

Los Pequeños Pepper

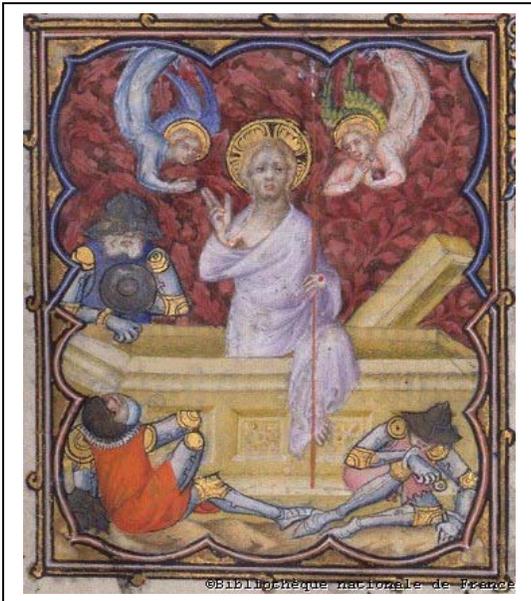
Publication of Los Pequeños de Cristo

April 2005

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“...forever, according to Melchisedech”

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Purgatory

Six women discuss divine justice at lunch.

(Well, yes...lunch with six women could be purgatorial...)

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*Cover: Resurrection of Christ,
John of Berry's Petites Heures
France, Paris 14th Century*

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Newsletter of Los Pequeños de Cristo
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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.

Pax Christi New Mexico Leadership

Interesting insights into the local Pax Christi movement

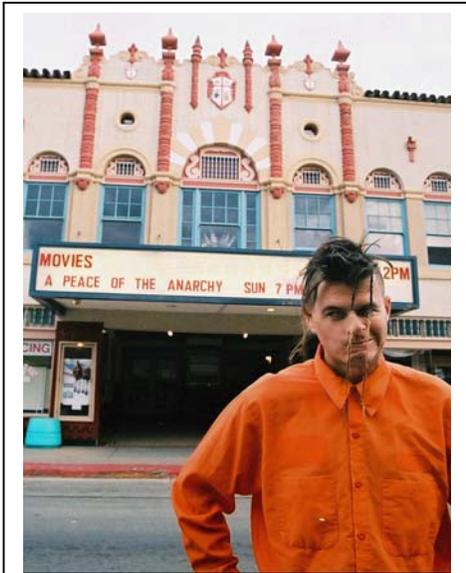
By Stephanie Block

You can look it up for yourself: 505-870-2275 is the contact number for *Pax Christi New Mexico* (PCNM) – found at the bottom of their opening website page (www.paxchristinewmexico.org).

If you click the *Catholic Worker* icon that is at the bottom of the PCNM homepage, you'll be taken to the *New Mexico Catholic Worker's* Albuquerque group, called the *Albuquerque Catholic Worker's Circle of Friends* (www.paxchristinewmexico.org/itchy). According to information posted here, the Circle held a PCNM regional council meeting on February 27th at the home of Sr. Joan Brown, who serves in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe's Office for Peace and Social Justice. But never mind that. In the published minutes for the August 5, 2004 *Pax Christi New Mexico* Regional Council Meeting, held at Santa Maria de la Paz and found on the *Circle of Friends* website, we learn that PCNM is joining the *Albuquerque Peace Center* and that Marc Page, PCNM co-coordinator, can be contacted at 505-870-2275.

Surf over to the *Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice* website (home.comcast.net/~peacecenter). Its online January 2005 Newsletter carries the following *noticia*: "The pacifist, communitarian, service-oriented *Catholic Worker Movement* in New Mexico offers monthly roundtable discussions and seeks to open a new *House of Hospitality* for the resident homeless in the UNM area. Info: Marc Page, 505-870-2275; roundtable.lovarchy.org."

So, the 505-870-2275 number belongs to Marc Page. But who is Marc Page? In UNM's December 9, 2004 *Daily Lobo*, we learn: "Marc Page is more of a radical than a filmmaker, though he says it is difficult for him to choose between the two."



