HOBART LECTURE
by
The Most Rev. Frank Griswold
Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church
at
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Yes, when we were in Chicago, your bishop very carefully did not put himself under the canonical oversight of the Bishop of Chicago. And therefore, we could speak freely about any number of things without my feeling any direct responsibility. And it's been a great joy to me to find that you're now in New York as well. We had a long tradition of breakfasts, which we've restored. And I'm really not only grateful for your friendship, but also very grateful for your wisdom and good sense.

Of course, we all, at this point, are thinking about a year ago. And a year ago today, I had breakfast with Rowan Williams, who was then going to make his way here to give the Hobart lecture. And of course, he described. I'm curious, because he described it in the most understated way his experience at Trinity the day before. And it was only after he wrote his little book that I realized the extent to which he had been at the heart of that experience.

I'd like to explore not so much your delivering pastoral care, but rather some of the elements that go into creating pastors so that they can then respond gracefully to the demands that are made upon them in regard to pastoral ministry. And with last year very much in mind, I'd like to begin with the whole notion of the experience of God being most deeply entered into when in some way, we are experiencing our own vulnerability and weakness.

And some time ago, I ran across an essay written in 1976, smuggled out of a Soviet jail, written by a man named Mihailo Mikhailov, who's not a Christian. And yet he, in the midst of that experience of utter poverty and privation and total vulnerability to the whims of those who oversaw the jail, could write as follows, only those can preserve their bodies and physical existence, who preserve their souls. In the depths of the human soul there dwells an unexplained force which is stronger, and not only symbolically but empirically stronger, than all outward forms of oppression and destruction, however invincible they may seem. The fate of men is not decided by Earthly powers by outward physical forces, but only by the mystical power which from time immemorial has been called God, and whose relationship to man seems to depend on man's relationship to his inner voice.

Remember, it's 1976. Forget the sort of gender specific language there. The point, I think, is a very important one made by someone who had that experience rather than someone who, by virtue of an inherited faith, sort of tried to crank himself up into that awareness. And it was the process of being stripped that revealed to him this sort of hidden depth within. I think here too, of

the French writer Antoine de Saint-Exupery, who said, we are most fully ourselves not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing more to take away, when we are naked. And I think this is a truth we know, if not about ourselves, then it is a truth that's been shown to us by the people of God, by the warp and woof of their living and dying.

Especially I think the latter. I remember some years ago as a parish priest in Philadelphia, traveling with a relatively young hematologist through leukemia and remissions and ultimately into death. And I remember going to his bedside. He died shortly after Christmas. Going to his bedside during the Christmas days to give him communion. And the interesting thing about this man was until I met him, which was in the hospital after he had received the news that he had leukemia. Until I met him, he had no discernible relationship to the parish except to be on a list and to make a minimal pledge annually. We know the faithful of this kind.

So when I called on him in the hospital, I really didn't expect very much. And indeed, consciously, there wasn't a faith within him. But as he moved through this illness and descended deeper and deeper into a process of stripping, things were revealed that were as much a surprise to him as they were to me with respect to a deep presence of God within him. And I remember that particular day, shortly after Christmas, I gave him communion. And he was, at this point, everything was hemorrhaging. And he was within a few days of death. And his face became absolutely radiant. I mean, transfiguration is the only way I can describe it. And he said with what I can only describe, a Mediterranean fervor that was absolutely not who he was. He said this was the most wonderful present I could possibly have. And with that, he said, you are my Pope. And he grabbed my hand and kissed it. And I thought, I'm not going to let you get away with this, you old wasp there. So, I leaned over the bed and kissed him on the forehead. And our eyes met. And I thought, you know, I've come to bring Jesus to him, him in the bread of the Eucharist. And here is Jesus profoundly present in the midst of this man who is embracing death, stripped, and yet so completely himself, dazzlingly himself. And I'm sure you know that experience yourselves in some of your pastoral care.

