICE THINGS' IN CHURCH?

Since I have been at Our Savior parish, I have made a number of purchases (all with monies donated to me for special use) that have had to do with the celebration of Eucharist:

- *The parish's chalice and ciborium have been re-plated
- *New patens for distribution of Holy Communion were bought
- *We have new purificators of linen (the choice because it absorbs best): these are the cloths ministers use to wipe when administering the Precious Blood
- *We have new corporals made of the same linen (a corporal is the large cloth on which patens and chalices are placed during Preparation of the Gifts and Communion)
- *We got a new Book of Gospels and a new Sacramentary (the large book of prayers used during Mass), to replace older books that were both out-dated and tearing up
- *We have (finally) our own monstrance for use during 1st Friday Holy Hour
- *We have new candlesticks (Paschal, altar and processional) to replace the older set that was breaking apart

Why should I care about all of this? Why isn't "good enough" good enough? Interestingly, the answer was supplied to me long ago when I read the writings of the saint on whose day I am writing this: St. Francis of Assisi. Though he is known as the lover of "Lady Poverty," he had strong words for clergy. In a letter to them, this is what he wrote:

Let all those however who minister such most holy mysteries ponder within themselves, especially those who minister illicitly, how unbecoming are the chalices, corporals and linens on which is sacrificed His Body and Blood. And how it is kept by many in wretched places and carried about disrespectfully and received unworthily and indiscriminately administered to others. And His written words [= Lectionary and Sacramentary] are sometimes trodden under foot [the reference apparently is to a custom of storing the liturgical books on the floor near the altar]. And all this because sensual humanity does not perceive the things that are of God.

So in the spirit of *Il Poverello* I also want to have vessels and other items for the celebration of Eucharist that are dignified, well made and beautiful, things which help me proclaim that what we are doing when celebrating Eucharist is truly to perceive the things that are of God. I hope these things will help you, too.