

ARCHBISHOP CHAPUT ON THE AMERICAN BISHOPS, JOHN F. KENNEDY & RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

On March 1st, 2010, Charles J Chaput, Archbishop of Denver, Colorado, addressed the members of Houston Baptist University on the subject of the vocation of Christians in American public life. His speech is set out below. Archbishop Chaput used the occasion to place his Protestant audience within the Catholic understanding of salvation. He had some refreshing things to say on the order of the obligations to God and to one's country, and, perhaps unwittingly, he cast light on the provenance of an evil that has afflicted the Church for fifty years.

In the course of his address Archbishop Chaput endorsed the verdict of English historian, Paul Johnson, that America was "born Protestant".

"Whatever America is today or may become tomorrow, its origin was deeply shaped by a Protestant Christian spirit, and the fruit of that spirit has been, on the balance, a great blessing for humanity."

This analysis was, with respect, a little simplistic. As well as Protestant believers among America's Founding Fathers, there were any number of Freemasons. While the latter accepted that they must endorse the Protestant cast in the country's founding documents, they were at pains to interpret them in accordance with Masonic principle whenever they could. With the passage of time, the Protestant influence diminished, but the Masonic has increased.

Protestantism is Catholicism eviscerated of those elements of Catholic belief its adherents refuse to accept. The Protestant does not believe as the Catholic believes, conforming himself to God's authority on God's authority, in one faith.¹ The Protestant believes on his own authority, in any of a multitude of faiths. The one faith, the Catholic faith, is from God, a gift [*Ephesians* 2: 8]². Protestant faith, in all its varieties, comes from man; and any passing influence may shake it. The lives of many celebrated men show the passage: they begin as Protestants, often leading practitioners of their sect, only to lose faith in its tenets as the cares of life multiply, and they end as atheists. The Protestant rejects what God has revealed; he rejects God's authority; he rejects God. The order follows logically. In Protestantism lies the roots of modern atheism.

On such a shifting foundation it was inevitable that some Protestants would follow the path of Michael Servetus, and reject even the most fundamental elements of God's revelation; denying that in the One God there are three Persons; denying that Christ is God. It is a short step from this (Unitarianism) to the reduction of the

¹ Submitting his conscience to the teaching of God's Church because he knows he can trust its authority.

² There is an apodictic proof of this in a phenomenon of which Catholics—and only Catholics—are aware. When a man loses the Catholic faith he loses all memory of the thing he once possessed. If the Catholic faith was of man and not of God, one who had forsaken that faith would yet remember the reality of what he had forsaken.

understanding of God to whatever the heretic chooses to make it. This is Freemasonry.

Archbishop Chaput's Address is a timely reminder of the extent to which the Masonic *zeitgeist* has flourished since the end of World War II, not only in America but throughout the world. This malign influence has affected the thinking even of members of the Catholic Church. It affected that of the American bishops. It affected John Fitzgerald Kennedy who, in September 1960, in the course of an address to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, thought he must appeal to it to secure the support of the American people³. It affected the ruminations of the bishops of the Second Vatican Council and marked certain of their determinations, as Freemasons afterwards frankly acknowledged.

Kennedy's appeal to the Masonic principle of separation of church and state had followed its adoption thirteen years earlier by the United States Supreme Court in *Everson v. Board of Education*. Archbishop Chaput refers with approval to the answer the American bishops gave to the Court's ruling in *Everson*, their pastoral letter of November 1948 entitled *The Christian in Action*. The letter contained, indeed, some admirable passages. But it failed to address at least three injustices, each of them rooted in Masonic principle.

