

## **Catechism of the Catholic Church-Pillars of Faith Series**

Pillar 3: Life in Christ  
Bishop Hying

### **1:10 Opening Comments**

Good evening to all of you. Thank you so much for being here -- especially all those of you who have been here all three nights. You should get, like, ten extra points for doing that. (laughter) But, thank you.

I'm much better than last week. I was sick to death. I think sometimes God lets us be sick just so we appreciate not being sick when it goes away. But, I took an antibiotic over the weekend, so that helped me to turn the corner.

### **1:37 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Diocesan Mass at Camp Randall?**

I don't know if I told you this last week. For the first time I went to a Badgers' game, it was when they beat Michigan a couple weeks ago -- like, annihilated Michigan, right? (applause)

It was my first game ever at Camp Randall Stadium, and I got to meet the chancellor. She wants to have lunch sometime, which I think is a great idea. And I was thinking, next year is our 75th anniversary of the diocese; beginning in December of 2020, it will be 75 years since our diocese was created. And I thought, "Wouldn't it be neat to have a diocesan Mass at Camp Randall Stadium?" Wouldn't it? (laughter, applause) It's probably not legal, but it's worth asking, right? (more laughter) Wouldn't that be great? That's awesome.

So, we're going through the Catechism, and I just want to give a shout-out. There are still some extra copies in back. They're available, and all that's asked is that you make some sort of donation. I would just encourage every Catholic to have a copy of this, because it's just so magnificent. It's just a compilation of the essence of what we believe all between two covers -- the Catechism of the Catholic Church. And we've had it now for twenty-five years.

### **3:07: Review of Pillar I and Pillar II**

So two weeks ago we looked at what we believe, in terms of the Creed. Last week we looked at how God communicates life and grace and salvation to us through the Sacraments and through the Liturgy. And tonight we're looking at the moral life: our life in Christ. And it really is summed up, I think, in the question, "What are we to do?" What should we do? And all of us are faced at times with moral dilemmas. And we have to make a decision on something and we're not sure what the right decision is. And it's a

harder decision than “what color should I paint the kitchen,” because there are decisions we face that have moral dimensions to them. And sometimes we find ourselves in something really complicated that we're not quite sure what the right way is to go.

#### **4:06: Pilar III and ‘What Are We to Do?’**

And so, the beauty of our faith is that the Lord has clearly given us a path. He's given us the moral law. And these are guidelines, these are rules -- but they're more than rules. It's a way of life to allow us to flourish and to become the person that God has called us to be.

Twice in the Scriptures, in the New Testament, (<http://usccb.org/bible/luke/3>, <http://usccb.org/bible/john/6>) where people poignantly ask, “What should we do?” And the first time comes in the synoptic Gospels when the crowds hear John the Baptist preach. It says, “They are cut to the heart by his preaching.” They are cut to the heart. And John the Baptist's preaching was not sweetness and light. I mean, he was calling people to radical conversion. He's calling them to change. And yet, they come out in droves because they want to hear what he has to say, because he's speaking of the imminent break in human history of the Messiah -- that they need to be prepared in order to receive the Messiah.

So they hear him preach, and they say, “[What are we to do?](#)”

And he says to soldiers, “Don't bully anybody.”

He says to tax collectors, “Don't cheat anybody.”

He says, if you have an extra coat, give it away. If you have extra food, feed the hungry. Just basic acts of goodness. So, do good; avoid evil. That's pretty much what John the Baptist says.

The other time when that question surfaces is on Pentecost morning when Simon Peter gets up and, for the very first time, proclaims that Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, is the new meaning of human history. And again, it says that the crowds listening to his proclamation are cut to the heart. And they say, “What should we do -- What should we do with all of this? You've told us that Jesus has been raised from the dead and that's the life-changing experience. Practically, what do you want us to do?”

And he says, “Turn from your sin and be baptized. Come join us in the mystery of this new communion called the Church.” And it says that that moment was so powerful that three thousand people were baptized in the power of the Holy Spirit. And so, the Church is born in this explosion of grace.

So that question, “What are we to do?” is one that often cuts us to the heart.

And it's a question that the rich young man asks Christ. So I just want to read this passage from [Luke](#) (<http://usccb.org/bible/luke/18>, Luke 18:18-23); we've heard it often.

It says, "A rich man approached Jesus, knelt before him and asked him, 'Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?'"

"Why do you call me 'good'?" Jesus answered. "No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not murder. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony. Honor your father and mother."

"All these I've kept since I was a boy," the man replied.

"When Jesus heard this, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Go sell everything you have and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come follow me."

"When he heard this, he became very sad because he was very wealthy. And, he walked away."

I think of this moment, this moment of opportunity -- the most opportune moment in this young man's life because he's asking the right question. You know, "What do I have to do in order to inherit eternal life? What's the right thing to do? How should I act?"

And Jesus gives a two-fold answer. He says, "Keep the commandments. Obey all the commandments. But secondly, this one thing that's getting between you and God is your wealth."

So, he doesn't ask the rich young man to give away all of his things, because things are bad. But it's because Christ could read that young man's heart, and He knew that the one thing holding him bound from becoming a great apostle, a great saint, was his attachment to his possessions. And so he says, "Go sell all you have, and give to the poor."

The young man obeyed all the commandments, but he couldn't make that one final surrender. And so, he walks away. Disappears from the pages of Scripture. Disappears from history.

When I hear that passage, I often wonder, "What would've happened if the man had said, 'Yes'?" Would he have become a great saint? Would we have his feast day in the Liturgical calendar? Would we have his writings? Would we know something of his preaching? Would he have converted thousands of people?

He did none of that, because in his moment of opportunity, he couldn't quite muster the ability to do what Christ asked him to do. And so, he walks away.

But it's a great example of that whole question in the Scriptures: "What should we do?"

#### **10:04 'What Must You Do?'**

I met a whole bunch of different people today for a whole bunch of different reasons. And one of them was somebody who was asking me what I thought she should do in a particular situation. And it came to me just to say to her, "I think you should forgive. I think you should pray for this person that you're struggling with."

And that wasn't necessarily the answer that I was thinking I was going to give her, but it just kind of came out of nowhere. Came from the Holy Spirit, I think. And then after she left, it occurred to me, you know, there's somebody in my life right now that I'm struggling to forgive. It's nobody in this diocese, so don't be worried. (laughter) It's in another diocese, far, far, far away. (more laughter)

And I thought, "You know, how can I say to this person (that) you just need to forgive. It's that simple." When it struck me between the eyes there's a situation in my life that I need healing for -- that I need forgiveness for. That I need to forgive and to ask forgiveness.

