



Saturday, September 21, 2013

Dear Friends in Christ,

I write today to share with you some reflections on the recent interview given by our Holy Father, Pope Francis.

The Pope, through his humility and personal warmth, has invited many to see the Catholic Church and her teachings with new eyes. And he has invited others, including those who are not currently participating in the life of the Church, to consider a return to the faith.



In the Pope's lengthy interview for the Jesuit publication, *America*, the Holy Father is helping us to see something really fundamental: oftentimes we think about how we are to serve, what our moral life is to be, without first focusing on knowing and loving God. Many people don't believe in God's love or even in a personal God. They have not opened themselves to the saving power of His love. As a result, what the Catholic Church might teach about a variety of issues, including those moral issues which are counter-cultural, may not be welcomed, or even dismissed without a hearing.

Through his simple and loving approach and personal example, the Pope is reminding the entire Church that, much like a field hospital, we must prioritize, and that our first priority must be to help people encounter the person of Jesus Christ and to be open to His love so they can be transformed by that love and begin to radiate it. Bound together with other believers, we can better love others, serve others in need, and begin to see what the Church teaches as not a duty but as a response of love and an expression of gratitude to the God of love.

I urge you to read [the interview](#) in its entirety. To fully appreciate and understand what the Holy Father is communicating, his words should be read in context and in totality, not in the form of a summary – mine or anyone else's.

After reading and reflecting on the Pope's comments, I was reminded of

the words of Pope Benedict XVI, who ushered in this Year of Faith with the image of a door being opened widely for all to enter. Pope Francis now continues to serve in the role as modern day evangelist by opening more widely the doors to our Church and the hearts and minds of God's people. This must be the example we follow as an Archdiocese. Through our parishes, the preaching of our priests, and the works of our schools and charitable institutions, we must continue to welcome all through the doors of faith so that all who enter may encounter Christ and be renewed by His love.

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ William E. Lori". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend William E. Lori
Archbishop of Baltimore

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