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FR. GEORGE WILSON SJ EDUCATIONAL FORUM

CLERICALISM: THE DEATH OF THE PRIESTHOOD

SS. SIMON & JUDE
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Introduction

Bishop Thomas Gumbleton

I have the honor and privilege to introduce our speaker for today, Fr. George Wilson. George was born in Philadelphia, grew up in Philadelphia, and in high school entered St. Joseph's Prep, which is a Jesuit high school in Philadelphia; and immediately afterward in 1946, he entered the Society of Jesus and began his training for the priesthood. He has a bachelors degree and a masters degree in the classics; and then at St. Louis University, did his theological studies in a Jesuit University in Innsbrook, Austria; and then came back and taught at Woodstock, a Jesuit school. He taught sacramental theology to Jesuits and Americans until 1972. In 1972 he became an intern at a program named *Benjamin Design Institute*, and there he began to prepare to do work for that Institute. Its mission, described here, is to provide process assistance to anybody engaged in a common enterprise, helping them with participatory processes for focusing their mission, and to use their human resources in the best collaborate manner to achieve it. Sounds like a really good thing to do! (Much laughter) We all need to learn process - how to be collaborate and work together to achieve a common goal - and so George has been training people in doing that sort of thing for many years now.

In regards to his work, he's also written many articles, and I will just mention or name a few of them. He has an article *Human Systems Approach to Leadership: Training in the Ethical Use of Power*. That sounds like a really good one to me! (Laughter) He has an article on *The Women's Ordination Question*. I'm going to look that one up myself; (Much laughter) to see where he stands on that issue. He probably is in trouble over it, as others of us are. And then also, a couple more articles. *I'd Like or I Have to Impose Some Thoughts on Personal Freedom*; that's in a human development magazine; and then also in that same magazine an article entitled *Leader of the Pack*. And here's one also that I think you all might find especially interesting, *Ideological Struggle in the Church: What is really going on?* We'd all like to know, I'm sure, but we don't give up. And then, finally, a book that he published quite recently - in fact it was the book that kind of prompted us to invite George to speak here today. Tom Lumpkin read the book, and I read the book, and we both said, "Here's a good thing! We need to get George here to speak about it." And the book, I'll give you sort of background on it: "Searching for answers in the midst of the sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church, many people blamed the clerical culture. But they're questioning: what exactly is this clerical culture?" As members of the Church, Fr. Wilson maintains we all share responsibility for creating a clerical culture, and now for that culture's transformation. This book aids that transformation by helping us examine some underlying attitudes that create and preserve destructive relationships between clergy and laity. After looking into this crisis and establishing where we are now, this book challenges us with concrete suggestions for changing behaviors; and that's what George is going to talk to us about this afternoon. And so I'm very pleased to welcome him here today in the name of all of us, and ready to hear what he has to say. (Applause)

Clericalism: the Death of the Priesthood

Fr. George Wilson

Let me say, first of all, thank you to Bishop Tom, and the committee for inviting me to see the Elephant. I feel like the kid who bought a Cracker Jack at the circus and reached in and found that there really was a prize at the bottom; and it was the answer to the DaVinci Code. (Laughter) So to see the whites of your eyes is important; all I have is a piece of paper. On a more serious note, before I begin

today, I would like to make note of the fact that many of you may not know this, but certainly all the women religious in the audience will. We have just suffered a very sad loss for the Church in this country. Sr. Mary Daniel Turner has certainly been one of our heroines, one of our leaders. She died last week in Washington D.C. in her early eighties. And as I thought about mentioning that, I thought Mary Daniel did the work of the Elephant before the Elephant even existed. So I'd like to dedicate our work here today to her memory; a great woman.

When I first was invited to speak about my book, I faced a conundrum, 'cause surely there are going to be people in the audience who've read the book; and they don't want to hear the same old thing. They want to move beyond what I said. And then, there's going to be people in the audience who have not read the book, and want to know what's in it; so I checked with some friends. I said "How do I do this?" And they said, "Don't be afraid to repeat much that's in the book, because even the people who've read it under one medium, it will be a different experience in another." So I'm really going to follow through on that; and Tom's opening comments really took away the first section I wanted to talk about, (laughter) but I'll go back over it a little bit.

These ideas didn't come to me two years ago. They've been bubbling up over 30 - 35 years of ministry. But the catalyst for the book was indeed the tragedy of the sex abuse situation. And as he noted, what was a common mantra around our country was - well the abuse situation - was all due to the clerical culture. And people kind of just threw that out and said, "OK! That takes care of that," without examining what's behind those words. So I began to say to myself, "Let's unpack what this clerical culture is all about," and it led me into writing the book.