And I thought, tonight, chances are some of you struggle with that, too. We all struggle with forgiveness. And maybe right now there's somebody in your life that you're really struggling to love, to forgive, to rebuild a relationship. And sometimes it feels no matter what you do, it's the wrong thing or it doesn't work. So what I try to do in prayer in those moments is to imagine the person I'm struggling to forgive standing at the foot of the cross, standing at the foot of the cross looking up at Jesus. And the crucified Jesus looking down at that person. And I picture myself behind Jesus looking at that person through the prism of Jesus' merciful eyes. Whenever I do that in prayer, it just automatically begins to change how I view that person. Because, I come to realize Jesus loves that person as much as he loves me. Jesus died for that person as much as He died for me. And then forgiveness becomes at least easier, at least possible.

### **12:25 'We Live in a Culture that Allows Everything and Forgives Nothing'**

So often I think what the Lord is asking us to do is to forgive and to love and to give a benefit of the doubt. Cardinal George put it powerfully, I think. He said, "We live in a culture that allows everything and forgives nothing." Isn't that true?

We live in a culture that permits everything but forgives nothing. He said, "We live in a Church that doesn't permit certain things, but the possibility of forgiving everything is always there." That's the counter-cultural witness that living our Christian faith gives to us.

### **13:49 'Be Holy'**

So the moral life is really about becoming holy. And holiness is to God what humanness is to us. Holiness is God's nature. I can't think of it right now, but the original Hebrew word for holy essentially means "different." So when Isaiah has this magnificent vision of God's glory in the Temple, and he hears the angels singing "Holy, Holy, Holy..." -- you know, "Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus," in Latin -- what the angels are really saying is, "God is different, different, different." God is God, and we're not God. Right?

And when we learn that lesson, that's a great primary lesson for us. Because when I let God be God and I let myself be loved as a beloved daughter or son, then I'm in right relationship with God.

So God gives us the moral life so that we can become holy as God is holy. And that will make us different in the eyes of this world. Not different in an eccentric way, although people might view us that way, but different for the sake of Christ's difference. Difference to make a difference in the world.

#### **14:25            The Holiness of Saint Mother Teresa**

Harvard University gave an honorary degree to Mother Teresa back in the 1980s. And all of these Harvard intellectuals were all falling over themselves to meet her and to talk to her. And Harvard University isn't exactly the capital of Roman Catholicism, right? I mean, it's pretty intellectual, pretty sophisticated, pretty not about religion. And here's all these Harvard professors and intellectuals falling all over Mother Teresa.

Somebody interviewed one of them and asked them, "Why did you find her so entrancing?" Because she's not exactly what Harvard's about.

And they said, "She was different. She was different than anyone we have ever had here before, and that difference attracted me." That's what holiness is. So when we set out to live the good, abundant life that Christ has given us, what we're really saying is, "Lord, I want to be holy as you are holy." And God loves us so much, He wants to share His nature with us.

Saint Irenaeus famously said in the fourth century, "God became man so that man could become God."

It sounds just a little heretical, because we never become fully God, right? But the saints show us that we can come awfully close to the holiness that God desires for us. That's why you're here tonight, because in one way or another, you are seeking God. You are seeking holiness. You are seeking the truth.

#### **16:09            What Is Truth? Is There Objective Truth?**

As Christians, as Catholics, we're convicted that we can come to know the truth of things. That there's such a thing as objective truth. And that in our minds and hearts, we can come to know what that is and we can live it out. That would have seemed self-evident a thousand years ago. Everybody would have said, "Well, of course! The Church teaches us that truth. It's been revealed to us by God."

We live in a world today that kind of echoes the cynical question of [Pilate](http://usccb.org/bible/john/18) (<http://usccb.org/bible/john/18>, John 18:37). Remember? Jesus is standing before Pilate in John's Gospel, and Pilate asks essentially, "Who are you - what are you about?"

And He says, "I have come to bear witness to the truth. And all those who listen to the truth hear my voice."

And Pilate says, "What's truth? What's that?" Like, what does that mean in light of power politics? What does that have to do with the price of tea in Rome, right? Just this kind of ethereal, philosophical truth thing. It wasn't what Pilate was about.

### **17:19            Love and Truth**

But we can come to know the truth as we come to know the love of God. I think a beautiful way to look at our faith is to say it's the perfect fusion of love and truth. Because love without truth becomes sentimental, kind of empty, just kind of placid. Truth without love becomes harsh, judgmental, rigid. Put love and truth together, and you have the firepower of the Gospel. You have Jesus' ministry. You have the power of Jesus preaching.

The day of my appointment, there was a press conference at Holy Name Heights, and the local press here from Madison was there. And I knew all the questions weren't going to be just pieces of cake, right? But the very first question was, "Are you conservative or liberal?" That was the first question. (laughter) It's like, okay, great; I'm in Madison. (more laughter) Welcome home.

So I said, "I'm neither one; I'm Catholic." (laughter) Isn't that a great answer, I think? I mean, I don't know. (applause) And sometimes that truth of our faith, sometimes it seemingly cuts to the right. Other times, it seemingly cuts to the left. But in the end, it's the truth that Christ has revealed to us. The Gospel has political implications, but it is not political in and of itself. But when we live it out in this world, it's going to change events; and it's going to challenge hearts; and, hopefully, transform lives. So we're all about coming to the truth and being convicted that we can know the truth.

### **19:13            A Moral Person: 'Do Good, avoid Evil'**

To be a moral person, then, is to do good, avoid evil. And we realize that the more we practice good, the more good we become. And the more good we are, the easier it's going to become to do good.

It's kind of (like) when you go to the gym, and you start lifting weights. The more times you lift weights, the greater your capacity becomes to lift more. So it is with our moral muscles. When we do the right thing, when we exercise our muscles of forgiveness and sacrifice and purity and honesty and generosity, the greater our capacity becomes to do that.

All of the martyrs who gave up their lives rather than their faith could only do that at the end because they'd really just been doing the same thing their whole life. They'd been

getting ready their whole life for that final moment of self-gift. Because, they'd been making a gift of themselves all along. So, we are moral agents.

There are some decisions in our life that may not matter too much. Do you want Pepsi or Coke with that pizza? That doesn't matter much. Other questions are live-giving and also potentially death-giving. People wrestle with terrible moral dilemmas, especially today. So when people ask me, "Why does the church teach what it does about a particular issue -- whether it's same-sex marriage or abortion or invitro fertilization -- I always want to say, "Do you have about four hours? Because I can give you the five-minute answer, but it's going to take me four hours to explain all of what goes into the Catholic moral vision of things."

We don't have four hours, obviously, and there are so many issues we could talk about. But what I really wanted to do tonight was to lay out some general principles so that you can take those principles and then apply them to particular moral situations and ethical issues and say, "Okay. This is why the Church teaches what she does. This makes sense." Because, once you understand our basic principles, then everything else falls into a coherence; it makes sense. It's why we teach what we do.