Marcus Page

Page is an independent filmmaker from Gallup whose movie, "A Peace of the Anarchy," will be screened at the Albuquerque Center for Peace and Justice. The 62-minute documentary explores radical activism and the life of Ammon Hennacy.

Hennacy was an activist who spoke out against war and nuclear weapons. He has been described as a Catholic, an anarchist, a vegetarian and a one-person revolution. Page compiled his movie from archival footage and interviews with people mentioned in Hennacy's autobiography.

Page said the autobiography was his bible during the production of the movie.

"He made it easy for a researcher," he said. Cerillos resident Father John Dear is among those interviewed in "A Peace of the Anarchy." Page described Dear as a contemporary activist who preaches the radical message of Christ. Page said Christ's radical message included love, peace and getting together.

The filmmaker said “A Peace of the Anarchy” is an important historical timepiece because of how it portrays anarchy. “It shows the goodness of anarchy, its roots and philosophy,” Page said.

He said Hennacy's view was in opposition to the way mainstream media portray anarchists in the press, and anarchists should be seen as spiritual.

Aside from making films, Page said he considers himself a radical for peace and an activist. Page said he has received negative attention for his beliefs. He said the police briefly detained him four months after the 2001 terrorist attacks. He was handcuffed and sat in the back of a police car under suspicion of having an affiliation with terrorist groups, he said. (Aaron Hendren “Filmmaker examines radical peace activist”)

At Marc Page's website (lovarchy.org/movies/POA/anarchy.html), we learn that others who interviewed for this documentary include the Wiccan apologist Starhawk and the *Call to Action* peacenik John Dear. Topics discussed in the film cover a wide swath of issues: pagan anarchy, green anarchy, various socialist and disarmament movements, and creation spirituality, among others.

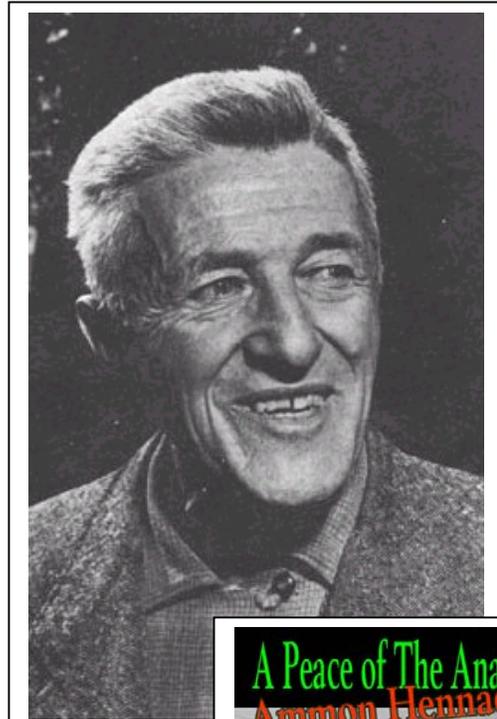
Hennacy (1893 – 1970), according to material available on the site, was an “anarchist pacifist, vegetarian, draft resister in two world wars, tax resister, one-person revolution in America.” He was baptized into the Roman Catholic Church by an anarchist priest and between 1953 & 1961 was the associate editor of the *Catholic Worker*, in the Bowery area of New York City. Page's site then directs the surfer to another site on anarchy, which teaches that “anarchism is primarily a movement against *hierarchy*” (emphasis in original, <http://www.infoshop.org/faq/secA1.html#seca11>), having particularly interesting implications for a Catholic.

Dorothy Day, who worked with and greatly admired Hennacy, writes: “For a time Ammon was a Catholic. It was before the aggiornamento, and though he had been christened a Baptist, a valid baptism, he was conditionally baptized again by Fr. Marion Casey in Minnesota. His instruction had been slight in spite of retreats and conferences which we were in the habit of having...” It was hardly surprising that he formally left the Catholic Church in 1965, now calling himself “a non-church Christian.” Without disputing Hennacy's good work with the New York *Catholic Worker*, his *thought* isn't “Catholic.”