Freemasonry, since it is of the Devil, attacks human society where it is most vulnerable, namely, in the family. It aims its blows at parents and at their children, made in the image and likeness of God, to disturb the pursuance of their eternal destiny at the very earliest opportunity. The moral right and corresponding duty to educate children lies with parents, not with the state. This right and duty is vested in them from the very nature of the family. No state *no matter what its constitution or laws may say* has the right to deprive the parents either of right or duty by purporting to shoulder them itself. It is a corollary of this principle that no state has the right to exact from parents the moneys they require to educate their children, even under colour of the return of those moneys by way of 'grant' or 'subsidy' or similar device. Freemasonry aided and abetted by Protestantism had, by 1948, ensured that its protocol that the state *does have* rights in child education was well established in the laws and usages of the American states.

A serious departure from justice such as this in any country ought to be among the principal considerations in any pastoral letter of the country's bishops dealing with Christian activity. The American bishops did not deal with it in *The Christian in Action*; nor did they set forth the evils that would flow from its continuance. To the contrary, they seemed to accept the *status quo*. They complained of the Masonic push to refuse funding to Catholic schools. "[Secularism] has banned religion from tax-supported education..." They asked for a deeper appreciation of the contribution Catholic institutions of higher learning were making to a Christian reconstruction of society and urged "a more generous support of their work", including, it would seem, a claim on Federal and State authorities for more generous *financial* support. It

³ "I believe," he said, "in an America where the separation of Church and state is absolute."

does not seem to have occurred to them that while they were objecting to *one* application of Masonic principle they were busily endorsing *another*.

The second injustice arose from the bishops' failure to distinguish the only religion to which a man can be bound by duty to adhere, the religion established by Almighty God, the Catholic faith, from Protestantism, or from any other religion for that matter. They said—

“The essential connection between religion and good citizenship is deep in our American tradition. Those who took the lead in establishing our independence and framing our Constitution were firm and explicit in the conviction that religion and morality are the strong supports of national well-being, that national morality cannot long prevail in the absence of religious principle, and that impartial encouragement of religious influence on its citizens is a proper and practical function of good government.”

In the absence of appropriate distinction, this statement was inaccurate. There are a variety of meanings that might have been accorded the word 'religion' and its cognate adjective, 'religious', in 1948. As we in the 21st century know only too well, 'religion' can be advanced to excuse mass murder or mass suicide. Even in the mid-20th century the word could not have been used without qualification. The cults of Unitarianism, Mormonism, and Jehovah's Witness-ism, to name but three, could each have claimed to be classified under the heading 'religion', yet each was problematic, and none of their adherents would have subscribed to the American bishops' sentiments. Even if the bishops' claim was read as embracing only Protestantism and Catholicism, it was inaccurate.

For Protestantism is false religion, redeemed only by the Catholicism which underpins it. The Protestant, the *renegade*, part of it—the rejection of what God has revealed at the instance of human opinion (of how so many different human opinions!)—is evil. Insofar as Protestantism achieved any good in American society, it did so because of Catholic principle not yet abandoned. As time has gone by more and more of that underlying principle has been lost.⁴ Chesterton spoke to the point when he said (of England) almost 100 years ago that it was living on its Catholic capital, and it was rapidly running out.

The third injustice arose upon the bishops' use without distinction of the expression “religious freedom”. At best that expression means the freedom to exercise some sort of religion, without insisting that it be the religion founded by Almighty God. At worst it means that one is free to choose to reject any form of religion and embrace atheism. In neither case can its use be justified as indicating the existence of a right. The Church had formally declared this to be the case—

“[W]hen [religious] liberty... is offered to man, the power is given him to pervert or abandon with impunity the most sacred of duties, and to exchange the unchangeable

⁴ The great attacks on society, divorce, contraception and abortion, have all emanated from adherents of one sect or another of Protestantism.

good for evil; which... is no liberty, but its degradation, and the abject submission of the soul to sin.”⁵

In contrast to this statement of certain truth by the Church, the American bishops said this:

“We feel with deep conviction that for the sake of both good citizenship and religion there should be a reaffirmation of our original American tradition of free cooperation between government and religious bodies—cooperation involving no special privilege to any group and no restriction on the religious liberty of any citizen.”

