

There's an envelope here.
Let's take a look: And the winner is...
It says, "Stop the steal,"
Who counts the votes? Stop the steal: It demands a recount.

I can't argue with that.
Frank O'Loughlin is not a prophet.
On my best days, I'm a plagiarist.
By the Grace of God, I hope to sometimes
be a plagiarist of the Word of God.

I know what a prophet is supposed to be.
I read and loved Abraham Heschel;
Plagiarized him constantly for homilies.
If you were in a parish with me,
you have a copy of Walter Brueggeman's Prophetic Imagination.

Stop the steal.
What I am is an Irish Catholic.
Irish Catholic, the very definition of ordinary.
No WASP here. Not white, Not Anglo, No Protestant individualism.
You remember how James Joyce defined Catholic,
"Here comes everybody."
Whether upper or lower case C,
Catholic, everybody, pluralist.
In Florida we learn to say, "Y'all."

Cut me some slack, I'm in trouble if you think I'm being sectarian or nationalist.
I'm no prophet, merely product of a culture, Catholic and Irish.
Proud, for example, to say, "I'm Irish, not white."
When we were little schoolboys, our teachers had the wisdom
to ridicule the notion of whiteness: "White, what can that mean?
Take a gander at that pink mug of yours in the mirror;
where is that famous white?"

It isn't that I don't believe in prophecy
I wholly believe in prophetic community,
to our attending to each other's voices in community.

On Saturday the Wall Street Journal celebrated a catechism teacher,
Stephen Colbert, as the adult Mister Rogers.
One of our own. Listen to him.

I am of an era of peace activists. I belonged to the movements.
None has had more depth and staying power than Pax Christi of the Cathedral parish.
Community and culture. Never mere individual idealists.
We were the parish, reading the Gospel together,
receiving Communion, animated by a spirited quest for God,
even reckless in pursuit of a world renewed.
The Bible Girls praying for more, not less, demanding mission
Barbara and Beth, liberationists in the Megan mode
Phyllis and Sandy, instigators of the kingdom of peace and hope
the poet Nancy, our ambassador to Haiti and to Heaven.

Have you forgiven the Irish bit?
I'm not promoting nationalism, but community and culture.

May I plagiarize once more?
This will be a reading from the gospel according to Bruce Springsteen.
Describing the vocation he shares with the kids from the Dublin community,
the rockers Bono and U2, he says
"You want the sky to split open and God to pour out."
Does that sound like the yearning of your Pax Christi culture?
About U2, Springsteen says,
"Their search for God intact, laying claim
not only to this world, but the next.
There is a deeply held faith in the work you're doing
And its power to change the world.
Before James Brown, there was Jesus.
We are not ironists,
we are creations of the heart and of the earth
and of the Stations of the Cross.
Here we are Lord, this mess in your image.
Bono brought his personal faith into the real world.
You find the spirituality as home, as quest.
How do you find God, unless He's in Your heart?"

Within the heart and culture of your Peace community.

As the Peace Activists invited me to their three-day retreat and credited me with the formation
we have given each other through many years, I realized that day one was on the anniversary of
the My Lai massacre.
The second was the birthday of Wilfred Owen.
The third was the anniversary of George Bush's unleashing of fire and brimstone
on Baghdad.
And each day Putin was getting away with ravishing the Ukraine.
What to say at such a date?

Mary Carter Warren brought substantial studies to nourish hope and purpose.
John Frank cultivator of our beginnings and Johnny Zokovitch seeding our next generation.
Father Fred, resilient graced priesthood.
Sandy's light touch direction infused a spirit of glad joy in being together
among lifelong witnesses to grace and mercy.
And I talked about war.

A great horror of modern warfare is the calculated destruction of
spirits, of culture, identity, heart and soul.
American psychologists developed techniques in the war against
Vietnamese nationalism which were reproduced in the war against the Maya.
A European human rights study described the strategy in Guatemala as
"Creating a Devastation and calling it a Peace."
Americans remember it as "We had to destroy the village to save it."
Not only were villages ravaged and massacred, but such survivors as emerged
were gathered at other sites, 'Development Poles,'
where all marks of identity were erased and a new National Security identity
was offered on streets named for warriors.
The Maya have twenty seven languages and many dialects.
These were suppressed in the new villages.
Religious expression was replaced with Southern US preaching,
now called Evangelicals.
But the most striking affront to the Mayan civilization
was the prohibition of the people's traditional clothing.
The Maya had not only had a multiplicity of ancient cultural features
evidenced in their myriad languages
but every community had its own very clearly individual dress.
To grasp the sacred civilization
one has to imagine how the thread was first invented,
a craft taught from grandmother to granddaughter, perhaps 500 years ago.
The dyes that could be produced from local leaves and berries were created and the weaves
and patterns that became representative of the community and culture emerged.
Sticks and stones and guns and bombs, we have learned,
do not win wars against such civilizations.
The spirit that sustains the victims' humanity must be undermined.
At their Lake Worth Center, when Mayan women have seen the huipils,
they have been carried away, recalling the grandmothers whom
they saw weave and wear huipils in those very patterns.
See the crafts, and weep with me for the sins of war.

Lord bless the prophetic culture of your Pax Christi community.