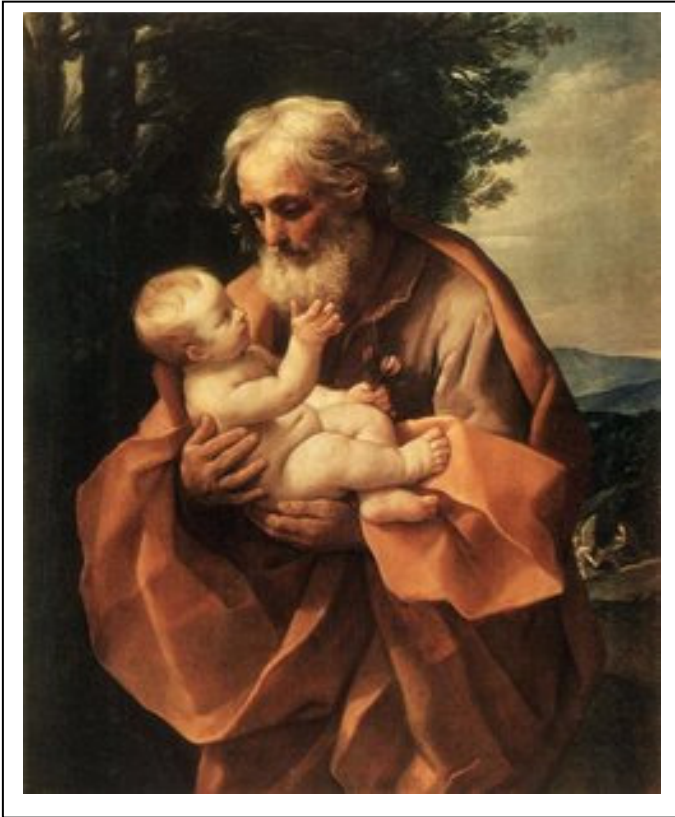


Los Pequeños Pepper

Publication of Los Pequeños de Cristo

January 2008

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*Cover: Guido Reni: Joseph with
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Newsletter of Los Pequeños de Cristo

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Volume 10, Number 1

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We are an Archdiocesan-wide Catholic lay organization committed to a charitable defense of the Catholic Faith by means of education, communication, and prayer. We are devoted to the Roman Catholic Magisterium, the Holy Father, and to the bishops and clergy in union with him. Our members believe what the Church believes and we promote what the Church teaches. To this end, we believe that no individual, whether cleric or lay person, has the right to alter the substance of the gospel message or moral truths which have been inerrantly and infallibly held by the Catholic Church since Her founding.

The Men He Intended

Claiming our Vocation as Priests of Jesus Christ

By Most Rev. Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of Denver

Excerpts from a speech delivered in Melbourne, Australia, July of 2007 concerning the damage of abortion to society

...I want to briefly sketch for you the picture of an anonymous culture. But everything I'm about to tell you comes from the factual record.

This society is advanced in the sciences and the arts. It has a complex economy and a strong military. It includes many different religions, although religion tends to be a private affair or a matter of civic ceremony.

This particular society also has big problems. Among them is that fertility rates remain below replacement levels. There aren't enough children being born to replace the current adult population and to do the work needed to keep society going. The government offers incentives to encourage people to have more babies. But nothing seems to work.

Promiscuity is common and accepted. So are bisexuality, and homosexuality. So is prostitution. Birth control and abortion are legal, widely practiced, and justified by society's leading intellectuals.

Every now and then, a lawmaker introduces a measure to promote marriage, arguing that the health and future of society depend on stable families. These measures typically go nowhere.

Ok. What society am I talking about? My own country, of course, would broadly fit this description. Yours would, too. But I'm not talking about us.

I've just outlined the conditions of the Mediterranean world at the time of Christ. We tend to idealize the ancients, to look back at Greece and Rome as an age of extraordinary achievements. And of course, it was. But it had another side as well.

We don't usually think of Plato and Aristotle endorsing abortion or infanticide as state policy. But they did. Hippocrates, the great medical pioneer, also famously created an abortion kit that involved sharp blades for cutting up the fetus and a hook for ripping it from the womb. We rarely connect that with his Hippocratic Oath. But some years ago, archeologists discovered the remains of what appeared to be a Roman-era abortion or infanticide "clinic." It was a sewer filled with the bones of more than 100 infants.

If you want some useful winter reading, pick up a little book written about 10 years ago, *The Rise of Christianity* by Rodney Stark. You'll find all of this history and more.

Why begin a talk about priestly vocation and mission with an excursus on ancient Rome? Because people often say we're living at a "post-Christian" moment. That's supposed to describe the fact that Western nations have abandoned or greatly downplayed their Christian heritage in recent decades. You have evidence of that in your country. I see it in mine, as well.

But our "post-Christian" moment actually looks a great deal like the pre-Christian moment. The signs of our times in the developed nations—morally, intellectually, spiritually and even demographically—are uncomfortably similar to the signs in the world at the time of the Incarnation.

