



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Homilies are Reportable.
All media inquiries answered in writing.
No verbal statements outside homilies.

Media: Admin@saintlonginus.org
Subject: PRESS - Vermont

Re: The Vermont Clergy

Like many of you, I saw the news that seven clerics/religious leaders, representing different traditions, were hauled off and arrested for unlawful trespass. Know that I, as clergy, stand and support those clerics; no matter how many titles my denomination gives me, I am a lowly cleric first and foremost, a servant always.

Had I been in Vermont, I would have stood beside them; choosing to be arrested with them. For our Lord too was arrested by the powers of his day, his crime was that he spoke out too and stood up; that being the underlying motive for why charges were sought. Some have seen my Legatine coat of arms, and the phrase “Christum Imitari est eum Glorificare.” Some of you may have wondered what that means. “To imitate Christ is to glorify him.” That is what it means. I crafted that motto at 13 years old, just before I left the church. It is how I live my life. So, if I am arrested for having spoken against power, refusing to compromise because of the Christ I claim, I will let my life imitate him; unto death even. I will never go seeking harm, and would rather suffer arrest over death, but I am prepared to suffer what is necessary to hold the line with my fellow clerics; if that be unto death, then not as I will but as He wills.

I can barely believe that in 2026, nearly 2,000 years since Christ's death and the persecutions of the Early Church, clergy of good conscience are having to have conversations about death of our colleagues. Rome has risen, it seems, like the days of old. The State's religion is in control. I make this statement before you all, and before God, that I am willing to put my body on the line if it comes to it; that I will not betray my Lord to accept the safety of the State. A State that arrests clergy, kills and deports citizens, and makes public enemies of those who disagree, is a State that has turned imperial.

When I was ordained, called to this work by my Lord, I devoted my life to him; I promised him that I would go where he sent me. As clergy continue to be pressured to conform to the State, I will continue to refuse. I am proud of the clerics who stood up. I am proud of the clerics who stand up on a daily basis. I am with them in spirit, if not in body. I see their courage, and I praise God for their witness and bravery.

To the Episcopal Church, The United Methodist Church, The Unitarian Universalist Association, and the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), I stand in solidarity with your clergy. You have extremely devoted, and faithful clergy. Know how proud I am, as a denominational head, of all of you. Continue to hold the line in the sand, do not waver or bend. Other denominations, much like ours, see you and are just as proud; we stand and support you.

To my fellow clergy and religious leaders, no matter your denomination or faith, it is time. We must gather together, putting aside our differences, and establish a council. We must put it in writing, each denomination and faith, what we will not tolerate anymore. That what is happening on our streets violates the core values our religions and denominations teach. I invite you to share the invitation with your religious leaders. Whether we meet in person, or virtually, it is time that the clergy of the United States, put pen to paper; a United States Barmen Declaration. We need to hold the line, together, arm in arm; saying, as God once said to Job, "Hitherto thou shalt come, but no further." That this is where the line in the sand gets drawn. The faithful, during times of crisis, look to us. The Barmen Declaration didn't stop the Holocaust, but it made it clear who would and wouldn't sanctify the Power of the State. For the sake of our deities, our faithful, and the communities we serve, let us come together as one to speak in one voice; unified, and resolved.

Job asked a litany of "how much longer, O Lord, shall I..."s. I ask you, my dearest colleagues, scholars, theologians, mystics, and religious leaders, how much longer are we to pretend this is okay? How much longer are we to pretend that our voices don't need to come together? How much longer...? When we are arrested on the way to work? When our beloved faithful are deported? When the Government finally declares us enemies of the State? Search your conscience, brothers and sisters. Who will be brave enough to step forward? In the name of the Lord, and the witness of the clergy who stood at MSP, I earnestly hope and pray.

In the Christian faith, when we are baptized or confirmed according to the old ways, we affirm that we will resist and renounce evil, in whatever form it takes. It is with my baptismal covenant in mind, and the vow I took at confirmation too, that I issue this statement. While I am willing to practice civil disobedience myself, I in no way compel others or ask them to do the same; let them, and their consciences, dictate their own appropriate response, irrespective of what I am willing to suffer if necessary. In the words of Joshua, "But as for me, and my house, we shall serve the Lord."

When Pilate sent the imperial standards into Jerusalem, bearing the images of Caesar, the Jewish people protested and petitioned Pilate to remove them at once; for the images violated Jewish Law. They went to Pilate at Caesarea, and pleaded with him to remove the standards from Jerusalem at once. When he refused, they instead remained prostrate for five days and nights. When Pilate finally surrounded them with soldiers, ordering them to unsheathe their swords, the Jewish people did the extraordinary. They went to the ground and exposed their necks for the soldiers. The Jews of first-century Judea were willing to die, rather than compromise their religion, or permit profanation. If Rome is truly ready to rise, in the person of the United States of America, bearing standards commanding obedience and faithfulness to power over Christ; then, we must have courage enough to resist. For while none of us Christians is Jewish, we follow a man who was Jewish and was raised under those conditions.

Lastly, as it has bearing on the substance of this statement, I, through my Office and the Basilica, and on behalf of HCCoG, have made it clear that this Church stands against all acts of violence; that we should not become what we oppose. In Christianity, as it was expressed nearly 2,000 years ago, no lawful weapon other than prayer shall be taken up by a Christian. (According to Early Church tradition, pre-Constantine, preserved through the writings of Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Clement.)

"I vow to thee my country, all earthly things above. Entire, and whole, and perfect, the service of my love. The Love that never falters, the love that pays the price, the love that makes undaunted the final sacrifice...And there's another country, I heard of long ago, most dear to them that love her, most great to them that know. She may not count her armies, we may not see her king, her fortress is a faithful heart, her pride is suffering. And, soul by soul, and silently, her shining bounds increase. And, her ways are ways of gentleness, and all her paths are peace" – Cecil Spring Rice.

I remain, beloved friends, a laborer in the vineyard of Jesus Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Legate Brandon Leg. Max." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Legate Brandon Leg. Max.

His Holiness, the Legate
Holy Catholic Church of the Gospels
Bishop Ecclesiae of the Basilica of Saint Longinus the Centurion

###