But back to that love-truth thing. I've walked with people who have struggled with many different teachings of the Church. I've been with people who are living far from the Church in terms of their moral life. And I always think, the place to start is just to lavish love upon them -- to affirm for them the goodness of their humanity, that they know that they're a beloved child of God. That's the place to start and to walk with them and to listen to them and to know their struggle. But also, to be willing to entertain their questions and understand what the Church teaches enough to be able to say, "But, look at it this way for a minute. Because, the Church isn't out to hurt you or to persecute you or make you feel bad about yourself. But, teachings of the Church are to set you free so that you can become fully the person that God is calling you to be." I think that's the adventure of Catholicism.

### **22:53 Three Contemporary 'isms': Relativism, Materialism and Secularism**

I think we struggle with three "isms" in the world. And we can think of Catholicism as the ultimate "ism" that we're living here. But we live in a cultural moment that's very much controlled by relativism, right? Relativism essentially says, "There is no objective truth." So it's like, I have my truth; you have your truth. It doesn't matter if those truths agree; we define what truth is for us -- what works for me. So relativism would say in imitation of Pilate, "What is truth? We can't know what truth is; or, there is no ultimate truth."

So relativism is all around us. And we see that to confidently assert something to be true in the moral realm, people will automatically say often, "Yeah, that's being arrogant." Or, "That's being exclusive." Or, "That's being judgmental." But we believe that God has

revealed the fundamental truth of our nature, and that when I discover that truth and live it, it sets me free. It sets me free to be the person God has wanted me to be.

The second “ism,” I think, is materialism. And materialism, essentially, says that only what we can see, touch, control, own, feel is what's real. So, it kind of shuts the doors and windows against God. You see that in the whole argument between science and religion, right? That science gets to what's ultimately real; religion is just kind of this pious myth to make us feel better about being alone in the universe. But I always say that science can beautifully explore and help us understand “what” exists; it can never get at the “why.”

Why is there something, rather than nothing? Why does the world work so remarkably in symmetry and harmony, despite the ways that we mess it up? Why am I alive at all?

We think of the complexity just of our human body, all the things going on in our body that are just happening, and we don't even have to think about them! Each one of us is a walking miracle, and we should walk up to every person we meet and just say, “Your existence is miraculous to me.” It'd be interesting to see what their response would be, right? (laughter) Say that to somebody at work that you're struggling with (more laughter), just say, “Your existence is miraculous to me!” Right? The fact that I'm mad at you and you're still here. But, materialism just kind of reduces us to highly evolved animals, reduces us to consumers, reduces us to just this life.

Our heart tells us there's so much more. Our heart tells us there must be an eternal life. Our heart tells us that love is at the heart of the universe. Our heart tells us that it matters how we live in this world.

### **26:17 Secularism: Freedom of Religion vs. Freedom of Worship**

And the third “ism” is secularism, which kind of, again, pushes God out of the picture. A good example would be, “This country isn't about freedom for religion, it's freedom from religion.” So, people came to this country seeking religious freedom. They weren't seeking freedom from religion; they were seeking the freedom to practice their own religion. There's a fundamental difference there.

Oftentimes today people will speak not of religious freedom in the First Amendment, but they'll talk about freedom of worship. That's a dangerous distinction. Because, freedom of worship essentially is just saying, “We don't care what you do in your buildings on Sunday morning. You know, if you want to follow that pious Jesus myth on Sundays in your buildings, that's fine.”

But religious freedom is bigger than what we do here at Mass on Sunday morning. Religious freedom indicates that we have a right and a responsibility to contribute to the common good, to bring our values to the public square, and to shape moral and public policy based on what's good for humanity. And the moral law informs us of what that is.

So if we factored out all the contributions of the Catholic Church in this country to the world of healthcare, education, social services and service to the poor, there'd be huge holes. There'd be huge gaps. So for us as Catholics, we've always seen part of our integrity of faith is not simply what we do in our buildings. It's what we do as contributors to the common good -- that we're called to transform society and build the kingdom of God. So our vocation is to beatitude and to freedom.

## **28:22            Freedom is the Ability to Do What God Wants**

Today, oftentimes people would say, "Freedom is the license to do what I want." Right? The Christian definition of freedom is different. We would say, "Freedom is the ability to do what God wants." It's freedom for excellence. It's freedom from sin. It's freedom for holiness.

When I was in parish work, I always taught in the grade school, and I know your priests admirably do the same thing. I was talking to Father Steve about how much he enjoys going into the classes and the great questions that kids ask. Kids ask great, great questions. One student asked me, "So John the Baptist baptized Jesus; who baptized John the Baptist?" (laughter) Isn't that a great question?! I was talking to a little group of first graders in Indiana, and we had a Q&A right before Mass. And, I said we have time for one more question. This little girl raised her hand and said, "When is this going to be over?" (laughter) That was her question. That was like the greatest question I've ever been asked, right?

So if I see you raise your hand, I'm not going to answer the question. (laughter) But kids have great questions. And so, we teach and we minister and we love in the public square, because God is calling us to that. But my point -- I just rediscovered my point: I would teach eighth grade religion. In eighth grade religion, we'd always go through the Ten Commandments. So I'd say to the eighth graders, "How would you feel if you went home tonight and your parents said to you, 'There are no more rules. You can go out... You can come home any time you want. If you don't come home tonight at all, that's okay. There are no more rules about anything. You can just come and go as you please. I'm not going to ask you to do anything. You don't have to be here. You can do whatever you want.' How would you feel about that?"

Invariably, every single one of them would say, "I would hate that." This is an eighth grader. This is a teenager saying, "I want rules!"

And I said, "If we didn't have rules, we'd feel that our parents didn't love us. If our parents just threw out all the rules, we'd feel that they didn't love us because they wouldn't care about us." Isn't that great?! Apply that to God.

The moral life that God gives us is because He loves us. And He loves us enough to give us the whole truth. And sometimes that truth is hard. And we knew that as kids, and we know that as adults. Sometimes the truth is hard. Sometimes it's really difficult to

embrace and accept a particular truth. But, God gives us the grace to be faithful. And, even when we fail, we can still come back to Him. We can still come back to Him.

There's a young couple who couldn't conceive a child that came to me, and they wanted to try particular ways of conceiving. Actually, the husband wanted to try particular ways that weren't in line with the Church's teaching, but his wife didn't want to do that. They were really struggling, and it was creating a conflict between them. And, I think the husband wanted me to say, "What you want to do is okay." The wife wanted me to say, "Stick with what the Church says."

So I said, "Let's just pray about this." It's always a good response when you're not quite sure what to say first. (laughter) Right? Let's just pray about this. And we prayed about it and talked about it. And I said, let's just keep praying, and let's just wait. You don't have to make this decision in a big hurry. Let's just pray on this; let's just give it to the Lord. Three months later, she conceived a child. And I think maybe it's because they just calmed down about it. And they just let God be God in their life. They just kind of surrendered.