Looking back a year ago, I think we were all overwhelmed, particularly those of us who had some relationship to a house of worship, by the numbers of people who just poured in, the moment the doors were opened. They just needed to be there. And I think part of what was happening was corporately, we were being stripped. Corporately, we were taken to that place of profound vulnerability and nakedness. And what emerged, I think, was not simply looking for answers. I don't think people really expected to find answers in the churches and places of worship. But what was being revealed to people, I think, was their capacity for God. Their capacity for God, possibly in an unnamed way, but nonetheless, there it was. And I was thinking back to the Friday after that fateful Tuesday when I was here at the cathedral. And at the end of the service, your bishop and I made our way, as we were told to, out onto the steps with candles. And the whole congregation had been given candles with the instruction that they were to disperse into the city, carrying the light of hope and new possibility into the darkness of what had happened.

And we stood there at the top of the steps, and people gathered and people gathered, and people walking by joined them. And some people even went off and bought candles of their own and came and got on the steps. And I being an old liturgist, I thought, now how do we end this discreetly? And so I said to your bishop, I said, I think we should solemnly make our way down the steps to the sidewalk, and that will let people know that it's over. So we marched down to the sidewalk. It didn't phase anyone. They stayed put. Soon they started to sing. And finally we retreated because it was perfectly clear that no one was going to move, no matter what the hierarchs were up to. And I think the other thing there that was being revealed was the profound need for community. They needed to be with one another. And I think the two, that sort of vulnerability and solidarity, which were themes in the Archbishop of Canterbury's sermon yesterday at Trinity Parish, were exactly what we were experiencing here and in other parts of the country.

And I think we know from our own pastoral experience often our own capacity for God, you might say, is overlaid by all sorts of preoccupations with this, that and the other thing. And suddenly it is revealed in the midst of our own poverty and spiritual nakedness. When we encounter a situation that is beyond us, we don't know what to do. We don't know what to say. We're simply there in it. It's happening, and something is pulled out of us that we know isn't our cleverness or our having thought it out. It is obviously grace. And in those moments, we give thanks for the capacity to speak or the capacity to do in ways that meet the needs of those we are ministering to, often in ways that have nothing to do with what we've decided.

I think here, of course, of the risen Christ after Paul has prayed for the removal of the thorn that would allow him to enter into a projected sense of himself according to his own righteousness. You know, I mean, he'd had this intense conversion experience. Now, there's only one thing more that would really make me happy. If you would just take away this source of shame and embarrassment. And of course, the risen Christ says, my grace is sufficient for you. My power is made perfect in weakness. Now we mouth those sorts of words, but they are true. And I can tell you, as a bishop and now as the Presiding Bishop and Primate, I have recourse almost daily to those words of the risen Christ addressed to St. Paul. So we minister not always out of our strength, though we would like to think so, but out of our own capacity for God, our own ability for God, our own weakness, our own vulnerability, our own limitations.

Some years ago, actually, it was the year after I was ordained to the Priesthood, 1964, I went with a group of Roman Catholic curates from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia on retreat to a monastery that some of you may know. Mount Savior in Elmira, New York, which at that time was presided over by a wonderful German monk trained at the Abbey of St. Ottilien, who had come to this country to be chaplain of the Sisters Regina Laudes in Connecticut, but then had moved on to establish a kind of reformed Benedictinism that recovered the original charisms of the rule. He was, in many ways ahead of his time.

In any event, Father Damasus gave us, this group of clergy, daily conferences, and they were brilliant and filled with European wisdom and years and years of Benedictine prayer, and we

were all dazzled. And toward the end, he opened his Bible and turned to the second chapter of the Book of Revelation and smiling in a slightly wicked way, said to us, gentlemen, because we were all men, I would like to read something to you. So we all sat up, and it's the risen Christ addressing the angel of the Church at Ephesus.

And the risen Christ says, I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance. And we all thought to ourselves, yes, yes, yes, we're patiently enduring old rectors who haven't thought a new thought for at least 40 years. And we are the Church of the future. And we also looked at one another and nodded and winked and thought, isn't it wonderful that this ancient Benedictine monk knows how gifted we are and how we are the cutting edge of the Church's future.

