

1) To begin, might you give us a brief retelling of your journey from the Plymouth Brethren to the Charismatic Episcopal Church?

Fr. Treco: I had the good fortune of being raised by devout evangelical Christian parents. We were part of a congregation that itself was a part of what is known as the Plymouth Brethren movement. My dad very early in his Christian life was appointed an elder for this mission church that was entrusted to him and about four or five other young men with families, each of them. And their task was to evangelize one of the poor areas of Nassau at the time. They moved out from Central Gospel Chapel into what is known as the Camp Road area, so to speak, on east Shirley street. My childhood was filled with beautiful, church connected experiences. Sunday mornings would awake to find us hopping in one of my parents cars and driving across the island to various places, picking up little children to bring them to church, so they would hear the name of Jesus and hopefully come to know and accept the Gospel. Everything about my parents' life revolved around God and the church, and my dad would say if I didn't believe that Jesus Christ was the only savior of the world I have better things to do on Sunday. But he did believe and so he dedicated not just his Sundays but every day of the week to serving Christ in various capacities. Our days began with prayer with my dad and the reading of Sacred Scripture and they closed at dinner time with lively family discussions over and after dinner that were prompted by a practice my dad had instituted where he would hand out a little devotional card from this little plastic loaf of bread called the Daily Bread. And we would read where one side was a verse from Scripture and then on the other side a brief meditation. And so we would go around the table and we would read them and they just transformed our dinner conversation.

The journey from the Plymouth Brethren to the Charismatic Episcopal Church is a rather circuitous one, you know? My parents had converted out of Anglicanism. The way my dad would say that he got saved from Anglicanism. But most of his family were themselves practicing Anglicans, and my dad was a loyal brother and brother in-law, so even though his conversion created significant strains, he worked as diligently as he could to maintain good relationship with his siblings.

One of those relationships happened to be almost a covenantal commitment to using uncle Rafael's garage for the repair of his vehicles and to purchase gas for those vehicles. And Uncle Rafael's son Keith, at the time that I really came to know him, was a seminarian for the Anglican Church and he was a winsome evangelist. And when I would go to Cartwright's garage to get gas for one of my dad's vehicles Keith would very often, just as I was about to hop in the car to leave, he would ask me a question. Now we just spent the last 10 or 15 minutes chatting about things about God and the church and the Christian life and stuff like that. But just as I was closing the door to get into the car so that I wouldn't have an opportunity to sort of rebut him, he would say something to me that would cause me to think. There are two particular instances that stand out in my mind. One, as I was leaving he said to me, 'You know Vaughn, Jesus said unless you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man you have no life in you. How do you do that?'

A second time that stands out in my mind so sharply; I was getting in my dad's mini bus. It was a 15 passenger bus that we used to pick up people for church most of the time. And he said to me, 'You know, St. Peter says "and baptism which now saves you," How did that fit?' So Keith knew that devout Plymouth Brethren Christians were staunch defenders of the infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture so he would always cast his questions -you could call them the departure questions- in a way that would compel me to have to muse on what it was he had said to me. Well I didn't know it then but that sort of laid the foundation.

When I went to college, I was attending Trinity College in Deerfield Illinois, and at the time, my then girlfriend, and I (were) attending a Presbyterian-esque congregation in Lake Forest, Illinois not far from the college and it was a wonderful experience. It had litanies. You wouldn't say it, properly speaking, had liturgy. So that was my first brush with regular Christian worship that had a form. Because the Plymouth Brethren, one of their claims to fame was a free spirit led, moving sort of service, especially around the Lord's table. So we attended this church for several months, I think less than a year or two, and honestly we just got tired of being welcome as guests every Sunday.

While I was at Trinity, for the second time I switched my major from Psychology to a double major in Psychology and Biblical Studies, and with that switch I came into contact with, I had to study New Testament Greek, and my New Testament Greek professor was Professor William Moulder. And every week, every day of class he would come in and he give these five minute meditations and they were phenomenal. I mean every single one was just penetrating or eye opening or deeply confrontational in an interior sense in terms of the spiritual life.

And so after about six weeks of this I said to him, 'Professor Moulder, where do you find this stuff?'. And he said to me, 'Well, you know Vaughn, the church is very old and every day the church celebrates the life of a Saint. If they have written something I simply read something that the Saint has written. If they have not written, I simply read something about the life of that Saint.' And then he closed with an invitation, he said, 'And if you're really interested in this stuff why don't you come visit a visit us at St. Charles Episcopal Church?'

Well a couple weeks later Norma and I were wrestling with just being invited as guests again at our home Church. And we got up on Sunday morning I said, 'I'm just tired of this. Why don't we just go someplace else?' Now, Norman and I had never church shopped, so we didn't really know any other churches. I only knew one Plymouth Brethren Church and that was too far to go to, and the only other church we knew of was Professor Moulder's Episcopal Church, St. Giles Episcopal Church. I said, 'Well, why don't we just give it a try? You know, we'll find something else next week.'

So, we got dressed, we went to church and it was All Saints Day. And as we entered the church we were given a little bookmark and it had stick figures on it. And next to each stick figure it had a statement to describe what that person was doing at that point in the liturgy. And at the end of the bookmark the second side said 'At St. Giles we do all these things because we believe them. We welcome you to do as many or as few of them as you believe.' And that sort of freed us up immediately. We didn't have to wonder about if we didn't sit when everybody else sat would we be thought odd. But when we went and stepped out of the northex and into the church itself, I thought I had died and went to Heaven. There was a mini orchestra playing, the choir when it began to sing sounded like angels.

And then the procession, the opening procession, began and the processional cross entered with servers, the thurifer, and then eventually Fr. Risk who was the rector of the parish. The opening hymn had about eleven or thirteen versus, and they sang every one of them as they circled the church multiple times refilling the thurible. By the time they were done, you could barely see someone across the aisle. Well when mass was over and we walked out I was about to turn to my wife and I was going to say to her, 'I think I died and went to heaven.' But before I could say anything she said to me, 'Don't ever bring me back here.'

So for the next few months we went back and got welcomed as visitors at our home congregation, but it became old so badly that we we woke up another Sunday morning and we said, 'We'll just go to St. Charles, okay? And then next week we'll find another church to go to.'

So we went and as we were approaching the northex to open the door, Miss Pauley Badger came up to us and said, 'Hi there Vaughn and Norma. Where have you been the last nine months?' And Norma turned to me and said, 'If we're important enough that somebody who met us once remembered our names nine months later, I will give this a try.' That began our journey together in Anglicanism.

Eventually I would become an unofficial ordinan for the diocese, the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago. I had been confirmed earlier by Bishop Montgomery, The Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Chicago. But because I was already in seminary at this time at Trinity Evangelical Divinity school I couldn't be an official ordinan, but as an unofficial one I had to fulfill all of the pastoral internship requirements, the ones that did not involve classes. And so I did that at St Giles under the care of the associate pastor at the time. But by the time I was done with Trinity it was evident that the Episcopal Church was just on the fast road into darkness and madness. And when I got home, the Bishop of Nassau, the Anglican Bishop of Nassau, Bishop Eldon, called me to his office and he offered to ordain me as an Anglican priest in the Bahamas.

When I came home and I told my dad this my dad said to me, 'You know Vaughn, I know you are convinced in your mind, you've been converted in your mind, that the church from its founding has had bishops, priests and deacons. I'm not asking you about that. What I'm asking you is, is your conversion complete? Because I know that if you pledge obedience to a bishop you will obey him. But what I'm asking you is can you do that now?'

