

**A Trust Betrayed:  
The Catholic Communio of Clergy, Church and College**

“Let us pray that we never fall away from communion with his Body, with Christ himself, that we never fall away from the Eucharistic mystery. Let us pray that he will never let go of our hand ...

The Lord has placed his hand on us. He expressed the meaning of such a gesture in the words: "I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father" (John 15:15). I no longer call you servants, but friends: In these words one might even see the institution of the priesthood. The Lord makes us his friends: he entrusts everything to us; What trust! He truly delivered himself into our hands.”

Pope Benedict XVI Chrism Mass for priests 2006

On October 25, 2007, the University of St. Thomas Board of Trustees struck a blow for democracy by changing their bylaws to eliminate the archdiocesan *ex officio* offices and invest in themselves the power to elect the Chairman and Vice Chairman of their own Board of Trustees. They immediately exercised their new power by electing two men to five year terms. One of these men would surely, and the other would likely have been replaced as trustees in nine months when a new archbishop came into office. It certainly wasn't an act of keeping an ancient trust. Maybe it wasn't such a blow for democracy either. The peaceful transfer of an office and its privileges to the next generation of legitimate officeholders has always been a hallmark of democratic traditions. Indeed it is tyranny when men use offices for themselves as individuals at the expense of the common good and the rightful claims of their legitimate successors. It is also the breaking of a fiduciary trust. It is not clear how many members of the St. Thomas board really

understood the revolution in governance which they had affected. It didn't seem like a revolution. It seemed like tradition and continuity. Board members in many cases were electing the clergymen who had greeted them on to the board. The familiar faces of Archbishop Harry Flynn, Fr. Kevin McDonough and Fr. Dennis Dease were elected to five year terms. Amidst their reassuring smiles, it was hard to see that Church offices had been removed and the Board of Trustees had changed its Catholic nature.

The board members were like travelers on a stagecoach headed to a town for a change of drivers before the next leg of a long journey. The coach stopped, watered the horses, and then headed off. Yes, the drivers are the same. Yes we are familiar with them and associate their presence with authority and cordiality. But wait! It looks like our trusted drivers are heading down a different road than the destination agreed on long ago at the very beginning of the journey. They are not keeping faith with the drivers before them and they have just left the town without giving the reins to a fresher crew. The drivers who were legitimate when driving their section of the road are now seen by any alert passenger or bystander as interlopers indeed. Maybe that is why they keep looking over their shoulders and asking the passengers not to discuss the retention of the drivers and the change in course of the coach with any curious townsmen.

The major reason few Catholics and even fewer non-Catholics recognize this grand heist is the early success of President Dease's and Archbishop Flynn's deliberate disinformation campaign. But for these pretenders of modernity and democracy, it is the very age they enter which will relentlessly expose them. There are a lot more public lights available than just the two official spokesmen of the university and diocese. "No lie can live forever," said Martin Luther King. The great ponderous information-controlling bureaucracies have entered a new era. Archbishop Flynn and Father Dease have traded away their birthright of telling the

gospel through the apostolic tradition. That form of information transfer can live in any age. They have retained the stew of fixed cover stories and official spokesmen who reveal the depth of deception by repeating the party line as other news sources outrun their fabricated tale. Their transparent cover stories depend not only on the trust of Catholics in their priests and bishop, but also on the impoverished catechesis of Catholics. For no one could accept the pathetic fiction that three priests may act as individuals apart from an incoming ordinary if he understands the central teachings of Vatican II. The Catholic priesthood is not a profession of independent contractors. This is why Archbishop Flynn's scolding answer to the watchwoman columnist Katherine Kersten was patently duplicitous. She noted in her crispest Joan of Arc prose that divorcing the university from the diocesan governance of the incoming Archbishop Nienstedt would diminish the university's Catholic character. Archbishop Flynn answered that by retaining the individualistic trinity of Fathers Dease, McDonough and Flynn, the board would safeguard a Catholic identity because a bishop and priests would always be on the board. That is a little like the British arguing that Newfoundland was really American because her new military government would be run by an American soldier. The fact that the soldier was Benedict Arnold and not George Washington seems an important distinction. Archbishop Flynn on the Board of Usurpers versus Archbishop Nienstedt on the Board of Trustees really is the difference between wearing a ribbon of a previous rank by Benedict Arnold and bearing intact communal authority by George Washington.

