



33rd SUNDAY of ORDINARY TIME ***YEAR C – November 17, 2019***

The Readings today, from Malachi, Saint Paul and Saint Luke, remind me of the words of Cardinal George, the former bishop of Chicago, who said on one occasion that he expects to die in bed, his successor will die in prison and his successor will die in the marketplace.

That is already happening in many parts of the world. Some Christians are put in jail because of what they believe. Some Christians die in jail. And some Christians die in the market place precisely because they are Christians.

While we can all be shocked at that under reported reality, we can also be lulled into sleep by simply believing it can never happen here - not in America - the land of the free and the home of the brave.

I remember when I was a boy, it was believed by many that the Bethlehem Steel would never close - but it did. There was a belief then, that God would always be a part of our public education system because without God a part of reality is missing - and when you miss a part of reality that is by definition insanity.

We were told by people in authority, “That could never happen here”. Well it has!

There is a wonderful little poem that is known to all the kids in grammar school. It’s called Mary had a little lamb. Someone sent me a revised version of that poem and I’d like to share it with you. It goes like this:

“MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB
HIS FLEECE WAS WHITE AS SNOW

AND EVERYWHERE THAT MARY WENT
THE LAMB WAS SURE TO GO.

HE FOLLOWED HER TO SCHOOL EACH
DAY ‘T WAS NOT AGAINST THE RULE.

HE MADE THE CHILDREN LAUGH AND
PLAY TO HAVE A LAMB AT SCHOOL.

AND THEN THE RULES ALL CHANGED
ONE DAY, ILLEGAL IT BECAME.

TO BRING THE LAMB OF GOD TO
SCHOOL OR EVEN SPEAK HIS NAME.

EACH DAY GOT WORSE AND WORSE
AND DAYS TURNED INTO YEARS

INSTEAD OF HEARING CHILDREN LAUGH
WE HEARD GUNSHOTS AND TEARS

WHAT MUST WE DO TO STOP THE CRIME
THAT’S IN OUR SCHOOLS TODAY?

LET’S LET THE LAMB COME BACK TO
SCHOOL

AND TEACH OUR KIDS TO PRAY”.

“I expect to die in bed, my successor will die in jail and his successor will die in the marketplace”. Could Cardinal George be right? Can that happen in our country? For a few moments in silence, pray for those already dying in the marketplace and hope it never happens here.