And my dad had rightly perceived that there was some incompleteness in my conversion. And so I declined Bishop Eldon's invitation to be ordained as an Anglican priest until I began what was my last hurrah into evangelicalism. Not long after that a young liberal pastor and I'd launched New Providence Community Church. New Providence Community Church was specifically created to reach a segment of the population that seemed to be ignored by the churches in Nassau. These are

young professionals who are college trained and they had returned home.

So we had a passion to reach this group that nobody seemed interested in reaching. And so we launched New Providence Community Church. But it had two dimensions to it. First, it would be creedal in its theological foundations and it would be radically contemporary in its presentation. And those two pillars, or those two engines, sort of drove what we did at New Providence Community Church. Well that was beautiful. New Providence Community Church took off.

By the time we had hit our second anniversary we were equaling the size, if not surpassing the size, of either of the two congregations that helped to give birth to us. And so it was time that we had to begin to do what any normal congregation had to do, we had to teach on the sacraments. At least that's what I called them. And so the first two since, I was a full time pastor, Clint entrusted me with the responsibility to give the instruction. Well the first week we talked about baptism and I simply taught what I understood the creed would require and that is that in the waters of baptism Original Sin is washed away. We are made children of God and enter the kingdom of heaven. Clint could barely keep himself in his seat.

Well the following Wednesday it was time to talk about the Lord's Supper and I spoke of how at the words of institution, when the minister pronounces those words, the bread and wine ceased to be bread and wine but are transformed into the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Clint could not keep his seat and he walked out at that time. The following day we met and it became clear that though we agreed, and we both agreed, that we our understanding squared with what we have written on paper, what we meant by what was on paper- when I said I we were founding a creedal community, I meant the creed as understood by those who wrote them. But Clint meant the creeds as understood by the reformers. And both of those takes on our founding documents were legitimate because our documents weren't clear enough. So I said, Clint, you know, to simplify matters what I will do is I will resign, because by this point in time I have become firmly convinced of the necessity of being a part of an apostolic community.'

So I resigned and went away for about three weeks. When I came back about five or six people showed up to my house and they wanted to form a community that was going to do what we said we were going to do. So in the coming months we began to formulate our self understanding, and then we stumbled across an article written by a gentleman named Randolph W. Sly. The article at the time of its writing I don't believe identified him as a bishop in the Charismatic Episcopal Church. I'm not even sure he was one at the time of the writing, but by the time I researched him and looked for him he had become the Archbishop of the Eastern and Central province of the Charismatic Episcopal Church of North America. And when I shared our story with him he invited me to come to Kansas and we met in Kansas and almost immediately we fit like hand in glove. We became fast friends.

It was easy to respect Archbishop Sly. He was evidently a godly and moral man, unlike the crazy Episcopal bishops I had met before or encountered in their writings. He was orthodox. He believed in the inerrancy and the infallibility of the Scriptures. He believed the ancient doctrines of the church. And so he offered to ordain me as a deacon and then as a priest for the Charismatic Episcopal Church. And so it turned out on May 3rd, 1997 about nine months after that first meeting, I was ordained a priest for the Charismatic Episcopal Church in North America by then Archbishop Randal W. Sly, who is today Father Randy Sly, a priest of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter.

2) Can you tell us about the moment, while attending an Anglican service at 15 or 16 years old, when you heard the voice of God asking you, "Can you do better?"

Fr. Treco: After I graduated in 1978 from the government high school, I was enrolled by my father in Queens College in Nassau. Queens College was the Methodist high school in Nassau. And at Queens College I was to complete the first year of my.. what did they call it.. A-levels or the Advance General Certificate of Education Examinations Studies program. You might consider that sort of like the rough equivalent of freshman year in college. My dad had thought I was a little too young at fifteen to go off to university so he thought it best that I take a year and study at Queens College. It was during this time that I met and started dating a young Anglican girl. And over the course of the year she invited me to come to Mass at Christchurch Cathedral in Nassau. On the particular Sunday that I was invited to go to Mass with her they were celebrating ostensibly in this liturgy, the contribution of the youth to the parish. I couldn't believe my ears. First of all it was the worst homily I'd ever heard in my whole life. Even to this day I don't think I've ever heard a poorer homily or one that was more destructive to the people to whom it was being addressed.

But anyway during the course of this twenty minute homily the priests who were supposed to be celebrating the youth went through a systematic exposition of the various ministries of the youth of the Cathedral parish and at each point he attacked the value of the contribution of the youth. I could remember the point of the homily that really stuck with me was he spoke about, they apparently had- I didn't know they had this until that day -they had a parish youth council that met to make

various decisions about things they were going to do or ways that they could positively affect the Cathedral Parish. And this priest said, and now I'm almost quoting verbatim, 'You know you think your decisions are important but they actually don't mean anything.' It was within the context of this homily that I heard God speak to me and say, 'Can you do better? I want you to do better.'

3) *I've heard you describe your path into the Catholic Church as a 20-year long journey of Jonah. When did you first have any inkling that the Catholic Church would be your ultimate destination?*

Fr. Treco: You know there really is no better way to put it, but when I was deeply impressed by God at that Anglican mass, the last thing I wanted in the world was to be a full time worker. You see I knew what a full time worker was I had grown up in the Plymouth Brethren and full time workers- if one were to answer the call to become a full time worker what it meant was you are going to be poor or you're going to be destitute. And I wanted to be neither. Not that I had a lust for money I just had no interest in being poor. And so I took off like Jonah. I ran as far as I could run. I ignored what I had heard at mass that day and I stubbornly pursued the path that I had set for my own life. And that was, I wanted to complete a pre-med degree and then go off to medical school and become a brain surgeon.

And so that's what I did.

The following fall I enrolled at Trinity College as a pre-med major. I'm not sure if they actually had that particular type of major but they had designed a series of courses that would give you the rough equivalent, and so I signed up and pre-registered for the necessary first semester courses.

But I didn't make my way through the first week of those course introductions before I realized this is not what I want to do. I need to do something else. But because I did not want to become a full time worker I just switched majors and I became a psychology major. Again, I was not interested in 'doing better' than that Anglican priest had done at that mass, during that homily. All I wanted to do was have a normal life. You know one where I could make more than enough to [never] be poor.

But God was unrelenting, that's the only way I could put it. After a year and a half at Trinity I withdrew from my studies and returned home in the middle of a semester. It was a terrible mistake to make. But because of the wise counsel and commanding voice of a friend of my oldest brother Greg, I returned to school the following fall. He said, 'It's a terrible thing to quit in the middle of doing something. So you are going to complete this application for the University of Minnesota. You are going to be accepted into the University of Minnesota and you are going to study this fall.' And he hung up the phone. And so that's what happened. I went to the University of Minnesota. A year later my brother Timothy and cousin Timothy joined me there. And I was on this.. in addition to all of my studies which were going fairly well, I was exhausting myself in Biblical studies and Theological Studies reading just about everything I could get my hands on and even things I couldn't get my hands on I would I would read, so to speak.

And one day my brother Timothy came to me and said, 'You know what, this doesn't make a whole lot of sense. You're spending so much of your time studying the Scriptures and studying theology, why don't you just go back to Trinity, Where you could do this and get a degree in it?' And his wisdom confounded me and so I applied to Trinity and I returned there in the fall. Coincidentally, during that same period of time I had met and fallen in love with a young woman who was later to become my wife, and she was attending Trinity, so you might say that was a major attracting point, although I'd never considered the possibility until my brother Timothy had said it to me.