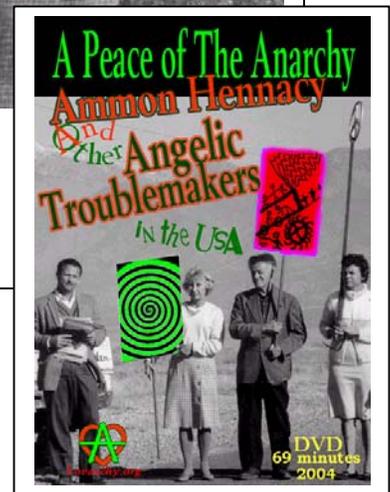
What are we looking at? The founder and the co-coordinator of *Pax Christi New Mexico* (Fr. John Dear and Marc Page) are involved in a documentary film called “A Peace of the Anarchy.” Their *Pax Christi New Mexico* website hosts the *New Mexico Catholic Worker's* website. So these are closely linked “peace” groups, both sporting a similar, non-Catholic ideology.

But they use Church resources. The *Albuquerque Catholic Worker's* “Circle of Friends” (meeting at the home of Joan Brown, the Archdiocese's Peace and Social Justice official eco-justice activist) has advertised in the Archdiocesan monthly, *People of God*. *Pax Christi*, for its part, meets all over the state on Church property: Santa Maria de La Paz in Santa Fe, Aquinas Newman Center in Albuquerque, Sacred Heart Retreat Center in Gallup, St. Mary's in Farmington, Immaculate Conception in Cimarron, the Newman Center in Silver City, and San Francisco in Rancheros de Taos.

What's wrong with this picture? ☹



Ammon Hennacy



Around the Archdiocese

Rev. John Dear & Rev. Daniel Berrigan

(Fr. Berrigan was arrested in 1968 for breaking and entering a Maryland draft board office and burning government documents. In 1971, he was indicted as a co-conspirator in a plot to kidnap Henry Kissinger and blow up the heating systems of federal buildings in Washington, DC. In the Vietnam War, he sided with the Communists; he sided with the Marxists in Nicaragua; he blames the US for the September 11 attacks. He is an avowed pacifist – unless you happen to be Henry Kissinger.)

February 26, 2005; Santa Maria de la Paz

Pax Christi Gathering: Rev. John Dear

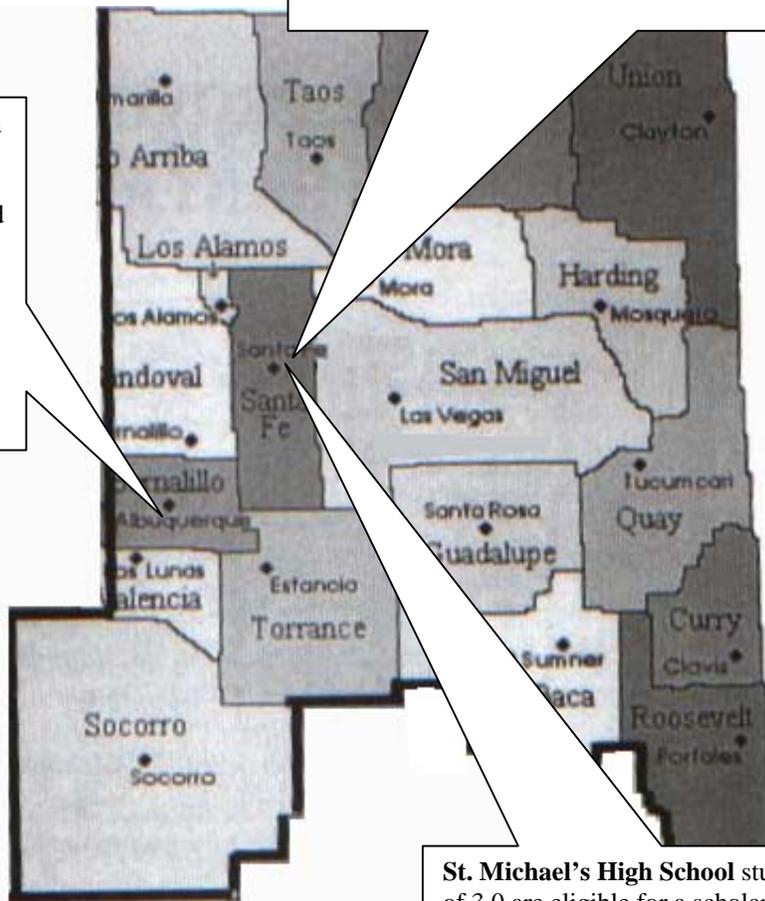
August 5, 2005: 60th Anniversary of Hiroshima – Santa Maria de la Paz