Drawing lessons from history is a subjective business. There's always the risk of oversimplifying. But I do believe that the challenges we face as priests today are very much like those faced by the first Christian priests. And it might help to have a little perspective on how they went about evangelizing *their* culture. They did such a good job that within 400 years Christianity was the world's dominant religion and the foundation of Western civilization. If we can learn from that history, the more



Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of Denver

**Defending Christians
before Marcus Aurelius
in A.D. 177, Athenagoras
argued:**

***"What reason
would we have
to commit
murder when
we say that
women who
induce
abortions are
murderers, and
will have to
give account of
it to God?
...The fetus in
the womb is a
living being
and therefore
the object of
God's care"***

***(A Plea for the
Christians, 35.6).***

easily God will work through us to spark a new evangelization.

Stark's book addresses a couple of key questions: How did Christianity succeed? How was it able to accomplish so much so fast? He's a social scientist and also a self-described atheist. So he has no interest in God's will or the workings of the Holy Spirit. He focuses only on facts he can verify. Stark concludes that Christian success flowed from two things: Christian doctrine, and people being faithful to that doctrine. Stark writes: "An essential factor in the religion's success was what Christians believed... And it was the way those doctrines took on actual flesh, the way they directed organizational actions and individual behavior, that led to the rise of Christianity."

Let's put it in less academic terms: The Church, through her bishops and priests, preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ. People believed in the Gospel. But they weren't just agreeing to a set of propositions. Believing in the Gospel meant changing their whole way of thinking and living. It was a radical transformation. So radical they couldn't go on living like the people around them anymore.

Stark shows that one of the decisive areas in which Christians rejected the culture around them was marriage and family. From the start, to be a Christian meant believing that sex and marriage were sacred. From the start, to be a Christian meant rejecting abortion, infanticide, birth control, divorce, homosexual activity and marital infidelity – all those things widely practiced by their Roman neighbors.

Athenagoras, a layman, told the Emperor Marcus Aurelius in the year A.D. 176 that abortion was "murder" and that those involved would have to "give an account to God." And he told the emperor the reason why: "For we regard the very fetus in the womb as a created being, and therefore an object of God's care."

Christian reverence for the unborn child is no medieval development. It comes from the very beginnings of our faith. The early Church had no debates over politicians and communion. There wasn't any need. No one who tolerated or promoted abortion would have dared to approach the Eucharistic table, let alone dared to call themselves true Christians.

And here's why: The early Christians understood that they were the offspring of a new worldwide family of God. They saw the culture around them as a culture of death, a society that was slowly extinguishing itself. In fact, when you read early Christian literature, practices like adultery and abortion are often described as part of "the way of death" or the "way of the black one"— that is, the devil.

There's an interesting line in a Second Century apologetic work written by Minucius Felix. He was a Roman lawyer and a convert. He's talking about a birth-control drug that works as an abortifacient. He describes its effects this way: "There are women who swallow drugs to stifle in their own womb the beginnings" of a person to be.

That's what the first Christians saw around them in their world. They believed the world was snuffing out its own future. It was stifling future generations before they could come to be. It was slowly killing itself.

If we see similar signs in our own day, we need to find the courage those first Christians had in challenging their culture. We need to believe not only what they believed. We need to believe those things with the same deep fervor.

The early Christians staked their lives on the belief that God is our Father. They believed the Church is our mother, as Paul told the Galatians. They believed their bishops and priests were spiritual fathers and that through the sacraments they were made children of God, or "partakers of the divine nature," as Peter said.

The first Christians believed these things because their spiritual fathers -- their bishops and priests -- preached and taught them these things. They taught what Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had heard from his Father and passed on to the apostles. They taught what the Catholic Church is still called to teach until the end of the age.

That's your mission, brothers: to preach the Word of life with power. To incarnate that Word through the sacraments. To make that Word come alive and change the hearts of those who hear it. You're called as Christ's priests to be fathers to a new race of women and men. Second Corinthians tells us that, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation." It reminds us that Christ "entrust[ed] to us the message of reconciliation. So we are

ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us” (5:17-21).

It’s time for us to reclaim our identity as spiritual fathers of the children of God. We need to know ourselves as God intends us to be known-as his fathers on earth. We’re called to be icons of his divine fatherhood.

Do you have the confidence to say to your people what St. Paul said: “I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel”? “Do you exhort your people as he did – like a father [exhorts] his children”? The first Christians made heroic sacrifices and gave extraordinary witness because they knew that, before the foundation of the world, God had a plan to make them his children. To make them holy. To make them saints. They knew God created each person for a reason. That he had a plan for each of their lives.

They knew all these things because their fathers told them so. Are you preaching these things to your people? Are you telling them what Paul told the first Christians: “Be imitators of God, as beloved children”? Men and women call you “Father.” But it needs to be much more than an honorary title. It reflects a spiritual reality...

...There’s nothing “pastoral” about keeping quiet in the face of evil. It’s not charity to let anyone persist in serious sin, or to help people make excuses.

God has entrusted his own children to you. He has given you a share in the authority that his Son alone possessed. I mean it quite literally and with all my heart when I remind you that there is no more important human office than that of the Catholic priest...

...the living God has delivered himself into your priestly hands. To your hands he has entrusted his honor and his plans for the human family. You alone can make Christ’s body and blood present in the Eucharist. You alone can forgive sins with his voice in the confessional.

The Curé d’Ars, St. John Vianney, used to say that if he met a priest and an angel, he would salute the priest before the angel. Why? Because the angel is the friend of God, but the priest stands in his place.

