



DIOCESE
of
LAFAYETTE-IN-INDIANA

Bishop Doherty's Message at St. Elizabeth Seton

**Comments to be publicly delivered at St Elizabeth Seton Church,
July 4-5, 2020, by Bishop Timothy Doherty**

God so loved the world.... (John 3:16)

This is why Christ came and instituted his church. Go and make disciples. This is who we are. It is important at this uncomfortable juncture to remember who WE are. We are at a moment when some people are defining others and their social stances. Let's not forget what defines us.

St. Elizabeth Seton parish has a wonderful history, and Father Ted Rothrock has been very much a part of this. Priests and people here say we are welcoming, and so we build moments to put that into practice. There are social outreaches to Haiti, to the needy, and advocacy for the education of children. The parish is a strong supporter of diocesan ministries. The Divine Liturgy here, the Mass, is treated with reverence and with worthy music. The Liturgy of the Hours is a daily public practice. There are ongoing opportunities for spiritual growth: "CRHP," RCIA, and Awaken, just to name a few that I am familiar with. This is who we are.

We also realize that area parishes and schools are not the only ministries carried out in the name of the Church. We are defined by Catholic-sponsored healthcare systems here in Central Indiana that are a huge presence here both as employers and care providers.

By contrast, defining others is perilous. On June 16, the Catholic News Agency and the National Catholic Register –which are part of the EWTN organization– published an article titled "Can Catholics Support 'Black Lives Matter'?" It tells us at least two important things. First, that there are dozens of organizations that use that phrase. One of them, The Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation, clearly says things that I oppose. Second, it is only one organization among many dozens using the phrase BLM, and it is a mistake to say that that foundation is the headquarters of what is a very diverse movement.

We can't capture the facts of what is happening across different movements inside and outside the United States by simply referring to an unspecific "THEY" or "IT."

I am here today also so we remember who I am, the bishop over this parish community. As every priest learns at seminary, and as we hear in the words for the Ordination of Priests, the priest, the pastor, is an extension of the bishop's ministry. A priest's capacity to celebrate Mass and Sacraments is an expression of the bishop's own mission to govern, teach and sanctify. Each Mass reminds us of this connection when the bishop is prayed for by name.



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Could we imagine that Fr Rothrock's bulletin article of June 28, much less his choice of wording, is an extension of, and expression of a Catholic bishop's apostolic role in the Church? Some people chose to think so. But we know it is not, and in my conversation here on Wednesday with Father Ted, he knows it too. The serious consequences of that article are still playing out among us, and in the wider community. I chose the suspension provided for in church law. The suspension offers me an opportunity for pastoral discernment for the good of the diocese, of St Elizabeth Seton Church, and for the good of Father Rothrock.

I ask your continuing prayers for the parish, our church and for me. Pray for Father Rothrock who is still a friend to many of us. And if anyone asks you, you can tell them that this bishop says that Black lives matter.

Keep in mind these two citations:

10 I urge you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and in the same purpose.¹¹ For it has been reported to me about you, my brothers, by Chloe's people, that there are rivalries among you.¹² I mean that each of you is saying, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ."^{13*} Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? — I Corinthians 1:10-12, NAB*

Pope Francis in a June 2, 2020 speech to the world: "We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life."