It is no guarantee to any community that because scattered priests are on the board that the institution will retain a Catholic identity. The priesthood is an ordered relationship. It has a fundamental structure derived from the structural integrity of "the Twelve." Christ left men not just "goo goo" in love but in an ordered community of love with leadership and a mission defining the deepest

wide-radius trust bond in human history. Archbishop Flynn has always known that as the ordinary of the archdiocese, he enjoys authority not shared by any other bishop. He played on the collective ignorance of the public in reproving his faithful Catholic daughter, Katherine Kersten. The great tradition of educating our Catholic women and even teaching them skills in public reasoning has certainly come back to haunt the sclerotic scolds of the “press release and no question” school of governance. Their apoplectic response to Mrs. Kersten reflects the same hissy school of clerical cowardice which Saint Joan of Arc and Saint Catherine of Sienna faced centuries ago. Katherine Kersten is a loyal daughter of the Church and she did not want to refute the archbishop too harshly in his obvious attempt to mislead the public. He has another message he is supposed to be preaching and all of us would like him to retain a shred of credibility to better fulfill his primary mission.

In a given diocese there is a sharp distinction of authority between the bishop who is called the ordinary of the diocese and all others. The diocesan priesthood shares in the friendship with Christ by joining in communion with the ordinary of the local Church. This priestly brotherhood is the apostolic mark of the Church which distinguishes Catholics from other Christian traditions of gathering. In the Catholic Church our personal relationship with Jesus Christ is an ordered relationship. The ordinary is the bishop who holds the fundamental keys of authority in a given diocese. Auxiliary or retired bishops are indeed bishops but there is no dispute of the singularity of the ordinary’s authority. In fact a bishop who is not the ordinary of a diocese is usually assigned some other “see” where he is the titular head. The ordinary of a diocese is first and foremost to lead the priests and the people in the liturgical rhythm of daily, weekly, seasonal, and yearly worship. Across the world and down through the generations, the Church orders the relationships of men in conformity with the sacrifice of Christ. This way of living together is not the product of a vote by all who are present. This action “in

memory of me” has been ordered from above. Because Catholic culture is so intrinsically wedded to worship and priesthood, Catholic institutions often are marked by a setting off of certain sacred ground, a moral prohibition against certain defiling acts and some mechanism by which the priestly sacred character of life is represented in governance. For Catholics, all life springs from participating in the Church’s liturgical act of entering into the mysterious life of the triune God. The bishop-led diocesan priesthood is the ordinary way we experience this font and summit of our communal life. This is as true for the life of workers in parishes as it is for students and faculty at the university. We are Americans and so we understand the art of democratic association. But we are also Catholics and thus we accept the centrality of the sacred and the necessity of priestly authority to protect and transmit this fundamental category defining our communal life.

The St. Thomas Board has always been a separate legal entity from the archdiocese. That is done so our enemies cannot pick a single pocket in lawsuits. It is meant to separate us so we pose a more difficult target for our enemies. The legal separation is not meant to separate us from the communion we enjoy in our common diocesan life. Look at the St. Thomas mission page: “a Catholic, diocesan university.” Look at the statue of Archbishop Ireland on the campus. We too have our “mystical cords of memory.” We Catholics live together at a deeper level than corporate bylaws. Francis Fukuyama has written about this beautifully in *Trust*, a book that should be our business school’s common text. He explains how moral communities that share similar notions of right and wrong, the sacred and the taboo, are capable of producing great public institutions because they have a wide-radius trust system which supersedes family, kinship and personal friendships. Catholics trust each other at a deeper level than legal obligations. We go to communion together. We have been confirmed in the same diocese together. If the bishop is the fullness of Holy Orders, then Confirmation is the fullness of lay

initiation. Our Confirmation draws us ever more deeply into the fullness of our ecclesial identity in relationship to the local bishop as chief celebrant of our Eucharistic life. The venture philanthropist and feminist judge who consider our bonds so easily broken are a lot like the Soviet army in Afghanistan - they don't really know the sinews of religious men.