In one of her visions, Christ told St. Catherine of Siena something similar: “[Priests] are my anointed ones and I call them my Christs, because I have given them the office of administering me to you. . . The angel himself has no such dignity, for I have just given it to those men whom I have appointed as earthly angels in this life.”

The Church belongs to Christ. Our priesthood is his priesthood. No one else is given the mission we have. As Pope Benedict XVI has said, priests are Christ’s “living instruments.” We were ordained to be “the voice and the hands of Christ in the world.”

...One last question before I leave you: How many of you know who Mother Teresa was? It’s a trick question. Every one knows her. But how many of you know the name of her parish priest when she was a child?

What’s my point? Mother Teresa didn’t become Mother Teresa by herself. She had a spiritual father. Someone who preached the Word of God to her. Someone who fed her at the table of the Lord. Someone who heard her confession and gave her direction.

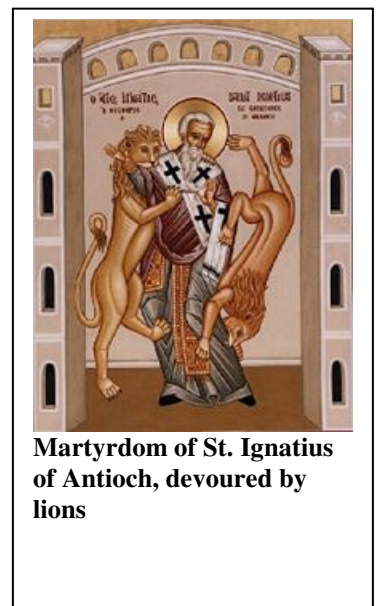
Did he know he was helping to form the soul of one of our age’s great witnesses to Christ? He couldn’t have. But it wouldn’t have made any difference. His mission would’ve been the same. He was doing what he was supposed to do. What God called him to do.

That’s your mission, too, brothers. To help God make saints. Maybe not one of the handful of men and women canonized by the Church. But ordinary, everyday saints.

By the way, Mother Teresa’s priest growing up was a Jesuit named Franjo Jambrenkovic. Though the world won’t remember his name, she never forgot him. The world needs more Mother Teresas. And for that, the world needs more Father Jambrenkovics. In other words, it needs you.

I began this talk by noting that our world looks a lot like the world did before the Incarnation. And the world is still waiting for the children of God to fulfill the promise of the Incarnation. Today, we who profess to be Christians are called to do what Rodney Stark said the first Christians did. We need to make the teachings of Christ take flesh in our lives. We need to live what we say we believe. We need to live as children of God, holding fast to the Word of life in a troubled and confused generation.

Only a new generation of God’s children can make the waters of life flow once more in this barren world. But God has not left this world desolate. He has left us his priests. And that means you. That’s why you were born. That’s why you’re here.” *



Martyrdom of St. Ignatius of Antioch, devoured by lions

The Miraculous Beatification of Antonio Rosmini

Until six years ago, priest and philosopher Antonio Rosmini was under an 1887 condemnation against 40 propositions drawn from his writings that taught a form of economic liberalism that is open to religion. Rosmini's work anticipated statements on religious freedom affirmed by Vatican Council II, criticized "state religions," and defended the freedom of citizens and of "intermediate bodies" against State abuse.

According to Rosmini's supporters, his primary political concern was to guarantee the dignity and freedom of the human person. In opposition to socialist economic theory, Rosmini connected the capacity to acquire private property with the citizen's ability to defend himself against encroachment by the State. "Property," he writes, "is the originating principle of legal rights and duties. Property constitutes a sphere around the person, of which that person is the center: no one else may enter within that sphere."

Rosmini is wary of State-run solutions to poverty. "Government beneficence...is in great demand in view of the most serious difficulties, and instead of good it can produce great harm, not only to the nation, but also to the same poor class that it is pretending to help; in that case, instead of beneficence, it is cruelty. Very often it is also cruel because it dries up private sources of charity, discouraging citizens from helping the poor, who are thought to be receiving help from the government, while instead they are not and cannot except to the slightest extent."

His criticism of the Enlightenment, which is particularly pertinent to contemporary tendencies, centers on the idolatry of Reason - man's presumption that he can take the place of God and create a perfect society. The State, however, can never achieve perfection, just as individual persons are always fallible. "Perfectionism - meaning the system that believes it is possible to achieve perfection in human affairs, and sacrifices present goods for imagined future perfection - is a result of ignorance. It consists of an arrogant prejudice that judges human nature too favorably, basing itself upon pure conjecture, upon a postulate that cannot be granted, and with an absolute lack of reflection upon natural limitations." [excerpt from *Philosophy of Politics*] It is only by living "a precious reality...a dogma of Christianity" that man can become more perfect in this world.

Utopian schemes - communism and its various socialist mutations - were natural products of the Enlightenment. Far from making men happy, however, utopianism is a "tomb." "[I]t digs an abyss of misery; far from ennobling them, it renders them as ignoble as beasts; far from pacifying them, it introduces universal war, substituting power for law; far from distributing wealth, it concentrates it; far from moderating the power of the government, it makes this absolute; far from opening competition to all in all areas, it destroys all competition; far from expanding industry, agriculture, art, and commerce, it deprives them of any incentives, blocking private initiative and spontaneous activity; far from spurring minds to great invention and hearts to great virtue, it smothers and crushes any vitality of the soul, rendering impossible any noble effort, any magnanimity, any heroism; virtue itself is prohibited, and even faith in virtue is destroyed."

