

# SAID ED January 22, 2017

## Part I: The Presidency of the United States

Last Friday our Country celebrated Inauguration Day; it's one of the finest days in which we are given to participate every 4 years. This grand day reminds us that we live in a country that allows freedom for all people. What a gift! - it is a gift we respect and honor, similar to any gift we are given, but this one is very sacred.

Last Friday Donald J. Trump took the oath of office and became the 45th President of the United States. We need to hold Mr. Trump in our prayers as we have for all past presidents. We need to offer prayers of thanksgiving for President Barrack H. Obama. Most importantly we offer prayers of gratitude for the smooth transfer of power from one freely elected person to another.

As I was thinking about this day in our American society and decided to use it to remind myself of some of the facts of the presidency; nothing new – just a little refresher.

- The President of the United States is the elected head of state and head of government of the United States by the people who are the United States.
- The president directs the executive branch of the federal government and is the commander-in-chief of the United States Armed Forces.
- The President is considered to be one of the world's most powerful political figures; he is the leader of one of the contemporary global superpowers. He is the overseer of the world's most expensive military with one of the largest nuclear arsenals.
- He leads the nation with the largest economy in the world.
- The Constitution vests the executive power of the United States in the president. The power includes execution of federal law, alongside the responsibility of appointing numerous federal executive, diplomatic, regulatory and judicial officers.
- The president is empowered to grant federal pardons and reprieves, and to convene and adjourn either or both houses of Congress under extraordinary circumstances; and is largely responsible for dictating the legislative agenda.
- The president is elected by the people through the Electoral College to a four-year term, and is one of only two nationally elected federal officers, the other is the Vice President of the United States.
- In all, 43 individuals have served 44 presidencies (counting Grover Cleveland's two non-consecutive terms separately) spanning 56 full four-year terms.

Yes, it is a great honor to live in a Country that is so blessed and has the privilege of freely electing our president. Let us pray daily for all our elected officials that they do the best they can, will govern with integrity and they never forget they are called to serve the people of the United States of America.

Peace!

Ed

Several people asked me to send out the Prayer I used in this weekend's homily. I received it from a Lutheran Colleague, Pastor Steve Garnaas-Holmes:

*(The prayer follows on the next page.)*

"Today, God, you create me anew;  
today I inaugurate a new life.  
By the power invested in me by the Holy Spirit  
I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute  
your call in my life, and will to the best of my ability  
uphold your commandments.  
I will act with love and gentleness,  
with reverence and forgiveness toward all people.  
I will practice humility, generosity and truthfulness.  
I will honor and delight in the diversity of the human family,  
respecting the true unity of all people  
and the oneness and sacred worth of all living things.  
I pledge to live, speak and act for justice and peace.  
I accept the power you give me  
to resist evil, injustice and oppression  
in whatever forms they present themselves.  
I will stand against all violence, disrespect and bullying.  
I will speak out against meanness,  
give voice to those who are silenced,  
and include those who are outcast.  
I acknowledge that I shine with your light, O God,  
that my life is not mine but yours.  
This day I pledge to do your will, not mine,  
for your sake and the sake of the healing of the world.  
I understand that this pledge  
will often set me against my culture,  
and that the culture will resist me.  
With your help and those of like mind and heart,  
I will persevere.  
I give you thanks. I ask your blessing. I trust your grace.  
Amen."

## **Part II: Pier Giorgio Frassati & Being Fishers**

In Sunday's Gospel, Jesus says, "Come after me and I will make you fishers of men." With this simple yet profound statement, Jesus calls us all to follow Him and to lead others to Him. One follows the other, but not automatically. We have to allow it, actively seeking the Christ and through that seeking, attracting others to Him.

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, born in Turin, Italy in 1901, provides us with a modern example. At 17, Pier joined the St. Vincent de Paul Society. He dedicated much of his time to caring for the sick, orphans, and disabled veterans of World War I. In college, he fiercely promoted and lived out Catholic social teaching. Although from an affluent family, Pier lived simply, giving his money to the poor. He would often give away his bus fare and walk to his destination—a few blocks or many miles.

While daily Mass and intense periods of prayer were common for him, Pier also loved to have fun. Passionate about mountain climbing, Pier would use climbing trips with friends as an opportunity to draw others to Christ by leading prayer circles and taking his companions to Mass. He also hung out at bars and pool halls. As an expert player, Pier would even use the game of pool to evangelize, by betting his opponents that if he won, they would go to Mass with him.

Before graduating from college, Pier Giorgio contracted polio while tending to the sick. Ignoring his illness to help care for his dying grandmother, his last days on earth were filled with terrible suffering. In 1925, he passed into eternal life at the age of 24. At his funeral, the streets filled with thousands of people, to his family's surprise. These were the people Pier had served and brought to Christ. On May of 1990, Pier Giorgio Frassati was beatified (the final step before officially being declared a Saint) by John Paul II.

Pier Frassati's life gives us a powerful model of how to be "fishers of men." He didn't take great leaps to bring people to Jesus. He worked within the confines of his day-to-day life. He knew that holiness was and is a life that everyone could live. We don't have to do exactly what Blessed Frassati did to win others to Jesus, but we can ask ourselves: What am I doing in my life that I can adapt towards serving others and winning others to Jesus? Some ways we might do this: Pray before and after a sports game. Use our words to build people up (as well as their reputations). Dedicate our work to the Lord or to a prayer intention. Invite people to Mass and Church events.

The list is endless, and we can brainstorm ways to draw others to Christ in our daily lives. Perhaps you are already doing this. But if you find leading others to Christ is difficult, you're not alone. I struggle with it on a daily basis. Overcome this by asking the Holy Spirit for help. Invite Him into your life and rely on Him. If you fall down, (and we all do), rely on God's mercy, pick yourself back up, and keep moving. He will give you the grace to live out this universal call. In this way, we are able to live an extraordinary life of holiness and become the "fishers of men" that Jesus promises we'll be.

God Bless You Always,

*Ted Bianculli*

---