It may have been that under Archbishop Flynn, each parish acted as its own congregation and every priest was treated as an independent contractor; but this is not the Catholic way. It was a pathological variant in which the ubiquity of American Congregationalism filled the cultural spaces allowed by a weak father who could not command or unify. If Catholic parishes yielded to the Congregationalist mentality, then it should not surprise us that members of the university board would see moving toward elections as a kind of progress and faith in the American style of governance. Of course elections are defined not simply by the act of voting but by the selection of voters. That is called "picking your Board." When we examine the Fr. Dease - Judge Diana Murphy - John Morrison philosophies of board operation we will better understand how the unapologetic pro-abortion candidate for Senate, Mike Ciresi, is an invited voting member on Minnesota's largest Catholic institution. What is revealing as we watch the hijacked stage drive out of our Catholic town is that the presence of Mike Ciresi on the board is not the major scandal here. His plan of winning social approval while the board gets some of his tobacco money is that medieval corruption of washing dirty money in the laundry of good deeds and beautiful art for the church. His story seems a venial sin compared to those of his fellow board members who see St. Thomas not as a line on their resume, but as a pliable institution to be employed in their service. Lest we be distracted by Mr. Ciresi, consider the very different subversions of John Morrison and Diana Murphy. The Morrison agenda reminds

us of the Anglican seizure of Church property for secular ends, while the Murphy agenda is an ideological Cromwellian beheading of the patriarch.

### **John Morrison—the Venture Philanthropist meets an Apostle**

John Morrison understands institutions. He understands boards and presidents. He has made his money and his reputation in mergers and restructurings. When Minnesota Attorney General Mike Hatch applied the hatchet to the lavish overspending of Allina Healthcare executives, it was John Morrison who was accepted by the state as the interim CEO to clean up the mess. Mr. Morrison did so with great competence. This does not mean Mr. Morrison is an opponent of extravagant spending. Visit his office. Visit Naples. Ask Fr. Dease. Ask Pio Laghi. He is lavish with himself and he has a particular penchant for helping the high status-low salaried among us. Mr. Morrison is no longer on the board of Allina Healthcare but this is only a formality. He is still integrally involved in the institution's agenda as a major driver of the group seeking to solve corporate medicine's problem of not enough primary care physicians. This problem is difficult. How does a corporate leader rectify the pay imbalance of primary physicians to specialists and the mountain-to-ravine disparity of corporate executives to doctors on the frontline? That is the tough but solvable problem facing United Healthcare, Allina and all of corporate medicine. In the world of venture philanthropy their problem became our problem when St. Thomas board member John Morrison and former Allina board member John Morrison joined forces in a dramatic expenditure of St. Thomas time, treasure, and talent. Here's how Richard Pettingill, Allina CEO put it. "Our board realized that, while complex, this could be an extraordinary opportunity to forge a bold and innovative new model of medical education. Few health care leaders dispute that there is a looming physician shortage, and Allina and St. Thomas are uniquely positioned to

address this dire need." Mr. Morrison is part of that "unique positioning." And as Fr. Dease said at the time of the public announcement in May of 2007, "Our board understands the need for more primary care physicians to serve Minnesota and has authorized this study to better understand whether St. Thomas can play a meaningful role in addressing it." Now we don't know who he is referring to on the board but university spokesman Doug Hennes told us after the deal had fallen through. "We didn't come to Allina; they came to us. We were starting a 500 million dollar capital campaign and there was no money in it for a medical school." When asked about the role of Morrison for St. Thomas (His role at Allina is for another reporter to outline – it won't take a lot of sleuthing.), Hennes said, "He wanted us to go ahead."

