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Restoring Our Civic Friendships

Archbishop Cupich

When society does not promote the common good, “a cancer grows that damages the whole social body,” Chicago Archbishop Blase J. Cupich said in a March 12 homily at Old St. Patrick’s Church in Chicago. The archbishop was celebrating a Mass for St. Patrick’s Day. Archbishop Cupich noted that this year is the 100th anniversary of the Easter Rising that led to Irish independence from Britain. He noted that the violence that led to independence came about because “a segment of society was told they didn’t matter and were treated as subhuman, ‘a lower class’ not only economically but socially to be excluded from the body politic,” which meant that “many people lost hope, solidarity vanished, hearts hardened and society ended up becoming infected by a

“It is becoming clear that the body politic is nearing the limits of how much suffering it can endure.”

cancer that harmed all.” Archbishop Cupich said that something similar is happening today in America: “Our politics and public discourse are often marked by enmity and animosity. There is an overly competitive character that defines how we relate to one another, emphasizing what divides us rather than what we share in common. And because we do not value growing together, a cancer is developing that threatens to harm us all.” The archbishop called on believers “to be open to the spirit of God moving us to take up the work of restoration, a restoration that comes in building friendships in stages with the discipline and with a commitment to dialogue, a commitment to walk together step by step as equals who, while not always agreeing with each other, have so much in common.” The archbishop’s homily follows.

father Hurley, you pay this full-blooded Croatian a singular honor by inviting me to preside at the Mass to begin our city’s celebration of St. Patrick’s Day.

I learned early on in my ministry as a priest that the Irish are not all that familiar with Croatians, as shocking as that may be. Years ago when I was serving as a bishop’s secretary, I was asked to get another bishop on the phone. The housekeeper answered the phone in a strong brogue. I asked, “Is the bishop available?”

“And who would be callin’?” she insisted.

“This is Father Cupich,” I replied.

“And how would you spell that,” she

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