And he went on, I know that you cannot tolerate evildoers and that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not. I know that you have found them false. I know also that you are enduring patiently. And we thought, oh, we certainly are enduring patiently under all sorts of idiocies and bearing up for the sake of my name and that you have not grown weary. And of course, by now we were on the edge of our seats. And then he paused and went on with the next line, but this I have against you. You have abandoned your first love. And with that, he shut his Bible and said to us, gentlemen, you have been newly ordained. Be very aware of the Eglise Mechanique, the mechanical church, and do not allow yourselves to become technicians of the sacred. And I've never forgotten that experience, nor that warning, because it is all too easy for us to become technicians of the sacred. And when we become technicians of the sacred, we lose a living relationship to the sacraments, for example, we become profferers of the sacraments to others. But in some existential way, we don't receive communion ourselves.

I remember once, some years ago, a weekday celebration when I was a curate. I guess the weather was bad or something, but one sweet old lady appeared, and she said, oh. Oh, dear, I wouldn't want you to do all of this just for me. And I said, well, did it occur to you that maybe I need communion just as well as you? And she said, no, I didn't realize that at all. And I said, well, you know, there really can't be a Eucharist if the priest doesn't receive. And so if you don't mind, now that you're here, I really would like to receive communion. And would you stay?

But I mean, I think some of us do have a, I mean, we lose our living relationship to the sacraments and sort of slowly slip into, well, I've got the 7:30 or the 6:15 or the 8:00 o'clock or whatever, and we slog our ways through it, giving hopefully a half decent homily and reading with some degree of grace and accuracy. But there we are sort of wandering away. I mean, how many priests have recited the words over the bread twice out of absentmindedness, because their minds are sort of wandering off somewhere? I mean, you don't have to be having a senior moment to do that kind of thing. I've known some very young clergy slipping into that, and I think, I wonder where their mind is at this point as they move through the great thanksgiving.

And here I think of some wonderful words of St. Ambrose that I try in some way to inhabit, not always with success. It's his commentary on the Gospel of John. And he says, you have shown yourself to me, O Christ, face to face. I have met you in the sacraments. I mean, a wonderful

sense of expectation, of encounter, a willingness to be sacramentally surprised. And how many of us go to the altar on the tiptoe of expectation? I think probably very few of us. And yet I think that's exactly what St. Ambrose is suggesting here. Eager for encounter.

And I must say here I've learned a tremendous amount as a bishop. Before I was a bishop, when I was a priest in the Diocese of Pennsylvania, I was the liturgical officer, and I hovered over the bishop at every liturgical celebration. I determined what he would wear, where he would stand, sit, what prayers he would use. And at one point the bishop was heard murmuring as I left him with my fierce and clear instructions, he said, oh, he's always telling me what to do. Never did I realize that the divine sense of humor would reverse roles one day and I would find myself standing anxiously in a cathedral sacristy in Chicago with someone telling me what to do.

But in any event, the point of what I'm saying is that as a bishop making my visit Sunday by Sunday, and maybe I shouldn't say this, but I'll go ahead and say it anyhow, I would always ask people, what do you, you know, particularly before I knew the congregations with any intimacy, I'd say, well, what is your liturgy like on Sunday? And the answer was always the same. It's the usual. And of course, the usual could be hideously eccentric, or it could be well ordered with a great deal of style and good taste. In any event, I was sort of set off. And the devil had a wonderful way of often incorporating into the local liturgy wherever I went, exactly the things I couldn't stand, and the worst for me were the little wooden banks that children would put pennies in because of their birthday. And the priest would say, well, don't you want to hold the bank? And I would say, no, Father, I think it would be more appropriate because of your pastoral relationship with the child. You hold the bank. And I'd sort of sit in my elaborate chair and go, ugh. Inwardly, in any event. I mean, outwardly, I would smile and try to be appropriate, but judgment was working hard within me.

And then I remember one day going to a congregation sitting behind the altar, and the thurifer came to me and presented the thurible. And as I put incense into it, out of his mouth came the most enormous bubble of bubble gum I've ever seen in my life. And I could see his fiendish eyes over the bubble. And finally, the bubble covered his eyes, and all I could see was the bubble. And then there was a loud snap and a sucking sound. And he pulled the entire thing into his mouth and glared at me. And I decided this was God's revenge. I was so wooden about liturgical proprieties, and I think God was saying, come off it, Frank. Look at liturgy as the way people play, and I'm perfectly willing to play with them in any number of ways, so why don't you lighten up and enter into the play as well? And that sort of changed my whole relationship. And so when I say enter into liturgy on the tiptoe of expectation, I mean it quite literally, because you never know how God is going to take these sort of stereotypical elements, or even some of the ceremonial complexities, and turn them around in ways that indeed manifest Christic presence, but not in the ways you're accustomed to encountering the Risen One.

