

Thirtieth Sunday of Ordinary Time October 29, 2017 A

- **Florida's Archbishop Joseph P. Hurley, Vatican diplomat and builder bishop**
- **A great article about difficult decisions**

Archbishop Joseph P. Hurley was the sixth bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine serving from 1940 to 1967. This weekend is the 50th anniversary of his death. His story is quite amazing. He did more for the Church in Florida than any bishop before or after him. I wanted you to know something about this great churchman and patriot. I especially wanted you to know about him since he did more for the Church in Brevard County than any other county in the state. He founded all twelve parishes and nine schools in Brevard County.

Below is an account of Archbishop Hurley's life, taken from the September/October edition of *St. Augustine Catholic*, and from an article written by Monsignor David Page, Pastor Emeritus of Holy Name of Jesus, who served as an assistant to Archbishop Hurley for many years.

Early Life

Joseph Hurley was born on January 21, 1894 in Cleveland, Ohio. He was one of eleven children born to Irish immigrant parents. He was ordained a priest on May 29, 1919 for the Diocese of Cleveland. The newly ordained priest probably expected to be a parish priest for the rest of his life. But God had other plans for him.

Papal Diplomacy

In 1927, a former professor of Fr. Hurley, Archbishop Edward Mooney, recently appointed Apostolic Delegate to India, asked him to be his secretary. The assignment in India launched the young priest on an improbable papal diplomatic career—a career that is recorded in a wonderful book called *Vatican Secret Diplomacy: Joseph P. Hurley & Pope Pius XII*, by Fr. Charles Gallagher, S.J.

After five years in India, Archbishop Mooney was named Apostolic Delegate to Japan. Fr. Hurley went with him. After Mooney was appointed Bishop of Rochester, Fr. Hurley was transferred to the Vatican as an American liaison to the Secretary of State. He was the only American priest in Vatican diplomacy. This was 1934.

In the 1930s, the US and the Vatican did not have diplomatic ties, and were in fact wary of each other—America being a largely Protestant country with a strong anti-Catholic bias. During 1934-40, Hurley helped to develop closer ties between Pope Pius XI and the US State Department.

In 1939, after the death of Pius XI whom Hurley greatly admired for his strong stance against the Nazis and Fascist Eugenio Pacelli, a veteran diplomat was elected Pope. The new Pope, Pius XII, was much more restrained in his condemnation of Nazism.

Many in the Vatican were more worried about the communists, who openly persecuted the Church. But not Hurley. Though no fan of the communists, Hurley considered Hitler public enemy No. 1.

Hurley frantically tried to nudge the new pope into taking a stronger position against the Nazis. But Pius XII resisted. In utter frustration, Hurley went on Vatican Radio and delivered a strong anti-Nazi speech. It was a career changer.

Out of the blue, in August 1940, Pius XII elevated Hurley to bishop and assigned him to the Diocese of St. Augustine. In his 13 years in the diplomatic corps, Hurley had lived and explored Asia and Europe, but he had to look at a map to find St. Augustine, Florida.

Though St. Augustine was a popular tourist town, to a world traveler like Hurley, it must have seemed like a backwoods place. This was Florida before interstates, air-conditioning and shopping malls.

Bishop of St. Augustine (1940-1967), and continued work with the Vatican and the US State Department

When Fr. Hurley was made a bishop and sent to Florida, WWII was in its early stages and the US was not involved. The new Bishop may have thought that his work as a Vatican diplomat and with the US Department was over. But neither assumption was true.

After coming to Florida, the new bishop founded the Florida Catholic newspaper which gave him a new forum to make known his views on many issues. Unlike most American bishops, Bishop Hurley supported President Roosevelt's decision to enter the war. The State Department was glad to have in Bishop Hurley an outspoken ally and quietly supplied him with the latest information by courier that he used in the Florida Catholic columns, sermons, and radio speeches. Hurley was one of the first to raise the alarm that the Nazis were sending Jews to concentration camps. The Vatican had no knowledge of Hurley's secret work with the US State Department.

Back Working for the Vatican

Shortly after the end of the war, the Vatican recalled Bishop Hurley to diplomatic service. He was sent to Yugoslavia during the reign of Marshal Tito. It was a very tense time for the Church. Hundreds of priests were killed by Tito's regime and hundreds of others were imprisoned including Archbishop (later Cardinal) Stepinac.