To address contemporary political and social problems, Rosmini encourages "long, public, free discussion." "The individuals who comprise a people cannot understand each other if they do not speak a great deal among themselves; if they do not confront each other vigorously; if errors are not drawn forth from minds and, once fully revealed, combated in all their forms."

In the face of excommunication for his writing, Rosmini wrote to Bl. Pius IX, "In everything, I want to base myself on the authority of the Church, and I want the whole world to know that I adhere to this authority alone." He was absolved in 1854, but 40 propositions from his work were again condemned in 1887, after his death. The 2001 revocation of this condemnation says "the events following Rosmini's death required a certain distancing of the Church from his system of thought and, in particular, from some of its propositions." One factor was "the need to foster Thomism as a philosophical and theoretical instrument, aimed at offering a unifying synthesis of ecclesiastical studies, above all in the formation of priests in seminaries and theological faculties, in order to oppose the risk of an eclectic philosophical approach. The adoption of Thomism created the premises for a negative judgment of a philosophical and speculative position, like that of Rosmini, because it differed in its language and conceptual framework from the philosophical and theological elaboration of St Thomas Aquinas." *



Father Antonio Rosmini

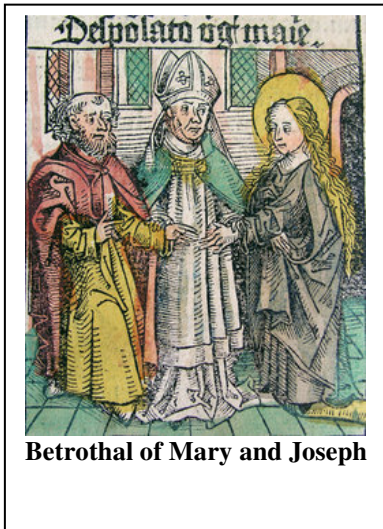
Part II...

Mary and Joseph: Spousal Sacrament in the Trinity

By Marie P. Locher

You are an enclosed garden, my sister, my bride, an enclosed garden, a fountain sealed...

- *Canticle of Canticles*, 4:12-13



Betrothal of Mary and Joseph

Joseph could sing of Mary truly, as the Bridegroom of the Bride in the *Canticle*. She is glorious as the sun, radiant as the moon, as she carries Jesus in her womb. Her belly *is* heaped wheat, in spirit and truth. For Christ is the seed fallen into the ground to bear much fruit, to become Bread for our salvation.

Mary would have understood Joseph in similar terms as the Bridegroom who shelters and protects her. He would truly be the image of the Father for her, rock and foundation, shade in the heat, shelter from danger, support in their life together – a builder, and the Greek “*tekton*” implies far more than a maker of furniture. In his work, he is also an image of the Father Creator. In his life, he is also quiet, silent – almost as invisible as the Father to us.

“The law of the Lord is in his heart” – the heart of the just man. In the Garden of Eden, the law was not words on stone or scroll, but the Person of God himself. The Garden is an icon of God’s reality as man’s ground, shelter, food and fruit. For Adam and Eve this was living Presence. For Mary and Joseph this was living Presence again, As Adam and Eve walked in the ark of the Garden with the Father, so Mary and Joseph walked in the tabernacle of the house at Nazareth with the Son. They spoke directly to him in the flesh, interacted with him every hour of the day, slept in his presence every night.

They would have known and discussed the Scriptures pertaining to all this. Does such knowledge and discussion negate the “darkness of faith”? No, even the prophets who “saw” interior and future realities did not “understand” with scientific clarity. Even when they witnessed future consequences of present actions, they did not know what each individual step forward in time and space would bring. They walked in both knowledge *and* a darkness that required faith through each chronological *now*, towards God’s eternal *Now*. When God reveals his truth and will to us, it is never in totality. We have to work towards it in faith, hope, and love, attempting to recover the absolute trust and surrender lost in the Original Sin.

Because Mary would perceive Joseph’s total integrity and focus on God, she could submit entirely to him, knowing he would choose the will of God and live it with her in all truth and in all love. Paul’s “cherish your wife” in Ephesians 5 would be lived through Joseph’s protection and provision for her, his generosity and gentleness with her.

They would not only have lived the Commandments, they would have practiced the Beatitudes in their daily life with one another and their neighbors. This is perhaps the surest key to understanding their lives and marriage. When Christ teaches us the Beatitudes, he is not only describing how God himself behaves within the Trinity and in relation to us, he is describing his human parents as well. They were poor in spirit, gentle, mourning for the crucifix to come, hungering and thirsting for righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, persecuted for Christ’s sake. The Beatitudes sum up the Holy Family in their whole life together,

and with family, friends, and neighbors.

Finally, Mary and Joseph lived such fullness of grace that no physical “knowing” one another could tempt them and no ordinary earthly ecstasies could satisfy them. They had surrendered themselves entirely to God in the fullness of his Spirit, in the human presence of his Son . . . this is spiritual union and communion to transfigure all else, a foretaste of *Parousia* and paradise.