So, take Ambrose's words to heart.
Routinization of the sacraments, always a problem.
And for many of us, sacraments are performance.

How do we look? You know, how's it staged, all the rest of it. I remember again from my days as a parish priest presiding over the evaluations of the 1967 trial Liturgy and finding, much to my surprise, it was a useful learning that congregations in which clergy disliked the trial liturgy perfectly mirrored their priest's point of view. And though it's true that change is always experienced as loss, even when we agree intellectually with the change, what became clear to me was, for many clergy, myself included, in many ways, I'd sort of become one with the rhythms of the 1928 Book of Common Prayer as performance. And I don't mean that in a pejorative way, but you knew just where to sort of Pause. And you knew exactly how the ceremony went and all the rest. And suddenly you were being invited into whole new ceremonial patterns, new patterns of words and all the rest of it. And there's, I think, for many, a profound loss of who they were as liturgical persons because they were so identified, or they so identify themselves, with those rhythms and patterns.

And so it's terribly important because I realize that at some point the present prayer book will give way to something else, and probably I'll have a terrible time adjusting, that it's always necessary to stay focused on the Lord of the liturgy, lest the liturgy itself become an idol. And I think by approaching the sacraments always as potential encounters with Christ, who can use bread and wine, anything, even bubblegum, that keeps us open to the deeper reality behind the sacramental action itself. And the other is Scripture.

I've done a lot of spiritual direction with clergy, not so much as a bishop obviously, but beforehand. And I found often that when you asked, when you invited clergy to pray with Scripture, to let Scripture simply address them and speak to them, it was very difficult because we've been taught to routinize and domesticate Scripture for our own homiletical ends. And I know from the House of Bishops experience when we try to have Bible studies, they are tedious. They are sort of recitals of yesterday's exegesis and things like, well, in this passage we might say that St. Paul is saying. And I'd say, well, what do you think it's saying to you? And that sort of personal encounter with Scripture is, I think, very hard for a number of us who are ordained. And therefore, it's very important to remember the words from Hebrews about the word is alive and active, sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow.

Scripture really is a place also of encounter. And it struck me some years ago that when you read the 24th chapter of the Gospel of Luke, in which the disciples hearts burn within them as the risen Christ opens Scripture to them, that Scripture is profoundly sacramental and that it is the risen Christ through the agency of the Spirit, who manifests Christ's own real presence in the scriptural word. So it's not just a text we interpret or find useful to support our arguments. It is an outward and visible sign in that respect.

At times, of course, the daily office is tedious, and you wonder what fool I think of Bishop Roskam's comment about the Eucharistic lectionary and being grateful that today's choices were in fact appropriate. But when you make your way through the office lectionary, there are times

when you want to throw the book across the room and say, what fool ever chose this particular passage? Or if you're celebrating the office publicly in a church, you think, good Lord, what did people expect the people of God to get out of this? And you've got to stop and explicate the passage because it's so dangerous. Left on its own, it can only mislead people. But in any event, while that may be true at times, I'm so grateful for not choosing my favorite passages and being obliged, by virtue of the lectionary to encounter a word that may not be what I want to hear, and also being made aware of the fact that in one context, the lectionary this year may seem pointless, and then the next time I encounter that same cycle, it leaps to life and becomes, as it were, a personal word. Two brief examples of this some years ago, and a number of people have heard this, particularly the bishops, because I've told it to them.