But “religious liberty” is a *Masonic* ideal! It has been part of the Masonic program since the French Revolution. Let the reader peruse sections 12 to 23 of Leo XIII’s encyclical *Humanum Genus* (20. 4. 1884): he will see that program laid out in detail.

Here was a remarkable thing: Catholic bishops sought to answer *one* element of Masonic doctrine—separation of church and state—by advancing *another*. Bemused by centuries of custom in which the dominant religious force in their country was Protestantism, the American bishops had aligned their thinking with a Protestant, instead of a Catholic, view of the issues and adopted a Protestant tolerance of Masonic principle. Seventeen years later something even more remarkable occurred. At the urging of the American Church’s *illuminati*, including one John Courtney Murray⁶, almost every one of the Catholic Church’s bishops renounced the solemn teaching of their Church and embraced Masonic doctrine with their “Declaration on Religious Liberty”, *Dignitatis Humanae*.⁷

Archbishop Chaput argues that—

“[Kennedy’s] Houston remarks profoundly undermined the place not just of Catholics, but of all religious believers, in America’s public life and political conversation...”

Did they? Or is the fault, rather, to be laid at the feet of America’s bishops for their failure to deal with the crucial issues of justice referred to above? A good argument can be mounted that if they had addressed them the blunder of *Dignitatis Humanae* would never have occurred.

Michael Baker

19th March 2010—*Solemnity of St Joseph*

⁵ Leo XIII, *Libertas praestantissimum* (On the Nature of Human Liberty), 20.6.1888, n. 20. Leo expounded here the reasons underlying the formal condemnation by his predecessor, Pius XI, of the proposition “Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, led by the light of reason, he thinks to be the true religion.” *Syllabus of Errors* attached to the encyclical, *Quanta Cura*, 8th December, 1864; n. 15.

⁶ In passing, it should be said that Archbishop Chaput was unwise to quote Murray in support of his argument to the Houston Baptist University. The often poetic way Murray had of expressing himself gave an impression of profundity, but it masked an inability to think rigorously. One of the less happy actions of Francis Cardinal Spellman (Archbishop of New York 1939-1967) was his summoning of Murray to Rome as *peritus* during the second session of the Second Vatican Council. He ignored the fact that the Vatican had earlier ordered Murray to cease writing on religious freedom because of his heterodoxy.

⁷ The present author has argued elsewhere that this failure to adhere to the Church’s solemn teaching demonstrates that, contrary to the expressed views of popes, bishops and laity, the Second Vatican Council was *not* an ecumenical council of the Catholic Church. Cf. *What Went Wrong With Vatican II* at http://www.superflumina.org/PDF_files/vatican_ii_www.pdf

THE VOCATION OF CHRISTIANS IN AMERICAN PUBLIC LIFE

by Charles J. Chaput

One of the ironies in my talk tonight is this. I'm a Catholic bishop, speaking at a Baptist university in America's Protestant heartland. But I've been welcomed with more warmth and friendship than I might find at a number of Catholic venues. This is a fact worth discussing. I'll come back to it at the end of my comments. But I want to begin by thanking Drs. Sloan and Bonicelli and the leadership of Houston Baptist University for their extraordinary kindness in having me here tonight. I'm very grateful for their friendship.

I also want to thank my friend Dr. John Hittinger of the University of St. Thomas. Part of my pleasure in being here is to encourage his efforts with the John Paul II Forum on the Church in the Modern World. The Forum is hugely important – and not just for Catholics, but for the whole Christian community. I'm grateful to the leadership of the University of St. Thomas for supporting him.

I need to offer a few caveats before I turn to the substance of our discussion.

The first caveat is this: My thoughts tonight are purely my own. I don't speak for the Holy See, or the American Catholic bishops, or the Houston Catholic community. In the Catholic tradition, the local bishop is the chief preacher and teacher of the faith, and the shepherd of the local Church. Here in Houston you have an outstanding bishop – a man of great Christian faith and intellect – in Cardinal Daniel DiNardo. In all things Catholic tonight, I'm glad to defer to his leadership.

