



January 7, 2021

Dear Cheverus Community,

I'm writing to share the comments I made over the PA this morning to start our school day:

"Good Morning. I'm going to take a few minutes this morning to address the school and lead prayer. First, I'm here to welcome a new member to our community. Today Mr. RJ Jacobs joins our community to work with our Campus Ministry team for the second semester. Mr. Jacobs is a Jesuit Scholastic studying to be a Jesuit Priest. Our juniors and seniors may remember Mr. Matt Briand who was at Cheverus for the 2nd semester of their freshmen & sophomore years, and Mr. Jacobs will be serving in a similar role for us this semester. Please take some time this week to say hello and welcome Mr. Jacobs to Cheverus.

Secondly I want to take a few moments to address what happened at our Nation's Capitol Building yesterday and early this morning, and to discuss our role and response to it. Back in October you may remember I sent a letter to our community detailing how we conduct ourselves in a Jesuit school during a presidential election. Today I feel compelled to return to some of those same reminders from the fall.

In October I wrote that the "most important goal for students in the time of an election is to learn HOW to have respectful and productive political discussions. How do we engage in dialogue when someone doesn't agree with our opinions? Do we enter these conversations with open hearts and minds as opposed to a competitive spirit, trying to change others' minds? Can we bear the opinions of those we disagree with in a manner that is respectful and kind? These are critical skills for living in a democratic country, and unfortunately our society seems to have fewer and fewer examples of how to do this in our daily lives."

For those of you who didn't watch and listen to the news yesterday afternoon and late into the night, our Nation's Capitol Building, one of the most central images of our freedom and democracy, was attacked and overrun by a mob of rioters while our elected representatives sought to ratify the Presidential election. People have died, many were injured, and our Nation sits in shock and horror that something like this could happen in our country.

Our Capitol Building and the grounds that surround it have been the sight of countless peaceful gatherings and protests, some of them involving hundreds of thousands of people, addressing issues from all sides of the political spectrum. Some of you have visited the Capitol and met with Congressmen and Congresswomen as part of the Ignatian Family Teach-in. What happened yesterday was not a protest.

I'm not on the PA this morning to just condemn the actions of rioters and the shame they brought to our country. There's nothing funny or amusing or entertaining about what they did yesterday, and they don't need any more of our attention.

I am here to say how inspired I was by what took place after the rioting ended. For those of you who watched and listened to the proceedings in the Senate and House of Representatives like I did last night, you witnessed a display of dedication and leadership from Republicans and Democrats. They made it clear to us and to the world that the few thousand people who chose the path of violence yesterday do not represent the American people.

Vice President Pence, a Republican, set the tone when Congress returned after the violence last night, thanking the men and women who protected the Capitol Building, grieving those injured and killed, and then making it clear that the work would continue. He said, "Violence never wins. Freedom wins. And this is still the People's House." He set the tone for the rest of the evening.

The Republican Senator James Lankford from Oklahoma followed by saying, "we have a lot of spirited debate in this room, but we talk it out and we honor each other." The night continued with speech after speech calling for this same type of unity and collaboration in response to the violence. And in the end, both the House and Senate overwhelmingly confirmed the elections.

The Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi opened the session in the House of Representatives by reminding us that yesterday was the Feast of the Epiphany, and then she invoked St. Francis' Prayer of Peace, and I'll end this morning by doing the same. I ask you to join me in prayer.

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace: where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.*

*O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

Amen"

I ask those of you studying at home as well as our parents and families to join us in this spirit and prayer.

Peace,

John Moran