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MODERATOR:

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MS. SMITH: Good afternoon, and welcome to the National Press Club  
-- thank you -- for our speaker luncheon featuring Theodore Cardinal  
McCarrick. My name is Sylvia Smith, and I'm the Washington editor of  
the Fort Wayne Journal Gazette and the secretary of the National Press  
Club. I'd like to welcome club members and their guests in the  
audience today as well as those of you who are watching on C-SPAN.  
We're looking forward to today's speech, and afterward, I will ask as  
many questions from the audience as time permits. Please hold your  
applause during the speech so we have time for as many questions as  
possible. For our broadcast audience, I'd like to explain that if you  
do hear applause, it may be from the guests and members of the general  
public who attend our lunches not necessarily from the working press.

And I'd like to now -- (laughter) -- I'd now like to introduce  
our head table guests and ask them to stand briefly when their names  
are called. From your right, Jeff Ballou, the deputy news editor, the  
Americas, Al-Jazeera English; Ann Aughterton, managing editor of The  
Arlington Catholic Herald; Ron Baygents of Kuwait News Agency; Brad

Garrett, a terrorism/violent crime consultant for ABC News; Rabbi Jack Luxemburg of Temple Beth Ami in Rockville, Maryland and a guest of the speaker; Jennifer Laszlo Mizrahi, founder and president of The Israel Project and columnist for The Daily Record; Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi, chairman of Fiqh Council of North America and guest of the speaker -- skipping over the podium -- Melissa Charbonneau of CBN News and vice chairwoman of the speakers committee -- skipping the speaker for just a moment -- John Cosgrove, NPC president emeritus; the Very Reverend Samuel Lloyd III, dean of the National Cathedral and guest of the speaker; Dave Cook, Washington bureau chief of The Christian Science Monitor; Father Richard Schmarek (ph), author and former contributing editor of Priest magazine; Kevin McCormally, editorial director of Kiplinger Washington Editors; and Ann McFeatters, syndicated columnist.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

Theodore Cardinal McCarrick may have retired at Archbishop of the Diocese of Washington a year and a half ago, but he is as active as ever. In fact, he flew home last night from Rome from a trip that included India and Nepal. Along with Ambassador Tony Hall, he recently hosted the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land's visit to the U.S. on behalf of the State Department. And he was the chairman of a task force examining the church's relationship with Catholic politicians whose voting records conflict with church doctrine.

Cardinal McCarrick has been a frequent visitor to the National Press Club podium. From this dais, he has discussed the election of the new pope, the death penalty, evolution. In fact, it's safe to say that Cardinal McCarrick rarely, if ever, sidesteps a question just because it's prickly or controversial. And we journalists appreciate that. Today, he'll talk to us about global terrorism and an ecumenical approach to reducing it.

Our speaker was born in New York in 1930, the son of a sea captain. His dad died of tuberculosis when he was just three, and his mother went to work in an auto parts factory in the Bronx and was helped in raising young Theodore by an extended Irish family. He was ordained in 1958 and 43 years later was installed as the archbishop of Washington. Just seven weeks after that, he was elevated to the College of Cardinals and then was one of 115 men who chose Cardinal Ratzinger as pope.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming His Eminence Theodore Cardinal McCarrick.

(Applause.)

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: Thank you, thank you very much. I'm really honored to be here. When I look at this assembly and the fact that we have so many people, I can't resist saying that, as people ordinarily do, this is very humbling to see what a big crowd you have. But the crowd is because of what we do not because of who we are, and we know that. I always think of Winston Churchill's remark about someone who

professed to be very humble. And he said he had a lot of be humble about. (Laughter.) And I think that certainly describes your servant here.

But I think that what we're about to do is very historic. What we're about to do is something that we've been looking for for a long time. In a special way, we've been looking for it since 9/11. And although I have to say that the Muslim community in many parts of the world and our own country has been doing this for a long time, we've never really taken the proper notice of these courageous things that they've done and the clear statements that they've made. Now we're doing that, and I think you'll find, if you haven't already read the fatwah that the Fiqh Council has issued, you will find when you read it, when you hear it read by Dr. Siddiqi that this is really something which is a monumental step in the history of religion, a monumental step in the history of our country.

And as I look around and see so many dear friends here among the Muslim community and among the Jewish community and the Christian community, I think that this is a family gathering to say thanks be to God, to the one God, the God of Abraham, the God of Jesus, the God of Mohammed, peace be upon him, and the God of all those who strive to love their neighbor and who strive to bring peace into our world. And this is the one God that we all worship, and we speak about him in different names, but it is the one God, and we're all his children. And that's what makes it possible for us to get together, possible for us to love each other, possible for us to know who we are and what we're all about.