The other board member who might also be troubled by the dearth of primary care physicians is Stephen Hemsley of UnitedHealth Group. I quit investigating when I found his 2003 compensation valued at \$19 million. (It struck me if we divided his salary among primary care docs and Fr. Dease's among incoming freshmen, the Church would be back to its old vocation as the primary educator and health care provider for all of Western Civilization. But we don't want to get simplistic about this.)

It is not obvious that Hemsley played any major role in driving this huge off-mission expenditure by St. Thomas faculty and staff. Mr. Morrison is a different story. On October 25, at the same time the board voted to cut its archdiocesan governance ties, it also released a statement about the medical school. "St. Thomas and Allina also did not feel it would be prudent to divert funding from existing programs or priorities to underwrite a medical school," said a joint statement from Pettingill and Dease. After hundreds of hours of staff time and an unknown fee to Pittsburgh-based Tripp Umbach consultants, the proposal was off the table for

what appeared to be financial reasons. Now certainly there are major financial problems with the proposal, ones so fundamental that it is clear this venture did not rise in any organic way from the mission of the university. As the spokesman said, “Allina came to us.” It would be good to know if Allina money or student tuition paid for the consulting fees. We know who paid for the staff time. Finance though is not the whole story here and more significantly, the project is not quite as dead as it might seem to those of us who get our news from press releases.

Allina and St. Thomas set up a set of interlocking committees to investigate the joint venture. The most important committees were Finance and Mission. There were two meetings of the “Mission Committee” at which priests from Loyola University in Chicago were invited to address concerns about the “Catholic values” problems that might arise in educating doctors. There was not too much discussion of the inversion of medicine from a deeply personal vocation of charity to an opportunity to maximize revenue stream at every customer-provider encounter. There was some talk of that old stickler - abortion. The discussion was in mixed company so no one quite pitted the real dilemma about whether abortion is a violation of the medical oath or just another customer service. In fact, at the first meeting with a priest from Loyola, Archbishop Flynn and John Morrison in attendance, all went well. It was that second meeting where the problem arose. (University “spokesperson” Hennes says he will not speak about this. Other people at the meeting of more than thirty people from both Allina and St. Thomas do not feel the meeting quite merits the seal of the confessional. But that is a “spokesperson” for you.) At that meeting, Mr. Morrison was not present but Archbishop Nienstedt was. So was Archbishop Flynn. At this meeting the Loyola priest was at his disingenuous best in showing the “no problem” approach toward abortion. Of course you can’t train to do abortions on campus but a student can

always find an off-campus obstetrics rotation where that peculiar service can be learned. No problem. (The Loyola priest did not say this, but early abortions are in fact technically a piece of cake. Like shooting a puppy with a magnum, it is pretty easy picking in that early vulnerable moment.) After the visiting priest left, Archbishop Nienstedt offered a direct reflection. He didn't want the Allina people thinking that because the man was a priest that he represented the Catholic position; not at all. The priest did not faithfully reflect the position of the Church or the archbishop. Archbishop Nienstedt spoke eloquently and clearly. Even months later, the Allina people were grateful and impressed by his clarity. A lot of people were spending valuable time that could have gone for patient care in medicine and student education at the university so the archbishop thought a declarative sentence or two was in order. It was clear the "Chicago compromise" so ardently cultivated by those who chose the Loyola consultants would not be allowed in our archdiocese. All questions by the Allina people were directed to Archbishop Nienstedt. This meeting was in late summer, 2007. Archbishop Flynn was present and did not utter a word. When Fr. McDonough spoke or nodded, it was in general agreement with statements by Archbishop Nienstedt. There was no question about the room's center of gravity. It was centered on the new archbishop who seemed centered not at all on what might please those in attendance. This meeting was one of the occurrences which earned him that horrible insult: "He seems abrupt." For the Allina clinicians it was clear - there were major problems. The archbishop had to be thanked for showing that most important trait in all cooperative business ventures; he spoke clearly and he could be trusted. News of the meeting spread through a lot of interested medical communities, most of which were opposed to the Allina-St Thomas venture. The financial difficulties were a problem, but people at Allina knew that the formidable Mr. Morrison was ready to be a major contributor and fundraiser. The "Catholic" problem was not so solvable as long as

