

# origins

CNS documentary service

## True Debate on Gun Violence Needed

Bishop Dewane

After more mass shootings in the U.S., the nation's leaders "must engage in a real debate about needed measures to save lives and make our communities safer," said the chairman of the U.S. bishops' domestic policy committee. Such debate is essential because "violence in our society will not be solved by a single piece of legislation, and many factors contribute to what we see going on all around us," said Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Florida, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development. His Nov. 7 statement was issued in response to "recent and horrific attacks" in the country, referring to the mass shooting Nov. 5 at the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs,

*"While acknowledging the Second Amendment ..., we live in a fallen world with daily advances in modern technology."*

Texas, that left 26 people dead and 20 others wounded, and the Oct. 1 mass shooting in Las Vegas during an outdoor concert that left 58 people dead and hundreds of others injured. "For many years, the Catholic bishops of the United States have been urging our leaders to explore and adopt reasonable policies to help curb gun violence," Bishop Dewane said. The Las Vegas and Sutherland Springs gun massacres "remind us of how much damage can be caused when weapons — particularly weapons designed to inflict extreme levels of bloodshed — too easily find their way into the hands of those who would wish to use them to harm others," he said. Bishop Dewane said the USCCB continues to urge a total ban on assault weapons, "which we supported when the ban passed in 1994 and when Congress failed to renew it in 2004." Bishop Dewane's statement follows.

For many years, the Catholic bishops of the United States have been urging our leaders to explore and adopt reasonable policies to help curb gun violence. The recent and shocking events in Las Vegas and Sutherland Springs remind us of how much damage can be caused when weapons — particularly weapons designed to inflict extreme levels of bloodshed — too easily find their way into the hands of those who would wish to use them to harm others.

Violence in our society will not be solved by a single piece of legislation, and many factors contribute to what we see going on

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After a 2012 mass shooting at an elementary school in Connecticut, faith leaders called for greater gun control. Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh faith leaders sent a letter to Congress Jan. 15, 2013, saying "gun violence is taking an unacceptable toll on our society, in mass killings and in the constant day-to-day of senseless death."

The letter calling on Congress to act on gun control was signed by nearly 50 religious leaders. Signers included Bishop Stephen E. Blaire of Stockton, Calif., then-chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, as well as the leaders of Catholic Charities USA; the Catholic Health Association; Network, the Catholic social justice lobby; Pax Christi USA; the Conference of Major Superiors of Men; the Leadership Conference of Women Religious; and Franciscan, Mercy, Dominican and Good Shepherd religious orders.

In light of the killings in Newtown, Connecticut, as well as mass shootings in Aurora, Colorado; Tucson, Arizona; Fort Hood, Texas; Virginia Tech University; Columbine, Colorado; and Oak Creek, Wisconsin, "we know that no more time can be wasted," said the letter.

The religious leaders called on Congress to enact universal background checks for all gun sales, ban high-capacity weapons and ammunition magazines, and make gun trafficking a federal crime.

Faith leaders were part of the consultation process over which Vice President Joe Biden presided in the weeks before President Barack Obama signed executive orders and outlined legislation he wanted Congress to pass. No action was taken by Congress.

The letter appeared in *Origins*, Vol. 42, No. 34, the edition dated Jan. 31, 2013.

"It's time for our nation, state

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all around us. Even so, our leaders must engage in a real debate about needed measures to save lives and make our communities safer. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops continues to urge a total ban on assault weapons, which we supported when the ban passed in 1994 and when Congress failed to renew it in 2004.

In addition, the bishops have supported:

—Measures that control the sale and use of firearms such as universal background checks for all gun purchases.

—Limitations on civilian access to high-capacity weapons and ammunition magazines.

—A federal law to criminalize gun trafficking.

—Improved access to mental health care for those who may be prone to violence.

—Regulations and limitations on the purchasing of handguns; and

—Measures that make guns safer, such as locks that prevent children and anyone other than the owner from using the gun without permission and supervision.

While acknowledging the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and related jurisprudence, we live in a fallen world with daily advances in modern technology. Some weapons are increasingly capable of easily causing mass murder when used with an evil purpose. Society must recognize that the common good requires reasonable steps to limit access to such firearms by those who would intend to use them in that way. ■

## Reactions to Mass Shooting at Texas Baptist Church

### Catholic Leaders

*The U.S. Catholic Church stands "in unity" with the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas, and the larger community after a shooting during Sunday services Nov. 5 took the lives of at least 26 people and injured at least 20 others. Those who died ranged in age from 1 to 72 years old, and included 14-year-old Annabelle Pomeroy. Her father is pastor of the church, but he was not at the service. "We stand in unity with you in this time of terrible tragedy — as you stand on holy ground, ground marred today by horrific violence," said Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in a Nov. 5 statement. With San Antonio Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, "I extend my prayers and the prayers of my brother bishops for the victims, the families, the first responders, our Baptist brothers and sisters, indeed the whole community of Sutherland Springs." Law enforcement officials said a lone gunman entered the church while 50 people were attending Sunday services. Almost everyone in the congregation was shot. Sutherland Springs is 30 to 40 miles southeast of San Antonio. A motive for the shooting was unclear, but the killer's former in-laws had attended the church. The killer was shot by a neighbor after leaving the church, and killed himself after a car chase. "We need prayers!" exclaimed Archbishop García-Siller in a Nov. 5 statement. "The evil perpetrated on these (families) who were gathered to worship God on the Lord's Day — especially children and the elderly — makes no sense and will never be fully understood," he said. A sampling of reactions by Catholic leaders follows.*

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### **Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo**

Earlier today, we heard of the mass shooting at the Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas. With Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, I extend my prayers and the prayers of my brother bishops for the victims, the families, the first responders, our Baptist brothers and sisters, indeed the whole community of Sutherland Springs. We stand in unity with you in this time of terrible tragedy — as you stand on holy ground, ground marred today by horrific violence.

We ask the Lord for healing of those injured, his loving care of those who have died and the consolation of their families.

This incomprehensibly tragic event joins an ever-growing list of mass shootings, some of which were also at churches while people were worshipping and at prayer. We must come to the firm determination that there is a fundamental problem in our society. A culture of life cannot tolerate and must prevent senseless gun violence in all its forms. May the Lord, who himself is peace, send us his Spirit of charity and nonviolence to nurture his peace among us all.

### **Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller, San Antonio**

We need prayers! The families affected in the shooting this morning at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs need prayers. The evil perpetrated on these who were gathered to worship God on the Lord's Day — especially children and the elderly — makes no sense and will never be fully understood.

Disbelief and shock are the overwhelming feelings; there are no adequate words. There can be no explanation or motive for such a scene of horror at a small country church for families gathered to praise Jesus Christ.

At this time there are reports that more than 25 were killed and more than 20 have been wounded while gathered for Sunday morning worship in their small sanctuary. Those injured are currently being treated at hospitals in San Antonio and Floresville.

These Baptist brethren are our family, friends and neighbors who live among us in the archdiocese, just minutes away from our Wilson County parishes of Sacred Heart in Floresville, St. Ann in La Vernia and St. Mary in Stockdale. We are committed to work in unity with all our brothers and sisters to build peace in our communities, to connect in a more direct and substantial way. The Catholic Church in Texas and across the United States is with you.

Catholic Charities of the archdiocese stands ready to assist and provide whatever

services may be needed in this time of tragedy and will do whatever needs to be done.

Let's help these brothers and sisters with prayers; they need us. Also, pray fervently for peace amid all of the violence which seems to be overwhelming our society. We must be lights in the darkness.

"Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them."

May God have mercy!

### **Bishop Mark J. Seitz, El Paso**

Most of us have experienced it; when we go to church to worship God, we enter a world that is what we dream life will be. It is a place where God is honored, hope is restored and strangers become brothers and sisters. Church is a place where peace and love reign.

Although facts are still limited regarding the shooter and his motives, it is likely that hatred took possession of his heart. A hate-filled heart cannot tolerate signs of God's kingdom. Our prayers go out for those members of the First Baptist Church who have given the ultimate witness. We extend our deepest condolences and offer prayers for each of their grieving families and to the entire community of Sutherland Springs, Texas.

As with any act of terror, we must not allow evil behavior to make us fearful or to prevent us from doing what is right. Ultimately, we know that the love of God will be victorious. At the same time, we will be proactive in working with our diocesan parishes to ensure emergency action plans are in place and maintained accordingly.

### **Pope Francis (Via Telegram to Archbishop García-Siller from Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin)**

Deeply grieved by news of the loss of life and grave injuries caused by the act of senseless violence perpetrated at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, the Holy Father asks you kindly to convey his heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and the wounded, to the members of the congregation and to the entire local community. He asks our Lord Jesus Christ to console all who mourn and to grant them the spiritual strength that triumphs over violence and hatred by the power of forgiveness, hope and reconciling love.