Just to give you a little background, my participation in this, I'm really a Johnny come lately, because some great men and great women have started this long before I came on the scene. But we were worried about peace in the Holy Land, and because the Annapolis meeting gives a new push forward on that, thanks be to God. But about three years ago, we wanted to give more support to our nation as it began this road plan for peace in the Holy Land. And so we developed -- and I was part of that but with a lot of other wonderful people -- a lot of wonderful people, I don't want to include myself among that wonderful people group. (Laughter.) That really is the height of whatever. But we began a group called the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Holy Land. And newly began, and we had representation from the Christian community, some of the highest-possible representation from the Jewish community, from the Muslim community and from just about everyone who was looking really in a serious way for peace in the Holy Land.

And what we found is that we could all work together. What we found is that -- you've heard this said before, it's almost a truism -- that what unites us is so much greater than what divides us, because we all want peace, we all want to be able to live in peace. We want Israel to live in peace. We want the Muslims to live in peace. We want the Palestinians to live in peace.

This is what we're trying to do. This is what the world should be. Then we began to do that, and the State Department's been very good. We meet with them every six weeks or so and talk about how we can help to move our nation forward in the thrust for peace in the Middle East

and especially in the Holy Land.

And then we realized that in the Holy Land itself, a group of people getting together, Muslims, Christians and Jews, and among them the highest representatives of religion in those areas, were getting together and were saying to each other, you know, we have to get together. This cannot continue. The vast majority of people from Israel, the vast majority of people from Palestine want peace. And we, the Catholic bishops have said from the very beginning, we are determined to make sure that the people of Israel have the right to live in peace without fear of terrorism, without fear of being attacked in their own country, their own territory. And we have also said that we believe that the Palestinians have a right to a viable and peaceful state of their own.

So all of this -- we find that even in a group as disparate as the group that we find in the Holy Land, everybody says yes, we've got to somehow find the way to do this. We've got to somehow find the way to get everyone together. And so there was being established in the Holy Land a group called the Council of Religions Institutions. Most of the Christian patriarchs were there. The two chief rabbis of Israel were there. Some of the most important rabbis of Israel were also represented and the president of the Shari'a courts of Palestine and a number of others, the minister for Religion of the Palestinian Authority and many others coming together, meeting together, getting to know each other, getting to appreciate each other. We are the children of Abraham, so we're one family. And it is that one family that meets here today. That's one family that says to the rest of our country, you know, we really need to love each other. We really need to understand each other. And we really need to work together.

We had a consistory in Rome, probably as many of you know -- since there's press here, all of you know -- and we got together. The Holy Father wanted us to talk about ecumenism, about getting together. And in that conversation, what was so important was that I would say 50 of the cardinals began to speak about getting together, getting to know each other, getting to work. Not getting to know the cardinals, they all know each other more or less but getting to know people of

other faiths. And I spoke, and in my few words I said, you know, we can all work together in helping the poor. We can all work together in helping the stranger. We can all work together in helping the person who has nothing, because all of us, in the Holy Koran, in the Hebrew scriptures, in the gospel, we are all committed by what we believe, to work for the poor, to work for our brothers and sisters who don't have anything. That's part of what brings us together. And because of that, we can do that. That's the message.

And our friends in The Fiqh Council have seen that and have accepted it very beautifully and very courageously. The Fiqh Council is the highest judicial body of the Muslim community in the United States. And their fatwah is a very important thing. It is an important statement. It is a very beautiful statement. It's a courageous statement, and it's something which will touch all of us in the United States and beyond. I was in the Vatican, I was in Rome, I came back yesterday, and I said to Cardinal Tauran who is now the head of the Pontifical Council on Interreligious Dialogue, I mentioned this

to him. And right away, he said The Fiqh Council is very special. This is a very important group. And the fact that they say these things make it something that we all must needs pay attention to.

So that's what we're trying to do. We we're trying to pay attention. We're trying to focus on, to highlight, to let it stand out in the light of the sun this extraordinary document that I would ask Dr. Siddiqi to read for us. And then we thought what we must do -- because they have done this before, this is not the first time that they have called for tolerance and fellowship and respect for everybody, but we haven't listened. And all of us have been saying, when will the moderate voices rise? Well, they have, we haven't listened to them. Now we listen to them, and now we respond. And that is so important to Rabbi Jack Luxemburg and Dean Lloyd. We'll be responding by reading a document that we have prepared that maybe the three of us will sign and that we would like all of you to sign, because you have little cards if you'd like to join us in that.