Archbishop Nienstedt, rather than Archbishop Flynn was the shepherd of the archdiocese and chairman of the board at St. Thomas. As the StarTribune reported:

Some questioned how the medical staff at Abbott and the Catholic administrators at St. Thomas could accommodate conflicting ethics over issues such as abortion, birth control and sexual health care for gays and lesbians. "You cannot train primary care people without giving them a solid foundation in appropriate management of those issues," Sockalosky said.

*(Dr. Joseph Sockalosky, director of medical education at Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota is a graduate of St Thomas. He was not part of the discussions. Ed.)*

After a huge expenditure of time and money, a mission meeting which was supposed to be another exchange of philosophical pleasantries didn't turn out that way because of the new archbishop. The new man was definitely not a team player. John Morrison was furious.

What happened next still has to be clarified. It has been reported that Morrison had an angry talk with Archbishop Flynn. In order to verify this we could just ask Fr. Dease or Archbishop Flynn or John Morrison. It does seem, however, that a message was delivered that the capital campaign was in big trouble if the new archbishop took authority at St. Thomas. We know from senior St. Thomas officials that earlier in the year Archbishop Flynn was adamantly opposed to divorcing the archdiocesan ordinary from governance of the school. We also know he abruptly changed this position. When Archbishop Nienstedt was at the late summer mission meeting he was clearly being treated as the incoming authority for the University of St. Thomas. We know that Mr. Morrison was a driving force on Allina's side of the medical school idea and that he was extremely upset at the Nienstedt-Allina-Loyola-St. Thomas encounter. Mr. Morrison had orchestrated a

venture which would involve millions of dollars, thousands of employees and the missions of two large institutions. All that had been accomplished was now threatened by a Church cleric. He knew church clerics. He knew several of them. The purpose of anger is to feed the drive to right injustices. Mr. Morrison had been wronged. How would he rid himself of this meddlesome priest? Mr. Morrison is no longer the CEO or an Allina board member, but there is clearly some kind of strategic planning /medical school task force which he influences. Mr. Morrison had considered the mission discussion safely put to bed. It was all so pleasant at the first meeting with the compliant Loyola priest, the eager Allina team and Flynn-Morrison upholding the St. Thomas position. It was that second meeting that the St. Thomas spokesman will not speak about that made all the difference.

Everyone should be aware that a future St. Thomas-Allina collaboration is still very much on the table. ("Allina and St. Thomas look forward to continuing and expanding the dialogue on these issues and engaging a broad spectrum of community leaders," Pettingill said. From 10-25-07 Allina CEO statement on discontinuing discussions at this time.) A better time and circumstance is needed. Above all that means a St. Thomas Board answering to no authority or moral system outside the desires of its self-perpetuating Board of Trustees. Only that stability in governance can allow Allina to take the risk of partnership in training the doctors who must keep abortion in their surgical skill-set. Archbishop John Nienstedt really doesn't fit in this latest version of Minnesota nice.

We leave this section with serious legal questions which we cannot answer. The first is a matter of fiduciary trust by the board for a DIOCESAN university. Can an argument be made that individuals who benefited by changing the diocesan nature of governance have betrayed a trust bequeathed them by a Church whose members include the living, the dead and those to come? As Archbishop John

Ireland once said we build on a tradition that both receives and passes on from “generations to generations.”