### **Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory, Atlanta**

Catholics throughout the Archdiocese of Atlanta are close in prayer with our brothers and sisters from the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas, as they grieve the loss and the injury of their loved ones. We

*and local governments to enact legislation that will severely limit the number and nature of firearms available to the general public," Bishop Thomas J. Tobin of Providence, Rhode Island, wrote in a 2013 column.*

*After the shootings in Newtown, Bishop Tobin said gun ownership is not an absolute right and that "as a society we need always to achieve a proper balance between individual freedom and the common good."*

*Bishop Tobin noted that the National Rifle Association is a key player in the debate over guns and said that "if the association wants to be a respected and credible part of our community, it has to be part of the solution, not the source of the problem. It has to promote the common good, not protect its own interests. The NRA, too, is subject to the law of God."*

*"Gun Ownership Is Not an Absolute Right" appeared in Origins, Vol. 42, No. 33, dated Jan. 24, 2013.*

*Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Atlanta pledged in 2014 to restrict the presence of guns in Catholic institutions in response to a Georgia law that would allow licensed gun owners to carry arms into schools, churches and other locales.*

*Writing in his column in the Georgia Bulletin, newspaper of the Atlanta Archdiocese, the archbishop said he regretted the enactment of the new law "more than I can possibly express." He explained, "Before this legislation takes effect in July, I will officially restrict the presence of weapons in our Catholic institutions except for those carried by the people that civic authorities have designated and trained to protect and guard us — and those who are duly authorized law and military officials."*

*"Guns Will Be Restricted in Atlanta Churches," appeared in Origins, Vol. 44, No. 2, dated May 15, 2014.*



*The U.S. bishops have long called for gun-control measures. Their political responsibility document, "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship," released every four years before presidential elections, states: "Promoting moral responsibility and effective responses to violent crime, curbing violence in media, supporting reasonable restrictions on access to assault weapons and handguns, and opposing the use of the death penalty are particularly important in light of a growing 'culture of violence.'"*

*In their 2000 statement, "Responsibility, Rehabilitation and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice," they said, "As bishops, we support measures that control the sale and use of firearms and make them safer — especially efforts that prevent their unsupervised use by children or anyone other than the owner — and we reiterate our call for sensible regulation of handguns."*

*The footnote to that sentence says: "However, we believe that in the long run and with few exceptions — i.e., police officers, military use — handguns should be eliminated from our society."*

*That in turn reiterates a line in the bishops' 1990 pastoral statement on substance abuse, which called "for effective and courageous action to control handguns, leading to their eventual elimination from our society."*

*The bishops' statement on crime and criminal justice appeared in Origins, Vol. 30, No. 25, dated Nov. 30, 2000.*

*And their message on substance abuse appeared in Vol. 20, No. 24, dated Nov. 22, 1990.*

*The message on substance abuse pointed to a 1975 statement by the U.S. Catholic Conference Committee on Social Development and World Peace.*

*The committee called for a "coherent national firearms*

stand with them in sorrow but also in faith that God will reward those whose lives have been taken and heal those who have been harmed. We ask God's blessing on all who are reaching out to comfort and assist in the wake of yet another senseless act of violence.

Our nation struggles to comprehend, to understand, to face another moment that demands that we address the root causes of such horrendous brutality. Among the causes that must be confronted are easy and unrestricted access to military-style firearms, the lack of similarly unrestricted access to effective mental health care for too many emotionally fragile citizens, and the proliferation of hatred and vitriolic material on social and mass media that often radicalizes people who then act in ways that harm and terrorize us all.

### **Cardinal Blase J. Cupich, Chicago**

Once again we must extend our condolences to families suffering the horrific loss of loved ones to an act of madness. It would dishonor those lost and those who mourn to simply participate in the routine exchange of sympathies underpinned by the sense of futility and hopelessness that has befallen our country.

We must recognize that the factors that produce these tragedies will not change unless we take direct action to change them.

Comprehensive national gun-control policies will not prevent every shooting but it will prevent some.

Access to mental health care — in legislation founded on the principle that health care is a right not a privilege — will not prevent every shooting, but it will prevent some and will mean we will have fewer podium speeches about our thoughts and prayers.

Let it be our firm resolve to act and to advocate and to end this hideous blot upon our nation.

Honor the memories of the many thousands of gun-violence victims by holding accountable those who could have done something and did not, who called for study instead of steps toward progress and who gave those Pope Francis has called merchants of death more regard than the dead children, the dead men and women we mourn today.

The time to demand action is now. ■

## **Has the Reformation Been a Failure?**

### **Archbishop Gregory**

*In an Oct. 26 talk at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta at a Reformation Day event marking the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation, Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Atlanta discussed whether the Reformation was a failure. He said that from a historian's perspective, "there are good reasons to say that the Reformation was a failure, a massive failure. The whole, true and pure church as it had been intended by our Lord Jesus Christ had not come to pass, and considering the Thirty Years War, the Reformation had made the lives of people much, much worse than they would have been even with a corrupt church." Archbishop Gregory said, however, that seen from a contemporary Catholic perspective, the Reformation was not such a failure. He discussed four main factors that led to the Second Vatican Council's vision of the Catholic Church's relationship with other Christians: the modernist crisis that led to research on the early church "revealed not only that tradition had indeed developed in the church, but also that the church had often tolerated a wider range of theological diversity than had been previously thought"; "Pope Pius XII's openness to the use of historical-critical methods to interpret the Bible"; "the work of faithful and courageous pioneering theologians like Paul Couturier" and Yves Congar; and the shared trauma of two world wars. The archbishop concluded, "If the church is the enduring historical continuation of Jesus in and through the community inaugurated on Pentecost and if the church is still in the process of reformation in a manner directly stemming from the epochal events of the 16th century, then, clearly, we can say that the Reformation is not over yet. The question of its success or failure is premature." Archbishop Gregory's remarks follow.*

Zhou Enlai, the brilliant first foreign minister of the Peoples' Republic of China, was once asked about the consequences of the French Revolution. He replied, "It's too early to tell." The question of today's lecture, "Has the Reformation been a failure?" is one that we could answer in the same way, "It's too early to tell" — and then go home and enjoy a free evening.

Moreover, just what is the Reformation that may or may not have failed? Our question is complicated by the fact that *Reformation* is a singular noun, but it refers to very complex, multifaceted events and trends that profoundly affected every aspect of European life over the course of more than two centuries: 1490 to 1700, in the estimation of one of the Reformation's premier historians, Diarmaid MacCulloch.

Now, in 2017, as we mark the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation with Martin Luther, we naturally think of Luther when we hear the word *Reformation*, but we cannot lose sight of the fact that the Reformation is really the reformations. Besides Luther, we have Zwingli, Calvin, Bucer, Beza, Müntzer, Karlstadt, Simons, Cranmer and, yes, Ignatius Loyola. This list could go further, much further, naming people who led some particular and important reform movements during this period. Perhaps, however, our question, "Has the Reformation been a failure?" is not unanswerable after all.

Even though there were many reformers besides Luther and many reformations besides his, each genuine reformer would have said that they did not want to found a new church and that division was anathema to them. Rather, they wanted to re-establish the whole, true and pure church as our Lord Jesus Christ had intended it. Therefore, amid the bewildering complexity of the various reformations of the 16th and 17th centuries, we can discern this, their common goal, and ask, "Did they succeed or not?"

Apparently Luther never said the exact words, "Here I stand; I can do no other" when he had been summoned to defend himself at the Diet of Worms in 1521, but these phrases surely express his conviction that his own judgment trumped the authority of the church. It is fair to say that he saw himself as a prophet of a renewed church.

But then his message trickled down from the clergy and nobility to ordinary people. They were delighted to learn about their freedom and dignity from Luther and took his message to mean, "Let's get rid of the old, tired, corrupt church!" His preaching and writing fostered a new spirit of rebellion against established authority that spread rapidly. As the reform movement disintegrated and violent peasant revolts broke out in Germany in 1524, Luther himself was horrified to see what people did with his notion of Christian freedom.

In fact, Luther and his fellow reformers had unknowingly faced huge obstacles in pursuit of their goal of a renewed church. On

April 4, 1864, Abraham Lincoln wrote to a correspondent, "I claim not to have controlled events but confess plainly that events have controlled me." Luther would have surely understood and agreed with Lincoln's sentiment.

In 1517, however, he did not yet fully realize that he was lighting a fuse to some explosive elements, in particular, the pervasive terror of God's wrath that seemed to be using an aggressive Islam as its instrument. MacCulloch reminds us that southeastern Europe had been vulnerable for decades, and Hungary would be conquered in 1526. Muslims would lay siege to Vienna in 1529. Therefore, an angry God had to be placated by a vigorous, painstaking defense of the right forms of belief and practice even against other Christians. This fear explains much of what to us may seem the theological hair-splitting that the reformers practiced incessantly.