Megan McKenna
&

Rev. John Dear
(CTA speakers and
associates of Pax
Christi)

April 30-May 2,
2005

Spiritual Renewal
Center Retreat



St. Michael's High School students with a GPA of 3.0 are eligible for a scholarship from the Montezuma Lodge No. 1 of the Free Masons, according to *Hoof Beats*, the March 2005 St. Michael's Parent Club Newsletter.

THE MASS: Meal and Sacrifice

PART I

By Marie P. Loehr

Then Melchisedech, the king of Salem, brought out bread and wine; for he was a priest of the Most High God.

- Genesis 14:18

The mystery of Melchisedech is at the heart of the mystery of the Mass. St. Paul speaks of Melchisedech in Hebrews. Although modern exegesis suggests the epistle to the Hebrews is not the work of Paul, because the style is so different, the CCD New Testament introduction to Hebrews notes:

Its thought is thoroughly Pauline and much of the phraseology is also distinctly Pauline. The excellent literary style, however, is generally superior to that found in the other Epistles of St. Paul, and ranks with the best in the New Testament.

- Introduction to Hebrews, *The Holy Bible*,
Confraternity Version, p. 238

We fail to apply common sense to exegesis sometimes. When we write letters, we suit the style to the recipient, and our relation to him. We write one letter to a spouse, one to a child, one to a friend, and another for business purposes, each depending on what business and what needs to be discussed. Paul did the same, writing his epistles--letters to a variety of brethren and churches. In writing the epistle to the Hebrews, he writes as a Pharisee of Pharisees, to those knowledgeable and educated in Judaism. He writes a formal testament, as a result, showing the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, Old Covenant and New, thus the literary style and formality.

This epistle is central to an understanding of priesthood and sacrifice, and so to an understanding of the Mass.

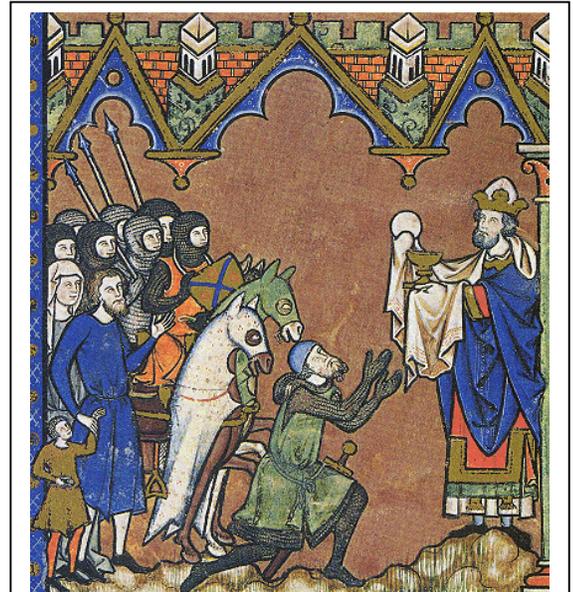
Paul describes Melchisedech as Genesis does: a priest of the Most High God.

First, as his name shows, he is King of Justice, and then also he is King of Salem, that is, King of Peace. Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but likened to the Son of God, he continues a priest forever.