Our hope is that men and women of all the Abrahamic faiths and of all faiths and of no faiths who look for peace, who look for human respect, the dignity of the human being, because that's what it's all based on, that all the people who believe that, that believe we are all brothers and sisters will be able to sign this and will give encouragement and support in a very special way to our brothers and sisters in the Muslim community who, as I say, valiantly, clearly, courageously and generously have offered us this document.

So now, if I might ask Dr. Siddiqi if he would read the fatwah, the Thanksgiving fatwah, of The Fiqh Council.

DR. SIDDIQI: Let me greet you first with the greeting of peace, as-salaam aleikum, peace be unto all of you.

Cardinal McCarrick, you're very gracious for your kind words recognizing this fatwah, recognizing the work of The Fiqh Council.

I especially want to recognize Ambassador Karen Hughes who has done a lot of work bringing better relations, better understanding between Americans and the Muslims.

(Applause.)

Islam emphasizes a peaceful and just coexistence between Muslims and all other human beings. Since peace is the rule, not the exception, in our faith, it followed that any act of violence in humanity and injustice by any party against any party must be condemned as contrary to God's teachings. This position has been stated and reiterated in an earlier fatwah of The Fiqh Council of North America and by many Islamic scholars in various parts of the world, recognized by the cardinal, yet it continues to be largely ignored.

I'm pleased that we are gathered here, united with our friends of other faiths, for the safety and security of all. We are hereby calling ourselves and all citizens of the world to rediscover our human brotherhood and express our love of and obedience to God, to humility, just and fair dealings. I'm pleased to announce the

following fatwah of The Fiqh Council of North America.

"In the spirit of this season of Thanksgiving, a uniquely American holiday, The Fiqh Council of North America states its unequivocal and unqualified condemnation of the destruction and violence committed against innocent men and women. This condemnation of violence is deeply rooted in true Islamic values based on the Qur'anic instructions which consider the unjust killing of a single person equivalent to the killing of all humanity (Qur'an 5:32). There is no justification in Islam for extremism or terrorism.

"Targeting civilians' life and property through suicide bombings or any other methods of attack is prohibited in Islam. In Islamic terminology it is called haram, absolutely forbidden. Those who commit these barbaric acts are criminals, not martyrs.

"In giving thanks for America and for American people and in the light of the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the prophet's tradition, the prophet's guidance, we, The Fiqh Council of North America, clearly, without hesitation, strongly issue this fatwah:

1. All acts of terrorism are forbidden in Islam.
2. It is forbidden for a Muslim to cooperate or associate with any individual or group that is involved in any act of terrorism or violence.
3. It is the duty of Muslims to report to enforcement authorities any threat which is designed to place a human being in harm's way, bringing them before a competent court of law and in accordance with due process.

"We pray for the defeat of extremism, terrorism and injustice.

"We pray for the safety and security of our country United States and its people. We pray for the safety and security of all inhabitants of this globe. We pray that interfaith harmony and cooperation prevail both in United States and everywhere in the world.

"

On behalf of The Fiqh Council of North America and also appreciate very much the cooperation in this whole endeavor with many other friends and especially the Islamic Society of North America, the largest Muslim body. We have representatives of the Islamic Society of North America. Dr. Muneer Farid is the secretary general. And especially our office here for interfaith relations, Dr. Sayyid Syeed, I appreciate your work.

May God bless you all. Thank you.

(Applause.)

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: I would now like to invite Dean Lloyd and Rabbi Luxemburg if they would read the response to this very wonderful and very strong statement of the Fiqh Council.

MR. : A thanksgiving season proclamation, giving thanks for America. We the undersigned are Americans of Christian and Jewish heritage who have joined together with Muslim Americans in celebration and thanksgiving for the United States of America.

We thank God for the wisdom imparted to our Founding Fathers who heard his voice. God has given us our freedom, and America has thrived because of religious freedom enjoyed by all.

As Americans, we are free to differ in our beliefs. We celebrate that freedom, knowing that the one God looks into the human heart, not doctrinal labels, race or ethnic background.

America has suffered for the third time in its history an attack on its homeland -- the War of 1812, Pearl Harbor and the 9/11 terrorist attack. These may not be the last attacks on our people. Americans cannot respond effectively to the criminal behavior we call terrorism if we are divided. And divisions are nurtured by misunderstanding and fear. Further, we recognize that we insult Muslim Americans when we do not respect their valued beliefs of their Islamic faith, the Koran and the Prophet Mohammed.

