

Catholic Review

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The complete text of Arc

Editor's note: Following is the text of the archbishop's speech at the testimonial dinner held in his honor March 1.

Fifteen years ago, Cardinal Shehan presented me to the people of Baltimore and remarked that he was happy to have been the 12th archbishop of Baltimore — a symbolic number, since Christ had twelve Apostles. He followed this by observing that St. Paul is considered the 13th Apostle and that I could not go wrong in following his example.

At that time I expressed the hope that the people of the archdiocese would not have that kind of expectation; however, being somewhat familiar with the Pauline letters, I knew that while St. Paul succeeded marvelously on a personal level, he did not always succeed as a bishop, and — to use the slang expression — I was somewhat relieved that he had his ups and downs. Tonight, my friends, in listening to you, I find that you did a fine job in relating my ups, but with consummate skill ignored my downs!

For this I thank you, but more to the point I thank you for your dedication, support, and apostolic commitment during these years. My brother priests, religious, and members of the laity are of a quality that they will match with any diocese of the country (I might say the world, but some could say I was a bit presumptuous).

'I not only look back with appreciation, but also look forward with confidence to the vitality of the church of the Baltimore Archdiocese.'

I have enjoyed and appreciated my work with my fellow Christian and Jewish leaders. Likewise, continued vision and cooperation of the governor and mayor and so many state and city officials have been most helpful in pursuing our work, especially in behalf of the poor and needy.

I would like to mention so many of you by name, but the list would keep you here throughout the night. But because of all of you, I not only look back with appreciation, but also look forward with confidence to the vitality of the church of the Baltimore Archdiocese.

Even though we have confidence in future leadership and decisions, thank God we do not know or need to know the specifics of the future. It is more than a truism to say that we are living in a period of history and society that is subject to continued change. We must and will contin-

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Chbishop Bo

ue to seek unity within our ever-increasing ge
diversity. Yet this unity can only be th
preserved within the context of truths that
are eternal and love that is divine. ou

One eternal truth we must always keep ge
before us as essential to our human we
communion is the unique value of every pi
person. No one person can take the place of w
another person. To quote a friend now dead, ce
"Each human life has a depth that eye
cannot see, a destiny that extends beyond w
time. Each human life is a priceless gift from le
God. Our participation in and increased, G
understanding of the process of human life st
should not lull us into thinking that it is all of
ours." st

Because of this truth, each of you has an th
important role to play in the mission to la
which all of us are called. In carrying out this ha
mission, we belong not only to the church, re
but also to God's plan to perfect the world in
and bring about the reconciliation of all pe
peoples. st

Thus, each of us has a ministry peculiar fi
to our state in life. In this ministry, we are vi
called to be more than functionaries,
organizers, or even facilitators. We must e:
engage our whole person in what we do. ci
Again, to quote my friend, "We can never be fc
dispassionate dispensers of truth or sacra- th
ments or actions on behalf of justice or any h

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Preston Room of the Annunciation Orthodox Center

prelate.

Orders' speech at the tes

good cause. Real incarnate love has to be the force behind all our actions."

God is the lord of life. He is the source of our being, and perfect union with him is the goal of our existence. With this central truth, we must always remember that all of our programs and institutions have validity only when this transcendent reality is at the center.

Yet we proceed in a human manner, which means that most of the time we are far less than perfect, and sometimes we fail. Good examples would be two of our most successful efforts: our Catholic schools and our health-care institutions. The heart of success of both these apostolates has been the dedication of our religious, clergy, and laity; yet economic and sociological changes have forced us to reorganize if we are still to remain a dominant religious educational influence, a health-care resource for the poor, and a constant base for ethical standards. The stabilizing influence we will find in all of these changes must be the vitality of parish life.

Associated Catholic Charities is a good example of how we can grow in changing circumstances. The multiplicity of programs for the poor, the elderly, the handicapped, the disenfranchised, has given evidence of how the church, state, city, federal govern-

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ment, and business, professional, and labor leaders can work together to make our society a better, safer, and more wholesome community.

This evening I wish to thank you for the gifts given to me on this occasion, because these gifts will strengthen our efforts to care for the persons whom we need to serve. I am very grateful for the work and leadership that brought about this celebration.

Our parishes, religious orders, and Catholic institutions offered one gift to be used at my discretion for the overall work of the church, and the corporate leadership of the community has offered another gift to be used for capital emergencies. I have decided to use the archdiocesan gift as a trust for the various efforts in the spiritual, educational, and outreach programs for young people;

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specifically, this will involve our Catholic schools, Christian Formation, and total youth programs. I have already indicated the designated gift of the corporate community.

Many have asked me what are my plans for the future. Certainly I will have more time to be with my family which has been so supportive throughout the three-generation span of my life.

It has been my privilege — and at time my problem as a priest — to live and work in five states and four countries. I really did not have the wanderlust, but assignments as pastor, World War II chaplain, campus minister, minor seminary rector, and bishop occasioned my movement from place to place. Fifteen years ago I found stability, a permanent home, in Baltimore and Maryland. I love the archdiocese and its people. I plan to continue to live here, and I hope in some manner to work with you and for you.

May I conclude by quoting from the "City of God," the monumental work of St. Augustine: "I am done with God's help. I have kept my promise. This is all that I promised to do when I began this huge work. From all who think that I have said too little or too much I beg pardon; and those who are satisfied, I ask not to thank me but to join me in rejoicing and in thanking God."