

Ted than all of these awards were the millions of souls he nourished, said Mass with, prayed for, and guided to a wonderful life.

When we look at Father Ted's amazing accomplishments at Notre Dame, we can't help but see what a stronger academic institution and better and more inclusive place it has become and that he left behind. Father Ted broke down the barriers and admitted women to Notre Dame back in the early 1970s, which changed the place forever and made Notre Dame a home for everyone. My wife and daughter, both of whom graduated from the university, were direct beneficiaries of his wisdom and his vision.

Father Hesburgh stood up to Presidents whenever necessary, stood together with Martin Luther King for civil rights, and ministered to those in poverty and need every chance he could.

Father Ted never gave a second thought about preaching truth to power; it helped to define who he was. We marked 50 years last July since he linked arms with Martin Luther King, Jr., in Soldier Field, Chicago, and sang "We Shall Overcome" when others turned down the invitation to be there. Father Ted believed in doing what was right, not what was easy. Next week I will travel to Selma for the 50th anniversary of the start of the marches there, and I will take Father Ted's example with me on that journey.

He expected doing what is right and not what is easy or popular from his students as well. He had a big heart, and he wanted his students to do their best, but a lack of effort was never an acceptable way of doing business with Father Ted. As a student, I remember seeing his light on in his little dorm room with his iron cot at midnight or 2 a.m. Every student there knew that meant Father Ted was open for business. Students would stop by and seek a comforting word if a parent had just passed away or when worried about "How am I ever going to be able to pay the next tuition bill?" or when they looked at their grade point average and said "How am I ever going to be here for other reasons next semester?" or if they had personal heartbreaks. Father Ted was there for all of us to talk with. He wanted every student to know they were loved and cared about and special, just like the cooks and gardeners and professors and the people of Notre Dame he went up to, shook hands with, smiled at, and gave encouragement to every day.

God bless you, Father Ted. I would never be here in the Senate without your kindness and your example. And there are Domers—as Notre Dame students are known—all over the world who know you helped give them the chance to open doors, to be given opportunities, and to have a better life that never would have happened without you.

There is a saying on the door of the Sacred Heart Basilica at the Univer-

sity. It says, "God, Country, Notre Dame." Father Hesburgh lived that every day.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold his request?

Mr. DONNELLY. I will.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

VENEZUELA

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, I want to speak about the ongoing crisis in Venezuela—something that doesn't capture a lot of attention in the headlines because we have situations going on in the Middle East, as we have seen the horrifying reality of what ISIS is doing, just this week kidnapping more Christians.

As we look at that situation in the Middle East, we should remind ourselves that there is a sectarian component to this that extends beyond ISIS's desire to convert the entire region to their version of radical Sunni Islam, but it also includes driving out all the Christians from the Middle East, and that is why they are specifically being targeted for brutalization. We have seen it again this week, and our heart breaks; and it should move us to move even faster in our efforts to destroy them. We can do this.

I also know the world's attention is being paid to Ukraine where a delicate ceasefire is being violated by Russians, both Russian regular troops, by the way, who make incursions into Ukraine to fight side by side with rebel forces against the central government of Kiev, but also the weaponry that they continue to harm them with and the heavy shelling that at times comes across the border from Russia into Ukraine.

These are significant issues we are being confronted with, and I understand why our attention is being paid to these things. But there is something happening in our own hemisphere that is not getting our attention, and I hope to use a few moments on the floor of the Senate to call attention to it, and that is the horrifying human rights catastrophe of Venezuela.

Venezuela is a rich country—rich in oil and rich in people. Its people are well-educated, hard-working, talented. It is the cradle of democracy in Latin America and in the Western Hemisphere; but over the last 3 years especially it has spiraled downward and out of control.

A once rich and prosperous nation has shortages of everyday goods from toilet paper to soap, with people having to wait in long lines. There is no U.S. embargo in Venezuela. There are no economic sanctions on Venezuela that they can blame on us or anyone else. It is due simply and entirely to the mismanagement and incompetence of Nicolas Maduro, the clown who runs that country, and the thugs who surround him in his gangster-style government.