So sometimes when we surrender, we paradoxically get what we wanted or what we were seeking, when we stop thinking that I have to have this right now. So, I think that's part of the moral life, as well.

### **32:47            Dignity of the Person**

Here are two things that the Church really introduced into the whole debate, I think, as modern nation-states were emerging and as constitutions were being written. One was the dignity of the person, the dignity of the individual person made in the image and likeness of God with inherent rights and responsibilities. So the human person is always the ultimate end and objective of economics, politics, culture and society; people are never a means to an end. And think of the prophetic nature of that when you think of totalitarian systems like Nazism or Communism where people were just ground up by the state -- where the individual meant absolutely nothing. Where the state wasn't here to serve us; we were here to serve the state or the furor or the leader or the politburo or whatever form of oppression was currently rampant.

So to lift up the dignity of the person -- that the person is the ultimate end of every economic, political, cultural action? That's really important.

### **34:00            The Common Good**

The other is the primacy of the common good. That it's not just me asserting my rights. It's not just me getting what I want. But that, when we work together and contribute to the common good, then we create a culture and a society of human flourishing where even the weakest and the most marginalized find their place within the beauty of the whole.

Think of Paul's writings in [Corinthians](http://usccb.org/bible/1corinthians/12) (<http://usccb.org/bible/1corinthians/12>, 1 Corinthians 12:12-26) about the body as an image for the Church -- that we all belong to the body. And some of us are feet. Some of us are fingers. Some of us are elbows. And, we can't say to anybody else in the body, "You don't belong to the body." Because, we're all linked together in the body. And when part of the body is glorified, all the parts share its joy. When one part is in pain, all the parts share its sorrow. That's a beautiful image of the common good, of the commonweal of our being together.

So two questions, I think, that the moral life asks of us are: "What does it mean to live as a person of dignity made in the likeness of God?" and "How do we live that together in a culture where we can have fundamental moral principles that allow each human person to flourish?" Each human person to flourish.

### **35:30            The Moral Act**

The Catechism goes into the sources of morality. There are three criteria when we look at the moral nature of a particular human act: what is the object chosen (is it a good end, is it something good we're trying to accomplish?); what is our intention (so sometimes we have good intentions, but we may justify doing something objectively wrong because the intention was good); and then, circumstances. So Church would say certain things are always objectively wrong, such as taking a human life. But, there are circumstances and intentions that may diminish or even take away the culpability or the guilt of the person. We all kind of know that. There are things that are inherently good; there are things that are inherently wrong. But sometimes, the knowledge, the intention, the circumstance, all those need to be weighed when we look at, you know, is this person culpable or guilty of what they have done here.

And that's where, I think, going to Confession really just helps us sort that out, because our priests are trained to help us think through the morality of our actions and to help us to see, perhaps, what's the right thing to do here.

### **36:57            Formed Conscience**

Catechism talks about the power of conscience. And, we are convicted that God had written on the human heart our ability to know right and wrong. But isn't that true? Think back when you were a kid, and you did something that you knew was wrong. And maybe you tried to pretend that you didn't know it was wrong. But, in your heart you knew it was wrong. You can never fool your mom; I mean, your mom always knew, right?

But, God has written on the human heart our ability to understand the difference between right and wrong, and we call that the gift of conscience. We also are obligated as Christians to form our conscience, to study the faith, to understand why the Church teaches what she does on particular subjects. So when we come up against something that the Church teaches that we either don't understand or don't agree with, our first response

shouldn't be, "Well, the Church is wrong, and I'm right." That shouldn't be the first response.

The first response should be "There's something here I need to learn. There's something here I need to study more. There's something here that I'm missing." So think about it this way: Think of a set of scales. And on one scale are billions of people who have lived this faith. On that same side of the scale are the Old Testament and the New Testament, the Catechism, the lives of the saints, the lives of the martyrs, Thomas Aquinas's "Summa Theologica," the entire weight of our Catholic tradition and teaching. That's on one side of the scale. And the other side is me (laughing)... on the other side is me with my limited human experience and my limited thoughts. You know, maybe I need to delve into the richness of the other side of the scale before I come to some definitive conclusion about what's right or wrong for me. We need that humility, right? To say, you know, the Church in her wisdom and her divine inspiration has given us this path. And so, we're called to study the faith and to form our consciences well so that when we make decisions, we're doing it with all the tools at hand that we can think of.

### **39:20            Four Cardinal Virtues**

Then the Catechism goes into the virtues. So we look at the four principle or cardinal [Virtues](#). They're: prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.

So prudence -- I want to read this to you because I think prudence gets a bad rap. When you hear the word "prudence" it usually means somebody that's afraid to do anything or afraid to act. But, that's not it.

Here it is: "Prudence is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it." So prudence is knowing what to do and when not to do anything. Prudence is knowing when to speak and knowing when to remain silent, right? Prudence is making those moral choices and growing in our ability to discern what's the right thing to do in this situation.

Justice is the moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor. So, justice is giving everything its due. What are the just demands or obligations in our lives? How do I live (showing) justice toward my spouse, toward my children, toward my parents, toward my church, toward my fellow workers, toward my boss, toward my friends, toward the poor? So, justice is giving every person and every situation its proper due.

Fortitude is the moral virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good. When I was here for the Festival Mass, I think I preached about the seventh Station of the Cross: Jesus falls the second time. To me, that's the perfect example of fortitude. Jesus is halfway up the hill. He has none of the energy that He had at the beginning. He's still far from the top, and He falls down. But, He gets up. He gets up, even though He has no energy. It's so hard to be in the middle. Anybody can start

anything, and when the finish line is in sight, you can muster that final burst of enthusiasm to cross that finish line. But the battle is won or lost in the middle. It's hard to be in the middle of a school year. Think of February 7th. (laughter) Hard to be in the middle of a marriage, hard to be in the middle of a project, hard to be in the middle of life. Because in the middle is where you just kind of lose your enthusiasm and then you kind of say, "Well, yeah, I need to do that, but I'm distracted by this."

But to have that singleness of purpose to every day, say, "No. I'm going to persevere in living this moral life. I'm going to persevere in my path toward God." That's hard, because sometimes we just feel lukewarm and we need God to fire us up.

#### **42:32            Temperance: Pleasure, Happiness & Joy**

And the fourth virtue is temperance, which is balance. It's the virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods. I think here about the distinction between pleasure, happiness and joy. Pleasure is a fleeting sensation when we are doing or experience something that gives us good sensory vibes. So for me, eating a big bowl of Peanut Butter Cap'n Crunch in the morning gives me pleasure. (laughter) Right? We all have pleasurable experiences, and pleasure isn't bad. But, pleasure is fleeting. Pleasure stops the second that last spoonful of cereal goes into my mouth; it's over. Our life has to be more than pleasure.