MR. : In this season of thanksgiving, we proclaim our unity through diversity. We give thanks on this day of Thanksgiving for Muslims, Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists and all peoples of other traditions and faiths. And it is in this spirit that we pledge our full faith and fortune to hold America's love of freedom high, even as we deal with the serious threats facing America.

In the spirit of giving thanks, we thank the Muslim Fiqh Council of North America for its fatwah deploring all acts of terrorism and declaring it is the duty of every Muslim to help prevent terrorist attacks against the American people. We join in the prayer of the Fiqh Council fatwah and with the American Muslim community.

And for those who have the paper before them, let's all join together, and let's read the declaration as one.

We pray for the defeat of extremism, terrorism and injustice. We pray for the safety and security of our country, the United States of America, and its people. We pray for the safety and security of all inhabitants of this globe. And we pray that interfaith harmony and cooperation prevail in the United States and everywhere in the world.

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: I'm going to invite Rabbi Luxemburg and Dean Lloyd if they would sign, and then I will, too. And if you want to sign your little cards at the same time, we'll all be doing this together.

(Applause.)

I truly think that this is an important moment. May it not just last here, may it not just die here. But may what we have done, hopefully in your name, may it continue to grow. And may this spirit of mutual cooperation and love and help for each other be what motivates this country and people throughout the world to work

together for a better world. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. SMITH: Thank you very much all of you.

Cardinal McCarrick, I'd hate to let you sit down and then ask you to come back up. But could you please join me at the podium? We have quite a lot of questions here.

The first one is, what would you ask American Catholics to do specifically to help with the goals of this ecumenical effort?

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: Well, we really believe that knowledge precedes all action. So to get to know, to let our people to get to know what it is to be a Muslim, what it is to be a Jewish person, what it is to be a Buddhist, what it is to be -- to let them know more about the people that they live with. And to let them know the beauty that is in every true religion. And to let them see that there are so many good things there. And then to let them begin to work with each other.

And as I said earlier, it seems to me that if we can get people to look at the evils of our society, the poverty, the lack of medical care, the problem with immigrants, all those things, if we could work together to solve these problems, that would be a way to get to know each other very well. So I think those are the two things -- to get to know about our neighbors in a better way than we do now and then to be convinced that we must work together with them in order to attack the other evils of our world, the other difficulties, the pains and sufferings of so many of our brothers and sisters. I think if we do that then that creates a mind-set. It creates a movement toward peace and toward justice. And I think that would be the way I would recommend.

MS. SMITH: In an interview that was published this week that I saw, the Papal Nuncio made this observation -- religion is and must be an instrument of peace. Historically, religion has sometimes been an instrument of conflict. I think the youth will abandon their religion if it is an instrument of conflict.

Cardinal, I'd be interested in your thoughts on those comments, particularly as it might relate outside of the U.S. borders.

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: There is no question that in the past in the history of the world, people have misused religion. I always remember a great statement from the document that the Appeal of Conscience Foundation -- Arthur Schneier who many of you know -- put together after meeting, I think it was in Istanbul maybe 15 years ago, where they said the greatest crime against religion is to use religion to hurt other people. And I think we all recognize that as something true.

(Applause.)

And if we teach that -- if all of us, Christian, Muslim, Jew -- if all of us teach that with all our heart and really mean that



therefore we must take from our religion what it gives us, religion always gives us this notion that we're all members of God's family. And whatever we are gives us this great principle of the dignity of every human person.

I was secretary for a long time for the Servant of God Cardinal Cooke whose cause for beatification is in Rome now. And he always used to say all brothers and sisters in God's one human family, that's what religion teaches in a very special way. And I think if we can work on that and proclaim that, then the young people will see that this is something worthwhile to stay with and to work with and to let it form their lives in a way that will make them not only better people but also better citizens.

MS. SMITH: Pope Benedict announced Friday that he will receive Muslim leaders at the Vatican. The invitation comes as a response to a letter sent to him by 138 top Muslims around the world. How

specifically might this meeting have an effect on ecumenical efforts and engage with Islamic countries.

And also, the questioner wants to know, do you have any idea when this meeting will occur?

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: I don't want to pretend that I am in the private confidence of anyone, let alone our Holy Father.

But I hope it will happen soon. I knew about this response that the Holy Father had sent, signed by the Secretary of State Cardinal Bertone and sent to Prince Ghazi who is a member of the Jordanian royal family and very close to King Abdullah and actually the one who has been really the theologian and the ecumenical officer of King Abdullah of Jordan.