Venezuela ostensibly portrays itself as a democracy but in reality it is not. The court system is completely controlled by the government of Maduro. The elections are constantly manipulated by Maduro. There is no freedom of the press. For example, the government gets unlimited hours to talk on television about whatever they want, and the opposition gets virtually none. Newspapers that oppose the government find that they cannot import newsprint—the actual paper—so they can't print. Other media outlets have been either bought or the owners have been forced out of the country and been bought and turned over to owners more friendly to the government. The point is Venezuela is not a democracy, or is a democracy in name only.

Beyond that, it is a government that is losing control and for the first time a few weeks ago or months ago authorized the National Guard to use deadly force on protesters. So it should not surprise us that earlier this week a young man—a high school student—was shot and killed in one of those protests, and we should expect to see more of this in the days and weeks to come, unfortunately. I hope I am wrong and pray that I am wrong, but I believe that is where they are headed, because there is no way out of this mess for the government.

In fact, their situation is so dire that one of the things that has allowed them to keep the elite on the side of Maduro is the gas subsidy. Gasoline is very cheap in Venezuela because it is subsidized by the government. I predict over the next few weeks or months the Venezuelan Government is going to have to go to the people and say we have to take away the subsidy. And when that happens, Maduro may lose the support that is even around him. That is why he is being so careful about announcing it, but they are going to have to do it. There are no ifs, ands, or buts about it. And when they do, it could quickly spiral out of control as well.

There are reports of coup attempts internally, with some of the military starting to bristle at the heavy-handedness of this government there, and that is something worth watching. The point is Venezuela is spiraling out of control. We need to pay attention to this because it is happening in our own hemisphere. It is happening in our own backyard. It has the ability and the potential not just to dramatically impact the people of Venezuela, but the countries of the region and even our own. I don't think enough attention is being paid to this, while every single day the brutality continues.

I called attention to this for the first time last year in February when the first wave of protests happened. We worked diligently to try to achieve sanctions on the individuals responsible for these human rights violations. Thanks to my colleagues here who were able to pass a bill that authorized the administration to impose sanctions

on individuals in Venezuela responsible for human rights violations. To date the administration has imposed visa bans on some of these individuals, but they have not taken the next step of economic sanctions on the people responsible for these human rights violations.

A few weeks ago I wrote the President a letter asking him, please begin to use this tool against those who are violating the human rights of the people of Venezuela. He has yet to do so. So I once again renew that call: Please impose these sanctions on the human rights violators in Venezuela.

I hope I can use these moments to describe to people what I am hearing from people inside Venezuela and the expat community in Florida. They feel as though no one is paying attention. They feel as though they have been abandoned. They feel as though they are alone. Every single day the news leads off with all these things happening around the world—and they are worried about these things, too—but they feel as though no one is speaking out for them. They feel abandoned by all the other nations in the region.

Where are all the governments of the Western Hemisphere? Where are all the other countries that are neighbors to Venezuela? Where is the Organization of American States? What is the point of even having that organization if it can't serve as an institution and a forum for condemning this sort of activity? Where are all the democracies of Latin America and the Western Hemisphere? Why are they not speaking out and condemning what is happening here?

It is interesting, we sent a couple of Guantanamo detainees to Uruguay and the Uruguayan Government says they are asylum seekers, that they are refugees—basically implying they are refugees to American oppression. They have no qualms whatsoever about speaking out against the United States for putting in jail enemy combatants and terrorists responsible for the murder of Americans, responsible for acts of terrorism, responsible for supporting the Taliban. They have no problem condemning us, claiming that the people we released to them—which we should never have done—are refugees and asylum seekers, but they are silent and say nothing when it comes to what is happening in Venezuela. The hypocrisy of it is unbelievable.

I challenge the heads of state of the countries of Latin America to speak out. The only problem is they are going to turn back around and say, Where is your head of state? Why isn't your President speaking out about it? The answer is, I don't know. I am grateful that he signed that bill. It is time to put it in effect. It is time to begin to use the tools in those sanctions to go after these individuals, but I wish the White House and the President would more forcefully and more consistently speak out against these human rights violations that are occurring.