So let's take a look. I'll let my friend here, Tom, be my guide (using powerpoint). So there's this man whom we call in our language and our culture, a priest. Oh! Is he a cleric? Is clergyhood identical with priesthood; or are they two different realities? Well unfortunately they are used in common writing as if they were saying the same thing. You'll read an article that says, "The priests of the diocese met in assembly. Clergy discuss sacraments." So the assumption is, well, clergy, priest, identical; and really what I am doing is breaking those two things open. The answer is: this man, and it happens to be a man at this point, he is a cleric; but he is also a priest. And if you asked the questions: "A cleric doesn't have to be a priest? Priest does not have to be cleric?" It's nice if they coincide, and they work well; but they don't have to.

So what is clergy all about? Clergy is a sociological status in society. The interesting thing is when you go back and look at the origin, the word *kleros* has nothing to do with religion. The original meaning of *kleros* was a person who had a portion or a lot. We would say in today's language, it was someone who owned property. You were a *kleros*. And going into the Middle Ages, the word cleric covered a lot of things that had no connection with religion or the sacred. In the Middle Ages clergy is basically the same word as clerk. In the Middle Ages a clerk or cleric was somebody who could write - everybody else was illiterate. The clerks were those who had the skill of writing. Okay, so there's behind the word the understanding that society recognizes a certain body of people; and they are called clerics. I'll expand on that a little bit on.

The word priest has nothing to do, per se, with clergy. When we use the word priest in any setting, we're talking about a relationship to the holy, to the numinous, to the Divine. It's a word about sacredness, huh? Clergy has nothing of itself to do with that world. So let's take that word a little bit now. This man who is in our world today, in American society, a priest, he is part of a culture, a clerical culture. So there's all those guys in robes there, they belong to a culture. And then we need to think a little bit about what are cultures all about? And that's the study we could go on forever. People have devoted their lifetime to cultures.

Cultures have to do with a body of people who have very deeply grounded similar attitudes and approaches to reality; and we're going to take that a little bit. Every culture exists because it creates some value in society. If it didn't it, wouldn't exist. So we can speak about American culture; we can speak about Irish culture. These bodies of thought and practice exist because they create human meaning. You know, I'm an Irish American. I'll tell you a bad story. My family grew up with legends about Ireland,

but they were only legends; and after I went to Ireland to visit, I came home; and all my uncles who lived with this mythological Irish thing said, "Oh, what was it like?" I said, "You know, I love the Irish; it's just Irish Americans I can't stand, (laughter) because they have this mythological unreal thing about what Irelands really all about." But anyway, every culture exists because it gives meaning; but the most important thing: every culture has within it the potential for destructive consequences. In the introduction of my book, I quoted from John Paul II, who set the principal out very well: "Since culture is a human creation, and is therefore marked by sin, it too needs to be healed, and nobled, and perfected." So every culture - I'm going to take a risk here, including the culture of the Elephant, you are a culture you know - you're a body of people with a certain set of assumptions and attitudes, etc., and subject to the same critique. Now, the ordained are only one of the cultures within the Church; the Church is a single system of people. One of the most important things in my work is to think in terms of wholes, whole human systems.

The Church itself is a reality in which there are many sub-cultures interacting. There are the ordained. There are the hierarchy. There are the laity of various sorts. So, we have to think in terms of this total reality in which the clergy, the ordained, are only one segment, interacting with others, creating the meaning as well as the destructive patterns of the total thing. So, okay, I think that's enough on - oh! we have the Elephant in there; that's you're sub-culture on the screen there; and the ordained clergy over there. Okay, now remember, now when I'm talking clergy, I'm not necessarily talking about ordained. Okay? Cultures are created and maintained by the interaction of the components. You know we interact and create a culture. You're not a culture by yourself. I interact with other Irish Americans and discover more about what it means to be an Irish American, or a Philadelphian - God help me. I always say about the Church in Philadelphia, it's a nice place to have been in. (Laughter)

Cultures, whether deliberately or covertly, do what? We need to say that in any culture of which we are a part - and I'm using the term obviously broadly rather than the narrow sense that some people use it - we all benefit from being part of a culture. And one of the implications of that is, folks: as much as we dislike a lot of things going on in the Church right now, we get a covert benefit from them; and we don't like to acknowledge that, but it's true. So we benefit from the arrangement of things they way they are now, because otherwise, if we didn't, they'd be changed. And here's the sad part: we are all complicit in the dysfunction of any society that we belong to. It's another way of saying, there is such a thing as original sin; and it affects every social system, not just individuals. So, whether we acknowledge the fact or not, we are in this reality called Church. We benefit from even some of its destructive patterns; and we are complicit; and we can't - what I'm saying in many ways is this: there are some people that would take the expression of the clerical culture, and say, "It was all caused by the clerical culture," and they translate that into: "I was all caused by the bishops and priests." No! No! We participated in it by creating the culture which gave rise to the sexual abuse situation. We'll talk about how.