- Hebrews, 7:1-3

Melchisedech appears in the Tridentine Mass, in the prayers following the consecration, when the priest prays that God may deign to receive our offering as He did the offerings of "Abel, Your just servant, and the sacrifice of Abraham our patriarch, and that which Your chief priest Melchisedech offered to you, a holy sacrifice and a spotless victim." [St. Joseph Daily Missal, 1962, p. 681]

Again, in the Novus Ordo, Melchisedech is cited in Eucharistic Prayer I: "Look with favor on these offerings and accept them as once you accepted the gifts of your servant Abel, the sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith, and the bread and wine offered by your priest Melchisedech." [St. Andrew Bible Missal, 1982, p. 22]



Melchisedech & Abraham

At ordination, the new priest hears that he is “a priest forever, according to the order of Melchisedech.” In Latin this is “*tu es sacerdos in aeternam, secundum ordinem Melchisedek.*” This statement is taken from Psalm 110:4, by David, devoted to the dual role of priest and king, as Fr. John Hardon explains in his *Pocket Catholic Dictionary*, p. 256, under “Melchizedek.”

Why is Melchisedech important?

First, he is a figure of Christ. Christ is King and Priest, our great High Priest, as Hebrews so richly describes.

Second, as king he serves his people. That service is the service of a father, to protect and provide for the people who are his charge and spiritual family. Such provision includes seeing that the people have what food they need to survive and grow, whether by their own hands or from the king’s storehouse. Consider the story of Joseph in Egypt, and his charge of seeing that the Pharaoh’s granaries and storehouses were filled with grain and seeds and other food supplies in preparation for famine. [Genesis 41-43]

Third, as servant of his people, the king is also priest, enabled to offer sacrifice on behalf of his people. Sacrifice means “to make sacred.” The thing sacrificed becomes sacred by being consecrated for God and offered to Him. The concept and practice of priest and sacrifice are ancient. In Genesis, in the sacrifice of Cain and Abel, we see that originally each man was enabled to offer sacrifice on his own behalf and for his family, as the father, thus patriarch, thus ruler or head.

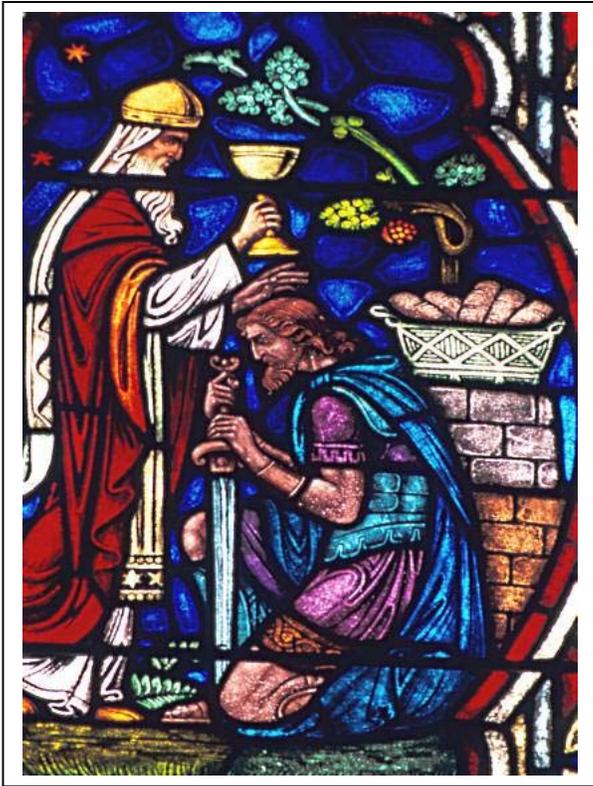
The father or ruler or king provides for the people. The most basic material provision is the food that nourishes and nurtures the family, the tribe, the people. The most basic spiritual provision for the people is the sacrifice.