I returned to Trinity and got my degree. Double major. I had finished so much of my coursework in psychology that it was easy enough to just add Biblical Studies as a second major. But again, I didn't want to become a full time worker but I was settling, the idea that that is where God was taking me was beginning to settle and there was not a whole lot I could do to resist it too much without becoming interiorly disordered, which was not interesting to me in the least.

You asked, When did I have any first inkling that the Catholic Church would be my ultimate destination? You know it's a funny thing. At times I describe it that I received two things from my mother's breast; The first is this deep and passionate love for our Lord Jesus Christ and second the certitude that the Catholic Church was *wrong*. Now, I don't ever recall my mother saying anything against the Catholic Church but we were so theologically opposed to it that everything about our formation just stood against it. But when did I have my first inkling? That's a hard, hard question to get at because.. I didn't.. By the time I had my first inkling my formation in the Catholic faith was near complete in the sense that one can be complete in a pre-conversion state. One is never complete in one's formation in the Catholic faith. One will spend one's whole life ever more deeply becoming converted to Christ and conformed to the teaching of the faith of the Church that He founded.

But the first inkling I really had of it was when New Providence Community Church, which was a very creative evangelical congregation that I had helped to found, near the end of my tenure there I was in a conversation with a friend and I said to him, 'You know, I'm becoming convinced that the single most important question that a Christian needs to ask is; did Jesus Christ found a church?' And to my surprise this friend turned around with a very quick answer and he said to me, 'I will never ask that question.' And I said to him, 'Why would you not ask that question?' He said, 'Because I know where that question will lead.' Even then I did not think that it would lead to the Catholic Church, I thought it may lead you to Orthodoxy but certainly not the Catholic Church. That was in the year 1995 I believe.

4) *When did you first become cogently aware of the state of the crisis in the Church?*

Fr. Treco: In 1999, or rather 1998, during a class for the seminary campus for the Eastern and Central Province of the Charismatic Episcopal Church, one evening after class, or near the end of class, one of my students said to me, 'You know Father Treco, your answers sound awfully Catholic.' This took me aback. Honestly it sort of shocked me. For several reasons I think I was thrown, one- it just wasn't occurring to me that that is what was happening. Most of my reading was from Eastern Orthodox writers, various Eastern Orthodox writers. And so the thought of becoming Catholic just wasn't in my purview. But when he made that statement to me he came up to me after class and he gave me a set of tapes called 'Answers to Common Objections', and he asked me if I would like to listen to them.

So I took them and because my time was so constrained I spoke with my bishop, archbishop Randolph W. Sly who is now himself Father Randy Sly of the Ordinariate, and I asked him if he thought this was valuable enough for me to utilize my time listening to them. And he said yes. He said, 'You know I think it would be good for you. I think would be helpful to you to give these tapes a listen.' I think there were six tapes in the set. Right now I don't recall each of the objections that Scott Hahn was responding to at the time, but I do recall that after listening to all six tapes I was struck because I believed all of the things he said were the things that Protestants put up as objections for becoming Catholic, even though I had read Orthodox writers and had, I thought, ostensibly embraced their doctrine of the Petrine primacy- first among equals -I guess in some deeper sense I understood that that meant more than what the Orthodox let on about it.

That for Peter to be first among equals, the most important word in that is *first*. And so Jesus statement, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church,' is a statement he had not made to any of the other apostles. However the Eastern Orthodox would seek to diminish the Petrine supremacy. It just didn't seem to hold, I guess, or it hadn't taken hold in me. And I found that out listening to those tapes.

So after that weekend I went to my bishop and I told him that I have a problem. I believe all of the things that the Catholic Church teaches. So why am I not Catholic? He told me he thought it would be best if I resigned and became a Catholic. Very wisely he advised caution. He said, 'You know, you are in an important position in the Charismatic Episcopal Church. You're my canon theologian. That is my theological adviser. And if you were to make any sudden moves it could be harmful to the faith of the people of the cathedral and even the broader Charismatic Episcopal Church.' And so he asked me to give it a year. And I was happy to give it a year. I wasn't chafing at the bit to leave. I just thought it was wise that I do as he asked me to do.

By the end of that year Norma and I had moved with Bishop Sly and his wife Sandy to Virginia to establish a new cathedral parish. The Charismatic Episcopal Church had decided to split the Eastern and Central province into two provinces; the Central province, which was then given to the governance of another bishop, and Archbishop Sly was commissioned to establish a new cathedral parish in Virginia.

And so we moved with him in the summer of 1999 and it was during that summer that the year came to an end and I went up to him and I said to him, 'I am more firmly convinced that it's time for me to resign.' He was not happy. But, so be it, you know?

But even though at the time I was not aware that I was on a trajectory to the Catholic Church, the fact of the matter was you can't read the Eastern Fathers or you can't read Eastern Orthodox theologians without becoming profoundly aware of crises that were confronting the Catholic Church. There were news articles coming out from various sources and when I resigned in 1999 from the charismatic Episcopal Church I was quite aware of the ugliness that was present in the Catholic Church at the time. It would have been virtually impossible to enter the Catholic Church at that time and not be aware that something deeply problematic was occurring within the Catholic Church. But there are two events that were iconic for me after entering the Catholic Church. That drove home to me just how deeply the problem or the crisis in the Catholic Church was.

In December 2002 I was hired as the program director for Marriage Preparation and Enrichment in the Office of Family Life for the dioceses of Arlington in Virginia, and two events occurred over the course of my two or three years in that office that stand out in my mind. That stood out then and still stand out in my mind.

One of the ministries that the Office for Family Life had was that each year we would bring in a class of deacons who were to be ordained the following summer as priests. And I could remember one time Father _____, a young, energetic and very uber organized pastor of one of the local parishes was commissioned to come and give a day of reflection and study and practical guidance to the deacons who were going to be ordained the following year. And during this particular meeting, one of these meetings, I noticed that around the table while Father was talking about the need to develop strong relationships and to form the people of God well so that they would be equipped to live faithfully as Catholics, and it seemed to me when I looked across the room that the eyes of most of the deacons were sort of like glossing over as if this practical stuff was not really important. As the meeting continued to go on I began to become more unsettled by their apparent lack of interest and sometime later in the meeting I stood up and said, 'You know, I've been watching you for the last hour or so and you seem remarkably disinterested in what Father _____ is saying. But you have one of two choices; you will either prepare young couples well for marriage- you'll do the hard work investing time with them, help them build strong families -or you will spend your life picking up the pieces of the broken marriages that are the fruit of your prior failed efforts.' And then I sat down.

Right around the time that I had been hired as the program director for Marriage Preparation Enrichment the news from Boston broke. And it was terrible news. Oh it was awful. But from time to time clerics would pass through the hallway at the Office of Family Life and go into the tribunal office which is pretty much next door to us. And one particular morning as a few clerics were walking through I heard them chitchatting about the statistics with regards to the clerical sexual abuse and they spoke of it in a kind of clinical impersonal way. And it.. it really got to me. And I got up from my desk and I walked into the hallway and I said to them, 'These are not just numbers! These are not just numbers. These are children. They have names like Michael and Joe and Susan and Cindy and.. These are people's children. It's important that we stop referring to them as numbers. And remember. And call them by name.' Those two instances caused me to to understand at a deeper level just how systemic the problem was.

