

## Six Seconds Can't Undo 40 Years of Service

[Homily/3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time/Rev. Robert Marciano]

Jan. 21, 2018—It has been headline news for a few days now: a 6-second-long; secretly-recorded video of Mr. Jay Brennan, the Principal of Bishop Hendricken High School. Maybe you have seen it or read about it, but the words used in the video are shocking and offensive and certainly not those expected from a leader of our premiere Catholic boys high school. The administration of Hendricken, under the sturdy leadership of Mr. John Jackson, took quick action and sadly accepted Mr. Brennan's retirement.

I have had the privilege of knowing Jay Brennan since my days as a student with him at Hendricken. It has been an honor to work beside him since my assignment here in Warwick in 1994, and in my most recent years as Pastor here at St. Kevin with Hendricken as our collaborative school. To say that we were all shocked to see and hear this video is an understatement. And, to be honest, Mr. Brennan—on seeing the footage—was equally shocked since he cannot recall it. It is very mysterious and clearly is intended as a malicious act without context. The damage, in so many ways, is undeniable—especially to the minority community at Hendricken that saw it and now feel betrayed. And since the airing of the video on Wednesday evening's news, I have said hundreds of times to countless people, *"A 6-second video does not unravel or change a 40-year career of service to the Church and to the school that he, and many of us, love."*

As you know, we live in a society that **permits** everything and **forgives** nothing. But you and I and the Catholic Church are oddly just the opposite. We **permit** little and **forgive** everything since, as Christians, when a mistake is made and when a person does wrong, we apply the Gospel that we live by. We love, we forgive, and we embrace that person even more because of the hurt and the pain that is felt by so many and in so many ways. The examples of this in the Gospel are legion: from the woman caught in adultery; to the denying words of Peter regarding his arrested friend named Jesus; and to the good thief named Dismas, who after a life of crime, receives forgiveness from the cross of a fellow criminal, a dying Divine Savior.

My friends, I have always been proud to be part of the Hendricken family, and always will be. And I will continue to actively encourage and support our young men here to be part of it as well. Even before this was all made public, the Hendricken Administration—after viewing the

video—contacted both the NAACP and the Jewish Alliance. This, in order to move forward in a positive way by addressing these matters so that Hendricken becomes an even better place, given these crucial and damaging events, and to be sure that out of this **bad** comes much **good**. After all, isn't that what our faith is built on? The **evil** of Calvary that seemed so final faded away on an Easter Sunday morning when God's powerful hand of love turned death into life. Such will be our story here, too. And I promise you, with His help now, that Hendricken's brightest days are still ahead.

For the record, I love Jay Brennan. He is a good friend and a very good man, but he is **not** a bigot or a racist. I join with the thousands of people these last few days in thanking him and his family for the countless hours that he has worked to better the lives of the young men who walk, and have walked, the hallways of Hendricken. I welcome him as part of the human race—that long line of frail and imperfect people who make mistakes, both large and small, but who rely on God—the God who called those first Apostles in the Gospel, as imperfect as *they* were, and used them to do great things for Him. For if we answer His call and if we follow Him, no matter how weak we are or how dark it seems, then He can do the same with us.

And so, as we say each morning in our own parish school as we begin our day, and each morning as the day begins at Hendricken, "***Live Jesus in our hearts ... forever!***" With those words said, and that invitation given and accepted, we need not fear or say anything more since that says it all!

God love you.