

Remembering Cardinal Gibbons as a man of the people

George Weigel's column on Obama and Notre Dame (CR, July 9) was one of his best. He asks, "What is the embodiment, the instantiation, the living reality of the Catholic Church to which (the administration and trustees of Notre Dame) profess loyalty? Where is it? Who speaks for it? What difference does it make what (Obama) says?" Weigel gives the reason for these questions: Catholic identity in America has become attenuated, and many Catholics are poorly catechized. Then he lays the blame squarely on the bishops.

Weigel laments the failure to achieve "one of the primary purposes of Vatican II ... to lift up the local bishop as a genuine shepherd and father of the local church, not simply a branch manager assigned by the Roman corporate GHQ." I suggest such a bishop was our own Cardinal Gibbons, who walked the streets of Baltimore before lunch and dinner each day, greeting and being greeted by the people on the street, who might also "have a word" or "speak their mind" or just pass the time of day. It isn't hard to read between the lines of the Gibbons memorial on the north side of the Basilica and know how deeply the Cardinal was loved and mourned by priests and people alike.

Perhaps a daily constitutional from the Catholic Center to Our Daily Bread and back might restore a "little sense of ecclesial connection to the local bishop."