
For the Installation of Christopher Wray as Eighth Director of the FBI

The Very Reverend Samuel G. Candler
Washington, DC

The Invocation and Remarks

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To Distinguished Guests, Members of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to Chris Wray and his wonderful family and friends: Grace to you and Peace!

We gather, first of all, to acknowledge and to give thanks for the service of so many in the FBI, you whose mission is to protect the American people and to uphold the sturdy and sensitive Constitution of the United States. Thank you! We remember all the brave men and women who have given their lives in service to this country, but especially we remember those who have served here in the FBI. Thank you.

We also gather today, to honor a gentleman truly worthy of the FBI's leadership and direction, Chris Wray. It is an honor to pray with all of you. But, as we begin in prayer, it is worth asking, "What are the the spiritual foundations of an office like the Federal Bureau of Investigation?"

In scripture, the old prophet, Micah, provides an answer. In his time, he wondered what would please the one great God, Yahweh. Would special rituals and rules, and precise personal sacrifices, do the trick? Would attention to intricate policies and detailed customs be the answer? No, realized Micah, and so he says at Micah 6:8. "He has told you, O Adam, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God."

The FBI certainly exists in order to fulfill that first requirement, on behalf of our country: to do justice. We live in a rough and tough world. Criminals and enemies of the state mean to do us harm, and our country needs the bravery of those who would protect us. The defeat of crime and terrorism deserves our best hearts, our best minds, and our best strengths.

In scripture, however, the word justice, or righteousness, has a special meaning. It means to be in right relationship. Justice is the situation in which right relationships are restored in community. The prophet Micah knew that justice truly wins when it includes loving kindness and walking humbly.

And so we pray for Director Wray, and for all the FBI, that they perform their duties with the most daring strength and the greatest intelligence, but also with the greatest humility. Because no matter how great and powerful we are, it is always God who brings us justice, and who brings us to right relationship.

All of us are called to be agents of truth and security in this world; and members of the FBI know that it takes special fidelity, bravery, and integrity to be such agents. It takes fidelity, bravery, and integrity, to do the mighty Micah's justice, kindness, and humility.

Ha! Humility and kindness? We might ask, "How might those qualities defeat the horrors of crime and terrorism?" Well,

they win because they are God's tools, God's equipment, God's agents, in this world's ongoing journey toward wholeness. It takes fidelity to do justice. It takes bravery to be kind. It takes integrity to be humble. Those are the agents that deliver God's justice and love.

Let us pray:

"Most holy God, you have called each of us to love you with all our heart, with all our mind, and with all our strength. Pour your Spirit into our hearts and our minds and our strength. Pour your Spirit into Chris Wray and the FBI. May he and we, may each of us, use our hearts, minds, and wills, to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God." AMEN.

The Benediction

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The time comes for a benediction. The word "benediction" means "a good word." There are lots of words in this world, and we—all of us—need to hear the good ones.

I give you a benediction this day, good words, but I also pray that each of us speak good words to each other. Words that have substance and strength and wisdom behind them. Words that have fidelity, bravery, and integrity. May the words and work of Chris, and of the FBI, and of this country, be for the good: tried and true, seasoned and sincere.

"May the Lord bless us and keep us. May the Lord lift up his face upon us and be gracious to us. May the Lord show us his countenance, and give us peace."

AMEN.