I could remember a third incident and this is where I was overhearing a conversation. Again I believe it was in one of Father _____ presentations, and one of the deacons had [been], you know, commenting about the fact that after confirmation seventy five percent of Catholics stopped practicing and the deacon responded by saying, 'They leave at confirmation but we'll get them back at marriage,' and he said in a way that suggested, not just suggested, but that affirmed that attitude was OK.

And I looked at the Deacon and I said, 'If any of the Protestant pastors I had ever worked for thought that I *thought* what you just *said* I would be fired on the spot.'

So what seemed to be present was a kind of indifference to the real need to call the people of God to live devout and holy lives before God and to help to form them in the practical demands of living out the Catholic Faith in all of its dimensions in their life. Those three events, those three conversations if you would, gave me a sense that things were really, really bad.

5) You may very well have gone about your work every day, functionally ignoring the deterioration of the broader Church, and continuing to minister to your congregation. Was this idea ever tempting to you? Or did you feel a persistent and immediate call to speak out?

Fr. Treco: Actually it never really occurred to me. Catholics are called to live holy lives in their current situation. Catholic priests, therefore, of necessity have to equip and ready the souls entrusted to their charge to live the life of holiness in the time that they exist.

So the idea that a parish could be operated in such a way or that a priest could function in relation to his parishioners in such a way that ignored the deterioration in the broader church never occurred to me because that is the situation in which we live. We are living in a time that's truly dark. It's replete with hundreds if not thousands of examples of of priests who have behaved destructively towards the people of God. How can a priest, any priest, hope to form, to go about his business in his parish life in isolation from the broader deterioration in the Catholic Church. That seems a practical impossibility.

If it were possible in ages past, if you lived so far away from the decadence that may have dominated one particular locale of the church that was one thing, but we're in the age of the Internet. We're in the age of television and before it was the age of radio and the fact of the matter is our neighbor in Rome's misdeeds are known to us. Before that neighbor falls asleep at night and we're just getting up for the day. So I was never really tempted to just go about the business of forming the people of God without any awareness of the darkness of the day in which we lived.

On the other hand, you asked did I feel a persistent and immediate call to speak out? If by that you mean to speak out publicly, to make some public declaration, that was never on my radar. My desire was to give the best possible formation I could give to the little Mission parish that was entrusted to me. And then as I was able to, whenever I was offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at other parishes which I did often, to proclaim the truth of the Gospel and call the people of God to live holy and valiantly holy lives in the day that we live in. What I found most liberating as a Catholic priest and have found and continue to find liberating as a Catholic priest is the fact that the readings are given to us. We don't have to make up a schedule. If we simply preach the Catholic faith as it comes to us, as it is relevant to the particular readings of the day that provides virtually unlimited opportunities to form the people of God in a way that readied them and prepared them and equipped them to live authentic, faithful, devout and holy lives before Christ in the Church. No I really wasn't tempted by either of those things to create a sort of insular parochial experience or the other option to speak out in so public a manner.

In a sense you could say that my approach to pastoral ministry was deeply impacted by instruction I received from my mother. It was very clear to anyone who knew my mother or knows my mother or sat under her instruction that it.. was the vital energy of every Christian had to be spent or had to be exhausted on conforming themselves to Christ. My mother read the Scriptures constantly and she was so familiar with them that when she would tell us Bible stories she could recite them. She could recast them in her own words because she was so familiar with the biblical material. I remember when I was a young boy my mother would gather the four younger children together Melody, Timothy, myself and my sister Deneen around a little cushioned red chair in her bedroom and she would tell us biblical stories. And on one occasion she was telling us the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and King Nebuchadnezzar and how he had erected this 90 foot gold image and how he had proclaimed an edict in the land that at a certain time when the trumpets would sound all the people of the land were to bow down and worship it. As she told the story of how when the idol was complete the image of Nebuchadnezzar was completed and the trumpets sounded, everybody else in the land bowed except Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

I don't recall if she turned to each of my siblings and looked them eye to eye and said the same thing that she said to me. But she looked at me eye to eye and she said, 'If the day ever comes that you are called to worship a false god I want you to stand. Stand like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. My mother also spoke of a characteristic that the Christian, because we were citizens of another country, we had a kind of dual citizenship, that we were to live as a peculiar people and so she would encourage us to be comfortable with the idea that we wouldn't fit in quite. That fitting in with the culture that was dark was not something to be praised. So deeply embedded in my own soul from my mother's voice was the notion that fundamental to being a faithful Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ, was to seek to live out in all the practical realities of life that Holiness which He embodied and which He is.

So, the pastoral task as I've always understood it was to help to form in each of my parishioners first to provoke in them a desire to be holy and then to assist them in the formation of holiness, which itself creates obligation for the priest. How does one call one's parishioners to be holy if one is not aspiring to be holy oneself? How does one seek to root people in Christ if one is not seeking to be rooted in Christ himself? And I don't mean this in some vague general way but specifically, because the priesthood calls us to holiness. So does being an ordinary Catholic man or woman. And this rootedness is of such vital importance. This rootedness in Christ and this holiness of life that reflects the holiness of Christ is so important that it of necessity requires that the chief pastoral obligation or focus of a priest is such formation.

And this is not just in the moral life, this is also intellectual life. Like the apostle Paul would say, 'Making every thought captive unto Christ'[2 Corinthians 10:5], and in another place he would say, 'To be transformed in the renewal of our minds,'[Romans 12:2]. So it was not just correct behavior that was sought after, what ought to be sought after by a pastor, but the correct formation of the mind, so that the truths of God would take root in our minds and from sound convictions about what the truth is would flow lives that are pleasing and holy before God. With that type of pastoral focus you could see where the temptation or the persistent or immediate call to speak out just wouldn't arise. If by which you mean public, like trans parochial or extra parochial context.

But even so even so. A priest cannot properly form his parishioners if he does not address the specific aspects of the call to the transformation of his parishioners' minds and their moral lives that are threatened by the current time in which they live. Holiness and transformation of mind for the human person are always local.

6) *What was the genesis behind composing this homily? Was the topic something you had reflected on for a long time?*

Fr. Treco: It's probably outlandish to say but at some profound level it's true. The genesis of my homily is really my whole life. But that may be too lofty to claim. Or too lofty a claim to make. If you were to ask me what were the immediate historical circumstances that gave rise to my homily I would say when the McCarrick affair broke and I saw my parishioners beginning to wonder about whether or not this crisis that the church was in was ever going to end and I saw their sense of spiritual being fading that caused a great concern to me as a pastor. And so I began to.. I was confronted with the reality that I would have to address this. When I listened to the reports about the fall of the once great Cardinal Archbishop of Washington D.C. what amazed me was how the narrative, at least in the public media, seemed to presuppose more or less sociological reasons for this crisis. Or if they didn't take a sociological approach if they had a properly spiritual approach or moral approach they located the approach within very narrow constraints historically.

None of these answers seemed satisfactory to me because the crisis- although it was weighing heavily upon everyone, the McCarrick crisis that is -it seemed that few people wanted to ask the deeper questions or questions about the deeper sources of the crisis. So my parishioners and the lay faithful across the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, watching them wander about for a way of wrapping their minds around the tremendous evil that McCarrick fall portended and the frequency with which bishops seemed to be able to say that they knew it all for many many years was shocking. So I knew I would have to take up the question of the reason for the crisis that was confronting or had engulfed the church. So I guess more than anything else in any immediate sense it was a concern for the spiritual well-being of my parishioners in the midst of this crisis. That's the genesis of my homily.