Ordained ministers are not the only clergy. That is a shriveled up way that we've identified the word clergy today. Everybody's mind would say the ordained. We need to think in a broader sense. For example, we have a legal clergy. The law is a culture. You know there was a time in the Middle Ages when lawyers wore special gowns, just like a priest wears a cassock, or did wear a cassock. So there were symbols that the law was a clergy. We do have an academic clergy. The academic world is a cleric, it's a clergy. It's a body of people with its own norms and expectations. And, you know, all that stuff with caps and gowns that we have today? That's the way professors, they always lived in earlier years. We have a medical clergy: our doctors, our nurses; our health care professionals are part of a clerical body that has norms. Clergies get created by society to fulfill a societal need. We need people, for example, who understand social norms; so we create a clerical caste called lawyers. We need people who guard the health of society; we create a clerical caste called the medical professions. We need people to seek truth; and so we have the academic clergy. And we have a social protection clergy: the police, the military. They are the clergy in the sense that they have their own set of norms and values; and they exist to perform a service in society. We would be in trouble if we didn't have police. But again the flip side is they also create potentially down sides. So within that there are the ordained clergy. So, obviously, I'm asking you to get out of a use of language which identifies clergy only with the ordained.

Now the ordained interact with other segments of society to create the society we call the Church; and it has its benefits. Each clergy makes a contribution to society. The ordained clergy are obviously

supposedly here to help society deal with the sacred, with the Divine; but they also, as I said before, every clergy carries within itself the seeds of superior/ inferior destructive relationships. We'll talk about a few of them later on; but, you know, just think of a few common things. Thirty years ago when you went to your doctor and said, "I'd like to see my chart." The doctor said, "Oh! No! No! No! You don't get to see your chart. That's us. We have that special knowledge. You lay folk don't enter into that world. You have no power in that world." We've changed that. We now can say "I want to see my chart;" and legally you get to see it. Every culture has a way of protecting itself, and making lay people potentially feel inferior to those who are in that particular cultural world. Same sickness or potential sickness is among the ordained.

I'm going to move now into exploring some of the assumptions that create this particular thing we call clerical culture. I'm going to use an image that's quite common. You know, in organization development, people talk about the assumptions that we have are like an iceberg. And in an iceberg, only 10% is above the water, 90% of the iceberg is below the water. What am I saying? I'm saying that you and I, every one of us, operate out of assumptions that we can name up top. We also operate out of many assumptions unexamined, that influence our behavior, that are very difficult for us to get in touch with; but they really operate. We wouldn't admit them. You know, that's how racism is generated. We wouldn't admit that we act in a way that excludes African Americans, or whatever, but we do; and we have beliefs and attitudes that we have to dig up to get in touch with what really motivates me. And that's the danger. The danger is: 90% that's underneath the surface. That's where the Titanic hit. The Titanic doesn't hit the top percent that's above the water; it hits below the water. And that's how human relationships break down. You know, people get married. That's what a marriage inventory is all about; trying to see if two people fit together? "How are you with regard to in-laws?" "How am I with regard to in-laws?" "What's your attitude toward sex?" "What's your attitude towards money?" It's basically an attempt to see whether we have the same fundamental assumptions, or whether you've got these, and I've got those and now we're together for 40 years of détente. So the question becomes, for all of us, to think about the assumptions that have generated the clerical culture.

Okay! I'll say a little bit more about assumptions. Assumptions can be facts; they can be beliefs; they can be attitudes that we have; and it's the unexamined, unacknowledged part that causes trouble. Someone will say at the end of a fight, "Oh I never realized such and such." Meaning, "I was operating out of a different assumption and I didn't dig it up. I couldn't get in touch with it." Okay! So the important part of good developmental process is to raise the iceberg so that as little of it as possible is invisible and uncritiqued. There will always be assumptions. This is part of our human nature. There will be things inside our psyche that we are operating out of that we don't admit to ourselves; and we don't acknowledge they're there. That's part of a spiritual growth and journey that we're on all our lives. It's to get deeper and deeper in touch with what really moves me. Where is God at work in me in ways that I am uncomfortable about? See, one of the things that I just got in touch with as I was preparing this talk, I've come to realize that that top part, if we're not working at the lower part of the iceberg, the top part becomes more and more rigid. People who are rigid are very clear on a small segment of society. They don't want to look at the rest; and that's how we get fanatics. They are focused on one small area; and they don't want to ask themselves questions that might have to change; so they keep that layer down. So, the healthier scenario would be, if we could all arrive at it, that 90% of our cognitive and affective world we are in touch with; and we can deal with it, but only a small segment.