Despite Hurley's effort to obtain the release of the Archbishop, Tito put him on trial for treason. Each day as Stepinac was led in and out of the courtroom, Hurley stood up and bowed in respect, a gesture that infuriated Tito. A photograph of Hurley's bowing was captured in a wire service photograph published around the world. Stepinac was convicted and sentenced to prison. He was released after five years.

Back to work in Florida

In 1949, Bishop Hurley's work with the Vatican ended. On his return, he was elevated to Archbishop even though the diocese of Florida was not yet considered as Archdiocese.

While away at work for the Vatican, Archbishop Hurley's auxiliary bishop, Thomas McDonough, helped to establish new large parishes in Miami and Fort Lauderdale.

In 1952, Hurley created a new "Missionary Burse Fund" which paid for the education of seminarians, further education for priests, and the purchase of land for new parishes and schools.

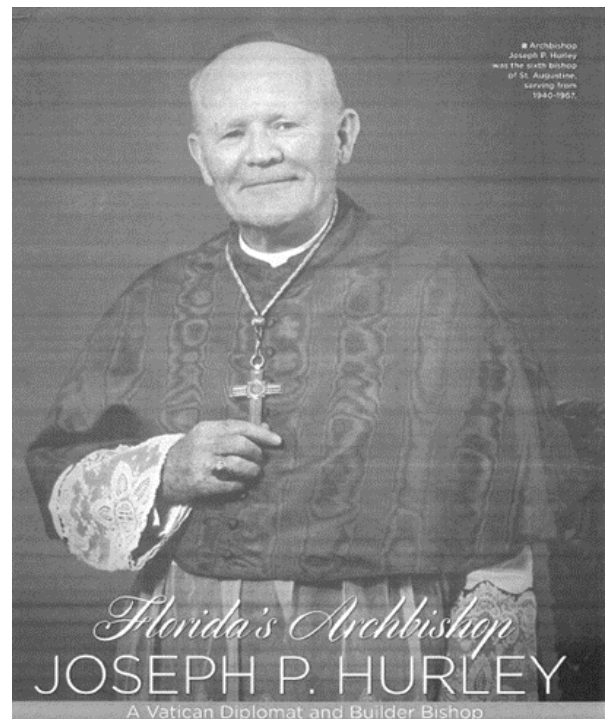
During his 27 years as Archbishop of Florida, Hurley established:

- 74 parishes
- 100 schools, several High Schools, including MCC
- 4 hospitals

- Morning Star School, the first school for disabled children in the state

In the 50s, in order to staff his multitude of new parishes, the Archbishop started to travel to Ireland in search of seminarians and sisters. In the 60s, about 40% of the priests in Florida were from Ireland (all wanted to come to sunny Florida). In the 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s, Irish Sisters of Mercy staffed elementary grade schools in St. Teresa's in Titusville, Divine Mercy in Merritt Island, Our Savior's in Cocoa Beach, Ascension, and St. Joseph's in Palm Bay. Our Sr. Joseph also spent several years at Holy Name of Jesus School.

At the turn of the century, 30 years after Hurley's death, *St Petersburg Times* included the Archbishop as one of the top 25 Floridians of the Twentieth Century. It is pretty safe to say that the vast majority of Catholic parishes, schools, and other institutions in all seven dioceses of Florida owe their existence, in a large part, to the remarkable foresight and prophetic vision of Archbishop Hurley. Yet, no Catholic High School in Florida bears the name of Joseph P. Hurley. Fr. Page, who knew Archbishop Hurley very well and was with him in Rome during the sessions of Vatican II, likes to say, "What George Washington did for America, Joseph P. Hurley did for the Catholic Church in Florida."



PRAY ABOUT IT

Facing a decision? Invite the Holy Spirit to the negotiation table.

When Chandra, now a married mother of four, was about 21, she began to pray for the man she would one day marry. She prayed that they would find each other and that he would have the characteristics necessary to be a good husband and father. Chandra says she was aware that her bar for a suitable husband was set high and that it would likely be the most important decision of her life. So she brought it to prayer. Her mother had died when she was 20, so she also asked her mother to intercede for her in finding her husband someday.