I spent a lot of time on this homily. Most priests, as you're aware, spend a few hours if that many preparing their homilies. And I didn't stop my practice of preaching at every daily mass that I celebrated during this time, but I began working on my homily probably ten to twelve weeks in advance of the day that I anticipated giving the homily. The Kingship of Jesus Christ, the Social Kingship of Jesus Christ, that is the Kingship of Jesus Christ not only over individuals but over nations that is celebrated on Christ the King Sunday seemed an opportune time to address the source of the crisis.

So I started working on my homily in midsummer. And I spent many, many weeks reading, praying, reflecting upon this homily. The way I draft a homily is that I, typically before I put pen to paper or finger to typewriter or iPhone electronic keyboard, I try to think it through so that my first draft, written draft that is, captures at least the shape of the homily. Typically a Sunday homily would go through about five or six iterations.

But before I started counting the iterations, because I would call them revisions, I had already gone through about six or seven and I realized what I needed to do, because so much material had to be processed and brought together to provide a coherent answer to the crisis or to provide a coherent rationale for the crisis that the Church is facing. I realized that I had to preserve each of the revisions so the revisions that I preserved were I think twenty five in number. Many things that were in that original draft never made it into the homily because they were either extraneous or overwrought or overstatements.

I knew the homily was going to be long. I had no idea how long it was going to be. And that's really not a consideration of mine first. when I conceive a homily the thing that matters most to me is that I have given sufficient time to effectively communicate what needed to be said. So I reflected on this homily over several months and as the homily matured I sort of field tested it in conversations with lay Catholics, some clergy.

In a sense I never.. I didn't really say that that is what I was doing but I would have conversations about different aspects of the homily. I had a particularly enlightening conversation in the Netherlands when I was visiting my daughter in October. It was a potential fiance inspection trip, you might call it. And I was hosted by the family that my daughter was serving as an au pair with, and they're a devout Catholic family and we had some pretty intense conversation one night about the role of the Second Vatican Council in the current crisis. And so, there you have it. That's how.. that's what gave birth to my homily.

Up until the day on which I gave the homily I probably listened to my homily in excess of five hundred times. And that's not an exaggeration. I used my time that I was in the car driving from parish to parish or from different assignments in this way, so I had many opportunities to think and reflect on and reconsider language, specific words. By the time the homily was done there was no word that I had not carefully thought about. And the choice of words are critical in the delivery of a homily because you can overstate something or understate something. And those are two pitfalls I was particularly alert to in this homily.

7) Father, was there any hesitation on your part in either initially delivering this homily, or subsequently allowing it to be published online by 'The Remnant'?

Fr. Treco: In the most profound sense I would say no, not really. When I was a little boy my dad was careful to encourage me to be honest in how I saw things. One way he did this he would say, 'You know, the only gift that you have for a friend is the way you see a thing. And so it's important if you love people that you will tell them the way you see it.' He said, 'You're not omniscient. And so you may not see it exactly right. But it's all you have. So it's important that you provide to your friends as clear an understanding of the way you see a particular thing.' This is profoundly my dad's statement to me when I was a boy. That particular one profoundly has shaped or has shaped my approach to homiletics. It governs and has governed every homily I've ever given since I was in full time Christian ministry. And every talk. What is central is to make sure that what you're saying is true. That you don't overstate it or that you don't understate it.

Both are temptations that priests have. They they may understate something or be tempted to understate something because of some pushback they would get or they would overstate something because of some personal anxiety or angst or something that is peculiarly personal to the preacher. These are two temptations that any person who wishes to be faithful in the proclamation of the gospel has to resist and resist them with all their might. And to call on the Holy Spirit, the Holy Ghost to assist them, because it is a near impossible task and it's certainly an impossible task apart from the actual graces that God provides to those who ask for them.

Because this particular homily was going to touch something so central to the lives of the faithful under my charge, my dad's exhortation occupied my mind a lot over the months that I was reflecting on this particular homily. When 'The Remnant' asked for permission to publish my homily, again there was no real hesitation. I guess my initial response to them was, 'A homily is a public act, a proclamation. And so if I were going to give it to my parishioners. I would certainly.. if I felt comfortable giving it to them, why would I hesitate to give it to others?' So Michael Matt at The Remnant said you know if I wanted to they could publish the homily anonymously and in that way protect me from any fallout that would come because he suspected fallout might come. And I said, 'You know, while that might be the safe road that would also be the coward's road because then.. Let me put it differently. I said that would be the coward's route. And what was in my mind, I'm not so sure I said it to him, but what was in my mind [was] if I could not say it to the world, so to speak, why would I say it to my parishioners? And since I would never dream of saying something to my parishioners that was untrue or that I understood to be untrue, it would be suitable and only fitting that I would own what I said to whatever audience that would hear my homily.

However, I spoke about how I personally went over this particular homily with a fine tooth comb because I knew it was touching something that was felt very deeply by so many and would impact my parishioners in a significant way. And it was fraught with many dangers. And by dangers I just mean the possibility of theological error not dangers like pushback that I would get or might get. When I was at I think the twenty-fourth revision, I sent this particular homily to five people and, in like I said, in revision twenty-four I just asked for the purpose of having them review it theologically. Sadly I didn't get five responses back even though I think I sent the homily out maybe three weeks before I was to give it. I only got two or three responses back, but they were helpful. And I think the input I received kept me from at least one or two pitfalls.

8) Were you contacted at all by His Excellency Bishop Steven Lopes about the homily prior to the removal of your faculties?

Fr. Treco: I was contacted by the vicar general not Bishop Lopes, initially. There was a simple email. 'Come to Houston' was the subject line and the content of the email was brief enough. It referred to my homily published in The Remnant in which I espouse what amounts to heresy. And I was exhorted, yea, I would say commanded, appropriately- my bishop has that right -to come to Houston for a discussion concerning the homily. But I was not contacted [by] him prior to that. And that was December 11th that I received that word from the Vicar General. In that initial email no specific comment was made about allowing The Remnant to do it [publish the homily] it was just stated as a fact. But in my first conversation with Bishop Lopes and Father Timothy Perkins the Vicar General and Father Richard Kramer the Director of Vocations the question of how we came to be that The Remnant published my homily, I informed them that after having seen the homily they [The Remnant] asked permission to publish it and I granted permission.

I think I missed an important factor in this. You asked, 'Were you contacted at all by his Excellency Bishop Stephen Lopes about the homily prior to the removal of your faculties?', so yes I was. I was contacted [by] him prior to the removal of my faculties because the initial contact took place on December 11th through the email and then two more or less short conversations at the Chancery in Houston on the 12th and the 13th of December. My faculties to preach and to hear confessions were withdrawn on January 15th.

9) *What were the circumstances under which you were notified that you were no longer to function as administrator for the church of St. Bede?*

Fr. Treco: By way of the email in which Bishop Lopes notified me of the change in my faculties, that is the revocation or the withdrawal of my faculties to preach and to hear confessions, it was at that very same time that I was informed that I will no longer be functioning as the administrator for the Mission Church of St. Bede's and that Monsignor Jeffrey Stephenson had been appointed as administrator pro temp for St. Bede's. Those two acts were simultaneous in the same correspondence.

As to the specifics, I think it was 3:30 in the afternoon on January the 15h, earlier this year 2019, I received an email from Bishop Lopes to which was attached the letter in which he informed me that he had withdrawn my faculties to preach and to hear confessions and concerning the change in the administration of the Mission parish of St. Bede's the Venerable.