Now let's translate this into the clerical culture. So these are some components that go into creating the clerical culture Over on the left (PowerPoint screen) you have the assumption of the clergy. Over on the right you have the assumption of the laity and it goes around different themes; so, for example, automatic status. The unexamined assumption of the priest of the ordained, if they are clericalized, is: "I'm a member of the clergy; and so I am automatically qualified; and I am automatically credible. I don't have to earn credibility by my performance; I got that when I was ordained." Okay? (Laughter) That's all. I don't have to work at it. Now remember, these assumptions, when I use these, we don't acknowledge them, but they operate in us. But, on the other side of that, there are lay people who wouldn't acknowledge it, but they would say, "There's a diploma on the wall; so I can trust him or her." We go into a doctor's office, and we see a diploma on the wall, automatically credible. Well, maybe not in today's world. We say, "We'd like to see your record doctor. How many operations did you perform

and how many people made it and how many didn't you know." But that's beginning to challenge an old assumption that lay people had. If you had the credentials, if you were ordained, if you were a priest, if you were a bishop, you were automatically a holy man and a reliable trustworthy guide for me. Okay?

My grandmother would never question a priest; her automatic assumption is, of course, they know what it's all about. It goes into things like title. People use a special title when they address me so I must be special. People call me "Father." On the other hand the lay person says, "She's got a title, I better shape up." That's true with lawyers, with doctors, with academics. I'm the lay person with regard to the medical field or the legal field. See, it's a question of an interpersonal dynamic. It's not a question of theology, or Church structure, per se. Clergy assumption: expertise. "We're the experts; who are they to judge us?" You know, the ordained clergy can fall into a trap and say, "The lay people don't understand. We went through seven years of seminary; we know all this stuff. Who are you, who never studied this stuff, to challenge me?" And on the other hand lay people fall into the trap of saying "They're the experts. I'm sure they know what they're talking about." I don't know how many times, and I'm sure the bishop and the priests in the audience, the ordained in the audience, will be able to resonate with this experience. Somebody comes up to me and says "Oh Father, pray for me. Pray for my daughter." And I say, "Pray for me." "Oh! You're a priest."

I mean, literally, there are people who say that priests don't need to be prayed for. They're holy. Just imagine the shock of the secular society that we live in when they discover, for God's sake, that Mother Teresa wasn't always in consolation with God. Duh! I mean, this is humanity. But, of course, she's a saint; so she doesn't have to wrestle with dryness, or God being absent in her life. Those are unexamined assumptions that we live out of; and they continue to create a relationship between laity and priests that is not helpful.

The area of accountability: the ordained can fall into the trap, "We don't have to be accountable to the laity, we are the experts." And the layperson on the other side, "We shouldn't question them; where would we be without them?" So this is not a question of attacking anybody on a side; I'm trying to get in touch with the dynamic, that is in all of us, that we accept, because we don't want to challenge some assumptions we're operating out of; and they create behaviors which then contribute to superior/inferior. "In the area of spirituality we have been ordained. That makes us experts or masters in spirituality, the laity don't have that gift." Laity: "They are the pro's in the things of God, we're just amateurs." So lay people have for years entrusted their spiritual life to people who really weren't qualified; but they were ordained. Huh? Okay. Hope I've made that point; and you can pick up some more in the course of the book.

I want to say a word about what happens when somebody How does the clericalism of the clergy over the ordained take place? I want to say first of all there are wonderful priests. They are ordained men who have remained priests. They are a great resource to our Church. And when I talk about clericalism, I hope you don't get the idea that I'm talking about all the ordained. I'm talking about a disease that some men get caught into. How does that happen? Well, over here (on the PowerPoint screen) you've got the clergy, whatever one, pick your clergy, the legal clergy, the academic clergy, the military clergy, or the ordained. That body has its own established norms, and practices, and attitudes; and it also has the inevitable hazards, if they are not attended to. Now along comes this guy. He is a potential novice. He's a real hunk. This is a guy that every seminary would like to have ... the all American guy. Well, look at that young lady showed up too. It could be a woman coming into a clerical group, whether it's the legal profession, whatever. Okay? That person coming into this system brings his or her own psychic development, as well as things that haven't been dealt with. This is a human being that has issues like every human being has, some of which have not been dealt with. They're still immature. They still haven't grown up yet. Okay?

So, you have the interface between a system that has strengths, but also has potential downsides. You have a human being enter that system who has unresolved things, as well as strengths. The question becomes: how will that interaction between these two realities unfold? Will this well minded, well meaning, young man become a great ordained minister, or will the fault lines in the clerical culture intersect with his own personal undevelopment, and then create someone who is clericalized in the

negative sense? Okay? So that's the question. The question then is how will that take place? How do we minimize the potential destruction behavior? I've come to an image that I came to after I wrote the book. I think what this is like is a germ, a bacillus, that we carry in our body. We all have all sorts of germs in our body that could be destructive, but they don't cause any harm, right? And then along comes the catalyst, cancer, or whatever, and those cells then do something they weren't intended to do; and they become destructive of the body.