So happiness: happiness is being married to the right person, having the right job, enjoying my health, having enough money in my pocket, feeling good about my life, knowing that things are good; I'm happy. But any one of those things could leave me tomorrow. I could lose my health. I could lose my spouse. I could lose my job. You know, my whole life could just be blown up in a moment, and people experience the terrible tragedy of accidents or things that befall them. So, it has to be bigger than happiness.

So, joy! Joy is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Joy is the byproduct of falling in love with God and giving our life away in service to Him and others. I'd say the byproduct of a life well-lived in Christ is overflowing, abundant joy. And I think the saints show us that you can have a life that doesn't have a lot of pleasure in it. You can even have a life that doesn't have a lot of happiness in it, and it can still be joyful. And conversely, you can have every pleasure and happiness possible and still be miserable because you don't have love at the center of your life; you don't have God.

#### **44:48            Joy - That Which the World Cannot Give**

There's a young couple I met -- Well, they were middle-aged, actually, by the time I met them in my first parish assignment. They were married, and early in their marriage they were in a terrible car accident. And, the wife ended up as a quadriplegic -- could only move her head. The husband had no permanent damage from the accident. And they're

young. I mean, they're like 30-years-old; they didn't have children yet. And friends of the husband said to him, "Why don't you get divorced? I mean, you're young. You're going to be bound to this situation for the rest of your life. You have a right to a different life."

He said, "But I love my wife; I married her. I married her for better or for worse."

So, I would go bring her Communion, but he would take care of her in the morning, leave for work. He worked maybe six hours a day. A caretaker came in to attend to his wife's needs. He'd be back in the mid-afternoon, and he'd spend every day with her, never went out. Just was there with her. And then, this has been going on for, like, fifteen years when I got to know them. They were the most joyful people I'd ever met. There'd be no reason for them to be joyful, right? I mean, they could say, "Woe is us! This is terrible! How did this happen?!" And, I'm sure it took them a while to work through that, to get there. But they had gotten there. They had a joy that this world couldn't give, because their joy was not dependent on external circumstances. It was dependent on God's love for them, and they had come to understand who they were, bound in Christ. So when I think of temperance -- temperance is knowing that, ultimately, the only thing that's going to give us joy is God. And everything else is less important than that.

#### **46:55            Mortal & Venial Sin**

The Catechism talks about the distinction between mortal and venial sin. And sometimes, people ask me, "Where does that distinction come from?" You look at [John's Epistles](http://uscgb.org/bible/1john/5) (<http://uscgb.org/bible/1john/5>, 1 John 5:16-17), he talks about deadly sin. And he says, "Some sin is deadly; some is not." So, mortal sin would be sin that's so significant that it ruptures our relationship with God. And when we commit mortal sin, we need the remedy of Reconciliation; we need Confession. We need forgiveness for that mortal sin to be healed.

Venial sin are less serious sins. And one way we believe that venial sin can be forgiven is through the Eucharist. But also, we should confess venial sins in Confession, because we receive grace there, as well. I think in our culture today, we're afraid of talking about sin. Or, we're afraid of saying that something is wrong. Or, we're afraid we're going to make somebody feel bad. But, if I never come to know myself as a sinner, I'm never going to know the joy of God's mercy. If I never acknowledge that I've done something wrong, how will I ever know the power of God's forgiveness. If I simply walk through life and kind of say, "Yeah, I've got it all together. I haven't really done anything too bad. I'm all right." It seems kind of thin gruel to me. It's why some of the greatest sinners became the greatest saints, because they realized the enormity of what they had been forgiven. And when they looked at anybody, they said, "That could be me. So, I can't sit in judgement of anybody. Because, that could be me!"

So the greatest saints had great affinity with great sinners, because they saw themselves in them and thought: "That would be me without Christ. But I want to introduce Christ to

that person so they can become more like Him and find love and forgiveness that I've discovered.”

**49:04            Confession is Great!**

So, I always encourage everybody -- I think we talked about this last time -- to go to Confession once a month. And I think I said, “Try that for a year.” Go for twelve months in a row, once a month to Confession. And ask yourself at the end of the year, “Am I happier? Am I more joyful? Am I better in my living of virtue? Have some of my sinful habits diminished or disappeared?” If the answer is “yes,” keep going, right? If the answer is “no,” talk to Father Randy or Father Steve, right? (laughter) They'll be able to help you. (more laughter)

But, Confession is great. Confession gets a bad rap sometimes. It's like people are afraid of it, or I don't need to go to it. But, when I go to Confession, I just discover (that) I'm wrapped in the mercy of God. So, the priest is not there to judge you. He's not there to yell at you. He's not there to be anything other than the minister of God's mercy to you.

I was blessed to hear Confessions in Third World prisons when I did mission work in the Dominican Republic. You haven't seen the bottom of life till you've been in a Third World prison. I heard Confessions in some of the toughest places. So, there's nothing I haven't heard. And there are people that would confess things that were almost beyond description, and yet they'd come to a point of such deep repentance, such deep transformation, deep conversion. So, the power of our faith is that, in the power of Jesus' cross and resurrection, anything can be healed or forgiven if we turn to God. Anything can be healed or forgiven, if we turn to God. And Confession is the path that leads us to that.

So I just encourage everybody: go to Confession as often as you can.

I once figured in my parish if every person went to Confession -- if everybody actually listened to what I said and went to Confession once a month -- I wouldn't have time to do anything -- not even sleep. But, we never got there, so I always got sleep in. But, I don't know? Wouldn't it be wild? Wouldn't it be wild if every Catholic in the world went to Mass every Sunday and went to Confession once a month, and prayed ten minutes a day and did one thing? We'd change the world! We would transform this country! Because Catholicism is this sleeping giant. And if it ever wakes up fully, we will become agents of transformation for justice and mercy and peace and compassion. Look at the amazing things that happen when only, essentially, nine percent of Catholics are doing 80 percent of the heavy lifting! Did you know that? Nine percent of Catholics do 80 percent of the contributing, volunteering, leading and serving. What would happen if that number went up to 50 percent? Can you imagine?

**52:12 Bishop Hying 's All-time Favorite Song is...**

I just wanted to thank our musicians again. My all-time favorite song is "Be Thou My Vision," so when we sang that tonight, that just captured my heart. But, thank you for being here every single night and for your prayer and your musical leadership and sharing your talent. Thank you so much. (applause)

I also became aware tonight that there's daycare. So, I just want to thank the people that are taking care of children tonight so that their parents can be here. So, thank you. (applause)

And all those that help with the reception and just everybody here at Saint Dennis. Thank you very much.

