

VOTFNJ Program:

ON THE COMMON GOOD

Sunday, March 26, 2017

Introduction of Rev. Terrence Moran by Leo Rogers, VOTFNJ

Well, it seems appropriate that we gather here this afternoon to reflect on the concept of the common good.

Simply, until Father Terry gives us a more erudite explanation, it's our obligation to care for the least of us. That has a gospel ring to it, of course.

We have had a tradition in this country of being rugged individuals - it's in our literature and our philosophy. You take care of yourself and let everybody else take care of themselves. Let them pull themselves up by their bootstraps!

Nevertheless, during the last 80 years or so, we've made some progress in caring for others. Social Security began in 1935 and slowly evolved to what it is today - a safety net for the elderly.

Then Medicare and Medicaid extended that safety net for the poor, the infirm, and the elderly.

Then, 9 years ago, the Affordable Care Act, which has brought healthcare to something like 24 million people in this country.

And during the past 75 years or so, we looked around and saw that our air and our rivers were polluted. We realized that that wasn't particularly healthy, and so with a series of laws and regulations we began to address that situation.

Then scientists told us that we were damaging the atmosphere and affecting the climate. So we have taken some baby steps to address that situation.

Now, all of this progress is being challenged by our government.

When I was a kid in Catholic high school and college - a few years ago - we were steeped in the concept of the common good as the underlying context for all social activity and as an obligation to work for justice in our society. **** And then that concept seemed to disappear from Catholic teaching.

So what are we as Catholic Christians supposed to think? What's the context in which we should be seeing all of today's challenges?

To answer those questions we are pleased and honored to welcome Father Terry Moran. Father Terry is a Redemptorist Priest working right here in our neighborhood. He is the Director of the Office of Peace, Justice and Ecological Integrity of the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth in Convent Station.

Father Terry studied moral theology at the Accademia Alfonsiana in Rome and at the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium. That's where our good friend Father Tom Ivory spent a good part of his professional life, as many of you know. Father Terry is widely respected as a presenter of theology and spirituality.

I might add that as we began to consider the common good as a topic for us to pursue, Mary and Gerry Gannon suggested Father Terry. And despite their strong recommendation, we called him anyway.