I think it's similar here that the clerical culture with all its goodness has downside implications; and if that man or woman joining that culture is himself beset with unexamined things, the potential is there for that to turn into a power drive: the guy who becomes a priest because he is going to be on top; or the guy who become a lawyer so that I can, you know, push my clients around and treat them destructively. There are human needs at work, and they are not all healthy in every individual. So we have, and again, I want to come back to make sure we're staying in touch with the good people. It's not a question of good or bad, but the people who navigate that transition well. You have a slew of great doctors and nurses, who are centered on their patients in our society. They live to serve their patients, and we should value them. There are police and military that are focused on maintaining peace. They know that's what they are there for. There are professors and researchers who will pursue truth, no matter what it costs. They're really out to learn what this world is about, and they're not afraid to ask deeper questions. There are client centered lawyers who are not afraid to rock the system. They live for justice, because that's what they embraced when they joined the legal profession. And there are ordained ministers who call forth the gifts of the laity for the good of the faith community.

But the bottom line possibility, if that interaction is not healthy, if those flaws on each side come together almost like a magnet, you get the following: the fault lines in the development of the individual member of a clergy group intersect with the occupational hazards of the group culture. Then you get the individual cleric: lawyer, doctor, priest, can lose touch with the societal vision that gave rise to that clergy in the first place. And you get the following: they lose touch with the world of the laity they're supposedly called to serve, which is one of the big things we complaining about our Congress right now, isn't it? They're out of touch. They've become a professional body geared to being elected, and don't understand the world in which people out on the street are living. They've lost touch. They've become an enclave. The same thing is true of the others.

So, what are the resulting forms of clericalism? You have people in the legal profession who forget the call to build just society; and they settle for more billable hours. The goal is just keep that case going. I remember my niece was in a big case down in Florida that went on for 7 years, millions of dollars; and at the end, two of the lawyers were heard to talk to each other and said, "Hey, you got to give me some slack" - they were on two opposite sides - "you gotta cut me some slack; I need some more hours. Yeah! Keep this case going; and then settle it on the courtroom steps after we've all made a ton of money off both of these clients." It's not a question of the clients; it's a question of the culture of the law.

We have members of the medical clergy who have forgotten the call to put the health of society first; and they are settling for sweetheart deals with "big pharma." We've got doctors earning their money by promoting drugs for the drug companies. They've forgotten what they're all about and it's just a question of make a deal with the drug company, promote something, and we'll all make a lot of money.

There are members of the academic guild who forget the pursuit of truth and they settle for ideological food fights. There's nothing more bitter than a faculty of a university that's fighting over the trivia that they fight over. Truth has long since left the building. It's whether my little profession, my little essay, is going to be better than yours you know. Okay? I'm gilding this, but that's okay.

There are members of the public safety guild who forget the call to protect the public and become bullies. We have police who have lost sight of their role as cops, and they are bullies. They do violence in our society. There are people in the military who become Rambo and lose sight of what their mission was.

And then, obviously, then we have members of the ordained who forget the call to promote the holiness of the Lord's people and they settle for totemized ritual, "I'll just say Mass." That there is any

sense that this man is praying with the congregation instead of going through a dead ritual, has lost touch with what ritual is suppose to be about. Or they put their time in on what I call ecclesiastical brick-a-brack. You know there are guys who spend their whole lives talking about whose going to become the bishop, and how did this ...; and you know they've lost touch with what this faith community is all about. That's clericalism. The culture has taken over and it becomes an old boys club. It's now an old boys club. It used to be a young boys club. (Laughter)

So, then, the question becomes: I've talked about culture, and culture particularly as it affects the ordained. Then, what am I getting at when I talk about priesting? What is priesting all about? I've got to make up a verb because we don't have any language for what I'm trying to get at. Part of our difficulty in changing, in transformation of the Church, is going to learn to use language differently. If clergy means only priests, if that means the same thing all the time, we're just going to repeat the patterns, because the words come from the attitudes; and we're going to have to learn some new words, and new ways of using language. What is priesting all about?