**52:57 October 9, Feast Day of Saint Dennis**

Speaking of Saint Dennis, tomorrow's the Feast of Saint Dennis. So, happy Feast Day to all of you. (applause) Saint Dennis was a missionary and martyr, and he evangelized Paris in the third century. I don't think there was much there, but what was there he evangelized. He brought the Good News of the Gospel. He was martyred for his faith. He was beheaded, and tradition says that he rose back to life, picked up his head and carried it to the place where Saint-Denis, or Saint Dennis Church, is built right outside of Paris. But, he stands for us as an example that we're all called to be on mission. That we're called to share our faith with those around us. And, Catechism reminds us that one of the best ways to do that is by living our faith. That we can say all the right things, but unless people see the authenticity of our witness -- not that we're perfect, not that we're not sinners -- but, that we're striving to live this good, abundant life of the Gospel, then our words and our witness are fused into one beautiful testimony to the power and the truth of Christ.

**54:20 Never Lose Confidence**

Somebody asked me at the break if I think we could really get Camp Randall Stadium for Mass. I don't know, but... (laughter) when I was Auxiliary Bishop in Milwaukee -- You know, Milwaukee has all the "fests" every weekend. And I was celebrating Mass for a Fiesta Mexicana. It was on a Sunday. It was on the main stage of Summerfest. And a group of atheists filed suit because if you went to the Mass, you got into the Fiesta Mexicana for free, and they didn't think that was right.

So Milwaukee Journal interviewed me and asked me what I thought. And I just said, "We lovingly invite our atheist brothers and sisters to come to Mass with us. And once they've experienced the astonishing love of Christ, all these silly arguments will end." So I thought, the Journal's not going to do anything with that. It was on the front page of the Sunday Journal! (laughter) So I was just, I was just laughing my head off, because it's

like, sometimes you just say the most wild thing and you think, “well nobody's going to listen to that; they're not going to print that.” And it ends up being so. So, we can never lose confidence.

Sometimes we're afraid to invite somebody to Mass. Or, we're afraid to talk about God at work. Or, we're afraid to give the moral answer because we don't know how it's going to be received. And yet, whenever I've invited somebody to pray or invited somebody to church or talked about a moral issue -- and, I don't think it's just because I have the collar on -- but I think people are open. People want to hear from us. So, don't be afraid. Don't be afraid of witnessing to the Lord. Kind of just step out of that comfort zone and just kind of go out on a limb. I think you'll be amazed at people's response to you. I'm just going to pray that the Holy Spirit stir us all up. Because, hands down, guaranteed, there's somebody in your life, as there are many people in mine, who need to hear the saving Gospel of Christ and haven't heard it yet. You may be the only person in their life. It's like, they don't know it, but they're waiting for you to tell them. They're waiting for you to share your experience of Jesus with them. And it doesn't have to be Bible-thumping or Catechism-thumping, it just needs to come from you, in your words and in your experience. What a powerful thing!

#### **56:47 Catholic Social Teaching**

I want to talk before we finish about the social teaching of the Church. So, I mentioned at the beginning the two fundamental principles of how the Church views morality. One is the dignity of the person. The other is the common good. So cohesion between the individual and society -- that both are important. And in the Church's social teaching, we see this beautiful set of principles. That if we applied them, even if you didn't believe in God and you still lived Catholic social teaching, it'd still be a good way to organize society. Because, it just is a beautiful way to allow people to flourish.

Catholic social teaching really starts as a body of thought back in 1891 when Pope Leo XIII wrote an encyclical called “Rerum Novarum.” It's Latin for “of new things.” And, he was addressing what, at the time, was called the social question. And the social question was, “What does the Church have to say to the people who have come to the cities from rural areas, are crammed into slums and working in factories under very dangerous conditions?” What does the Church have to say about that? The Church needs to say something about that.

And so, he spoke of several things. He balanced the right to private property with the right of people to have their basic needs met. He balanced the right of workers with the right of free enterprise. And what he was really calling for was a capitalism that was human, and that was just. But it was the first time that a pope commented on social matters, and it became the basis of a whole series of papal encyclicals that lay out some fundamental principles for us. So, there are eight of them, and I would just like to address them briefly.

The first one, again, is the dignity of the human person. That at the heart of the whole human enterprise has to be the absolute dignity and right of every human being. And that each human person enjoys rights, but also has responsibilities. And, those are not given to us through the beneficence of the state. They're given to us by God. So, a state does not give them, and a state cannot take them away. We think of the right to life, the right to be born. Without that right, the other rights make no difference. Think of the right to have food and shelter and medicine, the right to an education, the right to employment that is justly paid, the right to live in safely, the right to have access to culture. I mean, all those things the Church would say are inherent human rights that every person enjoys, not because somebody else decided that you should have them, but we have them simply because we are children of God.

**1:00:06**                      **Rights & Responsibilities**

As Americans we're really good about asserting our rights. We all have rights. But rights without responsibilities gets lopsided. So, the Church would say, "With every right comes a responsibility." So, yes, I have a right to employment that's justly paid. I also have a responsibility to put in a full day's work for what I get paid. Yes, I have a right to the material things I need to live a dignified life; I also have the responsibility to share my wealth with the poor. I have the right of free speech; but I also have the responsibility to speak wisely and prudently and to say only the things that will build up others and contribute to the common good. So, human dignity coupled with rights and responsibilities.

**1:01:00**                      **Principle of Solidarity**

The other dimension of Catholic social teaching is solidarity. And Saint John Paul II talked about solidarity a lot. It kind of goes back to Saint Paul's image of the body (<http://usccb.org/bible/1corinthians/12>, 1 Corinthians 12:12-26), to speak of the Church and of the common good. Solidarity means the deep conviction that all of us are in this together and that somehow one person isn't going to succeed or one group isn't going to succeed at the expense of another. I think in our society today, we radically need solidarity. Because, the opposite of solidarity is tribalism. The opposite of solidarity is groups and interest groups fighting and asserting themselves over others at the diminishment of others. So, whenever I look at social media, I don't see a lot of solidarity, right? It's a lot of the opposite of it. So when we live solidarity, it's looking at the whole and saying, "Every person has the right to have what they need to flourish as human beings."

### **1:02:19 The Power of Solidarity: When the Pope Went To Poland for the First Time**

So, John Paul is elected pope in 1978. And, he wants to go to Poland the next year of 1979. And, President Brezhnev of the Soviet Union calls up the President of Poland and says, "Don't let him in. Don't let him in. Because, if you let him in, he's going to speak about human rights and he's going to speak about Jesus, and he's going to speak about solidarity. And, that's going to stir up all this trouble, and we're not going to be able to handle that."

And the Polish president said, "I have to let him in; he's Polish!" I mean, how do you tell the Polish Pope that he can't come back to Poland, right? (laughter) So he comes back to Poland in this epic trip in 1979. And he's in Victory Square in Warsaw, and it's Pentecost Sunday and there's over a million people at this Mass. And he never said "Communism is bad." He never said "Overthrow the government." He never said anything volatile like that. He simply spoke of human rights being grounded in the dignity of being a child of God. That's what he spoke about. And at one point in his homily, he said, "Jesus Christ cannot be erased from human history." Because, that's what Communists were trying to do -- erase Christ from history, from the collective memory. When he said that, he could not go on for twenty minutes because people were cheering, shouting, crying, singing, dancing. And the Communist officials looked at this on television and said, "We're done." Because they -- people -- stopped being afraid. They stopped being afraid, and they looked at each other and said, "Why are we afraid? If we all stand up together and just live the life that God has called us to live, there's no government that can keep us down."

