



Bishop Gainer inspires, encourages legal community at Red Mass

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By TAMI QUIGLEY *Staff writer*

“Your participation in tonight’s Red Mass is a true encouragement to us who place our trust in you as agents of justice,” said Bishop of Harrisburg Ronald Gainer, homilist and principal concelebrant of the fifth annual diocesan Red Mass Oct. 8 at the Cathedral of St. Catharine of Siena, Allentown.



Bishop of Allentown John Barres was celebrant of the evening liturgy, sponsored by the diocesan St. Thomas More Society and followed by a reception in the parish activity center.

A priest son of the Diocese of Allentown, Bishop Gainer is president of the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference (PCC).

“It’s always a joy for me to return to my home diocese,” said Bishop Gainer, who extended thanks to Bishop Barres for asking him to be homilist of the liturgy.

“In the Red Mass we invoke the power of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the new judicial term on the important work you do,” Bishop Gainer offered in his homily.

Alluding to the way people joke about lawyers, Bishop Gainer said many ask in earnest or in jest, “Can lawyers be saints?” The answer is yes, as Bishop Gainer listed a number of lawyers the church recognizes as saints, including St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Thomas More, St. Charles Borromeo and St. Francis de Sales.

Bishop Gainer added that Blessed Luigi (1880-1951) and Maria (1884-1965) Beltrame Quattrocchi of Rome were the first married couple beatified together, and Luigi was a lawyer. St. Pope John Paul II beatified the couple Oct. 21, 2001.

“What does a holy lawyer look like?” Bishop Gainer mused. “Each had an unswerving commitment to justice whatever the cost,” he said, adding they had a deep prayer life and gave witness to the faith in and out of their profession.

“They knew the law can’t be separated from morality ... and must be founded in God’s word.”

Referring to the parable in the evening’s Gospel, Bishop Gainer asked who we – especially those in the legal profession – should identify with the most: Abraham, Lazarus, the rich man who could not enter heaven or the rich man’s five brothers, who still had time to embrace God’s teachings.

“We should identify with the five brothers,” Bishop Gainer said. He explained we have God’s word, the teachings of the church, the sacraments, the laws of the land and the example of many selfless and dedicated professionals in law who have paved the way.

“And we have the unsurmountable gift ... of a risen savior.”

“We’ve already been given all we need. The question is how will we use it?” Bishop Gainer challenged.

“These are not pious musings but critical questions for us and our society,” said Bishop Gainer, explaining the nation and world has “a crisis of meaning,” as Pope St. John Paul II described it in his 1998 encyclical “Faith and Reason.”

Bishop Gainer said this crisis can be seen in the way laws are enacted and applied, such as legal issues leading to the “erosion of marriage” and the “deadly jeopardy” faced by the lives of the preborn and frail elderly.

There are people, Bishop Gainer added, who want to define marriage the way they want – not in accordance with the teachings of Christ.

“You have a sacred trust before God and society to transcribe these truths into legal facts,” Bishop Gainer said. “You have the opportunity to open minds, hearts and doors to objective truths and moral justice.”

As the liturgy drew to a close, Bishop Barres thanked Bishop Gainer for his presence and for delivering an exceptional and inspiring homily.

Also concelebrating were Msgr. Alfred Schlert, diocesan vicar general; Msgr. Andrew Baker, pastor of the cathedral and chaplain of the diocesan St. Thomas More Society; Oblate Father Thomas Dailey, director of the Salesian Center for Faith and Culture at DeSales University, Center Valley and associate chaplain of the diocesan St. Thomas More Society; Msgr. Walter Scheaffer, pastor of St. Mary, Kutztown; and Father Eugene Ritz, chaplain of Berks Catholic High School, Reading.

Msgr. Victor Finelli was master of ceremonies. Deacon William Hassler of the cathedral assisted. The Angelorum Choir of the cathedral, directed by Beverly McDevitt, offered music for the liturgy. The Fourth Degree Knights of Columbus, Cathedral Assembly, provided an honor guard. Altar servers and ushers of the cathedral served at the liturgy.

Judge Thomas Parisi of the Berks County Court of Common Pleas and president of the society in the diocese, welcomed those of all faiths gathered for the Mass. The Berks County Bar Association donated the flower arrangements. Susan Hoffman designed the program covers.

The St. Thomas More Society, begun in 2010, is a Catholic professional association that promotes the mutual interaction of faith and culture in the realm of law and public policy. Its work is inspired by the life and legacy of St. Thomas More (1478-1535), patron saint of statesmen, politicians and lawyers. He models a fidelity to the faith grounded in the search for truth, the dignity of the person, the unity of the family and the justice of civil society.

- See more at: <http://www.allentowndiocese.org/blog/bishop-gainer-inspires-encourages-legal-community-at-red-mass/#sthash.Ae7LSzkE.dpuf>