“When I met my husband Jamal a couple years later, I knew very early that he was God’s answer to my prayer,” she says. “It was not a difficult decision to know whether to marry him, because it was almost as if I recognized him.” She says she’s not sure what to call her prayers, but she knows they were important because they’d taken place before she’d even met Jamal. “I did not wait until I was in the relationship to pray; I prayed beforehand, so I approached the relationship with confidence,” she says.

Early prayer allows us to pray without the anxiety that often accompanies significant decisions. And it is more likely when we ask God to prepare us a path, we’re less likely to wrap our prayers in our own agendas. Prayerful questioning—even before we’ve formed our questions—is one way we can surrender to the will of God more fully. Asking God for guidance in circumstances that are not yet upon us can also make us aware of God’s presence today, here and now.

An answer to prayer

If we believe in the all-pervasive presence of God, we ought to recognize the Holy Spirit’s movement even in our career and job choices. Bringing such decisions to prayer can be a powerful way to examine our own talents and gifts with God in mind. Tawnya, owner of an international consulting company, says her husband and a leap of faith are to credit for the path she’s chosen. She and her husband had just purchased a new home and were expecting their second child when she was faced with some uncertainty at work. “My employer was bought out by another company and there was no documented maternity leave built into my new employment contract,” she says.

A great story

Tawnya says that she’s normally able to navigate solutions to complex problems but that her husband

offered an alternative approach. “He suggested that perhaps all the hurdles were a sign to rethink my path forward,” she says.

Tawnya says she prayed hard, reflecting on her gifts and the circumstances she was facing. “I asked myself, at the end of my life, when I am standing before God, what will God say?” She chose to leave her job after realizing she wanted to spend more time with her children. She says leaving a job for family isn’t the right decision for everyone, but she felt that through prayer, she’d received a personalized message from God.

“I had dreamt of a successful career since childhood, and I had it,” she says. The choice to leave that was difficult, but one she felt strongly about having come to through deep prayer.

Fifteen years and two more children later, Tawnya runs an international consulting firm. “Starting my own business was only possible because I surrendered, and now I am so blessed for it,” she says. “I trusted the call in that critical decision moment.”

Requests for help

Brigid a mother of four, approaches decision-making both intellectually and spiritually. “I usually handle big decisions with research,” she says. “I also rely on several friends and close family members for advice. I know that their thoughts are not clouded by anything except what is best for our family.”

When it comes to decisions that involve others, Brigid brings prayer into the equation—and angels. “If the decision is about a particular person, I ask their guardian angel to help them or me with the decision-making process.”

C’za, a doctor and a mom, says prayer is a part of all her decisions—whether for concerns at the hospital or at home with her family. With children in college, high school, and elementary school, she points out that only time will tell if some of the decisions that she and her husband, Rob, have made regarding the children will turn out to be good ones.

She says that all major decisions have been brought to prayer. “Making difficult decisions requires an active prayer life,” she says. “I think that by having a personal relationship with God, I feel at peace with whatever we decide to do. I know that sometimes when I make a choice that is not along the path God wants me to take, it just doesn’t feel right—even if it is a choice that I think I really want.”

God shows up

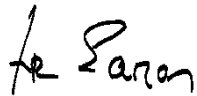
Sometimes the Holy Spirit will give us a nudge, even without an invitation. A life of faith gives us the grace to feel this nudge, no matter what course we’ve chosen.

Luisa was 23 and only a few months into a relationship when she discovered she was pregnant. A new immigrant to the United States with plans to earn an MBA and have a high-powered career, becoming a mother was not part of her plan. Luisa made an appointment for an abortion. “I was actually lying on the table in the office, and the doctor walked in,” she says. “I looked at him and knew I could not go through with it. I walked out.” She says when she saw women even younger than her in the waiting room, she’d realized that she could accept the challenge of becoming a mother. “God was in that room with me,” she says.

Luisa’s daughter is now 11 and old enough to understand the circumstances surrounding her birth. “I’ve explained to her that sometimes women face a very difficult decision, and that they feel alone, confused, and afraid,” she says. “I’ve told her about that day, and her response was not to be angry about the decision that I almost made. Instead, she thanked me.”

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Have a blessed week,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Sarah". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.