For Joseph the just man, Mary the good wife – truly a pearl of great price – and for Christ himself, the hidden house in Nazareth was the ark of the Father, the tabernacle of the Son, the temple of the Spirit. Here they were nourished and strengthened in truth, love and service. Here they prepared for the Way of the Cross, and the Resurrection.

By quiet presence, they teach us their gentleness and generosity, trust and tenderness, sweetness and surrender, virtue and vigilance, if we pay attention. By silent example, they teach us that in the Trinity we can – and must – live our lives as living flames of love each day. *

The Diabolical Aspect of Abortion

Defend Life, Inc., a lay Catholic organization associated with the Catholic Media Coalition, hosted a December talk at St. Agnes Church in Catonsville, MD. Titled “An Evening with an Exorcist: The Demonic Abortion Connection,” its two guest speakers were Fr. Tom Euteneuer, president of *Human Life International*, and an exorcist in the Diocese of Arlington, VA.

The evening began with Father Euteneuer’s experiences in spiritual warfare. He began with the long form of the St. Michael prayer in Latin, prefacing it by saying that one may not understand the Latin language but any evil demons present certainly would. The St. Michael prayer was composed by Pope Leo XIII near the turn of the 20th Century after overhearing a conversation between God and Satan. It carries with it an exorcism, asking St. Michael to bind demons and cast them into Hell.

In an age where religion is dismissed as inconsequential or as “an opiate of the masses,” people are hungering for spiritual truth. Father was asked if he felt there is an increasing sense of spiritual presence, both good and bad, in our lives. He said, “The short answer is yes,” and went on to say that nature abhors a vacuum, both in the material and in the spiritual realm.

There is a growing divide between those who believe in God and His power over our lives and society and those who either are indifferent or who are outright evil. Both sides are becoming more and more intense. “The divide can be seen in our political parties, our local communities, and in the media,” Father explained.

Preceding the talk, Father Euteneuer and 27 faithful gathered in prayer outside the Hillcrest Clinic, an abortion facility in Catonsville. They prayed the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary followed by Father Euteneuer offering binding prayers against the demons and the demonic influence affecting the building and all those who participate in the abortions there. *

A free copy of Fr. Euteneuer's talk, including the extensive question and answer session afterwards, is available by sending your name and address to: CDs@defendlife.org.



St. Michael the Archangel

Abortion 2008

As the 2008 presidential election approaches, there are intensified efforts to neutralize the passionate pro-life activism that may again defeat progressive political ambitions.

Nearly one year before the election, on November 8, 2007, a coalition of progressive organizations with faith-based connections held a teleconference to launch a “new abortion initiative” approved by House and Senate negotiators. Advocates of the initiative included Sr. Simone Campbell, Executive Director of Catholic lobby, NETWORK and representatives of *Faith in Public Life*.

The initiative is billed as an “abortion reduction package,” containing many of the core provisions of the *Reducing the Need for Abortions and Supporting Parents Act* (H.R. 1074), signaling what supporters dub “a major change in direction for the Democratic Congress on abortion.” The three ways the initiative supposedly accomplishes this are by:

- Identifying “the need for reducing abortions in America,”
- Emphasizing prevention of unintended pregnancies and support for pregnant women, and
- Discussing money allocation to “encourage women to carry their pregnancies to term, and provide support for new parents who have economic difficulties.”

NARAL (*National Abortion Rights Action League*) lauds the initiative. This abortion rights group writes: “Americans are tired of divisive attacks on a woman’s right to choose and they want lawmakers from both sides of the abortion debate to find common sense solutions. Rep. Tim Ryan – who opposes legal abortion – teamed up with pro-choice Rep. Rosa DeLauro and other lawmakers to introduce the *Reducing the Need for Abortions and Supporting Parents Act* (H.R. 1074). This new legislation contains a variety of policy initiatives aimed at preventing unintended pregnancies, helping women bear healthy children, and supporting new parents. The bill expands access to contraception, funds honest sex-education programs, improves health-care access for low-income women and children, and extends adoption tax credits. This partnership shows that pro-choice and pro-life lawmakers can bridge the ideological divide on the question of legal abortion by working together on effective, realistic strategies that will help women and their families.”

The key problems are, “The bill expands access to contraception,” and “...funds honest sex-education programs.” H.R. 1074 would require programs with a focus on abstinence to include thorough instruction on contraceptives as well (something that does not currently occur with federal assistance). It would also expand Medicaid and Title X coverage for family planning services, requiring states to cover contraceptives for women with incomes of up to 200% of the federal poverty level.

With “pro-life” initiatives like this, who needs abortion rights? Oh, right...that’s the idea. *



Sr. Simone Campbell, an attorney and Sister of Social Service, and the Executive Director of NETWORK

Campbell also is with the Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good speakers bureau. Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good and NETWORK are both involved with Faith in Public Life’s progressive political activism.

Organizing the Church

Now, why would anyone oppose unionizing diocesan workers? After all, the right of workers to organize and negotiate on behalf of their members has been recognized by the Catholic Church for almost as long as there have been unions.