When you think about it, why are the people of Venezuela feeling abandoned? They look to us. They see America as the beacon of hope. We are supposed to be the premier defender of human rights and freedom and democracy on the planet; and instead, from the White House and the President, there is silence. There is silence.

We cannot lose that aspect of our foreign policy. I understand that reality has a significant role to play in foreign policy, the balancing of different considerations; but morality and human rights must always be a key cornerstone of where we stand on issues of global affairs. If we lose that, if we lose the moral authority of this Nation, we lose our standing as a beacon of hope and freedom to people all over the world.

I know sometimes we read newspaper articles and these leaders criticize us. But I hope it is understood that although people may talk badly about America, even in places where there might be some resentment about America, at its core people admire America. They admire us because they know someone from there who came here and was able to achieve things they never could have done in their own homeland. They admire us because every time there is an earthquake, Americans are the first ones there. Every time there is a flood, Americans are the first ones to respond. Every time there is hunger or suffering, it is American charities and the American Government first on the scene. They remember that and they admire it and they admire us for it.

They admire our freedoms. They admire our democracy. They admire the fact that I am able to stand here on the floor today and criticize the President of the United States and there isn't some police officer outside that door ready to handcuff me and take me to jail.

Meanwhile, in Venezuela, just this week a member of their legislative branch was ousted. Do you know why they kicked him out? So he could lose his legislative immunity and they could arrest him. Two weeks ago armed agents stormed the office of a mayor, fired shots in the air to disperse crowds and arrested by force a member of the opposition party—a mayor. This is happening in our own hemisphere and this is happening in the 21st century. It was just two decades ago that the Western Hemisphere was full of dictators, right-wing and leftwing, strong men who controlled and oppressed their people. We paid a terrible price for that in this hemisphere and in this country. Then there was this opening of democratic progress in the region. Now it is starting to erode and we are standing by and saying nothing about it, as if it doesn't even exist.

You see it eroding in Nicaragua where the Sandinistas are back in charge. They won an election and then they used that power to erode democracy. You see it in Bolivia, you see it

in Ecuador. You even see hints of it in Argentina. And you really see it in Venezuela.

By the way, let me point out one more thing. Today, even as I speak to you, Cuban agents are here negotiating. I say Cuban agents. They dress as diplomats and act as diplomats, but in fact they are spies. In fact, the chief negotiator for the Cubans in these talks they are having with the State Department, Josefina Vidal, was asked to leave this country with her husband because her husband was an intelligence officer and she is known to be one as well. But these Cuban spies are here to negotiate with the State Department. They send spies. We send diplomats.

Let's not forget who has taught the Venezuelan Government these tactics of oppression, these violent tactics, these ways to crack down on society. Let's not forget who has coached them. Let's not forget there are thousands of Cuban agents working in the Government of Venezuela right now. Let's not forget there are thousands of Cuban agents infiltrated in the Armed Forces—not infiltrated, they are openly in the Armed Forces of Venezuela right now.

Let's not forget that in Venezuela, Maduro, and before him Chavez, ousted the sovereignty of Venezuela to the Castros. Let's not forget who the source of all of this in Venezuela truly was—who coached them, who taught them, who supported them, who provided personnel for them to carry this out. It is Cuba, a nation that is a global sponsor of terrorism, because they harbor fugitives from American justice, because they helped North Korea evade U.N. sanctions openly and nothing happened. Now the State Department is thinking about removing them from the list of sponsors of terrorism—one concession after another.

But, anyway, on the issue of Venezuela, I hope we will pay more attention to it, because there are people right now suffering—not just economically but politically and physically at the hands of a brutal regime. They are looking to America and its leaders to speak clearly that we are on their side, that we will speak out for them, that we will stand for them, and we will use the power of this government to go after and punish those who are committing these crimes against them.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the Senate is waiting for House action on