I think this is a -- the letter that was sent by the 138 Muslim leaders was a wonderful letter. One of the beautiful parts of it, it cited the gospel, it cited the Hebrew scriptures. It was obviously done with great care and great thoughtfulness. And I think the Holy Father's response through the Cardinal Secretary of State mirrored that. I spoke to Prince Ghazi two nights ago, and we spoke about the letter. He just received it. And he was pleased with it as I think all our Muslim brothers and sisters will be.

With that letter and the Muslim letter, we reach a good plateau, and we have to build on that. Now we have a solid foundation to build on. So I'm very pleased with this exchange of letters. I do believe that it can be built on and not just by Catholics and Muslims, obviously, but built on by other Christian leaders and by Jewish people and by anyone else of good will who wants to make this a better world.

I think these are exciting days, and there are a lot of things that we can do together if we're willing to be courageous as our Muslim brothers and sisters have been in this Fiqh fatwah.

MS. SMITH: This questioner asks, how can we hope that the

world's religions will come together to fight terrorism as long as some hard-line followers of Islam demand that a school teacher be given 40 lashes for allowing her 7-year-old students to name a teddy bear Mohammed?

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: Well, I think in all religions, there are people who don't get the message. (Laughter.) And maybe I'll just leave it at that. (Applause.)

MS SMITH: This questioner says the fatwah is an extraordinary achievement. What will be done to put this sort of peaceful and hopeful thinking into Arab textbooks so that children will learn hope and not hate?

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: I think you've given me a wonderful opportunity to let somebody else answer these questions. (Laughter.) Maybe Dr. Siddiqi might want to take that one.

DR. SIDDIQI: Thank you very much. I think it's very important tradition, idea that we have this fatwah and number of other sources like the letter with 138 people, like the response of His Holiness, like the statement come from many Christian scholars at Yale and published at The New York Times. These kind of resources are there now. These are the resources of inclusiveness. These are the resources of working relations between the people. We should put all of them together in the textbooks as source material. Because unfortunately, in many of our traditions, there are a lot of sources of how to separate people, how to exclude people. We have to build a whole library of textbooks of inclusiveness, working together, especially in a society like that in the world which is pluralistic world, the world where people of various faith, various cultures are living together side by side, working together. This is what we have to do, and I think this is a good opportunity. I thank very much for other people who have done the work, our work here. The fatwah is endorsed by 500 Muslim leaders in the United States and major Islamic organizations in the United States that have endorsed it. So there is a momentum for this, and this momentum has to be taken and wanted of. It should not be ignored but should be rather appreciated and recognized so that we can encourage people to do the work.

MS. SMITH: Thank you.

Cardinal, the question to you is, are you satisfied with President Bush's approach to terrorism? Has the war in Iraq made your work more difficult?

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: This is the kind of question that you ask either yes or now. (Laughter.) And because there were two parts of it, no one knows which one you answer at the same time. (Laughter.)

MS. SMITH: I have the follow-up opportunity. (Laughs.)

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: I guess I would like to say, you know, we all try to do our best. And sometimes we're not sure that the best that someone else does is the best that we would want to do. But I think that right now, with regard to terrorism, something like this will help, that this fatwah will help and I think if we can make sure

that the leaders of our governments recognize that. And that we have in other countries councils like the Fiqh Council in America doing the same thing, that would be extraordinarily helpful to us. If Muslim leaders of the moderate Muslims -- and most of them are -- all over the world could do the same thing as we've done in the United States, that would be extraordinarily helpful. So I think if we do that, then we've moving on the right thing.

As regard the war in Iraq, I think I'd be a braver man than I am to get in the middle of that one except to say that, as you know, the Catholic Bishops of the United States and the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II at the time, were not happy about us going into Iraq. And we all made that very clear. We're now in a situation where we're in, and now we have to make sure that we get out in the proper way. I don't know what that is, and I'm not sure anybody does. (Laughter.) I leave it at that.

MS. SMITH: Do you see the fight against terrorism as the long war or even the endless war as some portray it? Or will this chapter in history come to a foreseeable close?

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: I should have given that one to the dean or the rabbi. (Laughter.) They might want to talk to it, too, but let me just say I think that in our business which is hopefully the business of worshipping the Lord and teaching people how to worship the Lord and getting everybody together in love of each other and love of God and trying to do his will, in that business you have to be people of hope. And I think that's the great virtue for our time to have confidence in God and confidence in each other. And I think if we recount the things that have happened, the good things, this is one of them, one of the very special ones. And if we find this being multiplied by moderate Muslim leaders all over the world and accepted by moderate Christian and Jewish leaders all over the world, then I think we'll have a basis for that hope, which is very special.