For some reason, that right hasn't been applied to the Church. In March 2007, the Diocese of Santa Rosa, California, became the first Roman Catholic Diocese in the US officially to adopt *A Fair and Just Workplace: Principles and Practices for Catholic Health Care*, developed in 1999 by the Domestic Policy Committee of the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops.

Even the liberal California diocese put up a fight, however. While recognizing the justice of unionizing principles in the *secular* workplace, there was strong resistance to applying them to a *religious* environment. Here, one presumes another economics reigns – one in which idealistic religious and lay people volunteer their services for the good of their fellows.

Those days, evidently, are over. With dioceses heavily invested as arms of the State – as government redistribution centers – employees are busy about the business of making a living. They're doing self-interested good.

So, at Memorial Hospital, one of the five hospitals operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange within the Santa Rosa diocese, workers tried to organize a union with the SEIU (*Service Employees International Union*) during 2004 and 2005. The hospital opposed the attempt and was cited by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) for violations of fair labor practices.

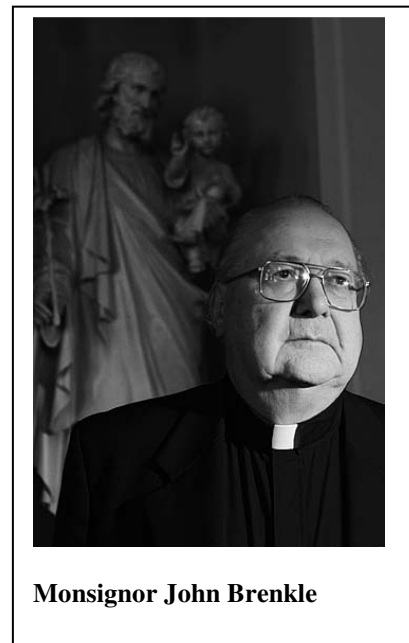
Monsignor John Brenkle, a diocesan pastor and well-known advocate for farm workers, was appointed by the diocese's Bishop Walsh to seek a mediated settlement with the workers. Monsignor Brenkle has said, "Our Catholic institutions should not only follow U.S. labor law, but should abide by the spirit of Catholic Social Teaching." His efforts and the diocesan adoption of *A Fair and Just Workplace* are clearly designed to push the hospital into compliance.

Which means the hospital, like other faith-based healthcare facilities around the US, will be pushed into further government dependency, simply to meet its payroll. With government funding comes government mandates, among them, particularly onerous "reproductive services." With government funding comes secular workers benefit packages, including healthcare insurance with "family planning" components. The noble tradition of Catholic hospitals is gone.

Back to Monsignor Brenkle. His parish school holds an annual benefit auction at which guests pay \$150 a ticket to bid on distinctive items. In 2007, one item raised \$14,000. It was an intimate, gourmet dinner with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the Monsignor.

The independent *California Catholic Daily* wondered aloud "how a Catholic school could offer dinner with a militantly pro-abortion, pro-homosexual politician as a prize." (10/24/07)

"...[Y]ou put up with the imperfections of politicians. Nobody is perfect," was Monsignor Brenkle's response. There's "Catholic Social Teaching" for you. *



Monsignor John Brenkle

Our Schizophrenic Society

By Stephanie Block

Okay, is what a pregnant woman carries in her uterus a *baby* or is it *not*? If it's perfectly legal and morally acceptable to, at the whim of its mother, dismember the *thing* growing in there, one would imagine that the pro-abortion and legal community in its service might – at least – consistently agree it is *not* a baby.

Evidently, it's only a *not* a baby as long as someone can make money from its being *not* a baby. Once there's money to be made from its *being* a baby, well then, *that's* what it is. Money is the ontological determinant of personhood.

Ask Martha Barrientes. Martha lives in New Mexico, you see, and was utterly disinterested in the economic value of her uterine product until a short while ago. No matter what the little snip might cost, it was her child. However, sometime during the first trimester of her pregnancy, the baby died. Told by a rather clinical doctor "to catch all the tissue that came out," Martha expelled a two-inch corpse with arms, head, hands, ears, legs, and feet. *Tissue*, it seemed to her, ought to be something amorphous. This had been a sweet, little person who she loved and wished to bury in St. Louis, Missouri, since she and her husband plan to move back there someday.

Now, within the womb, remember, the baby was, legally, just "tissue." Had the Barrientes chosen abortion (which they never would have done) and dumped the baby into a bucket for disposal, it's still, legally, just "tissue."

Having been born unnaturally early but, nevertheless, born dead in a natural manner, the former legally-appellated "tissue" is suddenly "human" remains and Martha is running into all kinds of red tape. In a riot of surreal irony, she and her husband have been told that they must hire a New Mexico mortuary to prepare the body and then fly it to St. Louis where another mortuary must be hired to escort the body to the cemetery. Furthermore, some airlines (the ones with affordable tickets, of course) flatly refuse to fly human remains, unless cremated. Therefore, if they wish their child to return to dust sans cremation, he will have to be flown to St. Louis separately.

In a sad way, there's a positive aspect to this madness. It proves, besides the abysmal greed of humanity, that Americans don't *really* believe that the unborn baby is "just" tissue. It may be pleasantly anesthetizing to *pretend*, when the baby isn't convenient, but we know better. We really do. *



January Calendar

Los Pequeños Monthly Meeting

January 18, 2007

Call (505) 293-8006 for information.