The first thing we need to think about when we talk about priesting is that the New Testament never uses the word priest of any individual human being, except Jesus Christ. The New Testament community did not know the idea of a single man being a priest. Now biblical scholars wrestle with why that was so. Potentially one argument is that they didn't want the word priest to be contaminated with the mystery religions with which the word priest was being used. They didn't want the priests in this community to be seen in the same way that the mystery religion priests were. That's one hypothesis. My own hunch is they didn't use the word priest of any individual because, organizationally, we didn't have anybody with that title. Isn't it interesting that in all the catalogs of the roles of the Church in St. Paul's Epistles you have apostles, you have teachers, you have interpreters of tongues, you never hear the word priest. So there were people in the community who had these different functions, interpreters of tongues, people talked in tongues and some people had the gift of interpreting them. No where does the word priest appear in those catalogs. To me that simply says there was no body that had that title at that time the community had not yet raised up. There were surely people leading and there were surely people leading Eucharist, no doubt, but they did not have that, they were not set apart as a guild, as a sociological reality that we would call the clergy today. And notice at that point, there were no laity either.

One of the interesting things as I explored this whole thing, the word laity only comes into being when you have a profession called priest; prior to that, we are brothers and sisters in the Lord. That's what we all are. We're all part of a priestly community. So the first point I'm getting at is: priest is applied to only one individual. We, the body of the faithful, the whole Church, are called a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. The total community is priestly. That was not a word associated with a particular body within the Church, okay? Priesthood precedes priesthood, in the sense I'm using it, precedes the sense of a socially designated role called priest and called laity. They come into existence later on.

So, then, if that's true, how do we take the word priestly, being a priestly people; and how does that get translated from a concept into reality? Well there are several things we need to think about. The first, to me, the deepest, is being priestly means standing in an attitude of adoration, acknowledging humbly we are creatures before the old Holy One ... foundation. If we are not living an attitude of adoration before the Holy One of God, we haven't begun to be a priestly people. How does that get translated into the everyday life of faith? These are all the things we call from Scripture: living out the beatitudes. A priestly people lives that notion of holiness that Jesus talks about: being pure of heart, having a singleness of purpose, being able to sit with those who mourn, all those things; that's the way priesting happens. It means following Matthew 25: compassionate identification with the broken and the dispossessed of society. I'm acting as part of the priestly community when I feed the hungry, when I clothe the naked, when I visit people in prison, when I advocate for those who can't speak. It means taking on the mind and heart of Jesus, single purpose, self-emptying love.

I want to say a word about Jesus for a minute, because it's very important to me. For 35 years now, I've lived and worshipped within two African American communities in Cincinnati. One of them is my spiritual home. The Jesuits still are, but in another sense. That community has changed my attitude

toward Jesus. It's interesting, you know, African American people rarely use the word Christ. Jesus, this human being just like us, is what's real; and we can avoid the humanity of the Christ by talking about the Christ. That's the transformed risen reality; and I think, for a lot of people, they have a Christ who's not in touch with Jesus of Nazareth, to put it in a small way.

You know, Karl Rahner said that if you scratch most people, most Catholics, you'll find that they are Monophysites, which means, they have come to terms with the fact that Jesus was God; and so, when you ask them, "You know Jesus shed tears? or Jesus didn't know what he was going to do next?" "Oh! But he was God." They immediately jump to the God question. "He was God therefore he knew everything, had all the answers;" and it's a way of avoiding the spirituality that's based on the fact that Jesus was just like us, that he had to wrestle, he had doubts, he had questions, that he didn't have the answers. But I'm afraid that our people are still being presented with a catechesis that's based on the Christ; and they've lost touch with the experience that the first Christians had, which was to walk the streets with this man, whom they could not have, at that point, called the Son of God, because they didn't have the language for it; but he was like them; and attracted them. So, taking on the mind of Jesus, priesting is speaking out for the voiceless; it means living constantly in pilgrimage.

You know, we're a people that are the product of the Enlightenment, whether we know it or not. And a great value that came out of the Enlightenment was, we're going to have certainty. We get rid of all this religious mumbo jumbo; we'll have answers, clear rational answers; and we'll have certitude. I think we've all been affected by that. We've lost touch with the pilgrim character of the Christian community, it's on the way; it's always on the way; and we don't have the answers. We have to learn to live with mystery. We've lost that.

Our American culture adds to the Enlightenment because, now, we want instant answers. The technological age has made us say, "If my computer doesn't work, throw this stupid thing out," if I don't get an answer right away. We're in a culture that needs immediate gratification; and we, as religious people on the pilgrimage, have to say to the world: "No! No! We're living with mystery. We don't have the answers." And we have to assume responsibility for living within that kind of a mental world.

It means also, and this is something I've been thinking a lot about recently, holiness has to do with radical confrontation with the real. Tom Peters, whom you know, the guru of excellence, he writes a book on effectiveness of business corporations. In the middle of one of his chapters, he says, "I've come to think about the saints are those who confront reality." There's everything in us that wants to avoid the unpleasant. We create mental worlds that are nice, that are comfortable. Having to confront those assumptions beneath is hard work, but that's reality. And the more I think just about that basic premise: *Can we confront the reality in front of us? Can we confront the meaning of Haiti?* What did that do to us if we allow ourselves to get in touch with it? What did it do to us in our attitudes toward God? Do we allow that experience to challenge the comfortable God we live with, and we think we need? Can we allow the painful, you know, the experience of the cross?