Repeated efforts were made to heal the divisions and come to agreement — and these efforts were often spearheaded by emperors and princes who did not want their lives complicated by severe religious discord with their realms. However, Luther and Zwingli could not find enough common ground when they met at Marburg in 1529. The Diet of Augsburg in the following year could not end the 12-year division of the church, despite the heroic efforts of Philip Melancthon. (Of course, his text became the Augsburg Confession, part of the foundation for a new form of Christianity.)

Eleven years later, the Regensburg Colloquy broke down over theological disagreements that could not be bridged. Reconciliation and reunion seemed hopeless now, and so the boundary lines hardened.

After some decades of relative peace and a "live and let live" religious policy pursued by the holy Roman emperors (who were not necessarily holy nor Roman nor emperors!), a militant Catholic, Ferdinand II, became emperor. Stability ended because he wanted to make Roman Catholicism alone the religion of his realm — and so he began harassing Protestants.

When his representatives in Prague were unceremoniously thrown out of a window (the famous "defenestration of Prague") in 1618, the terrible Thirty Years War broke out. Mercenary armies ravaged Europe, mainly but not only in German territories, killing, raping, pillaging and looting, leaving famine, disease in their wake. Brecht's powerful play *Mother Courage and Her Children* testifies to the immensity of the war's suffering and grief.

So the full story of the Reformation is painful and bloody. Throughout the period,

*policy" to stem the "rising tide of violence" caused by handguns. It said such a policy should include: a "cooling-off" period between the time of gun purchase and possession; a ban on "Saturday night specials"; handgun registration and the licensing of handgun owners; and tighter controls on the manufacture, importation and sale of handguns.*

*While "reasonable exceptions" should be made for the police, military, security guards and pistol clubs, "the unlimited freedom to possess and use handguns must give way to the rights of all people to safety and protection against those who misuse these weapons," the committee said.*

*"We support the legitimate and proper use of rifles and shotguns," it added, urging hunters and sportsmen to join efforts to eliminate the criminal misuse of handguns.*

*The statement appeared in Origins, Vol. 5, No. 14, dated Sept. 25, 1975.*

*In 1978, the same committee also said, "We support the development of a coherent national handgun control policy that includes: a several day cooling-off period between the sale and possession; a ban on 'Saturday night specials'; registration of handguns; licensing of handgun owners; and more effective controls regulating the manufacture, sale and importation of handguns. We recognize, however, that these individual steps will not completely eliminate the abuse of handguns. ...*

*"We believe that only prohibition of the importation, manufacture, sale, possession and use of handguns (with reasonable exceptions made for the police, military, security guards and pistol clubs where guns would be kept on the premises under secure conditions) will provide a comprehensive response to handgun violence."*

*"A Community Response to Crime" appeared in Origins, Vol. 7, No. 38, dated March 9, 1978.*

Christians despised, persecuted, tortured and killed one another in the name of Jesus. In England alone, to take just one example, more Catholics were “legally” murdered under Queen Elizabeth than in any other European country. England’s Protestants were martyred under Elizabeth’s sister and predecessor Queen Mary, or “Bloody Mary,” and *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* profoundly and permanently shaped the identity of the English Reformation.

From a historian’s perspective, then, there are good reasons to say that the Reformation was a failure, a massive failure. The whole, true and pure church as it had been intended by our Lord Jesus Christ had not come to pass, and considering the Thirty Years War, the Reformation had made the lives of people much, much worse than they would have been even with a corrupt church. After all, there was a Catholic Reformation that would have gone forward even without the challenges of Protestantism.

Now, though, let us consider the question of the Reformation’s success or failure from another perspective, that of contemporary Roman Catholic Christianity. This perspective is formed by recognizing and professing Jesus Christ as the absolute mediator of salvation, the one in whom God has offered God’s own self irrevocably to the world, to use Karl Rahner’s terminology. The reality of the church is more than simply a human institution, though it certainly is that. It is also the historical continuation of Jesus in and through the community of those who believe in him. In this perspective, the perspective of faith, our question about success or failure becomes more complicated.

Let me tell you a story. Way back in the early 1950s, a friend of mine told me his mother found herself getting more and more anxious about the state of the world. World War II had ended in 1945, but now, not a decade later, the United States was deep into another war on the Korean Peninsula. His mother had worried about her soldier husband all during the world war. Her husband had come home safely, but now she had a son, who is my friend, and she was afraid that he too might have to go to war if the world did not change, the kind of radical change that only God could bring about.

Her fear grew so great that finally she felt that she had to do something about it. She phoned the Archdiocese of Chicago and was able to get an appointment with Cardinal Stritch, the archbishop at the time. After the preliminary courtesies — which probably involved her kneeling and kissing his ring — she told the cardinal of her fears for her son and all the other sons.

“How can we find peace, real and lasting peace?” she asked, and then she answered her own question: “Through prayer. And we know,” she went on, “that God always hears the prayers of children. So please proclaim a day of prayer, Your Eminence, a special day when not only all Catholic children but also the children of all the other churches will pray for peace.”

“Madam,” replied the cardinal, “there are no other churches.”

Stritch was obviously a man of his time. In 1954, the second assembly of the World Council of Churches was held at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois: that is, within the Archdiocese of Chicago. President Dwight D. Eisenhower spoke to the members and urged them to actions that would summon Christians everywhere to “the devotion, wisdom and stamina to work unceasingly for a just and lasting peace.” Catholics would have had to read about the president’s appeal in the newspaper, since Stritch had forbidden Catholics to attend the assembly.

His prohibition and his reply to my friend’s mother reflected the position of the church as expressed in Pope Pius XI’s encyclical *Mortalium Animos* of 1928:

“It is clear why this Apostolic See has never allowed its subjects to take part in the assemblies of non-Catholics: for the union of Christians can only be promoted by promoting the return to the one true church of Christ of those who are separated from it, for in the past they have unhappily left it. To the one true church of Christ, we say, which is visible to all, and which is to remain, according to the will of its Author, exactly the same as he instituted it. During the lapse of centuries, the mystical Spouse of Christ has never been contaminated nor can she ever in the future be contaminated.”

Prior to Vatican II, then, Catholics deemed the Reformation not just a failure but a disaster: a disaster not only on account of the untold suffering

and of millions dead, but also because it enticed people out of the one true church — and membership in that church was necessary to salvation. That same friend of mine whose mother went to Cardinal Stritch recalls his childhood fears that his dad would not go to heaven because his dad was not Catholic.

Meanwhile, however, significant developments had taken place among the Protestant churches, mainly in Europe, beginning in the late 1800s. Historians maintain that the movement began with the World Missionary Conference that convened in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1910. Here the realization dawned more forcefully than ever before that the division which afflicted Christianity was a serious obstacle to proclaiming the Gospel. We find St. John Paul II echoing this same conviction in his 1995 encyclical on ecumenism, *Ut Unum Sint*.

We should not forget, however, the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, first adopted by the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States in 1886 and then accepted by the whole Anglican Communion in 1888. This document was a pioneering effort to promote Christian unity by declaring what the bishops considered the four minimal conditions to achieve it.

In the wake of World War I, in 1925, under the leadership of the great Swedish Archbishop Nathan Söderblom, a coalition of Protestant churches formed the Life and Work movement. Its wide-ranging agenda covered issues which today fall under the rubric of peace and justice. Clearly social questions had to be front and center for Christians in order to avoid another war like World War I. Two years later, in 1927, a coalition of 80 churches developed the Faith and Order movement to study the issues of doctrine and church polity that had to be faced in the quest for unity.

None of these significant developments moved the Roman Catholic Church to change its position. In fact, the Faith and Order meeting in 1927 prompted Pius XI’s encyclical *Mortalium Animos* in 1928 that I just quoted. Nor did the formation of the new World Council of Churches in 1948, when Faith and Order joined hands with Life and Work, change the official Roman Catholic position about Protestants and other Christians. After



all, in 1943, Pope Pius XII's encyclical *Mystici Corporis Christi* had identified the church of Christ with the Roman Catholic Church.

So what did change the official Roman Catholic position? Let me highlight four factors. I do not mean this list to be exhaustive, but these seem to me to be the main ones.

First, the modernist crisis. In the late 19th century, some leading Catholics wanted to bring church teaching into dialogue — and perhaps agreement — with contemporary findings in philosophy, history and the social sciences. Among other innovations, this meant the abandonment of scholastic philosophy and theology, which they now considered outdated. However, Pope Pius X crafted a unitary system out of these various notions, called it “the synthesis of all heresies” and ruthlessly condemned it in 1907. The theological lines were now clearly drawn in the church. Those who trespassed the boundaries of scholastic philosophy and theology fell under suspicion or were dismissed from their teaching positions.

So scholars began to devote themselves more and more to relatively safe research into the history of doctrine and of the church. The historical studies that flourished in the following decades revealed not only that tradition had indeed developed in the church, but also that the church had often tolerated a wider range of theological diversity than had been previously thought.

This new view of tradition necessarily suggested new views of the church itself. It became harder and harder to maintain what Pope Pius XI had said, “The one church of Christ is visible to all, and will remain, according to the will of its Author, exactly the same as he instituted it.”