Like we always say, we pray for the peace of Jerusalem. We say that constantly in the scriptures. We pray for peace all over the world, but we do it with a certain amount of hope. Because if you don't have hope, you don't have confidence in God, then, you know, you might as well get another job if you're in my business -- (laughter) -- because really that's what it's all about, you know. And I do have hope, and I do have confidence, and I do pray that the Lord will listen to these strong voices of our Muslim brothers and sisters and listen to the strong voices of our Christian and Jewish brothers and sisters and having listened, will bring an end to what is certainly going to be a very sad period in the history of our world.

MS. SMITH: This questioner asks, can you tell us about your recent interactions with Palestinian Christians? Can they help solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: I'm going to say yes and maybe stop. (Laughter.) Any time anyone really approaches the quest for peace with love, with patience and with a deep respect for human dignity, they can be helpful. Of course, you have to realize that the Christians in the Holy Land now are something like 3 percent of the population, down from a much larger percentage before, so that you

can't ask them to do everything. But we certainly do ask them to be instruments on the way to peace. And I mentioned that Council for Religious Institutions in the Holy Land. Well, the Christians there, the patriarchs and the bishops certainly appreciate that they have to

be on the side of peace, and they are, and I think they can make a difference. And I know they will.

MS. SMITH: Thank you. This questioner asks, what are your thoughts as to the U.S. treatment of terrorism suspects and how that might play into the growth of terrorism against the U.S.?

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: Well, I think all of us who are religious people are opposed to torture. And all of us who are religious people have to, once again, always constantly understand the dignity of the human person. Anything that violates that -- anything that violates that -- becomes grist for the mill of those who want to violate human nature, violate the human dignity.

So I think we all have to have as our goal and our standard love of neighbor and forgiveness and tolerance and the willingness to work together for a better world. If we don't have that and it shows in terrorism and it shows in torture and it shows in ways where we disdain other people or have contempt for people, when we do that, we just build up the wall that separates us. And we need -- John Paul II used to say we don't need more walls, we need more bridges. That's what we have to build.

MS. SMITH: This questioner is asking about the meetings in Annapolis. The sharing of Jerusalem as a divided capital for Muslims and Jews is one of the most controversial matters on the so-called road map. How might the ecumenical community play a specific role in getting to an Israeli-Palestinian peace and sense of equity in both lands?

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: I am going to see if Rabbi Luxemburg and the dean would want to respond to some of these questions. But this, obviously, is going to be one of the key questions, one of the key difficulties. But I don't think it's insoluble. I think that there are many ways, and I'm not going to go into them now, because there are so many ways in which Jerusalem can be made a place where everyone will feel at home and where men and women of both Islam and of the Hebrew faith and the Christians will be able to accept a way in which this can be another building block for peace rather than an obstacle for agreement. I don't know if the dean would want to say anything or the rabbi.

(Off mike commentary.)

Thanks a lot. (Laughter.) You see how tough these questions are. Okay, let me go on to the next one.

MS. SMITH: Okay. I actually have quite a few questions about the pope, so we're going to shift gears a little bit. What do you hope the pope's upcoming visit to the U.S. will accomplish?

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: I think most of all you'll see what a

wonderful man he is. And I'm not saying that because I'm paid to do it. (Laughter.) As someone who had the privilege of being part of the electorate that gave us Pope Benedict, I want to tell you this is an extraordinary man. He is a very humble man. That more than

anything is what you see. He's a brilliant man. He's one of the greatest scholars we've ever had, probably even a great scholar than John Paul the Great. But a very humble man, and I think that has been one of the very beautiful things we've seen. He has a wonderful way of approaching things. The new Encyclical which I have not read yet, because it just came out today, on hope is, I think, something that you would expect from him.

There's a -- I'm probably going over my time, but let me talk about the first Encyclical that he issued was on love, on charity, "deus caritas est," a line from the Epistle of St. John, "God is love." And I think he surprised people, because I think people were expecting him to come down hard on everything. But he has come down, he's come up and tried to bring us with him. And that's been very great and very wonderful.

There's a line in there where he talks about sometimes you work very hard, talking about the many Catholic activities to help the poor and to help the stranger and things like that, help the sick. And in that, he says sometimes you do this for a long time, and nobody even says thank you. And he said don't worry about it. You don't have to talk that much, just keep doing the things that you should do and let love do the talking. That's a great line, and I think it's a way of describing this present Holy Father.

