

BULLETIN – NOVEMBER 20

#notmyprotesters. Get back to school (or enroll). Get back to work (or get a job). That's my pastoral message to people who are keeping themselves angry and heartsick over the results of the recent presidential election. Get busy and help start cleaning up the country. If you don't accept the slogan "Make America Great Again," modify it to "Keep America Great" or "Cool the Globe Down" or something more to your liking. Those who complain that their candidate won the popular vote might note that the total was 60.2 million compared to 59.9 million. Even *that* is a razor-thin edge in an election in which a very high percentage of potential voters participated.

But, according to our Constitution, the popular vote elects *electors*, who then elect the President. Why? Look at the map of the 50 sovereign states. Would it be "fair" to have New England, New York, the Middle Atlantic states, and California alone elect the President? The Constitution was wisely designed to give the less-populous regions of the republic their say. I wonder how many of the protesters who have filled the streets since November 8 paid attention to that in their high school civics class, if they weren't out somewhere protesting that day.

Here's a similar lesson. Over seven games in the recent World Series, the Cleveland Indians scored two more runs than did the Chicago Cubs. However, they lost the Series, four games to three. That's because each game has its own individual score. You don't just add up all the runs at the end and give the trophy to whoever scored the most. But the protesters probably don't know anything about baseball, either. Maybe it's too American for them. That does seem to be a bad word in those circles these days.

The media spent a few days in a daze of their own. "How did we get it so wrong?" Well, media and government elites have for years referred to everything between the two coasts as "flyover country." They act as though the New York-Washington corridor and California actually set the pace and the agenda for the whole country, while all the people between the two coasts are clueless followers. And while it's true that they do have major influence in that regard, the folks in flyover land are also citizens with rights. The fact that the map was geographically drenched in red with only a few exceptions indicates very well how the elites got it so wrong, and did their very best to promote and prepare for a victory that didn't materialize.

Typical these days, the "protests" are far from spontaneous, but are carefully orchestrated. While numerous locals are recruited here and there to go out and chant their urban-legend slogans, the key figures of the protests are the same bunch who are paid to get bused from town to town representing "Occupy Wall Street," "Black Lives Matter," or whatever the current excuse for rioting and looting happens to be. That these professional anarchists are in the employ of some very wealthy ideologues is obvious, since most of them have no real marketable skills or any other means of support. Let them expend their energy on their foolishness, while the rest of us go about striving to make the country an even better place to live—for *all* people. And pay no attention to all the fuss the media will make over them. Let the media get it wrong again.

It was significant that President Obama, on Thursday, November 10, 2016, made a point of meeting with President-elect Trump, and concluded that meeting by acknowledging that both were committed to a proper and smooth transition and transfer

of power in January. He noted in his statement that former President George W. Bush, his wife, and his staff could not have been more helpful and gracious in the 2008-09 transition. It was, of course, a good thing that he didn't go eight years farther back in history. The 2000-2001 transition from one party to another had quite a different tone. Clinton staff members had smashed or disabled computers, ripped out wiring, "misplaced" files and documents, glued desk drawers shut, and created general mayhem for Bush administration members as they prepared to move into the White House. We should all hope that such sour-grapes shenanigans are things of the past.

Thank you once again to Paul and Mary (Schoen) Johnson of Jackson, Michigan, who periodically send us a generous offering to help with providing food for the needy of our parish and neighborhood. Their recent offering of **\$1,000** is earmarked for our Christian Service account to support our food pantry (at Trinity Reformed) and food voucher (through Ralph's Market) programs.

Certainly you are aware that Grand Rapids is undergoing considerable development in the central city. Business is booming, and new commercial and housing projects are rising everywhere, including here on the lower West Side. However, this is displacing many of our low- and fixed-income neighbors, who cannot afford the new homes and apartments and who can no longer find housing at rates to which they are accustomed or which they can afford. You can imagine how desperate some of them are, as they have to spend food money to pay the rent. We all hear and know of instances of abuse of "entitlement" checks and programs. The fact remains, however, that there are many people who truly cannot work, and who do not receive enough in disability or other aid money to actually pay all their bills. These people do not live in luxury or dress in fancy clothes.

Many of these people have been displaced from homes and apartments in which they have lived for a number of years. They have lived in neighborhoods in which few would *choose* to live, simply because those were the areas in which they could find affordable rent. Now it's those very areas which are being grabbed up by developers who buy out the old landlords, put numerous parcels together, tear down the old houses, and build new housing in which the same amount of square footage goes for three or four times the monthly rent that was charged in the old homes. In case you haven't checked, our shelters, missions, and multiple-unit housing facilities are filled, with long waiting lists.

If you have or know of someone who has any available housing for rent, a house or a vacant apartment, even on a temporary basis, and they are not interested in advertising or putting it on the open market, please let us know. We are always happy to arrange meetings between friends who might be able to assist each other. In any case, your gifts to our monthly Christian service collection (on the first full weekend of each month) help us tremendously in helping our neighbors through their challenging times. Works of mercy are what we do, and what we as a parish also try to facilitate.

Our Catholic Human Development collection which is taken up this weekend puts boots on the ground. It helps dioceses around the country provide seed money to neighborhood-based organizations who help people lift themselves out of poverty. The Church has ongoing monitoring in place to make sure that these monies are not

misdirected or misused. There are always people busy scheming to get something for nothing, and there are always people scheming to get Catholic money for causes which are in opposition to what we believe. Recipients of the CHD collection go through a rigorous vetting process, and are promptly removed from the authorized list if there is any question of fraud. We thank those vigilant parishioners who express reservations about the collection, and are happy to refer any first-hand knowledge of specific instances of abuse of funds to our bishop to pass on to the USCCB. God bless you!

Fr. Den

Thought for the week: “Elections have consequences. . . I won” (President Barack H. Obama, 2009, to Republican members of Congress). It’s kind of like graduation time. Transfer the shoe to the other foot.