When I was a parish priest, it was my day off. I'd given a talk to a group of clergy on the need for solitude and space in your ministry and not becoming obsessive compulsive and trying to do too much. Of course, it was my day off, and I was giving this talk on my day off. That should have been the beginning of a tip-off. And then I finished. Some people lingered to talk. I was late for catching a train into Center City, Philadelphia, to have an interview with someone about the baptism of their child. I got to the station just as the train was pulling out. I took a flying leap onto the train platform and managed to rupture my Achilles tendon and found myself a few hours later in the hospital facing surgery the next day, all on the eve of Lent, at a time when I was without any clerical assistance. So, I lay in bed and various clergy came by. And I must say, clergy are terrible visitors in hospitals, at least with respect to other clergy. People came in and said, what the hell are you up to Griswold? What a way to get out of Lent. And I thought, this is not very kindly or appreciative of the situation I'm in. And finally, a parishioner came and said, quite simply, is there anything I can do for you? I said, oh, yes. I said, you can bring me a Book of Common Prayer and a Bible. Which she did. And so I had nothing better to do than to read Evening Prayer that evening, furious at myself for my stupidity. Why didn't I watch where I was stepping and all the rest of it? And it was Psalm 94, which has the verse as often as I said, my foot is slipped. Your love, O Lord, upheld me. Now, it's a psalm that had never meant much to me before, but in that context, you might say the word of my own experience, where I was the scriptural word, came together and became the word of God to me right then and there in a profound way.

And another time, I'd been informed that I was one of the nominees to be Bishop Coadjutor of Chicago. I'd never met the Bishop of Chicago. I thought, the least I can do is go out and meet the man and give him an opportunity to see whether he likes me, so that if he doesn't like me in good Chicago style, he can figure out how to make sure I'm not elected.

In any event, the members of the nominating committee who had come to visit me in Philadelphia and therefore were sort of my advocates, had a conference call with me, and they said, if you come, it will be perceived as a political move, and you will seriously endanger the possibility of your being elected. So I hung up. And I remember being furious, furious at this anxiety. And I called back a few minutes later and I said, I'm very clear about why I'm coming. It's to meet the bishop. I think it's the polite thing to do before I come out and supposedly give a

talk on what I think the future of the diocese is all about. I mean, how outrageous is that? So I went, and I remember getting on the plane, and a friend of mine had called me very helpfully and said, now, you know, when you arrive at the diocesan center, there's a big plaza and a glass building that's the diocesan center. And at the time you arrive, the staff will be in the staff room meeting with the bishop. So you will walk across the plaza, and they'll all be looking out and watching you walk across the plaza. So don't pick your nose.

That was his advice. In any event, I got on the plane feeling somewhat ambivalent but clear about why I was doing it, and opened the Book of Esther, which was part of the lectionary for the day. And it was where Mordecai tells Esther that she's got to go in and tell the king what's really going on. And. And Esther, of course, is aware of the fact that if you go into the king's presence unbidden, and the King is not happy to see you. It's death. So, she says, I will go unto the king, and if I perish, I perish. And I remember reading those words and the most wonderful sort of lightness and consolation and yes came over me, and I thought, that's it. I'm going into the King, and this is what I must do. And if I perish, I perish. And that's fine, too. So, I just give you those two examples, and I'm sure you have some of your own about ways in which Christ has grabbed you through the instrumentality of the Word for that day. And because you didn't choose it, the Church said, this has a kind of objectivity that has let you know that it really has been an encounter and not simply something you were seeking on your own.

Let me say a little bit. I realize time is going on, and I was thinking when I saw you all sitting at the tables of an Alphonse Daudet story called the Three Low Masses. I don't know whether you're familiar with it. In that story, and this is a parenthesis, has nothing to do with what I'm saying, but I'll use it anyhow because it may be useful as a cautionary tale. In any event, in the story, the devil rolls dice with a young acolyte who is on his way to the chateau to serve the three Low Masses that are set in succession on Christmas Eve. This is an old pattern in the Roman Church. And the devil wins. So he gets the use of the young boy's body for the duration of the three Low Masses. And at the end of the three Low Masses, a great feast is always served. So, you then have the chapel, castle, and all the nobility and their families are gathered there for the three Low Masses. And the devil, as the acolyte, puts truffles into the thurible and, you know, sort of wonderful aromas begin wafting through the chapel, and the priest begins to salivate, and he begins skipping portions of the liturgy to get to the feast. And the congregation becomes more restless and eager for the final Ite Missa Est. And finally at the end, they rush to the table, the priest elbowing his way through the crowd, and he grabs the great haunch of something and bites into it and chokes to death, and the devil takes his soul. And that's the end of the story.