Sacrifice is so important that Christ leaves us the Mass as witness to His sacrifice on Calvary, an unbloody sacrifice remembering Calvary, making that one true sacrifice present for all time in the memorial of the Last Supper. What is the nature of sacrifice? Why is it so important in salvation history--and among pagan peoples as well, predating the formation of the Chosen People, predating the pagan encounter with Catholicism later in history? What does sacrifice have to do with “meal,” as in the Last Supper and in the Mass that makes that Wedding Feast of the Lamb present to us?

Fr. Hardon says in his Dictionary that a sacrifice is the highest form of adoration. In other words, it is an acknowledgment of human dependence on God. It is a statement that all Creation comes from God and is dependent on God. It is returning to God some portion of the gifts He has given us - in adoration of God’s glory, in contrition for our sins, in thanksgiving for His generosity, in supplication for our needs.

Whatever is offered is removed in whole or in part from human use, and reserved entirely for God. A sacrifice not only offers something to God. In token of its nature as absolute gift to God, the sacrifice is destroyed in whole or in part. It is something precious, something that represents the people, something surrendered to express the humility and trust of the people in God’s providence as Most High, the King of Kings. ✨

To be continued . . .



Politics of the Death Penalty

Peter Waldo

If you were recently considering becoming a Catholic but decided that it was impossible because of the January 27, 2005 Statement regarding the death penalty by the three Catholic Bishops in New Mexico, be not afraid. The statement made it appear as if to be a Catholic, one must in principle be opposed to the death penalty. For example, referring to the 1995 Papal Encyclical, "The Gospel of Life" the Statement said: "The new encyclical moves the Church to the brink of insisting that the fifth of the Ten Commandments - "Thou shalt not kill" - be applied to the penal codes."

Actually the encyclical does nothing of the kind. Rather, it states: "Moreover legitimate defense can be not only a right but a grave duty for someone responsible for another's life, the common good of the family or of the state. Unfortunately it happens that the need to render the aggressor incapable of causing harm sometimes involves taking his life." This is part of the traditional Catholic teaching on the death penalty. The Pope simply cautions us that the death penalty, given modern technology, should generally be used only in extreme cases, when "it would not be possible otherwise to defend society." This is a prudential decision on a contingent matter which is not something about which an infallible statement can be made.

So why would New Mexico's Catholic Bishops misrepresent the teaching of the Catholic Church? It is possible that it's just muddled thinking, which is, well, popular these days. The problem, however, could be much deeper.

In their Statement, the Bishops also wrote: "In the encyclical, the Pope listed the death penalty as one of the pro-life issues calling for church concern and action. The pontiff's stance adds to the quandary faced by Roman Catholic lawmakers and voters who endorse capital punishment." If the Bishops can make the death penalty a "pro-life" issue, they have effectively equalized the death of the guilty and the innocent. But why would they want to do this?

In New Mexico over 5,000 unborn babies are killed each year. The right to kill the unborn is supported by many of New Mexico's "Catholic" legislators and our "Catholic" Governor who assisted NARAL, America's most powerful abortion lobby, to raise twenty-five million dollars prior to the Presidential election. No public rebuke of the Governor came from New Mexico's Catholic Bishops in regard to this action, which is clearly wrong in light of the encyclical, "The Gospel of Life," which states: "In the case of an intrinsically unjust law, such as a law permitting abortion or euthanasia, it is therefore never licit to obey it, or to take part in a propaganda campaign in favor of such law, or vote for it." The Holy Father has not made a similar statement, ex cathedra, in regard to those who may support the death penalty.

However, by equating the death of the innocent (there have been approximately 150,000 unborn babies killed in New Mexico since Roe v. Wade) with the death of the guilty (i.e., the execution of Terry Clark, who raped and killed a nine year old girl. Clark is the only person to be executed in New Mexico by the death penalty since it was reinstated in 1979), the Bishops can assure us and themselves that they are doing something about the culture of death without ever really having to ruffle feathers. Whatever strides are made to suppress the death penalty, 5,000 New Mexico babies are being surgically executed each year. Where's the episcopal outrage? ☹



Social Justice Done Catholic

Authentic social justice affirms the work of the Church

By Stephanie Block

With the recent release of the Vatican's (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace) *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, we may be turning a corner in the wholesale usurpation of social justice by left-wing ideologues. Catholics are reclaiming their patrimony.