I think to answer the question more perfectly, I think people will get to see Pope Benedict. And in the United States they will see what a loving, gracious, humble and brilliant man this is and put a lot of confidence in to lead us to a better world.

MS. SMITH: Another questioner asks, has Pope Benedict surprised you in any way through his actions since becoming pope?

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: I can only answer that as an individual I had gotten to know him somewhat, not as well as his predecessor, but I had gotten to appreciate this really extraordinary man. So he has not surprised me. I've watched him during the conclave. I watched him during his first talks. And I saw the man that I had hoped we would see to lead the church. He was the right-hand man of the Beloved Pope John Paul II. And so he's carrying on basically the same kind of teaching, the same kind of principles. Those who thought he would be an authoritarian pope have been hopefully and happily disappointed. Those who saw him as a man of great charity, a man of great warmth have found their hopes and their expectations realized. This is really an extraordinary man when you see him. I hope you'll all meet him when he comes. You will find that he is a great man that the Lord has chosen through the instrumentality of the College of Cardinals to lead the church into a way of goodness and holiness and service to the rest of humanity.

MS. SMITH: Shifting gears a bit, how is the church doing with the new protections in place to prevent a reoccurrence of the sex

abuse scandals that occurred in the past?

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: Well, as you may know, in Washington, we probably have the finest child protection policy in the United States. We went to the National League for Children and got their director, who's not Catholic, to be the head of our organization, got a number of other non-Catholics there, people who are professional who knew about the protection of children. And we have adopted a policy which is one of the strongest in the country and yet one of the most sensible. And because of that, the Catholic Diocese all over the country have asked to see our policy, and it has been, in a certain sense, the norm. And I think that's through the whole United States.

Let me brag. I don't know if there's any other national institution in the United States that has as clear now, after the suffering, that has as clear a policy of protecting the children as the Roman Catholic Church.

MS. SMITH: This questioner asks, I understand you were in Rome last weekend, presumably for the consistory which you said you were, where two U.S. archbishops were elevated to the rank of cardinal. Now with Cardinal John Foley originally from Philadelphia and Cardinal Daniel DiNardo from Galveston-Houston among the ranks of the cardinal electors for the next pope, what do you think this will mean to U.S. Catholics?

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: I hope it will make them happy. (Laughter.)

MS. SMITH: And somebody else asks, when do you think we'll see an American pope?

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: Not in my lifetime. (Laughter.)

MS. SMITH: Well then, shifting to politics. You were ordained two years before John Kennedy was elected president. Congratulations on your upcoming gold anniversary, by the way.

The question is, almost 50 years after the U.S. asked itself whether the country was ready for a Catholic president, is the country ready for a Mormon president?

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: I think the country is always ready for a good man or a good woman who will serve God's people and bring the values that we cherish continually to the fore in the service of our people. That's what the country's waiting for. And I think among those who are presenting themselves for leadership, there certainly are enough people who will be men and women of value, men and women of thoughtfulness and men and women of courage. So I'm very -- as I say, I'm always filled with hope. I got a lot of hope about the future of our country.

MS. SMITH: A Catholic, an ordained Baptist minister, an evangelical Presbyterian, a Methodist, a Mormon and a Catholic married to a Mormon walk into a bar. (Laughter.) But this isn't really a

joke. It seems that the candidate's religion is getting more attention this year leading up to the primaries than in the past

elections. Is that a good thing?

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: That's hard to answer. I would say it is a good thing that we look at the value system of those who are going to lead us. It's a good thing that we look at what they believe, not necessarily what they believe as far as their religious tenets go but what they believe as far as the deepest religion principles go, the principles of loving your neighbor, loving God and loving your neighbor, the principles of reaching out to people who are hurting, the principles of trying to work for peace in the world. If we get that, then I think it's a good thing.

MS. SMITH: I'm asked to ask you, what is the status of the case for canonization of Cardinal Cooke?

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: You really have to be the answer man on these things. I'm sort of happy about it. Of course, it's a long process. Rome doesn't want to make a mistake. We sent in about, almost a year ago, the whole study that we made about his life, about his teaching. And that is in Rome currently being looked at. And if everything works out all right, he will be given the title Venerable, which is the next step to beatification. Beatification takes a miracle. And I'm happy to say we believe there's a miracle in New Jersey, the Diocese of Metuchen which is my first diocese. I'm really delighted with that. I don't know the details of it, but the doctors there have said that there is a cure that is not able to be explained in any other way except by a miracle. Now, they sent that to Rome. Rome is very, very strict on miracles. And whether they will accept that or not I don't know. But if they do, then the cause will be able to go forward quickly. So we're praying that they will find it acceptable. If not, we'll just find another miracle. (Laughter.)