Now, I tell that to you because you're all sitting at tables and you're all waiting for lunch, and some of you are desperately drinking Pellegrino water, but it's not as good as other things that will be. And I look at my watch and I think it's one o'clock. And I have so much more to say. But what can I start saying, skipping through so that you won't become disconsolate in your wait for food? But let me say a few more things before we eat. I'm going to take a sip of Pellegrino water myself to give you the freedom to do likewise.

This brings me to something else that's so integral to our pastoring and that's the quality of our own prayer. And it's something that we can so easily set aside in favor of the various external needs that present themselves. And we can be very sort of Ignatian and apostolic and talk about finding God in all things, which is, of course, true. But I really do think we have to, as Thomas Merton once said, waste time conscientiously with God. Which is, I think, a wonderful way of describing prayer, because so often people think of prayer as another thing to achieve or to do. And particularly in our society, sort of, you pray for 10 minutes, you look at your watch, and you say, okay, where are the consolations? Where are the insights? I've been at this for 10 minutes. I expect something. You know, I mean, we are that way, even if we don't voice it. I think that's often our sort of inner disposition.

And I've been helped by some words of those who are practitioners of prayer in a very deep way. Among them, Dom John Main, who oversaw the Benedictine community in Montreal and did a great deal to teach and promote what is now more popularly known as centering prayer, though that's not the way he would have described it. But he says prayer is an opening to love on every level of our being. Now, this is someone who prayed for hours a day. And here's this most simple an opening of ourselves to love on every level of our being. And I think too of the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel folks about availability simply being available. Our prayer is not an achievement. It is a stance of availability before the mystery of God. Gabriel Marcel also says the spirit of prayer is a welcoming disposition toward everything that can tear me away from myself and my propensity to become preoccupied with my own faults.

How often we get sort of focused in on ourselves and what we didn't do well or have left in some way in an untidy fashion. And Gabriel Marcel says, no, prayer is a focusing away from ourselves, an opening of ourselves to the mystery of God without that sort of monumental self-preoccupation. And the translator and poet Stephen Mitchell, in one of his poems on the Baal Shem Tov, describes, prayer was a quality of attention to make as much room for the given that it can appear as gift. To make as much room for the given that it can appear as gift. And I think how often in my own life I descend into places of profound resentment. Why do I have to deal with this idiocy? Why is this stupid church doing these dumb things? Why is this particular bishop doing this or that? And I can get sort of turned in on myself and just sort of descend into a place of anger and resentment. When, in fact, if I can simply open that reality to the mystery of God, it doesn't mean I have to talk my way out of it and be cheerful. But at least I can say, God, I am just mad as hell, and you just come into my anger. But we like to cling, you see and clutch these things to ourselves. In any event, the whole notion of the given appearing as gift being one of the consequences of prayer. And I think what that often means is in the midst of a situation, we don't necessarily say, this is wonderful. I'm so glad this is happening. But our affectivity is altered in relationship to what it is that is confronting us. If it may be anger, it's amazing how suddenly sometimes a flood of compassion will come over us. In fact, we'll resent its presence because we've so enjoyed the righteousness of our anger toward a particular person. And suddenly it's lifted. And we say, wait a minute. You know, I didn't argue my way out of this. I didn't figure out the seven steps to get out of this place. I didn't rationalize the situation so that I saw it differently. Just there's sudden lifting. And I think that's often the way God answers our

prayers. By sort of shifting things within us and for an instant, giving us what Paul calls the mind of Christ. We see differently and we respond differently.

Prayer transforms our consciousness. Dame Julian says it ones us to God. And that's why it transforms our consciousness. Because, as I said, it works in us over time. The mind of Christ. And it isn't that we can ever say, hmm, now I have the mind of Christ. Isn't that another achievement? It comes and goes. It comes and goes. And it expresses itself in such things as courage and compassion and endurance. It's not that we say, oh. Or at least I don't. I don't say, oh, I can get through this because Jesus is standing beside me. No, I don't have that sense at all, but I do have a sense of, you know, Frank, I'm amazed at your ability not to be frantic. Where does it come from? Does it come from you deciding not to be frantic? No, it comes from some other place. I think this is again, the whole dynamic of the sufficiency of grace and God's power, Christ's power coming to full term in the midst of our own weakness. Prayer also in Latin American theologian Segundo Galilea says, this prayer overturns our idols. We all live with myriad idols and idolatries, and prayer works in us over time, a kind of purification, and our various idols are thrown down and overcome.