I'd like to make one more comment about the matter of my notification. I celebrated Mass at St. Bede's in the afternoon, 5:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and we were very graciously given many opportunities by Holy Family our host parish in the Archdiocese and so at the time that I received this letter I was on my way to celebrate the 5:00 p.m. Mass that day. And typically one or two parishioners will often enough, one or two parishioners or visitors would knock on the sacristy door to ask if I would hear their confession.

And having received the letter prior to arriving at Holy Family I was filled with a kind of trepidation because I knew that having received this instruction I could no longer hear confession and wouldn't you know it, lo and behold the gentleman who was my altar server at many daily masses, on that particular occasion asked me if I could hear his confession and I had to inform him that I was unable to do so, and he pressed me a little, because it was awkward because I had never ever, prior to this day, ever delayed or hesitated to hear someone's confession, so it seemed odd to him and so he pressed me, and after I gave him what amounted to be firm but unclear.. a firm 'No I could not,' but unclear as to why, he figured out that I wasn't free to explain and very graciously sort of backed off the question.

10) *Did the suspension of your priestly faculties follow immediately, or were there interstitial events which took place?*

Fr. Treco: I received the letter withdrawing my faculties to preach and to hear confessions. On the 15th and on the 29th of January, just two weeks later I was suspended. In-between that time there was correspondence between my Canon lawyer and Bishop Lopes. When I received the letter of January 15th withdrawing my faculties at that point I realized that I had to retain Canonical counsel. I had delayed it as long as possible simply because I had no money and I knew a Canon lawyer would be expensive.

On the 15th I reached out to a priest of the Archdiocese to ask if he knew of any good Canon lawyers. He got back to me on the morning of the 16th and very fortuitously, providential I should say, he had just been made aware of a Canon lawyer that came with a fine reputation both as a lawyer and as a Godly man. And when I reached out to him he very graciously received word of my real inability to pay him in any normal way and accepted the risk of proceeding knowing that there would be some hardship for him in accepting my case.

Quite promptly after taking my case on he drafted a letter to Bishop Lopes, a letter of introduction. I believe that letter was sent on January 22nd. My Canon lawyer wrote to Bishop Lopes asking him not to take any Canonical action against me in situation until such time that we could work through conversation or written correspondence to what he thought would be a relatively simple and amicable process. My Canon lawyer received no response to that correspondence. To date in fact I don't think we have ever received any correspondence from Bishop Lopes specifically addressing concerns or requests that were made to him through my Canon lawyer. And since January 15th I have not communicated directly with Bishop Lopes and he has not made any efforts, whether in writing or on the phone, to reach out to me.

Before going on to your eleventh question I thought it would be good for me to go to print a copy of my timeline document again so I could just give a clearer and more precise statement to answer your question about events that took place between the withdrawal of my faculties and my suspension.

On December 11th I was called to the Houston on the 12th and 13th for two conversations at the chancery. That was followed by a letter that I sent to Bishop Lopes on the 18th of December that contained a personal Profession of Faith document, something that I composed. It was largely the Oath Against Modernism plus an explicit affirmation of my acceptance of the legitimacy of all of the conciliar Papacies. And also the validity and legitimacy of the Second Vatican Council. That was followed by a letter that stated December 20th but that I did not receive until December 24th, and in that letter Bishop Lopes notes the 'inadequacies' of my Profession of Faith, as he called them and [Bishop Lopes] then imposed a series of obligations upon me, one of which included the resigning of a Profession of Faith or the fidelity that all priests are required to sign and have witnessed prior to their ordination. December 24th puts us just the day before Christmas and so there was no consultation, no opportunity for me to share what was going on with any of my brother priests of the Archdiocese, even the pastor of Holy Family. So when the deadline that Bishop Lopes had imposed in that December 20th letter of January 6 arrived I had not been able to meet with anyone even though I had sought to. So I requested an extension. I had thought that I had sent that email on the 6th but there was a glitch in my email client and so I woke up on the morning of the 7th which was a few hours past the deadline, requesting an extension. Bishop Lopes responded in the same day granting me an extension of approximately six days.

So on Sunday December 13th I then sent him a letter in which I included the signed and witnessed Profession of Faith. The withdrawal of the faculties letter came on the 15th and I retained Canonical counsel on the 16th and the Archdiocese of St. Paul in Minneapolis, following the lead of Bishop Lopes, withdrew all of my faculties, whereas Bishop Lopes had only removed the faculty to preach and to hear confessions. On the 17th I received the letter. But by the kindness of the Bishop I was able to complete the following weekend's Mass assignments that I had in the archdiocese so it wouldn't be inconvenient to the two elderly communities that I served and a parish that had invited me to celebrate Mass.

On Tuesday, January 22nd I then wrote Bishop Lopes a letter affirming that I would be willing to recant anything that I said in my homily and I asking him to please identify for me those specific statements in my homily that were contrary to the Catholic Faith. Then on Thursday Bishop sent me an email that can be, I believe, properly characterized as condescending and insulting, saying my letters.. January 22nd I'd sent him two [letters], one for the priests of the Ordinariate and one to himself as he requested, and he expressed his being astounded by the ignorance or the depth of manipulation that my letters evidenced. And he made the claim that for six weeks he had been doing just what I had asked him to. If that were the case it would have been easy enough for him to simply restate those things but that was not in fact the case and I still remain unclear as to exactly what particular statements I had made in my homily that were contrary to Catholic faith. After that e-mail the next correspondence I got was the letter and the decree of suspension on January 29.

11) What justification was given for your removal? Were any specific violations of Canon Law mentioned? Any publicly uttered heresies on your part? Accusations of instances where you had taught or preached something in contradiction to the established Dogmas of the Catholic Faith?

Fr. Treco: There are several assertions that Bishop Lopes made in either the letter or the decree. The first assertion that he made is that I asserted that the Council itself was a departure from Catholic Tradition and that the Council was devoid of Magisterial weight. The simple answer is I never made either of those statements. The second assertion that Bishop Lopes makes against me is that I asserted that popes Paul VI, John Paul the Second and Benedict the XVI set aside the mandate given to them by Our Lord Jesus Christ, so that the Popes therefore do not exercised legitimate authority in the Church. He completed the thought of somebody, but not me, with that second half and the timeline document makes it clear what I said and what he added. The third assertion that he makes in the letter or in the decree is that I urged the faithful by extension to treat as suspect the Ordinary and Universal Magisterium of the Church after 1963, or that I incited animosity toward the Apostolic See.

I never called the either the faithful of St. Bede's or anyone who would hear my homily as provided on The Remnant's YouTube channel, any such encouragement to hold in suspect the Ordinary and Universal Magisterium of the Church after 1963.

The fourth assertion that was made is that in publishing my homily on a Web site known for 'extreme views' and the fact that my homily retrieved so much attention in digital and social media made it superfluous for any penal investigation to prove its veracity. That's quite an assertion. Again, it is unmerited. First of all The Remnant is not known for extreme views, unless you consider Catholic orthodoxy extreme. And I really had no idea of the reach of that my homily had gained, but even so if those two facts were true it still did not absolve the Bishop of the responsibility of proving his case.

