

Dignity and Respect at the Air Force Academy

In case you've not heard, the superintendent of the U.S. Air Force Academy gave a very powerful speech to the Academy last week. First the background. Five black cadet candidates at the academy's preparatory school had found racial slurs written on the message boards on their doors. Lt. Gen Jay Silveria, the superintendent called a meeting of all students, faculty, administrators and coaches and gave a powerful speech about dignity and respect. First he told the people gathered to take out their cell phones and record what he said "I want you to videotape this so you have it, so you can use it — so that we all have the moral courage together. That kind of behavior has no place at the prep school, it has no place at USAFA, and it has no place in the United States Air Force. You should be outraged not only as an airman, but as a human being." Toward the end of his speech, Silveria said: "Just in case you're unclear on where I stand on this topic, I'm going to leave you my most important thought today: If you can't treat someone with dignity and respect, then you need to get out. If you can't treat someone from another gender, whether that's a man or a woman, with dignity and respect, then you need to get out. If you demean someone in any way, then you need to get out. And if you can't treat someone from another race, or different color skin, with dignity and respect, then you need to get out."

There are many videos of his speech on-line. Do a web search for Lt. Gen. Silveria's speech and listen to it. I am proud to have served in the Air Force. This is leadership by example.

Because of the recent fervor about NFL players' protest of racial inequality, I did some research on the U.S. Flag Code as defined in United States Code Title 4 Chapter 1. Here is a portion of that code: "The flag should never be used for advertising purposes in any manner whatsoever. It should not be embroidered on such articles as cushions or handkerchiefs and the like, printed or otherwise impressed on paper napkins or boxes or anything that is designed for temporary use and discard. Advertising signs should not be fastened to a staff or halyard from which the flag is flown. No part of the flag should ever be used as a costume or athletic uniform. However, a flag patch may be affixed to the uniform of military personnel, firemen, policemen, and members of patriotic organizations. The flag represents a living country and is itself considered a living thing. Therefore, the lapel flag pin being a replica, should be worn on the left lapel near the heart." It appears that almost every day, I see examples of misuse of the flag.

We were at the opening of Illuminating the Word: The Saint John's Bible at the Hjemkomst Center. It is wonderful and well worth the trip.