So, this is a very important dimension. Sacramental expectation, encountering the Word as a living word, mediating the presence of the risen Christ, a sacramental word, and our willingness to waste time conscientiously with God. Those are some of the things that have been most useful to me. And I hope, I mean, I know you're practitioners of these things, but sometimes you need to be reminded of the very things that are part of your life. At least I know I have to be.

Do I have just a few more minutes? Okay. There's one other thing I'd like to put before you.

One thing that's been tremendously helpful to me over the years has been the spiritual exercise of Ignatius of Loyola. And I'm very grateful that some years ago, as a sabbatical experience, I went on a 30 day retreat and did the exercises that continue to be a sort of point of reference for me. And one of the most useful of the exercises is a meditation that Ignatius calls the Two Standards. And I'm going to lay it out for you because it's practical and useful. Because the other thing I think that's very much a part of pastoral ministry is that you have to sort of make decisions on the hoof. I mean, you don't have. Though I've talked about wasting time conscientiously in prayer. You often have to sort of discern things as they're happening. You can't go off to a monastery or a convent and figure it out. You've got to do it in a split second. And so your sort of interior disposition, your ability to read things accurately, has to be well formed. And in the Ignatian tradition, which is very much an apostolic and active spirituality, Jesuit formation is not so much about reciting the office in common or that kind of thing, but interiorizing some of the dynamics of the exercises, which are a way of entering into the mind of Christ and adopting a stance of interior freedom that allows one then spontaneously to respond to the motions of the Spirit.

In any event, Ignatius in his two standards, and he uses imagination. This is something that's worth noting. Ignatius is not afraid of the imagination as a place where the Spirit can work. I think we're very suspicious of the imagination. We say, well, that's just imagination. Well, often

the Spirit is working in imagination. And Ignatius had that, that confidence. In any event, background, Ignatius was a soldier, as probably most of you know, two standards meant two battle flags. And what he does is set out a description of the battle flag of Christ and the battle flag of Satan. And he says, you have to have an awareness of the dynamic that you enter into by virtue of whichever of the flags you're standing under. And. And you also need to be aware of the fact that probably at any given moment in your life, you may be under one flag with respect to this set of considerations, and under that flag with respect to something else. In any event, if you choose the battle flag of Satan, you find yourself caught up in a dynamic which he describes as riches, honor, and pride. And by that he means possessiveness, a sense of self derived from what you possess, and then a kind of world that you construct for yourself out of your own self-definition. Now, if this sounds abstract and remote, let me simply play it out in terms of ministry.

The riches can become my ministry. I'm very aware of people who talk about my ministry, my parish, my people, my diocese, my clergy. I think, hmm, what's going on here? A dangerous, dangerous language. So, let's say, well, I'll use myself. Let's use being a bishop. So, I become a bishop and I define myself as consummately a person of eternal fuchsia. I mean, and this is a dangerous color, by the way. You know, I appear in fuchsia and I expect people to step aside or curtains to part or rocks to crumble in my presence. There's a sense that I can sort of possess and turn into a form of riches, my episcopalness. And then I can define a whole little world for myself. I mean, it's interesting when bishops come together in the house of Bishops, there's always what I call the entry dance, because most of them come from their own little fiefdoms. And listen, you've got them too.

Your congregations can be just as much little citadels. And so, we sort of step beyond our citadel where we are adored and loved and known and have of course, perfect authority. And suddenly we find ourselves in a community of others who have exactly the same fiefdoms. And so there's a kind of dance as to how we relate to one another. And we're sort of aware of, oh, well, that's a small diocese, isn't it? Or that's a big diocese. Or, hmm, that's a mission congregation. Or, hmm, yes, they've got 14 curates. And all the little ways we sort of play with our fiefdoms. And so, my sense of worth can be derived from possessing Episcopal ministry and a certain adulation that I expect and enjoy. And then my world can become, let's say, 815 Second Ave. Or it can become the Episcopal Church in the United States when I am with other primates of the Anglican Communion. Or it can be your parish, or it could be your diocese.