A second factor was Pope Pius XII's openness to the use of historical-critical methods to interpret the Bible in his 1943 encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*. As Catholics employed these methods more and more, they discovered not only that the Protestants had gotten there first but also had come to similar conclusions in their research. Thus, a new vision of vast common ground between Catholics and Protestants began to appear.

The third factor was the work of faithful and courageous pioneering

theologians like Paul Couturier, who was chiefly responsible for our annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. But the chief among them was the French Dominican Yves Congar. His book *Chrétiens Désunis*, which appeared in 1937, became an important text for ecumenically minded Catholics, but, of course, it was constantly under suspicion by the Curia until Vatican II where Congar's influence was immense.

Finally, as ecumenical theologian Michael Fahey says, “The shift from isolation to tolerance and then to admiration and collaboration was influenced by the shared trauma of the two world wars, especially World War II.” Catholics and Protestants lived and worked and endured side by side under extreme wartime conditions. This made it impossible to overlook or to dismiss the Christian faith and commitment of a sister or brother whom one had previously deemed to be hardly Christian at all.

Add to this the witness of Hitler's Christian resistance: people like Martin Niemöller, Karl Barth and the great Dietrich Bonhoeffer, murdered in 1945, whose *Letters and Papers From Prison* won such a wide readership across the Christian world. How could one say that they did not belong to Christ?

These factors gradually dispelled the clouds of prejudice and ignorance that isolated Christians from one another and laid the groundwork for the great leap forward which the Roman Catholic Church took at Vatican II.

The essence of this leap is expressed in one verb in Paragraph 8 of Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. That verb is *subsists* — *subsistit* in the original Latin. It appears in the full, famous sentence: “This church [of Christ], constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in union with that successor, although many elements of sanctification and of truth can be found outside of her visible structure.”

*Lumen Gentium*, No. 15, details the implications of this text. After recounting those “many elements of sanctification and of truth,” the council says that non-Roman Catholic Christians “are joined with us in the Holy Spirit, for to them also he gives his gifts and graces,

and is thereby operative among them with his sanctifying power.”

The Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, in Paragraph 3 expresses this conviction in another way: “Moreover some, even very many, of the most significant elements or endowments which together go to build up and give life to the church herself can exist beyond the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church: the written word of God; the life of grace; faith, hope and charity, along with other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit and visible elements.”

This means that all Christian churches and ecclesial communities can and must learn from one another and act accordingly. As Christians dialogue with one another and collaborate with one another, they can teach and inspire each other. In and through the quest for church unity, says the decree (No. 4), “all are led to examine their own faithfulness to Christ's will for the church and, wherever necessary, undertake with vigor the task of renewal and reform.” (Latin: *reformationis*; emphasis added.)

Thus, said St. John Paul II in *Ut Unum Sint* (No. 28), “Dialogue is not simply an exchange of ideas. In some way, it is always an ‘exchange of gifts’ (*Lumen Gentium*, 13).” Therefore, as the late and great ecumenist Margaret O'Gara insisted, the ecumenical movement is a reform movement in the church, a case that she argues in her collection of essays *The Ecumenical Gift Exchange*.

A similar insight stands behind the “receptive ecumenism” associated most closely with Paul Murray of the University of Durham. In striving for the unity of the church, we go beyond mutual tolerance and understanding to ask what we see in our dialogue partner that might deepen and enrich our “own faithfulness to Christ's will for the church.” As we challenge and question one another, we enter more deeply, fully into the mystery of our salvation and from that transformation comes reform.

So let me offer a response to our question “Has the Reformation been a failure?” If the church is the enduring historical continuation of Jesus in and through the community inaugurated on Pentecost and if the church is still in the process of reformation in a manner directly stemming from the epochal events of the 16th century, then, clearly, we can say that the Reformation is not

over yet. The question of its success or failure is premature. It is, indeed, “too early to tell.”

To be sure, serious obstacles still lie in our way forward, such as the central issue of authority in the church, division over ethical questions and disagreement about the role of women. Nevertheless, we can and must face these together with trust in our God, “whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever” (Eph 3:20-21). ■

## Homily at Service Marking 500th Anniversary of Beginning of the Reformation

Archbishop Welby

*“The gift that came through Martin Luther was first a moment of hope, then of controversy, then of politics and finally of war;” the spiritual leader of Anglicans said. Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury spoke Oct. 31 at an ecumenical service marking 500 years since Luther posted his 95 Theses that led to the Reformation. The service, attended by Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster and other Catholic leaders, was held at Westminster Abbey in London. The archbishop said, “Through the Reformation the vast mass of people across Europe and then around the world were drawn to receive the fruits of a missionary movement that did not indefinitely suffer tyranny and that would not unquestioningly bow the knee to authorities and hierarchies.” He listed a number of reasons why the Reformation should not be celebrated: “with new vigor came conflict,” “with individual understanding of grace came individualism and division,” “with literacy and freedom came new ways of cruelty refined by science,” and “with missionaries bearing the faith came soldiers bearing the flag.” The archbishop noted that whatever one’s view of the*

*Reformation, it “reopened to the whole church eternal truths that are indispensable and to which we must all continue to hold, and not only to hold but to present afresh addressing the life of today.” As part of the service, the archbishop presented a resolution of the Anglican Consultative Council that welcomed and affirmed the historic 1999 agreement between Catholics and Lutherans, the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification. He presented it to the Rev. Martin Junge, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, and Bishop Brian Farrell, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. The archbishop’s homily follows.*

“O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee; mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts. Amen.”

First I would like to thank the churches who are here today for the invitation to speak and the dean for kindly agreeing to that. Thank you, Mr. Dean.

The gift that came through Martin Luther was first a moment of hope, then of controversy, then of politics and finally of war. Yet in the providence and grace of God it brought afresh to every Christian disciple the possibility of saying, “I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God to salvation.”

Through the Reformation we learned that we are saved entirely, confidently and unfailingly by grace alone, through faith and not by our own works. From the poorest to the richest all will come at the end to stand before God only with the words of the hymn, “Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to your cross I cling.”

Through the Reformation the church found itself again confronted with its need to be weak and powerless; to come with nothing to the cross and to admit that, in the words of the collect in the Book of Common Prayer for the 19th Sunday after Trinity, “without thee we are not able to please thee.”

Through the Reformation the church found again a love for the Scriptures, and seizing the opportunity of printing, gave them afresh to the world — telling every person that they themselves should read them and seek the wisdom of God to understand them. In doing so the church released not only reformation but revolution as confidence grew

among the poor and oppressed that they too were the recipients of the promise of God of freedom and hope.

Through the Reformation the vast mass of people across Europe and then around the world were drawn to receive the fruits of a missionary movement that did not indefinitely suffer tyranny and that would not unquestioningly bow the knee to authorities and hierarchies.

Through the Reformation the world changed; the Gospel spread; counter-Reformation renewed the places that the Reformation had not reached; there was a competitive drive in missionary endeavor.

What is not to celebrate?

Well, said Eeyore to Tigger, or the historian to the enthusiast, for each of the things that came through the Reformation — good as they are, precious beyond compare even — for each there is also a dark side.

With new vigor came conflict.

With individual understanding of grace came individualism and division.

With the knowledge that “without thee we are not able to please thee” came, through our sin and weakness, what so often we add under our breath, “But actually, I’m a lot more able to please thee than those heretics over there.”

With literacy and freedom came new ways of cruelty refined by science.

With missionaries bearing the faith came soldiers bearing the flag.

We could go on batting the ball to and fro as historians and theologians have done for centuries. The point is that the Reformation reopened to the whole church eternal truths that are indispensable and to which we must all continue to hold, and not only to hold but to present afresh addressing the life of today.

In this very pulpit in November 2015, at the opening service for the General Synod of the Church of England, the preacher to the papal household, Father Cantalamessa, said:

“Justification by faith, for example, ought to be preached by the whole church — and with more vigor than ever. Not in opposition to good works — the issue is already settled — but rather in opposition to the claim of people today that they can save themselves thanks to their science, technology or their man-made spirituality, without



the need for a redeemer coming from outside humanity. Self-justification! I am convinced that if they were alive today this is the way Martin Luther and Thomas Cranmer would preach justification through faith!"

Cantalamessa was wisely not making points about the rights and wrongs of the Reformation, which is the temptation at times like this. His key point is that in every age the church lives its experience of the current work of God in a historical context. We live amid political pressures, diverted by the heat of argument and the ferocity of sinful power-seeking and -gathering. That was true 500 years ago as the 95 Theses spread across Europe — as did Luther's Bible — at a speed impossible before printing, and feeding on the fuel of the intellectual ferment of the Renaissance.