MS. SMITH: I have a couple of variations of this question. Women are a civilizing force. How can we include more women in prominent positions within the churches, synagogues and mosques?

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: This is a wonderful opportunity to have my companions respond to that one. (Laughter.) I think that -- well, let me just talk about the Archdiocese of Washington for which I used to be able to speak. By the way, we have a great archbishop. I am so pleased. He's so much smarter than I and so much nicer than I. You really have to get -- he's really a wonderful man. But with deference to him who may answer this in a different way, in Washington in my time, the chancellor which is really the executive secretary of the whole thing was a woman. The head of the schools was a woman. The chief financial officer was a woman, and on and on and on. So that there are many women in the local churches throughout the United States who have very important decisive authorities. And so I thought you should know that. I think there could always be more. The lady who President Bush has named as a new ambassador to the Holy City, Dr. Glendon, is one of the most prominent lawyers in the United States that teaches at the Harvard School of Law. And she has been the

president of one of the papal commissions. And that's -- lay people usually don't get to serve that way, and she did. And now, of course, she'll have to leave that to become the ambassador.

But I think that -- I talk for the Catholic community, and I'm sure there are bishops in the Episcopalian community, there are many women in high posts in different Jewish congregations. I think in some of the Muslim countries, we have women prime ministers, so they have really reached a very important stage in political life. I would be loathed to try to give more details except to say as far as I have seen -- I was the ordinary for 25 years of different diocese. The ordinary is the one who has the responsibility. We've always found extraordinarily wonderful women who were able to take leadership and use it well.

And I would hope -- I think the premise on which this question was asked is a good one, that women tend to civilize more than men do. And I think that this world needs a lot of civilization still.

MS. SMITH: We're almost out of time. But before asking the last questions, we have a couple of important matters to take care of.

First, let me remind our members of future luncheon speakers. On December 10th, we have Jonathan Fanton who's president of the MacArthur Foundation. He will discuss the case for international justice system. December 17th, we have the Comptroller General David Walker and on December 18th, Morgan Freeman the actor, who is also the founder of the Grenada Relief Fund.

Second, I'd like to present our guest with our gifts, the NPC certificate and the famous, coveted National Press Club mug. (Laughter.) And since this is perhaps your third time at our podium, you need to come one more time so you can have a full set. (Laughter.)

And then let me ask you the last question. I ask this only because you've already demonstrated your great sense of humor at our podium. Do you think God has a sense of humor? And what joke would you like to tell him? (Laughter.)

CARDINAL MCCARRICK: Since God can do everything, we believe, and has no limitations, we believe, he certainly would have a great sense of humor, we believe. Because I think that one of the wonderful things about God -- I think we all are here together, all of us who are believers -- is that there are no limits to him. And St. Thomas Aquinas, the great philosopher of the church, has a question in his -- (inaudible) -- I think of his teaching on the summary of theology. And it is, is God simple? And by simple, he means there's no paunch to God. God is just simple, so that everything is included in God. And he says yes, because if you divide something, you make it less than perfect, so that there is a perfection in God. And that perfection is in his simplicity and his being one in a very perfect way, a way that we can't even understand. And so because of that, I think there would be a great feeling of all of us that anything we would want to find in God that is good is there. And as you say, what do you think God will look like? He will look in such a way that we will say isn't that wonderful? I think that's what all of us who are believers will say that we look at God that way.

I'm trying to think. I probably at that moment when I meet him,



if he smiles at me, I'm not going to tell him any jokes. (Laughter.) I'm just going to say let's not talk about anything else, just let me in. (Laughter.) And if he does that, even if it's for an eternity of purgatory, I'll say thanks be to God, I was lucky.

God bless you all.

(Applause.)

MS. SMITH: Thank you very much, Cardinal McCarrick. You were wonderful guests.

I'd like to thank you all for coming today.

I'd also like to thank National Press Club staff members Melinda Cooke, Pat Nelson, Jo Anne Booz, and Howard Rothman for organizing today's lunch. Also thanks to the NPC library for its research. The video archive of today's luncheon is provided by the National Press Club Broadcast Operations Center. Press Club members can also access free transcripts of our luncheons at our website [www.press.org](http://www.press.org). Nonmembers may purchase transcripts, audio and videotapes by calling 1-888-343-1940. And for more information for joining the Press Club, call us at 202-662-7511.

Thank you. We are adjourned.

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