Leading the charge is the Director of Peace and Social Justice from the Diocese of La Crosse, Dr. Arthur Hippler. Dr. Hippler gave three talks on Saturday, February 19, 2005 at the University of New Mexico's Continuing Education Building.

Hippler's first talk concerned the transformative power of Catholic social teaching. While insisting that the Church's primary purpose is the salvation of souls, he explained – quoting Pope Leo XIII – that she is a source of many temporal benefits, flowing from her teachings about justice.

Where Christian principles of social justice have held sway, the temporal benefits enjoyed by society have included the nurture and protection of children, recognition and appreciation of the dignity of women and the marital state, a challenge to slavery and an appreciation and protection of laborers. In Christian societies, humanity found historically unprecedented care for the poor and vulnerable and a tremendous love of learning, as realized by an entire gamut of provisions to spread education.

Next, Dr. Hippler discussed the interior life and the social apostolate in the light of the Second Vatican Council. It is important, Hippler stressed, that we understand that to work for a better society requires a conversion of one's self. One who cannot and does not draw from the wellsprings of God's charity has very little to give from himself alone – and the ability to draw from those wellsprings presupposes a rich, interior life. Humanitarian relief that is purely human is a very poor substitute for a holistic approach that addresses the entire person's needs, body and soul.

Lastly, Dr. Hippler addressed the social apostolate and evangelization, which is the primary purpose for the Church's founding. The authentic holistic approach to social justice referred to in Hippler's second talk finds its fulfillment in the evangelical work of promoting the gospel message. Using numerous quotes from Church documents, Hippler demonstrated that the mind of the Church has always been, and continues to be, dedicated to the spread of the faith, and never more so than when she is serving the material needs of others.



Audiotapes and audio CDs of Arthur Hippler's three presentations are available from *Los Pequeños de Cristo* by calling 505-866-0977. Cost is \$10/audiotape or CD.



Dr. Arthur Hippler



Wanted: Dead

The Terri Schiavo situation continues to plague euthanizers, distress pro-lifers

By the time this issue of *The Pepper* has been mailed, Terri Schiavo may be dead or dying.

Or, public outcry may have been so intense that she has been issued another stay – temporary or otherwise – of execution.

The outcome, whatever it is, has tremendous ramifications for people with disabilities, the elderly, and the seriously ill, as one impassioned writer told her bishop:

I am writing to ask you to please encourage your brother bishops in Florida, and in particular, Cardinal Keeler, to speak out boldly in defense of Terri Schiavo's life.

The news reports I have heard on television and radio, as well as what I have read in print depress me beyond measure. Our Catholic Church proclaims LIFE so prominently. Yet in the case of Terri Schiavo, there seems to be a silence I find incomprehensible. Her life is being sustained by only food and drink. If she is allowed to die, will this not be the beginning of the widespread evil of euthanasia in America?

[My husband] and I have a twenty-eight year old son, Paul, who is profoundly mentally retarded. He has no speech, he is not toilet trained and he cannot care for himself in any way. Yet Paul has been one of the greatest teachers in our lives. I was twenty-two when he was born, and at that young age, I learned that life does not always give us what we expect or want. That is a hard lesson for all of us to learn. Paul has taught us that sometimes we are given situations which will not change or improve. I will never hear Paul call me "Mom".

Yet, time and time again, Paul has influenced our lives. He has taught us compassion for those who are "different". He has taught us patience. He literally turned our value systems upside down. And most importantly, he has brought us closer to God. I have often told others that had it not been for the strength we were given to cope with Paul's retardation and seizures, we probably would not have been able to survive the deaths of our son Matthew and daughter Wendy. And yet it was the death of Matthew, in 1983, that brought us into a relationship with Christ and our Church that is imperishable. Romans 8:28-29* has become our theme-song. It can be Terri Schiavo's as well.