The good news of Jesus, the Gospel, so beautifully and powerfully renewed in the Reformation, is eternal. But its application, as Cantalamessa says, is different at different times. The Gospel always speaks to the needs of our times; it is always the word of God. It always speaks prophetically to human pride and sinfulness, of popes and archbishops and emperors in the 16th century. Today the Gospel speaks to the inequalities of a 21st-century world of inequality: of refugees and human trafficking; human arrogance and materialism; in the use of technology as a savior rather than as a gift. Our speaking and living of the Gospel must, like Martin Luther, be speaking to our world as it is.

The Gospel always says that we can add nothing to the work of Christ and that in Christ God has spoken definitively. That the Scriptures witness reliably to the word God has spoken and that when liberated and trusted they bring human flourishing. At the same time our witness is impeded by our divisions — especially as we live in a world of ever-present competing philosophies, faiths and approaches to faith or rejections of faith.

So what's the problem? The problem, as in every age, is us.

In John 17 Jesus prays for unity among the people of God so that the world may know he came from the Father. The Gospel is not an idea: It is life, love and transformation — and if the bearers of good news are not transformed into a united and loving life,

then they will be unable to convince anyone else that what they say is true.

Luther set the Gospel free, and as human beings we seek continually to imprison it behind ritual and authority — or to make it serve politics or causes. When we seek to use the Gospel for our own ends rather than to proclaim it as the word of God, then the Gospel is not preached and the church divides.

We are called to be united. In our cultures the realities of difference of self-identity formation, of politics, of language, of our history as both oppressors and oppressed, all drive us today into self-reinforcing bubbles of mutual indignation and antagonism. Unity is a witness that, through grace received by faith alone, the cosmos has truly changed, because Jesus came from the Father and because all has changed that we may as human beings find unity and purpose.

The Reformation was a gift of God not only in itself but as a sign of the faithfulness of God to his work of revealing the good news of Jesus to a world in need and the faithfulness of God in using his church despite our failings.

What do we do with the gift today? Will we be willing ourselves to be reformed again and always, setting aside our differences because we are caught up in the grace that is found through faith?

Will we find from God alone the strength and grace to be a united blessing to his world, so that our witness of unity in diversity overcomes our fears of each other?

Will we seize afresh in confidence the hope that God who never abandons his church will again reform us, so that the world may see that Jesus came from the Father?

It is already happening in so many ways, and so much has been accomplished. But we have not yet allowed ourselves sufficiently to be captured by the radicality of the Gospel that we may bless the world as we should. As we surrender to the God who rescues us sinners, we will most surely find our vocation as the messengers of good news to the world.

"O God, forasmuch as without thee we are not able to please thee; mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts." Amen. ■

## Kingly Dimension of Shepherding

### Bishop Kicanas

*"When as priests we are in touch with our own weakness, only then can we enter the pain and brokenness of others," Bishop Gerald F. Kicanas of Tucson, Arizona, said in a Sept. 21 keynote speech at the Louisiana Priests' Convention in New Orleans. The "irony of the spiritual life," Bishop Kicanas said, is that when "we lose our life, we find it; and when we hold on to our lives, we lose it." Bishop Kicanas, former rector of Chicago's seminary, told of his experience with Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, who was falsely accused of sexually abusing a minor. "That experience of utter weakness and the cardinal's later diagnosis of pancreatic cancer made him totally vulnerable," Bishop Kicanas said. "But something happened to him as a result of these two devastating experiences. He became so sensitive to the hurt of others." At one of the healing services being conducted around the archdiocese before the cardinal died, Bishop Kicanas said, he was celebrating Mass for an African-American community when "right in the middle of the Mass ... a woman came up the stairs of the dais." Bishop Kicanas said, "The priests concelebrating panicked and tried to get her to go back to her place. But the cardinal invited her to his chair and listened to her cry for help. His own encounter with weakness made him no longer merely an administrator but now a pastor, a shepherd who, like Christ, felt compassion for the flock, harassed and helpless." Soon after the following address was delivered, it was announced that Pope Francis had accepted Bishop Kicanas' resignation upon reaching the standard retirement age for bishops.*

Today we prayed, "O God, you are my God, for you I long. For you my soul is thirsting, my body pines for you like a dry, weary land without water. So I gaze on you in the sanctuary to see your strength and your glory."

The King we gaze upon this morning is not like any other king, the Shepherd-King we long to be. The Shepherd-

King does not impose but invites. The Shepherd-King does not demand but encourages. His strength is not in being served but in serving. His glory is not about his exaltation but is found in lifting others up. That is the King we will gaze upon today. Let me explain.

Recently, as part of a Catholic Relief Services delegation to Egypt, I visited the Coptic Orthodox Church of St. John in Luxor, Egypt. There beneath the life-size image of Christ the Pantokrator was an ostrich egg hanging from the ceiling. It seemed odd until someone explained its meaning.

When the ostrich lays her egg, she doesn't sit on it like most birds. Rather she watches it intently, attentive that nothing will harm the vulnerable unborn. When mother ostrich tires, the male takes over watching. When the mother leaves for whatever reason and she returns sensing some danger, she places herself over the egg and peers down at it, making herself totally vulnerable to the imminent danger from behind, risking her life to protect the innocent. Her intent is focused only on the well-being of the weak, defenseless ostrich egg. Keeping the unborn safe is her life mission

The ostrich egg in the Coptic church images Christ, who is ever attentive and vigilant to us in our vulnerability. Christ accompanies us, stands alongside us, attends to us and defends us, waiting and watching at our side. The ostrich egg placed above the holy of holies stands as an image of Christ that can also give us as priests a sense of our role imitating Christ the King: to watch over and focus one's full attention on the people we serve.

Images convey meaning, help us imagine and understand reality. Images are meant to attract, to convince, to fascinate and to overpower. Images help us to understand who we are and what we are to be about.

Like the image of the ostrich, the image of the shepherd is a classic way of picturing God's love for God's people and what God expects of priests given responsibility for pastorally caring for their people. It is one of the best-known metaphors of the Bible which is employed extensively in the Old and New Testaments.

Nicholas Cachia Roma published a book in 1997 titled *The Image of*

*the Good Shepherd as a Source for the Spirituality of the Ministerial Priesthood*. In that book he points out that the image of the shepherd for ministerial priesthood goes back to the Bible and even before. In the Near East the king was often referred to as shepherd. In Mesopotamia reference is made to the king and to the gods as shepherds. In Egypt the sun god Amun Re is seen as a shepherd who never tires to bring the sufferer to nourishment. The sun god is praised as the great shepherd and the brightest source of life.

In the Old Testament, key figures like Joseph, Moses and David were courageous, self-giving shepherds. With all the technological advances that have been made, the ancient image of shepherd remains normative for understanding God's relationship to us and the priest's relationship to his people. We priests shepherd in the name of the God who shepherds.

This morning I will consider what the image of the shepherd says about our pastoral ministry as priests. We are called first to provide food and water, refuge and security, to provide guidance and direction. The shepherd seeks out the lost stray at his own risk. Shepherding has to do with service, love and sacrifice for the sheep. Second, pastoral charity becomes the source and mover of all the activities that the shepherd does in favor of the flock.

This requires compassion, awareness of one's own weakness, presence and binding together. There is interdependency between shepherd and sheep, the priest and his people. Without the sheep, the shepherd would have no work, and without the shepherd, the sheep would stray into danger. Finally, I will reflect on the reality that the ecclesial minister must always remain a sheep in the flock of the Good Shepherd. The priest needs to live a life of discipleship following Christ, the Good Shepherd.

### **Provide Food and Water, Refuge and Security, Guidance and Direction**

Sheep are forever hungry and thirsty. They seek out food and ruminate on their food by chewing it again and again. They long to come upon a pool of fresh, cool water to quench their thirst amid the desert heat. As priests we strive to feed the flock with God's word in our preaching and teaching.

Preaching is one of our greatest privileges as priests. God had only one Son and he made him a preacher. Through preaching we can shape lives, form people in the faith. Preaching feeds and nourishes the flock.

Pope Francis in *Evangelium Gaudium* reminds us of the power and importance of preaching as a way to feed the flock. He exhorts us to prepare for this important responsibility we have as shepherds of the people. That preparation involves "a prolonged time of study, prayer, reflection and pastoral creativity" (No. 145). Effective preachers are immersed in the word, feed on the word, meditate and pray the word that they might proclaim that word to others.

But to be effective preachers we also need to know our people in such a way that we become one with them. We know their needs. We know their struggles. We stand with them. Francis reminds us that if we want to feed our people we need "to keep [our] ear to the people and to discover what it is that the faithful need to hear. A preacher ... has to contemplate his people" (No. 154).

In a shantytown on the outskirts of Buenos Aires called *las villas miserias*, or misery villages, Father Joseph Maria di Paola, called Padre Pepe, a *cura villeros*, or shanty priest, pastors the Chapel of Our Lady of the Miracle. He knows his people. He identifies with them. He shepherds them. He ministers with the poor living in wooden homes with no water.

His people are hungry. They lack for almost everything. He knows this is where he belongs. He believes one encounters Christ in the poor. They teach us a lot. His preaching impacts his people because he knows and understands them. He has become one with them. He breaks open the word for them in a way that speaks to their lived situations.

