



Office of the Bishop

DIOCESE OF LITTLE ROCK

2500 North Tyler Street • P.O. Box 7565 • Little Rock, Arkansas 72217 • (501) 664-0340 Fax (501) 664-6304

September 17, 2009

Vincent P. and Jan L. O'Neill
2416 NW 163rd Street
Edmond, OK 73013

Dear Vincent and Jan, Daniel and Kyle,

I received your long impassioned letter of September 14, 2009 and I must say that I am very disappointed to see how fearful you are of IAF and how little respect you have for the magisterium of the Catholic Church on the topic of community organizing.

1. It is clear to me that you do not understand the social doctrine of the Church going back all the way to Rerum Novarum of Pope Leo XIII. It is obvious to me in particular that even though you end your letter to me by quoting sections of Caritas in Veritate, the most recent encyclical letter of Pope Benedict XVI, you have not assimilated his teaching. I direct your attention especially to his discussion of justice and the common good in articles 6 and 7. In the first paragraph of your letter you state: "We must disagree with you first and foremost as Jesus Christ Himself calls His Church not to political action but to corporal and spiritual acts of mercy through charity." Compare that to Pope Benedict XVI in article 6:

"Charity goes beyond justice, because to love is to give, to offer what is "mine" to the other; but it never lacks justice, which prompts us to give the other what is "his", what is due to him by reason of his being or acting."

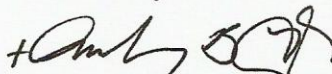
And in article 7:

"To desire the common good and strive towards it is a requirement of justice and charity. To take a stand for the common good is on the one hand to be solicitous for, and on the other hand to avail oneself of, that complex of institutions that give structure to the life of a society, juridically, civilly, politically and culturally, making it the polis, or "city". The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbors, the more effectively we love them. Every Christian is called to practice this charity, in a manner corresponding to his vocation and according to the degree of influence he wields in the polis. This is the institutional path—we might also call it the political path—of charity, no less excellent and effective than the kind of charity which encounters the neighbor directly, outside the institutional mediation of the polis. When animated by charity, commitment to the common good has greater worth than a merely secular and political stand would have..." And so on—read the entire letter!

2. It is also clear to me that you believe that those who do not agree with you are at best stupid and at worst part of a conspiracy to destroy the Church and usher in the anti-Christ. It pains me to tell you how insulting that is! Dialogue is only possible when there is a spirit of mutual respect, which is utterly absent from the letter you sent me, as well as from the treatment to which Fr. Luschen has been subjected. I addressed Saul Alinsky in the facebook post to which you make reference—obviously you reject what I said there. IAF today is not about Alinsky, every IAF group sets its own agenda, so nothing you said about Alinsky nor abortion nor any of the other moral ills you decry have any relevance to the present discussion... Even so, you seek to use these as a tool to oppose community organizing today.
3. You assume that your political views coincide with the teaching of the Catholic Church, which they do not. You focus on the evils of communism but fail to address the evils of capitalism, which are in fact the main reason Pope Benedict XVI issued this pastoral letter. The Church teaches subsidiarity, but also holds that there is a role for big government too, whatever best serves the common good—as well as labor unions, which you seem to oppose as well! The Church does not endorse either political party and though the position of the Republican party is closer to the teaching of the Church on abortion, the Democratic party is closer to the teaching of the Church on other issues. The same is true regarding President Obama. Why do you consistently write his name O.B.A.M.A. and fail to call him President? You don't do that for anyone else you mention in your letter. I can only assume that you are trying to show disrespect for the President. The Holy Father received President Obama with respect even though he disagrees with some of President Obama's positions and so also should we. I might add that he also received President Bush with respect, even though President Bush launched a war against Iraq that the Holy Father characterized repeatedly as unjust and immoral.

Vincent and Jan, I know that you want to be good Catholics, so please open your eyes to see how much you have allowed fear to cloud your judgment and understanding. There is no "Marxist Left occupying Capitol Hill" contrary to what you assert on page 6 of your letter and your demonization and distortion of the views of others is a sin against "Charity in Truth." I am not trying to destroy the Church, neither is Pope Benedict XVI or Fr. Tim—we all love the Church at least as much as you do. The Gospel calls us to work to establish justice...and community organizing offers an effective approach to work for that goal. I am forwarding a copy of this letter to Archbishop Beltran and to Fr. Luschen, so that they will know of my response to you.

Sincerely in Christ,



+Anthony B. Taylor
Bishop of Little Rock

Cc: Most Rev. Eusebius J. Beltran, Archbishop of Oklahoma City
Rev. Timothy J. Luschen, Pastor of St. Monica parish, Edmond, OK