Pro-life Prayer:

Planned Parenthood Abortuary

701 San Mateo Blvd.

Holy Innocents Chapel:

(505) 266-4100

Times: Daily 8 AM – 3 PM

Tuesdays at Noon

Mass at the Holy Innocents Chapel

Fr. Stephen Imbarrato

For more information, call

(505) 266-4100

Helpers of God's Precious Infants

1. Planned Parenthood Abortuary

701 San Mateo Blvd.

Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays: 8 AM – 11:30 AM

Wednesdays: 12 Noon – 3:00 PM

&

2. Medical Arts (801 Encino Place)

Saturdays: 8AM-11:30AM

For more information call Phil Leahy:

(505) 440-3040

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www.lospequenos.org

Around the Archdiocese

According to a list of upcoming events at the University of New Mexico's Religious Studies website, **John Dominic Crossan** is speaking in Albuquerque on January 25-26, 2008 - evidently to talk about his latest book *God and Empire: Jesus against Rome Then and Now*.

An ex-priest and co-founder of the notorious *Jesus Seminar*, Crossan denies just about everything the Church and Scripture have defined - the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, you name it. *God and Empire*, however, is really a political discussion, which invents a biblical "God of violence" and a "God of non-violence" to make a point about the United States, which Crossan understands to be a type of Roman Empire. One reviewer writes, "This book is what it is about as we enter the 21st century [sic]. What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus? Crossan has continued to open my eyes to what is at stake for our planet. What will humanity decide, peace through victory, or peace through justice?"

Well, so what. It's a free country. Crossan can spout any nonsense he pleases. The program is sponsored, not too surprisingly, primarily by progressive Protestants: The Albuquerque Mennonite Church, Church of the Good Shepherd UCC, La Mesa Presbyterian Church, *Albuquerque Network of Spiritual Progressives*, *Santa Fe Theologians*, St. Andrew Presbyterian Church, St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church, and *Called Back to the Well*.

That last organization is the one that's interesting to Catholics. *Called Back to the Well* is an ecumenical service for clergy of all denominations, providing a "resource for reclaiming vocation and accomplishing excellence in ministry." The program runs through the *Samaritan Counseling Center of Albuquerque*, in partnership with **The Norbertine Community at the Santa Maria de la Vid Priory**. One can't help asking: what's a nice Catholic community doing in a crowd like this? *

Around the Nation

Culture of Betrayal: *The Pepper's* copy editor, Carol Suhr, writes to the *Payson Roundup*, in Payson Arizona: October just past was the annual Respect Life month in the Catholic Church nationwide. For any who may have missed hearing any strong defense of the thousands of innocent unborn babies facing horrible deaths in America's abortuaries, listen now to the words of two very courageous men.

First, Bishop Edwin O'Brien of Baltimore and recently Archbishop of Military Services on October 1, 2007: "The right to life is the greatest civil rights issue of our time...it is the issue that will determine whether America remains an hospitable society...or whether America betrays our heritage and truths on which its founders staked its claims to independence."

Second, C. Joseph Doyle, executive director of the Catholic Action League of Massachusetts on October 7, 2007: "We may not always prevail in politics, public policy, or legislation but we can and must prevail in ensuring the pro-life identity and fidelity of our ostensibly pro-life institutions."

Doyle goes on to excoriate the "culture of betrayal" characteristic of the relationship of the Catholic Church toward the pro-life movement in Massachusetts - but applicable to "progressive" Catholic politicians and clergy across the nation.

Doyle names names and calls it "acts of treason" when powerful Catholic institutions such as colleges and universities invite the likes of Planned Parenthood, *NARAL Pro-choice* or pro-abortion politicians to make presentations at their conferences, speak at their commencements, and serve on their governing boards.

The same goes for Catholic charitable and medical institutions that embrace pro-abortion politicians for lobbying and fundraising purposes; for Catholic religious educators who run for public office on pro-abortion platforms; and for pro-life Catholic fraternal organizations that allow high-profile pro-abortion politicians to remain as members.

In conclusion, Doyle says, "The vital and heroic work of our pro-life clergy, religious, and laity has been grievously impaired by collaborators with the culture of death. The pro-life movement should not be forced to fight ...against both the culture of death in secular society *and* the culture of betrayal in our own Church. This betrayal of the pro-life movement is a scandal which we can and must end." *

*Editor: To Mrs. Suhr's thoughtful commentary, I add that the Catholic Campaign for Human Development has been leading the "culture of betrayal" charge. No matter how much advertising propaganda the archdiocese puts out, the collection does **not** primarily support anti-poverty programs but progressive political activity - meaning pro-abortion politics. The situation is unconscionable.*

Welcome Home, Sinners

By Joe Pritchard

I met a friend from the “Old Country” of Brooklyn. We had a great time reminiscing about the Good Old Days. We went back to the 1940’s and wondered where those last 60 years went. That old song is very appropriate. Here are a few lines:

*The New Year’s Eve we did the town
The day we tore the goal post down.
Though Summer turns to winter
and the present disappears
The laughter we were glad to share
will echo through the years.
When other nights and other days
will find us gone our separate ways.
We will have these moments to remember.*

We spoke about how we used to play stickball, touch football, ride the subways for a nickel, and hang out at the local ice cream parlor. We played the Juke box with our girlfriends and listened to Bing Crosby and Guy Lombardo.