As priests who shepherd our people, we feed them by teaching as well. Through education and catechesis, we feed the flock. We help them to know the Christ who suffered, died, was buried and rose on the third day. As shepherds we can bring the church's teaching to those who hunger for a deeper knowledge of their faith.

I recall a former rector of Mundelein Seminary in the Archdiocese of Chicago,

Msgr. Reynold Hillenbrand. He taught and formed a generation of priests steeped in the social teaching of the church. He introduced seminarians to the great social encyclicals that were being published. This generation of priests went out to engage their society and strive to transform it.

We can nourish the people we serve by teaching some of the great encyclicals and papal teachings like *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, *Deus Caritas Est*, *Evangelium Gaudium*, *Amoris Laetitia* and *Laudato Si'*. We know well how poorly catechized people are in the teachings of the church. If we care for the flock, we ought to seek ways to form them in the faith.

I have been amazed how hungry people are to know their faith and what the church teaches. In the Diocese of Tucson we have held sessions on the works of John Paul II, Benedict and now Francis. People have turned out and expressed gratitude for having these significant documents become accessible to them.

Pope Francis exhorts pastors to “ring out over and over: Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you” (No. 164). This is the kerygma we are to teach.

The shepherd provides refuge and security. Cows, unlike sheep, are herded from the rear. Cowboys get behind the herd and shout, make noise, push and prod the cows to move forward. On the contrary, sheep must be led from the front, not pushed from the back. Sheep will only follow a voice that they have grown to trust.

The shepherd makes sure the flock stays together so as to protect them. He protects the sheep at all costs. His staff is his instrument to defend the sheep and keep danger away from them.

Maximilian Kolbe was such a shepherd who gave his life to protect one of the flock. You know the story. Auschwitz, cell block 14 A. The deputy commandant had determined that 10 men should die because of an escape attempt. He picked out the 10 and called them forward. One of the men fell at the commandant's feet begging to be spared. A man began moving forward from the back. Rifles and machine guns were drawn. The people whispered, “It's that little priest, he is volunteering to

take the place of the man chosen to die. Is he crazy?” Maximilian was thrown into a starvation cell where he was given nothing to eat or drink. The guards hated him because he kept singing and praying.

The commandant sent in his friend Nehring to tempt the priest with a bit of cheese whose aroma filled the priest's cell. Nehring detected a slight twinge in the priest's face. He felt he had gotten him to relent. But Kolbe refused the cheese and insisted that it be given to another prisoner.

The guards became frustrated with him, his undaunted spirit, so they killed him with an injection of carbolic acid. But do you know when his body was being led out, all the men in the camp took off their hats in tribute to this man, this shepherd who had given his life for one man. The model shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. He will protect them at all costs. Like Christ, Kolbe saved the flock by shedding his blood.

Shepherds guide and direct the flock. God, the Good Shepherd, wants not just any shepherds but shepherds after his own heart. Christ's heart is one of compassion for the crowds. He gives them the bread of life, helps them know the meaning and purpose of their lives. Christ's life is directed to the well-being and the growth of the sheep. His was a life of complete service, commitment and constant reaching out to the flock.

When I was a deacon preparing to become a priest, I was assigned to work with Msgr. Ignatius McDermott. I learned so much from this shepherd after the heart of Christ. People called him Big Mac or Iggy. His entire ministry was working with alcoholics along skid row in Chicago. He guided and directed so many to realize their potential. To him, no one was beyond reach. They just needed someone to stay the course with them.

Take Big John Burns. He was a hopeless alcoholic. Relapse after relapse, everyone gave up on him, his wife, his kids, everyone but Iggy. Everyone felt he was a loser. Mac accompanied him, prodding and coaxing him to turn his life around. This lost sheep became a shepherd to others.

Iggy put him in charge of his halfway house where I lived as a deacon for the summer. John was a chef, a good one. Every morning very early at dawn,

I would see John go out on skid row, find some who had fallen off the wagon. Some he carried on his back like the shepherd carrying the lost sheep. He would bring them to the halfway house, clean them up and cook for them an amazing breakfast. He got to know many of those who passed through the door. He helped turn some of their lives around.

Shepherds, unlike hired hands, stand by the sheep, never give up on them. As priests, all our actions are projected toward the well-being of those sheep entrusted to our care and redeemed by Christ's blood.

### **Pastoral Charity: Source and Mover of All the Shepherd Does**

Today as priests we care pastorally for diverse communities that speak multiple languages, are formed in different cultures and think, act and feel differently from one another. Our parishes have people embracing different, competing ideologies. Just as our nation is fractured, our flocks vary greatly and sometimes find themselves set against one another.

Pastoral charity calls us as priests to engage these multifaceted communities and serve them pastorally, as demanding as that is to accomplish.

I remember one time being in a small town in France. It was evening, and it seemed everyone from the town was out walking, strolling, conversing and mingling. I was sitting on a bench in the center of the village and noticed the parish priest dressed in his soutane walking through all alone. He greeted no one and no one greeted him. He was like a shadow passing through. A shepherd cannot be a stranger to his community but walks among them. St. Gregory the Great compares the pastor's understanding for his people with maternal love shown to a child, no greater closeness.

Cachia Roma identifies three qualities of a shepherd's pastoral charity for the flock: compassion, by which the priest identifies himself with the people he serves; weakness by which, aware of his own limitations, he is able to feel the brokenness in peoples' lives; presence, by which he is intimately present both to God and to his neighbor. I would add a fourth: The shepherd works hard to maintain the unity of the flock.



### **Shepherds Lead With Compassion**

An essential characteristic of the shepherd is compassion. Jesus felt and suffered with the people. He heard the cry of the blind man and touched his eyes so he could see. He felt the pain of the mother who lost her son. He freed the man gripped by evil spirits. Scripture tells us Jesus felt compassion for the crowd for they were “harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd.”

Pope Francis has reiterated over and over the need for pastors to be compassionate, to be among the people, to be in their midst.

Francis tells the story of a great priest from Buenos Aires who was 72 years of age. He was an exemplary confessor. Many flocked to his confessional. That priest came to Pope Francis saying, “I have a small scruple, because I know that I forgive too much. ... When I feel this scruple keenly, I go to the chapel before the tabernacle, and I say to him: ‘Excuse me, but it’s your fault because it is you who has given me the bad example.’ And then I go away at peace.”

As priests like Christ the King, we are to feel and to suffer with the people.

Let me tell you about a man. He is tall, towering and tender. He has a terrific smile and a loud laugh. If he were here you could hear his laugh all the way to Baton Rouge. His name is Jean Vanier, founder of the L’Arche communities worldwide.

Some years ago, Vanier was asked by a bishop in Canada to give a retreat to his priests. Vanier said he would not do that, but if the bishop invited his priests, deacons, religious and laity, those with disabilities and those not, he would preach the retreat. So began his faith and sharing retreats.

I participated in one. Carol was there, cerebral palsied since birth. She sits in a wheelchair, thin as a rail, her head back, her tongue hanging out, uttering simple sounds so you know she is around. Her mom and dad have taken care of her every day for 32 years, day after day after day. They grind her food in a meat grinder so she can eat.

Most people feel sorry for Carol. I did, but not him. When he came over to her, he didn’t say a word, but she smiled and laughed and shook all over because, you see, she knew that to him she wasn’t this little handicapped girl to be pitied but she was a precious daugh-

ter of God, special in God’s eyes. Vanier exudes compassion, feeling with. That is exactly what the shepherd does, what we as priests must do.

### **Shepherds Know Their Weakness**

When as priests we are in touch with our own weakness, only then can we enter the pain and brokenness of others. You all know Cardinal Joseph Bernardin. He ordained me a bishop and modeled for me what a bishop should do.

As you know, he was accused of sexual misconduct with a minor, his name on the headline of every area newspaper. I was rector of the seminary at the time. I remember getting a call from the cardinal two days after the allegation became public. He said that he was concerned about the seminarians. He worried what they might be thinking, how they might be feeling. He asked if he might come out to the seminary and say some words and maybe answer any of their questions.

He came to Mundelein at the beginning of the next week. All the seminarians were gathered in an upstairs tiered room. As we entered the room, everything quieted down. You could hear a pin drop.

The cardinal gave a brief comment, and then he asked if they had any questions. Well, no one said a word. Finally, one of the seminarians cautiously raised his hand and asked, “What has it been like for you?” The cardinal paused for a seemingly interminable time, and finally he said:

“I was totally embarrassed, totally. Here I am the cardinal archbishop of Chicago accused of sexual misconduct with a minor, my name on the headline of every newspaper even in my hometown in Italy. I was totally embarrassed. I went home that night all by myself. I entered my home and walked up the darkened staircase to the second floor where my room was. I entered the room surrounded by all the honorary degrees and gifts that I had been given by so many. I prostrated myself on the ground as if I were naked.”