The fifth assertion that he made is that I said that the council taught errors and departed from the true Catholic Faith and that I refused to reaffirm the Profession of Faith made prior to my ordination. Those two facts are just plainly false. The sixth assertion that Bishop Lopes makes against me is that my refusal to retract the erroneous propositions of my homily indicates that I continue to hold schismatic positions contrary to the Catholic faith. Since this is contained in the decree that was received after I pleaded with him to provide me with the specific statements that were contrary to Catholic faith.

This sixth assertion is again without merit. The final assertion that Bishop Lopes makes is that he officially warned me that the censure of suspension would be imposed if I did not publicly recant my erroneous doctrinal positions and return to communion with the Roman Catholic Church by the 28th of January, 2019. My only response to this is.. I will read this one:

I, Vaughn Andrew Treco, ordained to the Eternal Priesthood of Jesus Christ on May the 3rd, 2015 by the Most Reverend Andrew Cousins Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of St. Paul Minneapolis, do affirm that Bishop Lopes communicated much the same to me in his letter dated January 21st 2019. But I note for the record here that the language and perhaps phrases that Bishop Lopes used in that letter are dissimilar to those which he used in his decree of suspension and therefore may not necessarily have conveyed the same thoughts.

In other words I'm saying Bishop Lopes was again being either evasive or unclear. So that's that's the ground upon which I was suspended.

12) Father, it pains me greatly that this question even needs to be asked, but several outlets have reported that you were formally excommunicated on April 1, 2019. Can you either confirm or refute this? If this unthinkable actions has been taken, who has proposed it, and on what grounds have they done so?

Fr. Treco: By way of this statement I can confirm to you.. And if you believe it's painful for you to ask the question, I pray that you understand that it is even more painful for me to answer the question with regard to whether or not I have been excommunicated. The answer to this question is a simple 'Yes'. On the 30th of March 2019, Bishop Stephen J. Lopes, Bishop of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter issued a Decree of Excommunication against me for the delict of schism, that is the crime of schism.

It was as unthinkable to me as it is to you. Although I must tell you from the first conversation with my Canon lawyer I said to him, 'Bishop Lopes is going to excommunicate me.' My Canon lawyer could not believe that was even a remotely possible outcome, but I had watched the escalation from the first correspondence, the e-mail from the Vicar General, until the day that I retained my Canon lawyer, and each correspondence seemed to escalate. So I didn't see, humanly speaking, where there was any grounds to expect reasonably any other outcome but excommunication.

Although the decree of excommunication was issued on March 30th, it appears that I was not intended to receive notification of my excommunication until several days later. I actually received the copy of the letter and the Decree of Excommunication the following Friday, I think that's April 5th. My Canon lawyer received a copy of it the evening of April 4th. So that's four days later for him and then five days later for me. For me however it appears that the whoever runs the emails or sends out the emails to the Ordinariate priests inadvertently failed to delete my name from the list of priests who were to receive the notification of my excommunication. So I actually was notified by way of an email that was sent out at 3:30a.m. on the first Monday of April. So I got wind that I had been excommunicated four days before I received the actual letter and Decree of Excommunication.

13) Father, what can you tell us about any recourse you have in pursuing justice in this situation?

Fr. Treco: I have had the good fortune of wonderful Canonical counsel and superlative brother priestly council throughout this process. Mr. Robert Flummerfelt, ESQ, my Canon lawyer, has proven himself to be a man of tremendous capacity and acumen. An honest man and a Godly man. Profoundly empathetic to my situation, and ready to pursue whatever courses of justice are permitted to me under Canon Law.

Mr. Flummerfelt began to act immediately in fact even before I was able to secure his retainer he was providing me with quite specific and direct Canonical counsel about meetings I was to have, specifically a meeting I was to have with Bishop Andrew Cousins, the Auxiliary of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis on April 17th, in which I received the letter withdrawing my faculties.

But you ask about any recourse that I have in pursuing justice. The first thing, before we got to any decrees being issued against me, my Canon lawyer first issued, you might call it a primary defense letter to Bishop Lopes and Bishop Lopes would have received that letter I believe around the 22nd of January. That letter was not answered. But it provided sufficient grounds for, one might say a reasonable hesitation on the part of anyone who is accusing me of the things I was being accused of. Mr. Flummerfelt then, after I received the decree of suspension, responded within the Canonically required time frame, in answer to it, issuing a remonstratio to Bishop Lopes on Thursday February 7th.

On Friday the 12th he sent the appeal to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith by way of the Papal Nuncio for the United States of America. Unlike the case with Bishop Lopes we actually received the confirmation of receipt from the Apostolic Nuncio on Tuesday April 16th indicating that he had received the appeal against the decree and had forwarded it on to the Cardinal Archbishop Ladaria Ferrer, Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

After the Canonical time had elapsed that was required for us to give Bishop Lopes an opportunity to respond to the remonstratio- we received no response to that, either -we then submitted what is called a Petition for Hierarchical Recourse against the Decree of Excommunication. This was dispatched to the Prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith as well and it was sent on Tuesday May 21st.

It's important to note something that I became aware of later. Apparently when a petition for hierarchical recourse is made all of the penalties of the decree that is being appealed against are suspended under Canon Law. So with that word I have been able to return to the sacraments. I became aware of the decree on April 1st. Until the day that I became aware of the Canonical provision of this suspension of the penalties I did not approach the Sacraments of the Church.

To summarize; My Canonical counsel has pursued all available canonical recourse and he has done it adroitly, promptly and we have simply not heard anything from Bishop Lopes throughout this period. But, the time frame in which a petition for hierarchical recourse gets a response from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith could be anywhere from a year to many years, or several years. And so in a sense what we have to do now is simply wait. But we are continuing our pursuit and we will continue this pursuit and exhaust every means available to us to secure justice for me under natural and ecclesiastical law.

And so now we pray. And so when people ask me what my need is I always say my chief need is prayer. It was particularly important, I mean it remains important, but it was particularly important during that time when I was not permitted access to the Sacraments. If any Catholic who understands the vital role of the Sacraments play in the sustaining of the State of Grace, life in the soul, it was a terrible burden. And so it was good to have so many people praying for me and also letting me know that they were praying for me. Because you can assume that people who love you will pray for you, but there's been a tremendous outpouring of spiritual affection and commitment to prayer on my behalf and I believe that in the persistence and the growth of holiness that suffering can become the occasion of was aided significantly by the prayers of the faithful on my behalf and I am profoundly grateful for them. Those prayers already offered and those prayers offered even now.

14) Do you think there is any pulpit today in the Catholic Church in America, from which the homilies of an Archbishop Fulton Sheen, or a Monsignor Ronald Knox, or a Cardinal John Henry Newman, or a St. John Marie Vianney would be welcomed? Or has much of the post-conciliar Church in America simply become hostile, from the head down, to the promulgation of tradition unfiltered?

Fr. Treco: You know, priests can get tempted to think that they're alone. We are told the stories of the prophets, some of whom thought they were alone and God had to remind them that they were not alone, that there was a remnant of the faithful about them even though they could not see them or were not aware of them. So I steadfastly resist the thought that there is no pulpit other than Saint Bede's, where I was that the sermons of Archbishop Fulton Sheen and the others you mentioned would be heard in their fullness. Certainly I believe that there are pulpits. Are there many? I do not know how many. Who knows?

I know some priests record their homilies and on certain YouTube channels their broadcast without naming the priests' names, and I myself have been encouraged by these homilies and without prejudice because they didn't put their names to it either. Do I believe? Certainly. Do I wish those would increase? Yes. And it is my prayer that whatever ordeal I am asked to undergo by the Triune God in my own particular situation however this pans out, that many more priests will do it. I mean our very salvation depends on it. 'Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel,' the Apostle says[1 Corinthians 9:16]. If it's woe to St. Paul, oh my gracious, how much more woe is it to us if we would not do it?

