



St. Luke's East Hampton Reflections from Fr. Ben

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At the end of last week, Rob Hirschfeld, Bishop of New Hampshire and seminary classmate, posted a Facebook video of a speech in which he – an eloquent, articulate person from the best families and best schools – said that the time of making statements and speeches is over. He instructed his clergy to make sure their affairs were in order and their wills had been written because the time had come when they might have to put their lives on the line. His words were picked up and re-posted by many others, including both the bishop of Long Island and the Bishop of Maine.

In my ministry, I have worn a bullet proof vest and a survival suit. I have been inoculated against the most virulent of tropical diseases and have found myself in the most dicey of situations at home and abroad. I have survived what could have been fatal blood poisoning in Haiti and had members of my team face the threat of Ebola, civil wars, and lions in Africa. In all this, I have never been told by a bishop – let alone three bishops – to get my affairs in order and make sure my will is up to date.

I am sure that as in East Hampton and Maine, people in New Hampshire feel so safe that they rarely lock their doors at night and sometimes even leave their keys in the car. To have the Bishop of New Hampshire give that kind of directive – and to have it amplified by the Bishop of Long Island who usually cautions his clergy to say or do little at all – is a sign that we, in our country and in our role as Christians, are in a whole new place.

In last week's baptismal service, we said that we renounced Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God; that we renounced the evil powers of the world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God; and that we renounced sinful desires that drew us from the love of God. We then promised to seek and serve Christ in all people, loving our neighbor as ourselves, and to strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being. The death of Renee Nicole Good – whose last words were “That's fine dude, I'm not mad at you” - show the tragic cost of putting these vows in action. Her death shows how important it is to keep living them again and again.

Are your affairs in order? Is your will up to date? Are you ready to live your faith. pastor from Minneapolis called her sermon from last Sunday “Phosphorescence.” That title is a powerful description of the light we are called to be and the light we are called on to bring.