But, do you know, he said at that moment of utter weakness, “I experienced the Lord present in my life in a way I had never ever experienced before.”

The irony of the spiritual life is that when we lose our life, we find it, and

when we hold on to our lives we lose it. That experience of utter weakness and the cardinal’s later diagnosis of pancreatic cancer made him totally vulnerable. But something happened to him as a result of these two devastating experiences. He became so sensitive to the hurt of others.

I remember being with him at one of the healing services he held around the archdiocese before he died. At the one in an African-American community, right in the middle of the Mass he was celebrating a woman came up the stairs of the dais. The priests concelebrating panicked and tried to get her to go back to her place. But the cardinal invited her to his chair and listened to her cry for help. His own encounter with weakness made him no longer merely an administrator but now a pastor, a shepherd who, like Christ, felt compassion for the flock, harassed and helpless.

Brothers, we need to become aware of our own weaknesses, our brokenness, and not dictate to people or harshly judge them.

### **Shepherds Bring Presence**

Pope Francis speaks often of presence and encounter. If we are to have the heart of Christ, Francis challenges us “to seek out, to include and to rejoice” (“The Heart of the Shepherd,” talk given for the Jubilee of Priests, June 3, 2016, in *With the Smell of the Sheep*, Orbis pp. 146-151).

We are to go out and encounter those lost. Francis says, “A priest is anointed for his people not to choose his own projects but to be close to the real men and women whom God has entrusted to him. No one is excluded from his heart, his prayers, his smile.”

Francis is one of those people that even if you are in his presence for a minute you know he is present to you and to you alone. So many times I find myself meeting someone and looking to the next person. Presence, real intentional presence, is a great gift that reaps so much good.

In the seminary one of my professors taught me that giving Communion should not become rote but challenged us to look into the eyes of each recipient, to be present to each person approaching the sacrament to see in them their hunger to receive Christ.

One thing we need to learn if we have

not already is that asking questions or giving advice is not what people seek. What they long for, need more than anything, is someone to be with them, to listen, to understand.

Dr. Ted Klaren was a parishioner at the parish where I was assigned as a newly ordained priest. He always came to the wake of a patient he had treated. I don't think I ever heard him utter a word, but he approached every family member and simply by his presence he communicated his care. You knew he felt your loss. I marveled at the impact he had on people who were grieving. They understood he was there for them, entirely there for them. Presence far more than words helps and heals.

### **Shepherds Work for Unity**

The people we serve vary greatly. Turf battles, parallel communities, ideological differences, cultural divides exist in most of our parishes. Ministry today is not easy. It's incredibly demanding. It can be exhausting.

Priests often say to me that they hate the critical, divisive atmosphere that can take over a parish. Most of us as priests dislike confrontation, avoid it at all costs. But communities at odds with one another need to be challenged. In his prayer, Christ cried out that we be one as he and the Father are one.

One of my pastors was Msgr. Dan Cantwell, a meek, gentle man who had a passion to uphold the dignity of every person in his parish. He established an interracial council striving to bring black and white parishioners to accept and value one another.

He once expressed great dismay about the divisions he saw in the parish. People seemed not to agree on anything. He once imagined getting together all the factions in his parish in the schoolyard. He pictured them getting in a big circle and turning their backs to each other while beginning to kick one another in the pants for a half-hour and then getting on with the mission of the church.

As shepherds, it is tough to hold the flock together. The Pasqua Yaqui, a native community in Tucson, have the custom of getting together a child, a young adult, an adult and an elder, each holding a piece of rope. As the drumming begins, the four begin intertwining themselves with the ropes as the observ-

ers sing, "Bind us together, Lord, bind us together with ropes that cannot be broken. Bind us together Lord, bind us together Lord, bind us together in love."

To bind our diverse communities together is a daunting task. Yet one of the primary tasks of the shepherd is to hold the flock together, to keep them moving in the same direction. This takes great sensitivity, patience and requires networks of support for anyone in ministry. We cannot be lone rangers. We need to realize and experience ourselves as members of a presbyterate, bound together with your bishop.

Ministry in our diverse parishes demands being both a mother and a father to the community. Mothers represent compassion, understanding; fathers represent direction, challenge and the ability to confront. So many of us as priests are effective listeners who exude understanding but we find it hard to confront. Yet shepherds need both qualities: caring for the sheep but offering direction, keeping the sheep from danger.

Our work as priests can be exhausting. What you do is not easy. Take Paul in First Corinthians. There we find Paul overworked. He was kind of a workaholic. We see Paul struggling with high and low moods. We find Paul challenged on all sides by those he was sent to serve. Yet he overcame all of that by his conviction that he, undeserving as he was, had been called by Christ to carry out Christ's mission.

He retained an absolute fatherly love for his people despite their meanness, and he counted everything else as loss save Christ. He shared his work with co-workers like Prisca and Aquila, Timothy and Titus. They buoyed him up when times got tough. As priests, we need such networks of support. Seek the help and support of other priests and co-workers.

Shepherds in the church today realize many have left the fold. We have all met those who say, "Oh, I used to be a Catholic" or "I was baptized Catholic but I left." Calling Catholics home remains a daunting task for pastors today.

I was on a Southwest Airlines flight recently and had sat down in an aisle seat. A young man asked if he could sit in the window seat. After a minute or so he turned to me and asked if I was Bishop Kicanas. I said I was. He said he

had gone to Sts. Peter and Paul School and then to Salpointe Catholic. I asked where he was worshipping now and he responded, "Oh, I don't go to church anymore."

What has happened and what can we as shepherds do about it?

Annabelle Miller a former editor of the English journal *The Tablet* once said that "you Americans are upset about the number of people in the United States who have left the church." "Well," she said, "in Western Europe we have experienced a massive hemorrhage."

In trying to understand why, she went around Europe asking people why they left the church. She came up with three basic reasons. "First," she said "I met a young man who was baptized, grew up in a Catholic family, went to a Catholic grade school, high school and college. But one Sunday he didn't go to church, and he never ever went back. For him," she said, "faith was like an overcoat that he put on but when convenient he took off and never put on again. He had never encountered Christ. Faith was never internalized."

"Second," she said, "there are those for whom the software of their lives do not mesh with the hardware of the church. There is a disconnect."

"Finally," she said "there is a basic distrust of institutions, not just the institution of the church but all institutions. They have let people down, broken their trust."

If as shepherds we are able to bring back people to the church, we need to lead people to a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. We have to better articulate what we believe in a convincing and conclusive way and restore trust that the church is a reliable place whose message helps people understand who they are, where they have come from and what is the best way to live their lives.

The task of the shepherd, the pastor, the priest is a daunting one.

### **Remain a Sheep in the Flock of the Good Shepherd**

Cardinal Christoph Schönborn in a book titled *Jesus' School of Life* (Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2016) says, "If we want to be disciples we have to go to the school taught by Jesus himself so as to have the same mind of God." As priests our goal is to know Jesus the shepherd,

not just knowledge about Jesus but an encounter with the person of Jesus. We can shepherd others only if we have walked along with the Good Shepherd, heard his voice and become part of his flock.

Schönborn sees in the Sermon on the Mount the perfect manner of Christian living. "It is the Magna Carta of Christian living. The Beatitudes show us the way discipleship is to be lived. ... They are the road map for the church, which recognizes in them the model of what she herself should be."

Encountering Christ as the good and unique shepherd of the church models and teaches us how we are to shepherd the church. As we follow and learn from Christ, we understand what we are to be and what we are to do. As priests, we remain always within the church, in full communion with those whom we lead. We become holy through our ministry, which mirrors Christ's ministry.

We are to enter into a loving mutual relationship with God, to live a life of discipleship following the Good Shepherd. As priests, we are to know the voice of the Good Shepherd and to listen and observe his word. Even if as priests we get lost, the Good shepherd will seek and find us and come back with us on his shoulder rejoicing.

Models, exemplars help us to see how encountering Christ, following his voice, can move us to do great things in his name.

Rev. Stan Rother was a diocesan priest, a shepherd who could not run away when danger lurked. On Sept. 23 he will be beatified, the first U.S.-born male to be so honored. You probably know his story. He grew up in a rural farming community in Okarche, Oklahoma. He was a farmer, tall, slender and strong. He loved farming and serving Mass. After high school, he heard God's voice urging him to go into the seminary.

He struggled, frustrated not to grasp Latin and was encouraged to leave the seminary. But he persisted and was ordained in 1963. After several years serving in his diocese, he volunteered to go to the Oklahoma mission in the Diocese of Solola in Guatemala as a missionary. He was assigned to the parish in Santiago Atitlán. The country was in the midst of a civil war. In Guatemala, the priest who founded in Latin learned

Spanish and the native indigenous language of the Mayan people.

His name was put on a death list by militants who despised how he was serving the rural poor. While others encouraged him not to return to Guatemala, he felt compelled to be with his people in their suffering; after all, that is what the Good Shepherd would do. He was an ordinary man, a common priest of extraordinary faith. That faith pushed him to return to his people.