Then came Pearl Harbor and we all grew up very fast. We accepted the fact that we would all be obliged to fight our country’s battles and most of the guys joined the Marine Corps when we came of age.

Then we talked about Church. He said, “I don’t go anymore. It’s filled with a lot of hypocrites... and the priest scandal drove me away.”

I said, “Come on, old buddy! When we were kids, everything was in Latin. Today it is clear that the Mass is made for us sinners. So, come join us sinners.” We say:

*I confess to Almighty God,
and to you my brothers and sisters
that I have sinned through my own fault
in my thoughts, and in my words
in what I have done
and in what I have failed to do.*

We then say the *Kyrie* - Lord have mercy. As the Mass goes on, we hear the Word of God that tells all we need to do good and avoid evil. In the Creed, we say we believe in the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting.

We remember what St Paul said in Romans 7:15, “I do not understand my own actions, for I do not do what I want but I do the very thing that I hate.” We understand that we all have weaknesses and are vulnerable to personal moral failure.

So come back to Church and let’s help each other on this journey – this new battlefield. Remember when we trained hard all day and couldn’t wait to get to the Mess Hall and on the chow line? We needed strength to be faithful to our Corps.

Well, sometimes we make a mess of our lives and when we come to the Lord (“Get on the chow line!”) and receive Him faithfully, we get the incredible strength to fight the good fight.

If you come to Mass early, you may hear people praying the Rosary: *pray for us Sinners, now and at the hour of our death.* So, now, welcome home, sinner! *Semper Fidelis* *



Course in Miracles

Last October, the Dominican **Spiritual Renewal Center** in Albuquerque held a New Age *Course in Miracles* retreat. With TV diva Oprah Winfrey now offering the teaching through her XM Satellite Radio program, this might be a good time to look more closely at it.

Warren Smith, who has authored a number of books about the perils of various New Age programs, has examined the *Course in Miracles* closely and found it to be seriously incompatible with Christianity. Its workbook, for example, asks the participant to go through the day affirming that “God is in everything I see.” Another lesson has the reader repeat “I am the light of the world” or to say “My salvation comes from me.”

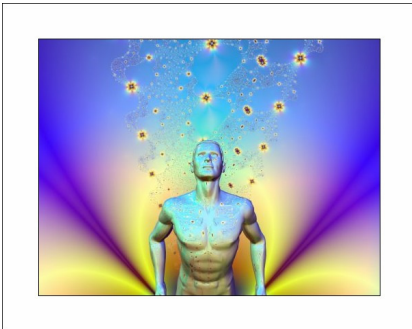
Smith writes, “Those who finish the Course will have a wholly redefined spiritual mindset—a New Age worldview that includes the belief that there is no sin, no evil, no devil, and that God is ‘in’ everyone and everything. *A Course in Miracles* teaches its students to *rethink* everything they believe about God and life...” stating “This is a course in mind training” dedicated to “thought reversal.”

A Course in Miracles purports to be a “new revelation” from “Jesus” to help humanity work through these troubled times. This “Jesus”—who bears no doctrinal resemblance to the Bible’s Jesus Christ—began delivering his channeled teachings in 1965 to Helen Schucman, a Columbia University Professor of Medical Psychology.

Smith was a devoted student of *A Course in Miracles* who discovered that it turned Biblical truth upside down, filled with teachings that “were everything the real Jesus Christ warned us to watch out for. In Matthew 24 Jesus warned about false teachers, false teachings and the false “Christs” who would pretend to be Him.”

Smith provides some quotes from the “Jesus” of *A Course in Miracles*:

- “There is no sin...”
- A “slain Christ has no meaning.”
- “The journey to the cross should be the last ‘useless journey.’”
- “Do not make the pathetic error of ‘clinging to the old rugged cross.’”
- “The Name of Jesus Christ as such is but a symbol. . . . It is a symbol that is safely used as a replacement for the many names of all the gods to which you pray.”
- “God is in everything I see.”
- “The recognition of God is the recognition of yourself.”
- “The oneness of the Creator and the creation is your wholeness, your sanity and your limitless power.”
- “The Atonement is the final lesson he [man] need learn, for it teaches him that, never having sinned, he has no need of salvation.”



Another component of this “New Gospel” is its *New Age Peace Plan* that rests on the false principle that “we are all one” because God is “in” everyone and everything. Scripture is clear that we are not God (Ezekiel 28:2; Hosea 11:9) and Galatians 3:26-28 shows that our only oneness is in Jesus Christ—not in ourselves as “God” and “Christ.” Peace sought in any other way will be illusory.

Smith laments that “our true Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is being reinvented, redefined, and blasphemed right in front of our eyes and hardly anyone seems to notice or care. If we want the world to know who Jesus Christ *is*, we need to also warn them about who He *is not*. There is a false New Age “Christ” making huge inroads into the world and into the church. The Apostle Paul said that “it is a shame” we have to even talk about these things, but talk about them we must (Ephesians 5:12-16).”

The Dominican *Spiritual Renewal Center* must get out of the business of leading people astray. If it can’t support its community by teaching Catholicism, it has no business parading as a “Catholic” community. *