

Statement on Reports of Further Political Violence

Archbishop Coakley

Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City had a message for anyone considering further violence following the Jan. 6 siege on the U.S. Capitol and threats against other state and federal government buildings: "You are being led astray by a voice that is not from God." In a Jan. 16 statement as chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, the archbishop said St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians offers "a reliable test of what is from God and what is not." Calling the events of Jan. 6 "a violent attack on a peaceful political process at the heart of our democracy," he urged anyone who sup-

"There must be accountability for these actions."

ported the violence or was contemplating further actions to reflect on the images from that day, which included "symbols of racial hatred, calls to execute politicians, a gallows and a noose" and misappropriation of Christian symbols. In the days leading to the inauguration of President Joe Biden, an FBI bulletin warned of "armed protests" in state capitals and Washington and threats were reported against lawmakers and their families. Archbishop Coakley said the Jan. 6 violence "and the many voices that urged it on, including some political leaders," were the opposite of the "patience, kindness, gentleness and self-control" called for by St. Paul. "Do not listen to those sowing hatred, anger and divisions!" he said. "They lead you away from God." His statement follows.

Like Pope Francis, after viewing the riot at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, I was "astonished": a violent attack on a peaceful political process at the heart of our democracy, bombs placed at political party headquarters, the murder of a police officer and others dead and injured, symbols of racial hatred, calls to execute politicians, a gallows and a noose.

There were those present who misappropriated Christian symbols as well. There must be accountability for these actions.

As a Christian, I must say to anyone considering further violence: You are being led astray by a voice that is not from God. St. Paul gave us a reliable test of what is from God and what is not:

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January 28, 2021
Volume 50
Number 35