You know, we can trivialize the experience of Jesus on the cross. We live in a world right now, a so-called Christian world, in which we have preachers who are preaching *the gospel of money* for God's sake, *the gospel of prosperity*, claiming to be followers of Jesus Christ. Is that what you read in the gospel? It's certainly not what I read. And if we know the story of the gospels, then we have to confront darkness in ourselves, in our Church, in our world. More particularly, ultimately, priesting means participating in the communal life and offering of Jesus at the Eucharist. That the Eucharist is not a ritual I go through, it is the uniting of my personal spiritual life with the One who is all holy, and who is all obedient, and who never flinched from the real. It is a demanding thing.

So clergyhood means assuming a role that's expected by society. It is a state. Once you're a cleric, you're always a cleric. Priesting, by contrast, is a way of living. It's a life; and that means every day being priestly. It means it's a process that's always unfolding through appropriate action. I'm never fully a priest or a priestly person; it's growing. And it is never achieved. I can't say, "Hey I made it, I'm a priest." It's never achieved; but it's always being actuated in the present moment, or else it's atrophying.

That means in every interaction relationally with my brothers and sisters, I'm asking myself: "What is priestly behavior here with individuals, and then with the social system."

The question then becomes: "If the Church," as I'm saying, as any social institution, "is a mixture of clergies that has to be transformed and overcome those downside effects that are within it, how do we do that? How do we re-priest a Church which has become clericalized?" assuming it's become clericalized, because we all did it? All of us are a part of it. You know laity that abdicate their responsibility to speak up to their pastors. I'll tell you a story that, I have to use the language of the story, so please, don't be upset by the language, but in the book I tell the story of a wonderful layman 50 years ago, who was a great hero of mine. In the city of Scranton, he was assistant to the president, did all sorts of things at the university, and he was also at that time very active in the Lakawanna County Temperance Society, which is what they called alcoholism in those days. And he had just been elected to the board, re-elected, and in the paper the next day, they had a picture of him on the board; and he walked past the chancery building, and he knew the priests in the chancery very well, and this monsignor came out of the chancery, and he saw John, and he said, "Hey John, I saw your picture in the Times last night with your Protestant do-gooder friends." And John said to him, "Yes, and they do more good than you bastards sitting on your asses in the chancery." (Laughter) Monsignor almost hyperventilated; and he said, "You can't talk to me like that." And John said to him, "I'll talk to you like that until you start behaving like a Christian," and walked on. To me, it might not be your style; but John was exercising his priestly baptismal call.

So we're gonna transform this by our own personal behavior, each of us, I as an ordained man, you as a lay man or woman, have to look into some of your attitudes. The way the Church is dealing with the sex abuse case situation, right now, is through preventive measures. We will introduce training children on how to recognize when they are being touched improperly. We will do training for priests, and DREs, and everybody in our schools. We're spending millions and millions of dollars; and its good stuff. You know one of the things I want to say about our Church, the irony of this whole thing is, that secular society is looking at the Catholic Church with regard to the sex abuse situation saying, "They have done better at dealing with this than any other entity in our society." So if we want to beat up on the Church, we can; but the Church has put its energies, and its resources, and is working to prevent abuse better than the boy scouts, where there's tons of abuse, better than other sorts of institutions. So, let's not lose our pride in our Church; we're doing some good things. But that's prevention. That's what we call the operational level against re-occurrence. It's good. If we can say 20 years from now that no child has been abused as a result of all these measures, that will be a tremendous success; but it's not getting at the deeper question.

There's a deeper questions from which this all arose. There are people, and I think this body would have a lot of its energy focused on reform of organizational structures, we need consultative bodies at the parish that work, that listen to the voice of the people. That's even the language, the Voice of the Faithful. We need them at the diocesan level, etc. We need structures for consultation. Fair enough! We need them; and I'm not going to denigrate them. But if we think that's the answer, that's another American bad assumption. Structures don't change people. The deeper question is: we need cultural transformation. That's a transformation of attitudes. It's a transformation of fundamental beliefs about who I am, and how I relate to you, whether you are ordained and I'm not, or whatever.