So, that's what spawned the birth of solidarity in Poland. That spawned the destabilization of Communism in Poland. That spawned the whole collapse of the Eastern Bloc, which destabilized Russia itself. No wonder they tried to shoot John Paul. So when they tried to assassinate him in 1981, it was all connected to that. But he spoke of Catholic social teaching and the power of this.

### **1:04:45 Subsidiarity**

The third principle is subsidiarity. And it just means that things should be done at the most local level. And that makes sense, doesn't it? Our government is a great example of subsidiarity. We have the federal level, the state level, the municipal level. There are things that are done on the municipal level. It doesn't make sense to have the federal government collecting our garbage, right? But, it (also) doesn't make sense that our municipality is going to be involved in national defense. So, there are certain things that need to be done on different levels.

That's true in the church, as well. There are times I need to learn as bishop, like, what's my role. What's legitimate for the parish level versus the diocesan level. So, subsidiarity. It protects us from the over-weening control of the state. And Pope Pius XI talked a lot about subsidiarity in the 1920s and '30s as totalitarianism was taking over Europe. That

the state shouldn't have control of everything; that (there should be) free associations of people. And we see that in the rich texture of our U.S. culture.

**1:05:59      Dignity of Work**

The fourth principle is the dignity of work. Christianity is the first world religion that lifted up work as something dignified. In every culture before that, work was done by slaves. Work was considered beneath those at the top. Work was something that was oppressive and was put as an oppression upon those who were enslaved. And we have the sad history of slavery in our country. But Christianity said “No!” Work is something dignified; because when we work, we become co-creators with God. So any human work that contributes authentically to the common good is a holy thing. The work you do every day, no matter what it is, is part of your path to salvation. It's part of your contribution to the common good. It's part of you building up the kingdom of God.

Sometimes that's hard to see. Like, how does washing all these plates somehow bring about the kingdom? But, it does. Because when we're faithful to the task that God has given us, and we play our part in the beautiful unfolding of the whole, then we're doing God's will.

**1:07:13      Beauty of the Family**

The next principle is the family. So, the Church sees the family as the fundamental building block both of society and of the Church. The Church calls the family, "the domestic Church." Because, in a family that's living the faith, the family is the first place where those children will learn about God and feel God's love for them, and learn to pray and come to practice the faith. The family is the fundamental building block and mystery of God's action in the world.

Saint John Paul II said that a family living the totality of its mission becomes an icon of the Trinity. “Icon” means window. So then, when we look at an icon, we're looking into the mystery that it represents. So, when a Christian family does its thing -- when a husband and wife are loving each other in Christ and are open to life and have children -- we see symmetry that we see in the Trinity. Father, Son and Holy Spirit: Wife, Husband, Children. Loving each other, one; and yet, fully realizing their individuality within the unity. So, the unity of God doesn't destroy the individuality of the Father, Son and Spirit. But, the individuality of the Father, Son and Spirit doesn't destroy the unity of God. So it is with the family. As a family, we're one. Yet, that unity doesn't crush the individuality, but it allows each person to flourish.

Think of how different each one of your children is, right? They all came from you; how can they be that different, right? And you love them equally. But in one sense, you relate to them differently because you come to know their temperaments. Because you know their pressure points. You know, some need to be pushed. Some need to be encouraged,

right? Some need to be calmed down; some need to be fired-up. I learned that with seminarians when I was rector of the seminary. It's the closest I'll ever come to being a father, I think. Because, each one was different. You had to respond to each one a little differently.

So, the beauty of the family. And I think we really need to help families today, because families are struggling. Marriages are struggling. Across our country in the last twenty-five years, civil marriages and religious marriages have dropped 50 percent. So there's 50 percent less people getting married than got married thirty years ago. I think part of that is young people; if they get married they don't want it to fail. And, they're afraid, because they've seen so much around them that doesn't encourage them to make this commitment, this permanent commitment.

On the other hand, in the last eight months I've done four weddings of couples who were in their early 20s. And they got married in the church. Did a couple's wedding -- they were both 20 years old. They both have one year of college left. They go to Mass every single day together. And, she was kind of a lukewarm Catholic. Had been raised in a nominally Catholic household. He was raised real intensely. He brought her back to the fire of the faith. They got married when they were 20 years old! Because, they knew who they were, and they knew what they wanted, and they knew what God was calling them to do. So, there are a lot of young people out there that really have their heads screwed on straight and are doing great things. And, we need to encourage them in terms of family.

### **1:11:03                      Preferential Option for the Poor**

The next is preferential option for the poor. We live in a world of such huge economic disparities. I discovered that when I did mission work in the Third World. And I thought I'd seen poverty in the Dominican Republic, and then I went to Haiti next door. And Haiti made the Dominican Republic look like the United States. And the level of just soul-crushing poverty in Haiti was beyond anything I could possibly comprehend. So, the infant mortality rates, the malnutrition rates, every bad metric is like the worst in the world in Haiti. It's just a terrible place of such injustice and suffering. And I would come home from places like that and think: I could flip on a switch and a light comes on. I could turn on a faucet and clean water comes out. I've got money in my pocket. I can go to a supermarket that has acres of food. There are people in the world who have none of that.

And to say that isn't to make us feel guilty, but it's to say, "How do we contribute to changing that?" Thankfully, more and more people are coming out of abject poverty on a global basis. There are fewer children dying of diseases and malnutrition. We're making steady progress in the right direction. But part of it is continuing to choose to really be sacrificial in our relationship to the poor -- both those in other countries and those on our doorstep.

**1:12:48 Care for Creation**

And the final one is the care for creation. And I know here at Saint Dennis last week we blessed solar panels. Pope Francis is certainly, clearly into care for creation. And I think, regardless of what you think of global warming -- and I don't want to get into that -- I think we would all agree that it's a good thing to take care of the planet. It's a good thing to not be wasteful. It's a good thing to recycle everything we can and to reduce our usage of the world's resources. God gave us this beautiful world, and we're called to be stewards of it and to be good.

My parents were green way before that was even known. We'd wear clothes until they wore out, and then they'd go into the rag bag and they were used as rags. I mean, not one morsel of food was ever thrown away. One time one of my brothers was in high school and his friends TP-ed our front yard. Got toilet paper everywhere. My father grew up in the Depression. So, he got out his ladder, took down all the toilet paper, rolled it up and used it. (laughter) Isn't that crazy?! And, my mom said, "You're crazy!"

And he said, "That's good toilet paper." And he said to my brother, "Tell your friends next time to use Charmin; you know, that's better." (laughter) But so, they were into using everything.