Here's my second caveat: I'm here as a Catholic Christian and an American citizen – in that order. Both of these identities are important. They don't need to conflict. They are not, however, the same thing. And they do not have the same weight. I love my country. I revere the genius of its founding documents and its public institutions. But no nation, not even the one I love, has a right to my allegiance, or my silence, in matters that belong to God or that undermine the dignity of the human persons He created.

My third caveat is this: Catholics and Protestants have different memories of American history. The historian Paul Johnson once wrote that America was “born Protestant” (1). That's clearly true. Whatever America is today or may become tomorrow, its origin was deeply shaped by a Protestant Christian spirit, and the fruit of that spirit has been, on the balance, a great blessing for humanity. But it's also true that, while Catholics have always thrived in the United States, they lived through two centuries of discrimination, religious bigotry and occasional violence. Protestants of course will remember things quite differently. They will remember Catholic persecution of dissenters in Europe, the entanglements of the Roman Church and state power, and papal suspicion of democracy and religious liberty.

We can't erase those memories. And we cannot – nor should we try to – paper over the issues that still divide us as believers in terms of doctrine, authority and our understandings of the Church. Ecumenism based on good manners instead of truth is empty. It's also a form of lying. If we share a love of Jesus Christ and a familial bond in baptism and God's Word, then on a fundamental level, we're brothers and sisters. Members of a family owe each other more than surface courtesies. We owe each other the kind of fraternal respect that “speak[s] the truth in love” (Eph 4:15). We also urgently owe each other solidarity and support in dealing with a culture that increasingly derides religious faith in general, and the Christian faith in

particular. And that brings me to the heart of what I want to share with you.

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Our theme tonight is the vocation of Christians in American public life. That's a pretty broad canvas. Broad enough that I wrote a book about it. Tonight I want to focus in a special way on the role of Christians in our country's civic and political life. The key to our discussion will be that word "vocation." It comes from the Latin word "vocare," which means, "to call." Christians believe that God calls each of us individually, and all of us as a believing community, to know, love and serve him in our daily lives.

But there's more. He also asks us to make disciples of all nations. That means we have a duty to preach Jesus Christ. We have a mandate to share his Gospel of truth, mercy, justice and love. These are mission words; action words. They're not optional. And they have practical consequences for the way we think, speak, make choices and live our lives, not just at home but in the public square. Real Christian faith is always personal, but it's never private. And we need to think about that simple fact in light of an anniversary.

Fifty years ago this fall, in September 1960, Sen. John F. Kennedy, the Democratic candidate for president, spoke to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association. He had one purpose. He needed to convince 300 uneasy Protestant ministers, and the country at large, that a Catholic like himself could serve loyally as our nation's chief executive. Kennedy convinced the country, if not the ministers, and went on to be elected. And his speech left a lasting mark on American politics. It was sincere, compelling, articulate – and wrong. Not wrong about the patriotism of Catholics, but wrong about American history and very wrong about the role of religious faith in our nation's life. And he wasn't merely "wrong." His Houston remarks profoundly undermined the place not just of Catholics, but of all religious believers, in America's public life and political conversation. Today, half a century later, we're paying for the damage.

Now those are strong statements. So I'll try to explain them by doing three things. First, I want to look at the problems in what Kennedy actually said. Second, I want to reflect on what a proper Christian approach to politics and public service might look like. And last, I want to examine where Kennedy's speech has led us – in other words, the realities we face today, and what Christians need to do about those realities.

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John Kennedy was a great speaker. Ted Sorensen, who helped craft the Houston speech, was a gifted writer. As a result, it's easy to speed-read Kennedy's Houston remarks as a passionate appeal for tolerance. But the text has at least two big flaws (2). The first is political and historical. The second is religious.