And that means for the clergy, change in their attitudes toward the laity; for the laity, change in their attitudes toward clergy. Do they live out a model of relationship which is disempowering, and then bitch about it, you know? We're all subject to that. So, since culture is created by the interaction of individuals and groups, to transform the Church is going to require personal conversion. Every one of us has to look at what am I doing that is contributing to the culture that has done harm. It means: we have to change from our learned ways of relating to one another. You know, here is a way of looking at our lives: we live by scripts. You know, every culture creates scripts; this is what you are expected to say. You get handed a script when you become a Catholic; and that script has some lines in it that are the old model of clergy-lay relationships. We're going to have to change those scripts; but if we do it, other people are going to be uneasy. There are certainly going to be people uneasy at the story I just told about my friend John, "Oh! Oh! That's terrible that he spoke to a priest like that." There are people upset who say, "they ought

to take that guy and string him up; he doesn't revere the clergy." He does. We're going to have to try new scripts and they're gonna make us uneasy.

We have to get away from a parent-child model, which is the unexamined reality so much that the ordained is the parent and the laity are children. That's what Rome sees in our American Church, as a bunch of children, that we have to straighten out. Growing up, however, means challenging myself, not just the other guy. One of the things I've come to, and I'm as pained about the Church, I think, as anybody, I've come to the realization that the only person I can change is me. I can't change the other party to that relationship; but if I behave differently, the other person will have to change, because it's a relationship. In a relationship, when one party acts differently, the other party has to.

I love to tell stories. There's a wonderful writer, a theorist of family systems therapy, Edwin. He tells a story about a woman who came to him; and the issue that she brought was that she knew that her husband was having affairs, multiple affairs. And she knew it; and she was trying everything to change him. And this guy said, "Look! I'm going to give you a different approach. The next time he's going on a business trip, and you know what he's going for, to meet the girlfriend, support him. Buy him a bottle of wine. Buy him some flowers and say, 'Joe, I hope you have a great trip.'" Within three months it was all over. Once she changed and said, "I'm not trying to change you anymore. I'm done with that game. I'm being me," he changed; and he said, "Whoa! This is getting serious; she's not playing the old game anymore." Okay! We have to do the same thing to change the clerical culture. And it's a peer to peer model.

The process of conversion begins in accepting our responsibility. The first act of the liturgy is confession. We enter the liturgy saying, "I have sinned; we have sinned". Monsignor Bob Fox, who is a great apostle to the Hispanic community in New York, used to say, "It is interesting in the old Mass: the priest used to come out and say, "Through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault'." He said, "Nobody believed it." (Laughter) He didn't, right? Do we take seriously that the beginning of liturgy is the acknowledgement of my share in the destructive behaviors that have characterized our community, our neighborhood, our world? A sentence that I wrote in the book that seems to have meant a lot to people is "I will not experience myself as a full agent in the creation of the new until I'm able to give up my illusion of being only a victim of the old." None of us are pure victims of the destructive behavior in the Church, we contributed to it.

Finally, transformation is a shared responsibility. It's gonna take time. We didn't get into this situation overnight; it's been building since Vatican I. It's gonna take, you know, decades to create a new model of relating between ordained and non-ordained. It's done in behavior, not in talking about it. That new behavior changes the relationship. It will involve conflict with prevailing scripts; and its best initiated by studying existing examples of best practices, like the one I told you.

Elements in the transformation process: prayer that says we want this to happen. I've gotta stand before God and not just bitch, but say, "I desire a new Church." It's gotta come from deeper. It means being attentive to my experience. It means learning from the example of Jesus, who was never clericalized. He took human beings where they were, even though they were not sanctioned by his society; and it means identifying as a member of a pilgrim community.

I have some critique of the comment of the idea of servant leadership. Servant leadership, that nice language in the Church can really be a nice new ideological control mechanism. I am the servant leader, which means I give, and you don't have anything to give. You're a recipient. It can really be another way of being on top. Here's a live pastoral story for all of us to think about because it challenges us. I was very close to the Madonna House community up in Canada, the Baroness Doherty'; it's a lay group. Some years ago they sent three of their members to Africa and the Baroness said to them, "Okay, you're in Africa for three years. I don't want to hear that you have done anything for anybody. You're not there to do for anybody." Well these three young people went out to Africa for three years; and they just found this unbearable: "We're here for three years, and what have we done? We didn't feed the poor, we didn't do anything." When they left, a thousand people from the community came down to the riverside to send them off; and what the people said to them is, "You're the only white people who ever loved us. You

lived our world. You shared the same things. You didn't try to do for us. You just were human with us." That's love.

Okay, I'm going to give one final quote. There was an Italian Jesuit who was a veteran missionary, who gained a profound knowledge of the culture and the language of the Japanese people where he served; and he wrote back to Rome, and he said this, "Any Jesuit who comes to Japan and does not foster a love for this bride of wondrous beauty, not caring to learn her language immediately, not conforming to her ways, deserves to be packed back to Europe as an inept and unprofitable worker in the Lord's vineyard." It all comes down to love. Priest, ordained people need to love the community they serve. Laity needs to learn to love the priests that serve them; but that means also challenge, calling them to something deeper. Thank you. (Applause).

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