So, riches, honor and pride is a dynamic that I think is very close to us. It also can be played out in very negative ways. One can take to oneself crippling low self-worth or rage and sort of define oneself as the person who never can be held accountable for anything because I have no competency. And so I simply live in a little tiny world that allows me simply never to take responsibility for anything, or my rage may sort of take over. And I sort of define myself in terms of I have a right to be furious and never forgive. And so then I establish a little world of anger in which I exist. So riches, honor and pride can be played out in sort of obvious external ways. It can be played out in very subtle interior ways. And I think it's very important for us to be aware of that dynamic because it accosts us day by day.

You know, we preach the most brilliant sermon of our life, and what do we hear at the door? What a lovely service today. And no mention of that blockbuster sermon. And we're furious and we suddenly think, what a stupid congregation I've got. Don't they realize what I've said? Well, that's, you know, riches, honor and pride at work in us. I remember once going to a congregation for an anniversary and arriving sort of the way I'm dressed today with my hat, boxes and suitcases and all the impedimenta of a pontifical visit. And the sacristan said, well, the visiting clergy are getting vested on the third floor. And I thought, visiting clergy? I, the bishop of the diocese. And so with a mock humble sigh, I said, certainly, and went to the third floor. The rector was embarrassed. Oh, bishop, you should be in the sacristy. Oh, oh, who sent you up here? So I swept down the stairs and with a smile, a withering smile, looked at the sacristan and said, the rector said I should be in the sacristy. So as I stood in front of the mirror adjusting the ends of my stole, I said, Frank Griswold, what have you just learned about yourself? Are you the humble servant? No, you are the proud hierarch who's just been slightly humiliated by being treated just like one of the visiting clergy. How good for you. Because clearly what you're doing is possessing the Episcopal office not as a form of service, but as a way of defining yourself and arrogating to yourself an authority that does not come from the Lord. So those sort of moments when we're embarrassed or think, well, they should have known better, are usually tip offs to some form of being caught by riches, honor and pride. Don't know what's going on outside, but I'll move quickly.

The other dynamic, if you stand under the banner of Christ, it commits you to poverty, contempt and humility, words that sound very dangerous. But what Ignatius means here is non possessiveness. So you don't have to defend yourself, and therefore you can speak truth, and therefore you can put up with those who may be discomfited by truthfulness or your courage or your willingness to step beyond safety. And that's what he means by contempt. He doesn't mean wanting to be disliked or something.

And the third is humility. Whereas pride closes you in and makes you want to defend your little fiefdom, humility opens you out. It's a stance of freedom and availability to be of service in the articulation of God's reign. So that double dynamic, I mean, there are times when we are profoundly free, and there are other times we are profoundly bound. And just sort of playing with this double dynamic in terms of our own lives could help us to be discerning as we move through active ministry.

I'm going to end here because I'm sure people want to serve the lunch. You've been very patient, and this is a rather abrupt ending. But anyhow, when I was elected bishop, rather like Mary rushing to Elizabeth, I rushed to Mount Savior Monastery, not to Dom Damasus, who had died some years before, but to the present prior. And I said, Father Martin, you've overseen a community for a number of years. I have just been elected a bishop. And though the dynamics are somewhat different still, you've been exercising a ministry of oversight. What wisdom can you give me? And this is what he said, and for some reason I had the good sense to write it down and I think it applies to all of us, not just to bishops.

Be yourself. Others will show you your weaknesses. Do not become perfectionistic. God reveals his glory through your weakness. Don't become dejected by your failures. If God wants you to be a bishop or a priest or a deacon he will be with you in spite of everything.

Incarnation is a process which claims us and plunges us into the paschal mystery, that endless cycle of dying and rising, losing and finding. You are called to be real. Trust in God, not in your own ability. Though you must not be passive. So, I pass Father Martin's advice on to you, those of you engaged in pastoral ministry and pastoral care. His advice has been useful to me, and I hope it's been useful to you and thank you so much for your patience. And now let the feast be served. Thank you.