Our second legal inquiry is, at what point does venture philanthropy transform from charitable giving to a contract? “You do this and I will do that.” The contract lawyers call it consideration. Who knows, but in the world of law there might even be a way to get statements from someone other than the official spokesperson on these tricky matters. We have little doubt that John Morrison has more weight with Archbishop Flynn than does Fr. Dease. Something happened to Archbishop Flynn and we might be forgiven for doubting he was just worried about Archbishop Nienstedt’s workload. What were the conversations between Fr. Dease and John Morrison? And what transpired between John Morrison and Archbishop Flynn before Archbishop Flynn gave the green light to jettison his soon-to-be-vacated office from the board? It is also pertinent to ask if there have been any gifts to Fr. Dease, and if Mr. Morrison has played any role in the hyperinflation of Fr. Dease’s salary. All of these are better questions for a public forum at the university rather than a lawsuit in the courts. Senior faculty, especially those who say their field is business ethics have an obligation to help shape an honest exploration of this. This will take some knowledge of the right questions to ask as well as moral courage to pursue the truth from those who might threaten reprisals. Ethics are habits of behavior. The character shaped by real ethics does not just know the right thing to do, but has the courage to fight for it. There are no ethics without courage; there are only platitudes. The niche identity of St. Thomas as a business and law school centered on ethics has become a parody as this masquerade is allowed to continue without honest discussion. The intrusion of Mr. Morrison in the life of St. Thomas and its place in the orderly traditions of the Church must not stand without examination. A vigorous public defense on his part

should be welcomed. Until then we would be wise to remember when choosing board members, the advice of Monsignor Terrence Murphy, President of St. Thomas from 1966-1995.

Great care must be exercised to get people who are competent, fair-minded and do not have a special cause to advance, and who are committed to the goals of the University.

*Judge Diana Murphy and President Dennis Dease*

If John Morrison's anger and Archbishop Flynn's fright were the immediate causes of the St. Thomas secession, a longer term preparation for this secularization has been a joint agenda of the Chairwoman of the Executive Committee and the university president. How such an aggressive and authoritative proponent of abortion as Diana Murphy came to sit in such a pivotal position on the Board of Trustees is a story for another reporter. Judge Murphy is also a major donor and Vice Chair of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) which urged the university to break ties with the archdiocese. Her notorious abortion decisions nullifying the laws of South Dakota should have been enough to keep her off the board. Her institutional agenda was to carry out the mission of the AGB. In all public statements of St. Thomas, it has been this consulting group which has been recognized as the ultimate authority in determining university governance. Apparently the "critical thinking" neurons of Catholic educators have been turned off in their swoon over the expertise of these self-promoting secularists. Murphy's commitment to the mission of AGB, as well as her past jurisprudence on male groups suggest a certain hostility to any system which required in its bylaws that the positions of highest authority be limited to the sexist brotherhood of the Catholic priesthood. Her story is told in *Abortion's Handmaid*.

An evaluation of the presidency of Fr. Dennis Dease is described in *Losing the Sacred Center*.

### **Archbishop Harry Flynn**

#### **Betraying an Apostle and the local Church**

My own life was part and parcel of his –streamlets gladly mingling its water with a great river and lost in it unseen. Yes my life has been one with his. Not only has there been a sweet unity of hearts; but unity of minds and unity of labors.

Archbishop John Ireland

Archbishop John Ireland experienced a little smoother apostolic succession than that now taking place with Archbishop Nienstedt. These are his heartfelt comments in 1884, about his predecessor Bishop Thomas Langdon Grace, O.P.

The Catholic Church is above all a love relationship. It springs from the love relationship that exists in the Trinity. We begin and close our prayers in the name of this communion of persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. When God became man he formed a communion of persons to keep his presence on earth and to shape us into a community awaiting his return. The Catholic tradition is not simply a body of beliefs or scripture. The Levites carried the Ark of the Covenant and the living presence of God. So the apostles and our bishops hand over to their successors the poles of the ark to carry Christ through the ages. We are not built, as some pagan religions, on a sacral marriage. We are built on a warrior brotherhood, united in communion and vigilant for contest. It is this body of men ordered in a very particular way which gives the Church her Catholic and Apostolic character. The relationship among the bishops is the loving brotherhood which forms the inner ring of love protecting the sacred center of the Church. Archbishop Harry

Flynn has grievously sinned against this brotherhood and betrayed his brother, John Nienstedt, in stripping from his bishop's chair a central teaching platform deeply embedded in the history and life of our archdiocese. This not a private matter between Harry Flynn and John Nienstedt. This strikes at the ecclesial center of the Church. Archbishop Flynn is not just spiting Archbishop Nienstedt. He is breaking his bond to Ireland and Grace and Murray as well as a host of other bishops who continued a tradition so much bigger than Harry Flynn and John Nienstedt. He is also cutting adrift diocesan bishops of future generations that none of us know. Despite the hysteria that has greeted Archbishop John Nienstedt, he is not the end of history. He too is bound by the duties of his office and he too will pass the shepherd's staff to some successor.