Early in his remarks, Kennedy said: "I believe in an America where the separation of Church and state is absolute." Given the distrust historically shown to Catholics in this country, his words were shrewdly chosen. The trouble is, the Constitution doesn't say that. The Founders and Framers didn't believe that. And the history of the United States contradicts that. Unlike revolutionary leaders in Europe, the American Founders looked quite favorably on religion. Many were believers themselves. In fact, one of the main reasons for writing the First Amendment's Establishment Clause – the clause that bars any federally-endorsed Church – was that several of the Constitution's Framers wanted to protect the publicly funded

Protestant Churches they already had in their own states. John Adams actually preferred a “mild and equitable establishment of religion” and helped draft that into the 1780 Massachusetts Constitution (3).

America’s Founders encouraged mutual support between religion and government. Their reasons were practical. In their view, a republic like the United States needs a virtuous people to survive. Religious faith, rightly lived, forms virtuous people. Thus, the modern, drastic sense of the “separation of Church and state” had little force in American consciousness until Justice Hugo Black excavated it from a private letter President Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1802 to the Danbury Baptist Association (4). Justice Black then used Jefferson’s phrase in the Supreme Court’s *Everson v. Board of Education* decision in 1947.

The date of that Court decision is important, because America’s Catholic bishops wrote a wonderful pastoral letter one year later – in 1948 – called “The Christian in Action.” It’s worth reading. In that letter, the bishops did two things. They strongly endorsed American democracy and religious freedom. They also strongly challenged Justice Black’s logic in *Everson*.

The bishops wrote that “it would be an utter distortion of American history and law” to force the nation’s public institutions into an “indifference to religion and the exclusion of cooperation between religion and government.” They rejected Justice Black’s harsh new sense of the separation of Church and state as a “shibboleth of doctrinaire secularism” (5). And the bishops argued their case from the facts of American history.

The value of remembering that pastoral statement tonight is this: Kennedy referenced the 1948 bishops’ letter in his Houston comments. He wanted to prove the deep Catholic support for American democracy. And rightly so. But he neglected to mention that the same bishops, in the same letter, repudiated the new and radical kind of separation doctrine he was preaching.

The Houston remarks also created a religious problem. To his credit, Kennedy said that if his duties as President should “ever require me to violate my conscience or violate the national interest, I would resign the office.” He also warned that he would not “disavow my views or my church in order to win this election.” But in its effect, the Houston speech did exactly that. It began the project of walling religion away from the process of governance in a new and aggressive way. It also divided a person’s private beliefs from his or her public duties. And it set “the national interest” over and against “outside religious pressures or dictates.”

For his audience of Protestant ministers, Kennedy’s stress on personal conscience may have sounded familiar and reassuring. But what Kennedy actually did, according to Jesuit scholar Mark Massa, was something quite alien and new. He “‘secularize[d] the American presidency in order to win it.” In other words, “[P]recisely because Kennedy was not an adherent of that mainstream Protestant religiosity that had created and buttressed the ‘plausibility structures’ of [American] political culture at least since Lincoln, he had to ‘privatize’ presidential religious belief – including and especially his own – in order to win that office” (6).

In Massa’s view, the kind of secularity pushed by the Houston speech “represented a near total privatization of religious belief – so much a privatization that religious observers from both sides of the Catholic/Protestant fence commented on its remarkable atheistic implications for public life and discourse.” And the irony – again as told by Massa – is that some of the same people who worried publicly about Kennedy’s Catholic faith got a result

very different from the one they expected. In effect, “the raising of the [Catholic] issue itself went a considerable way toward ‘secularizing’ the American public square by privatizing personal belief. The very effort to ‘safeguard’ the [essentially Protestant] religious aura of the presidency... contributed in significant ways to its secularization.”

Fifty years after Kennedy’s Houston speech, we have more Catholics in national public office than ever before. But I wonder if we’ve ever had fewer of them who can coherently explain how their faith informs their work, or who even feel obligated to try. The life of our country is no more “Catholic” or “Christian” than it was 100 years ago. In fact it’s arguably less so. And at least one of the reasons for it is this: Too many Catholics confuse their personal opinions with a real Christian conscience. Too many live their faith as if it were a private idiosyncrasy – the kind that they’ll never allow to become a public nuisance. And too many just don’t really believe. Maybe it’s different in Protestant circles. But I hope you’ll forgive me if I say, “I doubt it.”

