

**Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio**  
**President, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops**  
**Homily -- Tuesday, June 17, 2025, USCCB Special Assembly**  
**Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/061725.cfm>**

The seminary I attended required that two months of the summer after first theology were to be dedicated to some apostolic or educational endeavor. I studied German in Passau, but on the weekends a classmate and I tried to take advantage of the opportunity to visit nearby cities. We were in route to Salzburg in a second-class train coach and an Austrian mother and her two children occupied the rest of the compartment.

As frequently happened, she had packed a lunch, and some food was left over. She wanted to feed these two young men and offered the sandwiches, which we gladly accepted. My classmate whose German was much more advanced than mine expressed thanks and unwittingly added that the only thing lacking with the beer sausage was the beer.

She immediately dispatched the older of her two offspring to buy us each a beer. Needless to say, we were mortified. That was certainly not his intention and the homilist this afternoon is not a real patron of beer. Needless to say, I dutifully consumed the whole can.

Paul's discourse on Christian giving in the first reading brought this incident to mind. Of course, he is trying to explain the model of that giving which is found in the kenosis of Christ. The Lord Jesus makes Himself poor for our sake in order to make us rich by His poverty. He empties Himself to teach us what being fully human means and how it might be lived.

The topic is timely as we gather in reflection and consider our ministry as bishops in the Church in this particular and unique time. We are privileged to live in a wealthy country known for at least eight decades for its generosity. Our history of welcome is a bit more checkered, because each group of immigrants tended to look down on the next. Those who came on the Mayflower looked down on the Irish who fought with the Germans and all disdained the Italians. Now, as Shepherds, we earnestly try to urge our people to welcome those from Latin America, Haiti, and other troubled zones.

It is not easy to preach the Gospel and yet, it was held over our heads in episcopal ordination so that we might be ever imbued with the Word of God and ever more effective in preaching that living Word ever new and ever provocative.

Remember that Paul, the Apostle to the Gentles, was always radically engaged in favor of supporting the community in Jerusalem. Today's passage is exemplary for its organization and ever valid in the motivations offered. The Macedonians made a great effort to be generous and Paul calls that generosity a gift from God for two reasons. First, the goods or possessions were a gift from Almighty God. Secondly, the desire to give is also a gift.<sup>1</sup>

In our context can we fail to think about the Christians in Gaza, victims of a bitter struggle? Or perhaps we think about the poor in Syria afflicted by sanctions that really only punish the poor. Those in power always have access to fuel, food, and other necessities. The scene of the banquet in *Animal Farm* is ever repeated even in revolutionary regimes. Or we remember Lebanon still bearing the weight of more than 2 million refugees.

Our prayers for peace between Israel and Iran continue as more innocent people perish in yet another unnecessary conflict.

I do not pretend to cover the world, but Ukraine readily comes to mind as a valiant people strives to retain its independence. Can we forget Haiti at our doorstep? The willful neglect of a noble people cries out for our attention.

We must stretch our Catholic Relief Services dollars even farther as the U.S. international aid is shut off. How often in contemporary history was the United States the protagonist in offering aid to those in need? Although it remains in the Good Friday offering, it is no longer exclusively the collection for the Church in Jerusalem; we cannot turn our back on those crying out for our help. "Generosity is an indispensable condition so that the love of God remains in us and we remain in His love."<sup>2</sup>

Reading the Gospel in our context I was reminded of those Spanish missionaries who first left the known and comfort of Europe and came here to the relative unknown to preach the Gospel, defend the precolonial ethnic groups, and minister to the Spanish, as well. They were motivated by that love described by the Lord in the Gospel. The other might see himself as an enemy, but the missionary disciple sees no one as an enemy.

What an honor it is to celebrate our opening Mass here at the Founders Chapel at the University of San Diego. In your name allow me to thank Bishop Pham for his welcome and

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Albert Vanhoye, *Il Pane quotidiano della Parola di Dio*, p.423.

<sup>2</sup> Vanhoye, *op.cit.*, p. 424.

Bishop Freyer and his committee for their efforts to make this week a time of reflection and relaxation.

We have been blessed also to be joined by the Perpetual Pilgrims of the Eucharistic Revival who have made it this far from Indianapolis. Their commitment to helping others to deepen their faith in the real Presence of our Lord in the Eucharist inspires us in our vocation as shepherds of the flock entrusted to us. The commitment has been significant and your shepherds are grateful. You help to build on the momentum and enthusiasm that was experienced last July, which only makes sense if we continue to explore avenues to deepen that faith so central to our identity.

Borrowing from Archbishop Miller's quotations of the recent Bishops of Rome, allow me to quote Pope Leo's address to the Italian Bishops Conference earlier today: "It is imperative to bring a renewed vigor to the proclamation and the transmission of the faith. It means to put Jesus Christ at the center and... help people to live a personal relationship with Him, to discover the joy of the Gospel. In a time of great fragmentation we must return to the foundations of our faith, to the *kerygma*. This is the first great task that motivates all the others: bring Christ to the 'veins' of humanity (cfr Cost. ap. *Humanae salutis*, 3), renewing and sharing the apostolic mission: 'What we have seen and heard, we also announce it to you.'

You know that the Greek for "perfect" in the Gospel passage also means completed, mature. The idea is that the one who has a duty fulfills it completely.<sup>3</sup> The pilgrims are certainly doing that. The notion of being perfect is a bit daunting to the point of seeming impossible. The text actually urges us to a level much more attainable. The idea of fulfilling our duty in love seems to be within our reach. It is at least our goal and probably defines how most of us approach our ministry. We were forcefully reminded this morning that prayer is an integral part of our ministry.

Of course, the Lord always calls us to use our gifts and talents to make His Name known and loved and this perfect prayer offers us the sustenance to fuel our mission and enliven the commitment of those entrusted to us. It is much more than beer offered to seminarians on a train ride, but perhaps the largesse of the anonymous Austrian Frau mirrors the generosity praised by Paul and urged by the Lord Jesus.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Zevini y Cabra, *Lectio Divina*