The compliance of Archbishop Flynn in this subterfuge is a scandal to the faithful and a boon to our enemies. It can only be corrected by the most manly act of Archbishop Flynn's priesthood - an act of public repentance and a righting of the ship BEFORE Archbishop Nienstedt takes office. Archbishop Nienstedt already has a Herculean task of drawing the archdiocesan priesthood back into a fraternal loving communion. The archdiocesan priesthood he is bequeathed is corrupted, fragmented and incoherent. To deprive him of the authority over our largest Catholic institution bespeaks an impoverishment of soul and venality of character which should shame every priest in the archdiocese. This is an act Archbishop Harry Flynn would not have contemplated when he was coadjutor himself 14 years ago. It is an act that the Harry Flynn of three years ago would not have spoken about. Archbishop Harry Flynn has been corrupted by a corrupt diocesan priesthood. He has listened to the wicked while the righteous men have been afraid and unwilling to speak the truth. He is still our bishop. Priests owe him what they have never given him.

## **To the Priests of Our Diocese**

Tell Archbishop Flynn the truth. Go talk to him. What can he possibly do to scare you? Show him a way to make things right. Be a priest to him. As this story is revealed in the local secular press and the national and international Catholic press, it will be Archbishop Flynn who will be disgraced. It is he who will be the pathetic figure pretending he is chairman of the board when the real archbishop awaits his rightful restoration. Tell him the truth. What can be the downside of trying to tell a man he has been corrupted? Why be a priest if you cannot tell a brother priest the truth? Why have a priesthood of grown men if everyone plays the role of a frightened teenage girl? Go alone. Go in twos. Go in a group of twelve. But tell our archbishop the truth of this sick diocese and beg him to welcome his fellow archbishop and bring our diocesan priesthood back into communion as a priestly fraternity. Let us show the city and nation what Catholic community and repentance looks like. It is not in the lexicon of Catholic morality to “wait for retirements.” We talk metanoia not AARP.

Resist the temptation to rationalize your inaction because you are “waiting for the new archbishop.” It seems a poor strategy for warrior priests to lead in battle with your bishop’s chin. Besides that, John Nienstedt has already spoken more declarative sentences in three months than the entire archdiocesan priesthood has uttered in three decades. Help your bishop. Help us laymen. How will we laymen ever stop abortion in the civic arena if our priests cannot show examples of dramatic conversion, truthful dialogue and fundamental changes of public life in the Church? This is the duty of fellow priests not laymen. Harry Flynn’s episcopacy is not over yet. Encounter him in person—show your bishop manly love, not obsequy. The slow corruption of Archbishop Harry Flynn is certainly his responsibility. At the same time we must admit all of us watched as he fell deeper

and deeper into a trap set by evil men. His sons betrayed him by our own sustained cowardice.

***“And he said to me, ‘Son of man, go, get you to the house of Israel and speak with my words to them. For you are not sent to a people of foreign speech and a hard language but to the House of Israel...Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the House of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked “You shall surely die” and you give him no warning nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way he shall die in his iniquity but you shall have saved your life. Again if a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity and I lay a stumbling block before him he shall die for his sin. And his righteous deeds which he has done shall not be remembered but his blood I will require at your hand. Nevertheless if you warn the righteous man not to sin and he does not sin he shall surely live because he took warning and you shall have saved your life.’ ”***

***Ezekiel 3: 4-5,17-21.***

Submitted by David Pence for the docsociety

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