On July 28, 1981, three masked men convinced a young man to show them where Rother was living. They broke into the rectory and shot him dead.

When the shepherd fell, his flock in the thousands came together. They paid tribute to this good and decent man in a silent vigil in the parish plaza.

While his body was brought to Oklahoma for burial, his heart remains in the parish that he loved and treasured as his flock.

He lived as a sheep in the flock of Christ and imitated Christ's zeal, his passion, his courage and his complete commitment to the mission of caring for the flock. Like Rother, as priests we strive to imitate the shepherd we follow, and we strive to identify with those we are privileged to serve. We stand with them. We are to be their voice.

### Conclusion

In this convocation we have been reflecting on the *munis triplex*, which we share with all the baptized and which was re-emphasized throughout the Second Vatican Council. In this final talk, we have been discussing priest as shepherd/king. As shepherds of the flock, the ordained exercise their kingly role. In that role we are to feed, shelter and care for the flock. Pastoral charity is the source and mover of all we do as priests. We remember that we are to be sheep in Christ's flock if we are to adequately shepherd God's people. ■

## America's Leadership Needed in Middle East

### Cardinal Rai

*The patriarch of the Maronite Church told a U.S. audience that Christians in the Middle East are looking to the United States for leadership to obtain peace in the region. "We look to America to lead the international community in so many ways," said Lebanese Cardinal Bechara Rai, Maronite patriarch. At an Oct. 24 news conference kicking off the In Defense of Christians Summit in Washington, the cardinal and Greek Orthodox Patriarch John X of Antioch and all the East told a crowded room of church leaders, politicians and media at the National Press Club that Middle East residents were looking for the United States to push for peace, especially in their region. The Oct. 24-26 summit centered on the theme of "American Leadership and Securing the Future of Christians in the Middle East." Cardinal Rai said people in the Middle East were looking to America to help solve the humanitarian crisis that is enveloping Lebanon: 1.7 million Syrian refugees, who have been coming for more than six years; half a million Palestinians, who have been in the country for as long as 69 years; and many Iraqis. Yet he and Patriarch John insisted that Middle Eastern nations must be involved in coming up with a solution. "We hope the Palestinian crisis will be resolved soon but not at the expense of Lebanon," said Cardinal Rai, emphasizing that Lebanon needs to be involved in negotiations. The cardinal's remarks at the news conference follow.*

America is a young country, full of hope, vitality and idealism. The Middle East, for its part, is ancient, with many diverse cultures but also cynicism and a history of bloodshed. In recent years, the conflicts that have beset the Middle East have driven out millions of its citizens, including so many Christians — and with their exodus, our region becomes more extreme, more dangerous to the outside world.

Our worlds are, of course, very dif-



ferent. Yet we share many of the same hopes — for prosperity, for security, but above all for peace. Like all people, we look to America to lead the international community in so many ways.

First, we look to America to help us solve the grave humanitarian crisis of so many refugees (1.7 million Syrians, half a million Palestinians and many Iraqis), whom we received in Lebanon in the spirit of solidarity. Yet Lebanon has borne this responsibility for 69 years with the Palestinian refugees and over six years with the Syrian refugees almost entirely alone. It has become a terrible burden at various levels: demographic, political, economic, social, environmental, educational and security.

Lebanon's constitution does not grant birthright citizenship. Therefore, Lebanon cannot bear the consequences of the refugees and the fear of their disguised settlement within its borders. We'd like to see the Syrian and Iraqi refugees rebuild their lives in their respective homelands.

We hope the Palestinian crisis will be resolved soon but not at the expense of Lebanon. It must be made clear that international diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving the Syrian crisis and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must include Lebanon as a negotiator partner for the simple reason that Lebanon has many Syrian and Palestinian refugees.

We look to America to exercise its diplomacy to resolve the many challenges in the region that had direct and indirect impact on Lebanon. While in recent years Lebanon has seen rela-

tive stability, it is still a fragile peace. Lebanon's older generation remembers well the horror of war. They know that war must never be repeated.

The youth of Lebanon in particular long for freedom and opportunity. Throughout our history, many of our challenges came from outside Lebanon, which has too often been manipulated by stronger powers. We have been abandoned to solve problems we did not create. Lebanon must be sovereign and stable — but we can only be so with your help.

Finally, we look to America to help us negotiate permanent peace. This is the dream of all people who live in fear but long for peace. We seek friendship with those on our borders and beyond. It is here that our ancient world and your new world must encounter one another and begin to understand one another.

We have a long tradition of pluralism in the Middle East. But in recent years, we have been divided against one another. Christians are bound by our faith to love everyone regardless of religious, ethnic and cultural differences. How long can people look at one another in enmity, as hostages to fear? We cannot be divided against another and achieve lasting peace.

The work toward peace requires more than governmental efforts. We need humanitarian assistance. This can be the work of nongovernmental organizations, of writers, even of students. But above all there is a role for Christians — to be diplomats of faith. Come to Lebanon and to the Middle

East. Lebanon is a positive partner in the dialogue of cultures and religions. As St. John Paul II said, "Lebanon is more than a country; it is a message to the East and to the West."

We come to America today from the Middle East and ask you to bring your ideals and energies to work for peace. We welcome you with open arms, no longer as strangers but as our friends, our guests, our neighbors. ■

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## Nov. 19

First World Day of the Poor Observance. Sponsor: Vatican. Theme: "Let us love, not with words but with deeds." [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

## Nov. 27-Dec. 2

Pope Francis visits Myanmar and Bangladesh. [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

## Jan. 1

World Day of Peace Observance. Sponsor: Vatican. [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

## Jan. 4-6

American Catholic Historical Association Annual Meeting. Omni Shoreham Hotel. Washington, D.C. [www.achahistory.org](http://www.achahistory.org)

## Jan. 4-7

North American Academy of Liturgy Annual Meeting. Hyatt Regency Vancouver. Vancouver, B.C. [www.naal-liturgy.org](http://www.naal-liturgy.org)

## \*Jan. 10-12

Biennial Inter-American Congress of Catholic Education. Sponsor: Inter-American Confederation of Catholic Education. Theme: "Catholic School: Learning Management, Innovation and Creativity." Auditorio Colegio Agustiniño Salitre. Bogotá, Colombia. [www.congresociec.com](http://www.congresociec.com)

## \*Jan. 11-13

GO! Gulf Coast Faith Formation Conference. Theme: "GO! Build a Future of Hope." Pontchartrain Center. Kennar, La. <https://go4th.faith>

## \*Jan. 15-21

Pope Francis visits Santiago, Temuco and Iquique, Chile; and Lima, Puerto Maldonado and Trujillo, Peru. [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)

## \*Jan. 16-19

Southwest Liturgical Conference Annual Study Week. Theme: "Awaken the Voice: Sing as One to the Lord." Little America Hotel & Resort. Cheyenne, Wyo. [www.swlc.org](http://www.swlc.org)

\*signifies new entry

## On File

Thoughtful deliberation rather than hurried action is required on the tax bill introduced by Republicans in the House of Representatives, said the chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development. Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Florida, also called for prudence on the part of Congress and the American public so that all the provisions in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act are fully understood. "The changes proposed in this bill are significant and complex, affecting the entire nation," Bishop Dewane said in a statement Nov. 3, a day after the bill was unveiled. The bill would eliminate the adoption tax credit, and Nov. 6 the USCCB tweeted a short statement by Bishop Dewane, in which he said the credit "is more than just an economic consideration." He said the credit "sends an important message that our country and society value life, and helps to recognize the right of children to loving families with a mother and a father. Our national policies should reflect this priority."

Pope Francis named a bioethics expert and a seasoned canon lawyer, both women, as undersecretaries of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life. The appointments of Gabriella Gambino, a bioethics professor at Rome's Tor Vergata University, and Linda Ghisoni, a judge on the regional tribunal of the

Diocese of Rome, were announced Nov. 7 at the Vatican. Gambino was appointed undersecretary of the dicastery's section for life, while Ghisoni was named to the section for the laity, the Vatican said.

The Philippine bishops' conference started a prayer vigil to protest thousands of killings in the government drive to eradicate drug abuse and drug dealing. Archbishop Socrates Villegas of Lingayen-Dagupan, outgoing president of the conference, led the "Lord, Heal Our Land" Mass Nov. 5. He called for repentance and an end to the killings and warned that "the journey of healing for the values of our nation turned upside down will be a long journey still." In his message at the Shrine of Mary Queen of Peace on EDSA, the avenue where the 1986 peaceful overthrow of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos took place, Archbishop Villegas said clergy, politicians and security forces needed to repent for complacency, ambition for power and instilling fear rather than respect. "Peace to you in the armed forces and police," he said in his homily. "Stop the violence and uphold the law." Archbishop Villegas called on the faithful to pray the rosary daily until Dec. 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception. Many churches across the country have been winding down the exercise of tolling bells nightly to remember those killed.