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John Kennedy didn’t create the trends in American life that I’ve described. But at least for Catholics, his Houston speech clearly fed them. Which brings me to the second point of my talk: What would a proper Christian approach to politics look like? John Courtney Murray, the Jesuit scholar who spoke so forcefully about the dignity of American democracy and religious freedom, once wrote: “The Holy Spirit does not descend into the City of Man in the form of a dove. He comes only in the endlessly energetic spirit of justice and love that dwells in the man of the City, the layman” (7).

Here’s what that means. Christianity is not mainly – or even significantly – about politics. It’s about living and sharing the love of God. And Christian political engagement, when it happens, is never mainly the task of the clergy. That work belongs to lay believers who live most intensely in the world. Christian faith is not a set of ethics or doctrines. It’s not a group of theories about social and economic justice. All these things have their place. All of them can be important. But a Christian life begins in a relationship with Jesus Christ; and it bears fruit in the justice, mercy and love we show to others because of that relationship.

Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets” (Mt 22:37-40). That’s the test of our faith, and without a passion for Jesus Christ in our hearts that reshapes our lives, Christianity is just a word game and a legend. Relationships have consequences. A married man will commit himself to certain actions and behaviors, no matter what the cost, out of the love he bears for his wife. Our relationship with God is the same. We need to live and prove our love by our actions, not just in our personal and family lives, but also in the public square. Therefore Christians individually and the Church as a believing community engage the political order as an obligation of the Word of God. Human law teaches and forms as well as regulates; and human politics is the exercise of power – which means both have moral implications that the Christian cannot ignore and still remain faithful to his vocation as a light to the world (Mt 5:14-16).

Robert Dodaro, the Augustinian priest and scholar, wrote a wonderful book a few years ago called “Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine”. In his book and elsewhere, Dodaro makes four key points about Augustine’s view of Christianity and politics (8).

First, Augustine never really offers a political theory, and there's a reason. He doesn't believe human beings can know or create perfect justice in this world. Our judgment is always flawed by our sinfulness. Therefore, the right starting point for any Christian politics is humility, modesty and a very sober realism.

Second, no political order, no matter how seemingly good, can ever constitute a just society. Errors in moral judgment can't be avoided. These errors also grow exponentially in their complexity as they move from lower to higher levels of society and governance. Therefore the Christian needs to be loyal to her nation and obedient to its legitimate rulers. But he also needs to cultivate a critical vigilance about both.

Third, despite these concerns, Christians still have a duty to take part in public life according to their God-given abilities, even when their faith brings them into conflict with public authority. We can't simply ignore or withdraw from civic affairs. The reason is simple. The classic civic virtues named by Cicero – prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance – can be renewed and elevated, to the benefit of all citizens, by the Christian virtues of faith, hope and charity. Therefore, political engagement is a worthy Christian task, and public office is an honorable Christian vocation.

Fourth, in governing as best they can, while conforming their lives and their judgment to the content of the Gospel, Christian leaders in public life can accomplish real good, and they can make a difference. Their success will always be limited and mixed. It will never be ideal. But with the help of God they can improve the moral quality of society, which makes the effort invaluable.

What Augustine believes about Christian leaders, we can reasonably extend to the vocation of all Christian citizens. The skills of the Christian citizen are finally very simple: a zeal for Jesus Christ and his Church; a conscience formed in humility and rooted in Scripture and the believing community; the prudence to see which issues in public life are vital and foundational to human dignity, and which ones are not; and the courage to work for what's right. We don't cultivate these skills alone. We develop them together as Christians, in prayer, on our knees, in the presence of Jesus Christ – and also in discussions like tonight.

