

## “OUT OF THE SHADOWS INTO TRUTH” A TIME FOR HEALING AND HOPE

There is a motto that has been used both by schools and even as episcopal coats of Arms that seems especially appropriate at this moment in the life of our local Church. *Ex umbris et imaginibus in veritatem*. Taken from **Bl. John Henry Newman's** memorial epitaph, it is loosely translated as “From Shadows and Images into Truth.” It truly feels as though the Church has been in the shadows, as we have all learned far more than we ever desire about a tragic chapter in our history. With last week's agreement among all parties, a path forward has been cleared that will put an end to twenty-nine months of reorganization, popularly known as bankruptcy, brought about by clerical sexual abuse over decades and the handling of the cases by Church leadership.

While at a gathering of priests and permanent deacons last Thursday at St. Charles Borromeo, I noticed that some priests were suddenly buried in their cell phones. The news had just broken that a news conference with respect to **Archdiocesan reorganization** was imminent. Everyone surmised correctly that perhaps a settlement had been reached. While there were a few “wide eyes” at the monetary amount of the settlement, it is safe to say that the primary sense was one of a giant sigh of relief. I sincerely believe that the healing that needs to occur is far greater than any financial settlement could provide. Ultimately, all people involved have to reach a sense of peace within themselves. It is my genuine hope that the survivor-victims of abuse can take a giant leap forward in their own journey of healing. Some of them stood up publicly to be heard, and that took tremendous courage. I am convinced that the people of God are also ready to move forward in faith.

One way that this will occur is for all of us to focus on the Lord, and our own Archbishop is showing us the way to Jesus. One of the “perks” of serving at a Cathedral is that the rector is designated to **open the door** to the Church as the new bishop enters for the first time in his installation ceremony. Two years ago this past May 13, Archbishop Hebda stood in the Narthex and symbolically knocked on the Cathedral door. He did so, not with the customary Crosier, but rather with a wooden mallet fashioned from the log chapel by the Mississippi river bank—the only remaining artifact of our first Cathedral. I believe that this gesture turned out to be far more than symbolic, even if it is an official component of the liturgy. I may have opened a physical door, but he is the one who entered into the life of this local Church with vigor, resolve, strength and joy. He did so at a critical time in our history.

Among the key points included in his first homily, two stood out to me. The first related to his episcopal motto, **“Only Jesus.”** The Archbishop said: “The Lord wants it to be clear that it's not our things, our degrees, our resources that make the difference— but only him, only Jesus.” The other key point may have been little other than an aside, but in reality it has characterized his ministry among us. He continued: “I'm all in— but like you, I recognize that we're going to have success only to the extent that we can stay focused on Jesus, and only Jesus, and embrace his call to humility and simplicity and finding him as we serve those most in need.” But it was the first several words that stood out—**“I'm all in.”** Too often, I reflect upon how I have failed in this area. To truly be “all in” demands of us a response of faith, mixed in with hard work and persistence. It refuses to give up when the road ahead is treacherous.

In short, our shepherd “gets it” and is committed to making our church stronger and healthier. If we priests follow his lead, we will begin to rebuild this local church. We do so in collaboration with so many faith-filled laity, both those who work in the church, as well as those who volunteer. Together we will rebuild, but we must never forget. Our own Cathedral parish has been affected by the loss of the Riley Fund, an endowment held by the Archdiocese and established for the benefit of the Cathedral. It was forfeited during the final stages of negotiation. Prior to 2015, we drew approximately \$115,000 annually from the investment income, using those funds for the upkeep of the Cathedral. We've already absorbed the loss of that investment income for the past three years, as the Court ordered the assets frozen. But now it is completely gone. This is painful and disappointing, but we must move forward. I am committed to addressing our remaining roof debt, as well as other preservation improvements that need our attention in the future.

With the new safe environment protocols in place, it is crystal clear to every pastor that the rules have forever changed. To remain compliant with Archdiocesan protocols is challenging, as constant updating of records is

needed to ensure the safest environment for all. Unquestionably these protocols are in place today because some very brave men and women stood up and demanded that their voices be heard. But it is a miniscule price to pay, infinitely small, in order to help others gain a sense of confidence again in the Church. Some have lost that trust irrevocably, and I do not mean only those who were abused. Some laity are so fed up, they will likely never return to the fold. For others, it will take a very long time, but I believe that it can happen. I have been around the block enough to have witnessed amazing transformations. God works in mysterious ways, always seeking us out. For our part, let us keep our gaze fixed on Jesus.

- A new Vatican document entitled “Giving the Best of Yourself,” addresses the topic of athletics, showing forth the **Christian perspective on sports** and of the human person. Bravo! Twin Cities residents have seen three stadiums replace one. Stadium costs: Vikings @ \$1.1Billion in 2016 (\$587 per square foot); Twins @ \$545M in 2010; TCF Stadium (U of M Gophers) @ \$303M in 2009. The **Metrodome** (1982) was built for \$55 million (\$61 per square foot) and was home to all three teams. Just offering a little perspective.
- Before you complain about the rigors of airplane travel...It was 80 years ago this weekend that the **first trans-Pacific flight** took place. **Eighty-three flight hours**, two stops and 7,388 miles after leaving Oakland CA, a Fokker F.VIIB plane arrived in Brisbane, Australia. Today, while it would include a two-hour layover in Los Angeles, the same flight would take just 15 hours and 33 minutes of flying time.
- The internal dispute among German bishops over inter-communion at Catholic-Protestant weddings has been set aside. Cardinal-designate Ladaria of the CDF said that in an audience with Pope Francis, the Holy Father “came to the conclusion that the document is not mature enough to be published.” This would be a good topic for a future column, with its doctrinal issues that extend far beyond one country.
- I’m late to the ‘tech’ game, waiting years before finally texting. But could anyone explain how **Twitter** makes our lives better? Go count’em—exactly 140 characters!

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. John L. Ubel,  
Rector