So yes, I believe that there are pulpits in the Catholic Church in America where the homilies of Archbishop Fulton Sheen or Monsignor Ronald Knox or Cardinal John Henry Newman or Saint John Vianney would be quite welcome. In fact I would say the people of God are starving for that type of clear and forthright exposition of the Catholic religion. And I think priest would be surprised if they did it. Some would be run out of town for sure and others not just by the lay people who attend Mass but by their Bishop. But so be it. So be it.

It is certainly the case that much of the Catholic Church in America from head down has become hostile to the faithful, unfiltered proclamation of the Catholic Tradition. That is clear. But that's simply the occasion in which particular priests live. This is the hour. This is the time in which God has called me to serve him as a priest, and every other priest who currently serves the Catholic Church. This is the time that He has called us to. No matter how dark the time is we are not given an excuse to do anything less than to proclaim the Gospel, proclaim the fullness, unfiltered Catholic Faith, to those under our charge or to any who would hear us. That is one of our fundamental obligations. We are to confect the Sacraments and distribute the Grace of God by that miraculous act that is affected by God's power in us, but simultaneously we are called to faithfully teach the Catholic religion. If we do not teach it we will be held accountable and some of us, many of us, will lose our souls forever.

So I believe the number of pulpits in the Catholic Church in the United States of America where unfiltered Tradition is being taught is increasing. And if that is so I think it will provoke increasing hostility from those who have departed from the faith but yet retain the office of the Priesthood, or the Episcopate.

In my own experience and my own efforts to preach or proclaimed the Catholic Tradition unfiltered I have actually given homilies that were essentially recitals of the homilies of some of the men that you mentioned, or of some of the Saints. And I've been struck by how profoundly welcomed those homilies have been. They are a shock to many Catholic ears today. But it's a kind of shock therapy that has a cathartic, spiritual healing effect. And it is more, in my experience, welcomed than not.

15) During your time spent pastorally caring for your flock, and in interactions with the faithful in general, do you find that this antipathy to the idea of unfiltered truth is a reflection of their needs, or an undermining of it?

Fr. Treco: From my experience, since being ordained to the Catholic priesthood and attempting to preach the Catholic Faith with increasing fidelity as I grew in my own understanding of the Catholic Tradition, and that occurred after my ordination at a more accelerated pace than even before it. I have come to an increasingly firm conviction that the state of the lay faithful is a reflection not of where they wish to be, but of where they have been led. So any antipathy that I encountered in them in response to hearing the unfiltered tradition, I've always assumed that that was because of prior formation. I came to assume this or recognize this because I would say things and people would be shocked and then they would say, 'Well how could you say that?' and I'd say it's the Catholic Faith. And I am obligated, for the good of my own soul and the good of your souls, to tell you the truth. The truth that has been revealed by Jesus Christ and entrusted to His Holy Church.

Given the current state of the lay faithful in the Catholic Church and the current cowardice, apparent cowardice of many Catholic priests- even good ones -to proclaim with clarity and conciseness that doctrine of Christ. I think that is why we are where we are. If priests proclaimed, in an unfiltered manner, in a clear, unambiguous manner, the truths of the Faith it would do what the Apostle says. The demise of faith, the loss of faith, the cowardly, quasi embrace of the Faith, is a product of the failure of priests to do what the Apostle says will generate faith. 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing the Word of God.' [Romans 10:17]

How can they believe without a preacher? We should not be surprised that so many no longer believe. Because so few priests preach the unfiltered Catholic Tradition.

16) Finally Father, nearly everyone who I have spoken to about this interview has requested that I ask one thing of you; namely, for a message of hope. They feel what has been done to you is indicative of the current state of the Church and will only grow worse. Many have recently become aware of the problems which are inherent in, and a result of the fruits of, the Second Vatican Council, and they are not sure where to turn. What can you say to the faithful who feel the barque of Peter has been violently tossed about by the storm, and that they have found themselves washed overboard?

Fr. Treco: Dear Brother, it is beyond doubt that the Barque of Peter has been violently tossed about by the storm. The only way you miss this is if you're not in the Barque. But if you're in the Barque you could not help but notice the tossing and the turning of the Barque. And the threatening waves that splash against and over and into it. This is not just a sentiment or feeling of people. This is the objective fact.

You asked about a word of hope. Jesus makes a statement, in the Gospel of Mark Chapter 4 I believe it is, Jesus says to the Apostles something that's profound and simple and it seems as though as St. Mark narrates it's almost like this is a side comment. 'Let us go to the other side.' And the Apostles and Jesus get into the boat and Jesus rapidly I guess takes a pillow and goes to sleep. And they're making their way across the sea and a violent storm erupts. And Jesus stays sleeping. He's not sleeping because he's indifferent. He's sleeping because even the side comments of God are a promise that cannot fail. And He had said, 'Let us go to the other side.'

Those who gaze upon waves and are dependent upon Dramamine to keep their stomach settled in the storm rather than calling upon the mercy of God have made the mistake of, it seems to me, of taking their eyes off the promise. We're going to get to the other side. That's a certitude of faith. There's no reason to lose hope. The God-Man has said it. And we are going to be all right. Yes, we are going to be seasick. Yes, we are going to feel dizzy. Yes, we are going to be shaken in some sense and to a large extent this could be exteriorly shaken by the storms that buffet against us. We will feel the splash of the waves against our face. We will feel the heat of lightning bolts that come very near the Barque and we will feel the tossing and turning.

But this boat will not sink. Even if the hands that are supposed to be steadying the boat begin to take up axes and saws against the very wood of the Barque. We are going to get to the other side. And Jesus may appear to us to be asleep. But He could afford to sleep. Because He's already made us the promise. And He expects us to believe Him. The disciples thought that they needed some specific act of God to get them across the sea. But Jesus was disappointed by their lack of faith. Lack of faith in what? Lack of faith in the word that He had said, 'Let us go to the other side.' We're going to get there.

And what can we do? What can we do personally? Pray. Pray like we've never prayed before. Read the Scriptures. Know them back and front. Study the Catholic Faith. Know it in its details. And as you learn it, believe it. This is our duty. It's also the way of our salvation. Those who are ignorant to their faith will quickly lose it. But those who diligently seek true knowledge of the true Faith and entrust themselves to that Faith, to the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, perennially taught by the Catholic faith. Those who do that will increase in their level of calm and they'll feel less anxiety by the fact that the Lord seems to be asleep. Because they will be reminded that He said, 'Let us go to the other side.'

I've been asked if I am troubled by my situation. At some level I would say 'yes' but for the most part, no. And the reason is simple. None of this is a surprise to Jesus. The Lord knew that when I spent those ten weeks or more. Certainly more. Preparing for my homily. He knew what would happen. None of this took Him by surprise. It may have taken me by surprise but it did not take Him by surprise. He knew the response it would provoke. And He also knew that He would provide the grace to remain calm. Because He's promised to those who would be faithful to Him, we'll get to the other side. So do not lose heart. It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom of God. Let Him give it to you. We will be all right. And as if the promise of the God-Man is not enough, Our Lady has said, 'My Immaculate Heart will triumph.' So we have it from Our Savior. And we have the promise from Our Lady. What more do we need?