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Now before ending, I want to turn briefly to the third point I mentioned earlier in my talk: the realities we face today, and what Christians need to do about them. As I was preparing these comments for tonight, I listed all the urgent issues that demand our attention as believers: abortion; immigration; our obligations to the poor, the elderly and the disabled; questions of war and peace; our national confusion about sexual identity and human nature, and the attacks on marriage and family life that flow from this confusion; the growing disconnection of our science and technology from real moral reflection; the erosion of freedom of conscience in our national health-care debates; the content and quality of the schools that form our children.

The list is long. I believe abortion is the foundational human rights issue of our lifetime. We need to do everything we can to support women in their pregnancies and to end the legal killing of unborn children. We may want to remember that the Romans had a visceral hatred for Carthage not because Carthage was a commercial rival, or because its people had a different language and customs. The Romans hated Carthage above all because its people sacrificed their infants to Ba'al. For the Romans, who themselves were a hard people, that was

a unique kind of wickedness and barbarism. As a nation, we might profitably ask ourselves whom and what we've really been worshipping in our 40 million "legal" abortions since 1973.

All of these issues that I've listed above divide our country and our Churches in a way Augustine would have found quite understandable. The City of God and the City of Man overlap in this world. Only God knows who finally belongs to which. But in the meantime, in seeking to live the Gospel we claim to believe, we find friends and brothers in unforeseen places, unlikely places; and when that happens, even a foreign place can seem like one's home.

The vocation of Christians in American public life does not have a Baptist or Catholic or Greek Orthodox or any other brand-specific label. John 14:6 – "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me" – which is so key to the identity of Houston Baptist University, burns just as hot in this heart, and the heart of every Catholic who truly understands his faith. Our job is to love God, preach Jesus Christ, serve and defend God's people, and sanctify the world as his agents. To do that work, we need to be one. Not "one" in pious words or good intentions, but really one, perfectly one, in mind and heart and action, as Christ intended. This is what Jesus meant when he said: "I do not pray for these only, but also those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (Jn 17:20-21).

We live in a country that was once – despite its sins and flaws – deeply shaped by Christian faith. It can be so again. But we will do that together, or we won't do it at all. We need to remember the words of St. Hilary from so long ago: "Unum sunt, qui invicem sunt", they are one, who are wholly for each other (9). May God grant us the grace to love each other, support each other and live wholly for each other in Jesus Christ – so that we might work together in renewing the nation that has served human freedom so well.

(1) Paul Johnson, "An Almost-Chosen People," *First Things*, June/July 2006; adapted from his Erasmus Lecture.

(2) Full text of the Kennedy Houston speech is available online from the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

(3) John Witte, Jr., "From Establishment to Freedom of Public Religion," Emory University School of Law, Public Law and Legal Theory Research Paper Series, Research Paper No. 04-1, 2003, p. 5.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 2-3.

(5) U.S. Catholic bishops, pastoral letter, "The Christian in Action," No. 11, 1948; see also Nos. 12-18; reprinted in "Pastoral Letters of the American Hierarchy, 1792-1970," Hugh J. Nolan, *Our Sunday Visitor*, 1971.

(6) Mark Massa, S.J.; quotations from Massa are from "A Catholic for President? John F. Kennedy and the 'Secular' Theology of the Houston Speech, 1960," *Journal of Church and State*, Spring 1997.

(7) John Courtney Murray, S.J., "The Role of Faith in the Renovation of the World," 1948; Murray's works are available online from the Woodstock Theological Center Library.

(8) Robert Dodaro, O.S.A.; see private correspondence with speaker, along with "Christ and the Just Society in the Thought of Augustine," Cambridge University Press, 2008 (first published in 2004), and "Ecclesia and Res Publica: How Augustinian Are Neo-Augustinian Politics?," collected in "Augustine and Post-Modern Thought: A New Alliance Against Modernity?," Peeters, *Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicalarum Lovaniensium*, 2009.

(9) Referenced in Murray, "The Construction of a Christian Culture;" essay originally delivered as three talks in 1940, available as noted above.