And when we look at the world today, you know, how do we curb our waste? After I did mission work, I could no longer go into a cafeteria or into a restaurant kitchen, because you just see how much food is thrown away, right? I read somewhere that 40 percent of the food in our country ends up being wasted -- either thrown away or it's not sold by the due date or whatever. How do we change that so that everyone in this world has enough medicine, food, shelter, justice and joy? There's enough for everyone, if we share appropriately.

**1:15:03 Natural Law**

I wanted to end with a natural law. A natural law isn't something you hear of often anymore, but I think it's important to understand it and to bring it back. Because natural law goes back to Greek Philosophy, Roman Law, the Old Testament and the New Testament, Medieval Christian thinkers, and it has modern manifestations, as well. Natural law would say that if we study things, if we study the human body, if we study human nature, if we look at the world of nature, we can come to understand the divine purpose within things. That we don't need to just create a law to follow an ideal. But, we can come to study things in their natural state and understand what their purpose is. So that if we use reason and we analyze human nature, we can discover the binding rules of the moral universe.

So think of the law of gravity in the physical universe. You can say "I don't believe in gravity." But, if you jump off the roof, you're still going to fall to the ground, right? It doesn't matter if you believe it or not; it's a law. It's true. We would assert that the same is

true of the moral universe. That there's certain moral laws that help us understand who we are. That it's inscribed on the human heart. That because humanity is made in God's image, we can know the truth of things. We can know things deep down. We can see God's fingerprints on everything and come to understand their purpose. So it explains, really, the beauty of the Church's teaching on sexuality, for example. So when we look at men and women, it's clear that what's outlined in Genesis is true. That men and women are created for each other. That there's a complementarity of the sexes there.

We see that in our bodies, but we also see it in our temperaments. And we see it in our understanding and approach. So, based on natural law, we come to understand that the beauty of sexuality expressed has two ends. One is the unity of a couple, and the other is the procreation of children. So, if you understand that, the Church would say those are the two fundamental ends of the gift of our sexuality, all of our sexual teachings fall into place. Because then, any sexual expression outside of marriage -- sacramental marriage for Catholics -- that's not open to life or not unitive, falls short of that ideal of what the intention and ends are for.

When we look at natural law, we come to understand God's purpose and plan for us. Natural law also would give us a language that's not inherently religious when we enter into ethical debates. So, in our culture today to assert that abortion is wrong, the first response is going to be, "Well, that's what your religion teaches; you can't impose that on me." But abortion isn't wrong because the Catholic Church says it's wrong. The Catholic Church says it's wrong because by virtue of natural law it's wrong. Right? So natural law just comes to realize that human life is there already in its first moment of conception.

### **1:18:51 Pro-Life Month**

This is Pro-Life month, and I got involved in the Pro-Life movement as a young priest because I encountered -- I started encountering -- many women and men who had been damaged profoundly by abortion in their lives. And I realized that this wasn't just about the ending of a pre-born life. It was also about the profound wounding of people around the end of that life. So, the Church isn't just about stopping the ending of those lives; it's also about healing and bringing forgiveness and compassion.

So I say to folks on this, you know, if you're hurting or wounded because of any issue related to an abortion or anything for that matter, reach out. Talk to your pastor. Talk to someone, because the Church only wants healing, love and compassion for you. The Church wants you to come to a wholeness. And I came to realize, so often the greatest struggle in many areas is our inability to forgive ourselves. In the end, you know, a person can confess over and over again, and intellectually know that God has forgiven me. It's another thing to forgive me, and to allow God's mercy to transform me.

**1:20:15      Fusion of Love and Truth**

So, whenever the Church says “no” to something, it's only to say a greater “yes” to something else. Church is for the flourishing of sexuality as God created it. The Church is for life and beauty and joy and goodness. The Church is for all the things that make us authentically human. And when the Church says “no,” it's only to keep us from falling into something that is going to hurt us, that's less than complete.

I know we struggle with many, many issues in our culture today. But, I just want to end as I began by speaking of the fusion of love and truth in Christ. That when we really love other people and walk with them and listen to them and support them, many times we'll encounter people that don't agree with what the Church teaches, aren't living what the Church teaches. Those are the exact people that we need to love and to be with, and to connect with. And the more we walk with them, and the more we have -- I put it as -- “competence and confidence” in what the Church teaches, that we can articulate, “Here's why the Church says this is wrong.” Or, “Here's the greater yes behind the smaller no.” The more we can learn that and know that and articulate it, I've always found that many, many people find solace and consolation in that.

So the easy way out is to say, “Just do whatever you want.” This probably is flawed. The more challenging way that I think is the life-giving way, is to say, “Let's look at this together; let's pray about this. Can I tell you why the Church teaches this and the beauty that's behind it?” It's often I have found that people have conversions of heart and come to discover that God knows what He's talking about, and the Church does, too. And we've had two thousand years to reflect on the human condition in light of God's revelation. And the answers we find in this book are pretty amazing, because they're true and they're good and they're beautiful.

So, I just invite you -- especially -- to study this, this third pillar, this “Life in Christ.” You know, if you read a page a day, you might be through it by the end of your life (laughter), but it's worth the read. Because, we find here everything that God wants to give us and all that He wants to say to us.

**1:23:11      Closing Comments**

I can't be here next time. I think you already know that. I had another commitment. So Father Randy will be here and Father Steve, and the focus will be on the final pillar, Prayer. And I just want to say a big thank you to all of you for being here and for letting me be here. And I just look at you and just think how beautiful you are. You're children of God. You have an immortal soul. You're going to live forever. God's dream for this world would not be complete without each of us. And when we realize the wonder of God's life within us, when we see the miracle that this life is and the adventure that we've been called to live, then this becomes not words on a page, this becomes the way we live this divine romance with God.

**1:24:11      Four Things I Can Never Get Over...**

So, there are four things I can never get over when I wake up in the morning. The first shocking thing is that I'm actually the Bishop of Madison. I mean, it takes me about twenty minutes for that thought to sink in. (laughter) The second thought I think about is, I'm amazed that I'm a bishop at all -- I mean, how did that come to be? Third, that I'm a priest. But the fourth, that I'm even alive, that I exist. That I'm a child of God. Because, all of this could have gone on without God creating me. So, each one of us is a great might-not-have-been, as G. K. Chesterton put it. The whole world could have gone on without any single one of us, and yet God willed us to be. So, our very life is just this sheer, gratuitous gift, this grace. And when we realize that, like Mary, we break open the costly aromatic nard of our life, and we fill the world with the fragrance of Christ -- by believing the faith, by celebrating the sacraments, by practicing the moral life, and through prayer.

So, please know of my love and my prayers for you. And thank you for your witness to the Lord, and I lift you up to the Lord and all of your intentions. So, may Almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Thank you so much. (applause)