

**Homily for the 50 Anniversary of Msgr. Daniel Logan**  
June 7, 2013

At the end of a section on the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* concludes with a quotation from the saintly Cure of Ars, St. John Marie Vianney: “the priest continues the work of redemption on earth...if we really understood the priest on earth, we would die not of fright but of love...the Priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus.” (#1589)

We could not have dreamed of a better setting than the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the celebration of Msgr. Dan Logan’s golden anniversary as a priest! He could list his significant services in the Diocese of St. Augustine, particularly to the families of Holy Family Parish, Our Lady Star of the Sea, Bishop Kenny High School and thousands of marriages reconciled thanks to the peacemaking work of the Tribunal. These good deeds are so many that this would be a very, very long homily. Also, one could list many peculiar and unusual situations, humorous events, family interactions, contradictions and enigmas during such a long life of being a public man of the Church. Since I am not Irish, I would not do this well. Therefore, let me attempt to deepen in our gratitude for the gift of the ministerial priesthood at the service of the common priesthood of the faithful.

A few months ago, when His holiness Benedict XVI announced his resignation, he said something very important that was practically unnoticed: “let us entrust the Church to the Supreme Pastor, Our Lord, Jesus Christ.” There is but one Shepherd who is the High Priest and Shepherd who loves each one of us and all humankind with compassion. He fulfills the hope revealed in Ezequiel of a time when:

*“I myself will pasture my sheep;  
I myself will give them rest, says the Lord GOD.  
The lost I will seek out,  
The strayed I will bring back,  
The injured I will bind up,  
The sick I will heal,  
But the sleek and the strong I will destroy,  
Shepherding them rightly.” (Ez 34, 14ss)*

Our hearts might be ungrateful and many will reject his offer but the great Shepherd loves us with boundless and passionate love regardless. The Redeemer seeks the sinner to the end.

Above all, Christ’s love is a crucified love; literally, physically; his heart was pierced on his side with a spear and at once came out blood and water. This wounded, pierced heart became the simple identifying symbol of St. Augustin as Bishop of Hippo in Africa. This symbol became also the official diocesan effigy of the Diocese of St. Augustine where it was created in 1870.

“God is love” would say St. John but we know it is a wounded heart with love who calls our hearts to move away from our selfishness, to trust him completely, and to love others in the measure He has loved us.

We are all called to “abide in His love” but in a particular way the priest who is to reflect the love of the Sacred Heart. The priestly pastoral service flows from the love of Christ. He is the one whose hands plead the Holy Spirit to consecrate the holy gifts on the altar; he is the one who, in the name of Christ and his Church, forgives sins, thus participating in the joy of the Good Shepherd who has rescued the lost ones and brings back the lost one close to his heart. The priest is the one who, on behalf of the Good Shepherd, guides the flock entrusted to him by the bishop to good pastures and living waters.

It is not easy to understand priests because they carry a treasure in earthen vessels. This high call is lived in the midst of shortcomings, weakness and human limitations. The “enemy of the human race,” as St. Ignatius called the devil; the evil one is particularly brooding to undermine priests’ work. I do not know of a single priest who has not experienced attacks seeking to mislead him directly or indirectly. As Benedict XVI said at the beginning of the Year of the Priest in 2009, “Dear priests, the summons to conversion and to trust in God’s mercy also applies to us; we too must humbly, sincerely and unceasingly implore the heart of Jesus to preserve us from the terrifying risk of endangering the very people we are obliged to serve.” (Solemnity of the Sacred Heart, June 19, 2009) Because of the holy anointing, the people of God know by remarkable instinct that the priest needs lots of prayer and encouragement. As the Letter to the Hebrews states, “let us be confident, then, in approaching the throne of grace, that we shall have mercy from him and find grace when we are in need of him.” (4, 16)

Each one of us gathered here does feel a spark of gratitude for this priest whose greatest dream and love has been being a faithful priest. I invite you tonight on behalf of the entire state of Florida for the magnificent contribution of the Irish priests and nuns who for generations have built parishes and schools, hospitals and social services having a collective humanitarian impact of vast proportion. But Florida is not the only one; Georgia, the Carolinas, California, Oregon and Washington have had the Irish contribution. Add as well as the international level, England, Nigeria, Australia and New Zealand, just to mention a few countries. In honoring God, source of all blessings for the 50 years of service of one priest, we also honor the amazing missionary activity of the Irish Church which has blessed in countless ways.

Along with Msgr. Logan, let us tonight pray to the sublime wounded Heart of Jesus: “Receive my heart then, O divine heart of Jesus; purify it, sanctify it, and inflame it with your most pure love, that it may not act but by the motion of your love nor suffer, but for your love, grieve only that it loves you so little, have its only joy in loving you much, desire nothing but the continual increase of that love, and fear nothing but to let that holy love relent and be consumed; in a word, make my heart like to yours, that by you, and with you, it may eternally love the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

*Bishop Felipe J. Estévez*