Bishop, I trust you and I respect you as my shepherd. Please do what you can. Like Terri, Paul has little to offer the secular world. It costs over \$75,000 a year to maintain him in the facility where he now lives. Yet he has been a teacher of many. He teaches the lessons of God which the world cannot comprehend.

Whatever the outcome, pro-lifers have another front on which they must train their attention and energy. The euthanasia movement won't be going away. ☘

* Rom 8:28-29 – *And we know that to them who love God, all things work together unto good, to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be saints.*

For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son; that he might be the first born among many brethren.



Terri Schiavo, brain-damaged and alert

NOT comatose, not PVS, not worthless

Purgatory

Do Catholics still believe this stuff?

Seated around the restaurant table were six Catholic women. They blessed themselves before beginning lunch. Their talk centered on children and their Church, which they each loved deeply.

The subject of Purgatory came up. “Purgatory” refers to the state of being after death in which people do penance for sins not atoned for on earth. One woman said that she had been taught by her parish priest that Catholics didn’t have to believe that there was any such state after one dies, that Purgatory fell into a lower level of doctrine not requiring the full assent of the intellect, and *she* certainly didn’t believe in it. Other members of the party defended the teaching and the non-believer promised that she’d look the matter up in her *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

If she does, she will see (in sections 1030-1032) that the doctrine of Purgatory flows from the Catholic understanding of grace. It has both an Old and New Testament biblical basis. And it is part of Church tradition and teaching. *Catholic Answers* and a plethora of other apologetic sources have excellent resources on the topic. We present a sampling borrowed from them:

OLD TESTAMENT

Judas Maccabees offered sacrifices and prayers for soldiers who had died wearing amulets, which were forbidden by the Law. Scripture reads, “Turning to supplication, they prayed that the sinful deed might be blotted out” (12:43), and “Thus, [Judas Maccabees] made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from the sin” (12:46).

In the Book of the Prophet Zechariah, the Lord spoke, “I will bring the one third through fire, and I will refine them as silver is refined, and I will test them as gold is tested” (13:9). The School of Rabbi Shammai interpreted this passage as a purification of the soul through God’s mercy and goodness, preparing it for eternal life.

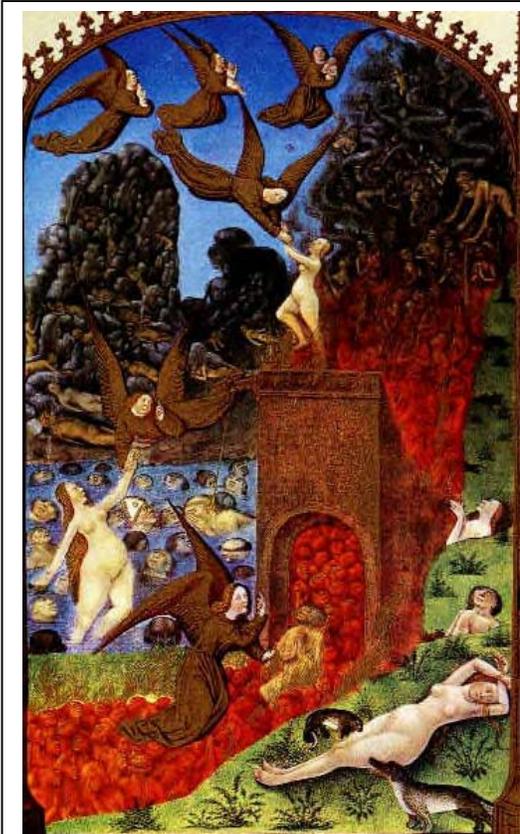
Sirach 7:33, “Withhold not your kindness from the dead” was understood as imploring God to cleanse the soul.

The Old Testament clearly attests to a purification process of the soul of the faithful after death.

NEW TESTAMENT

Jesus says: “And whoever says a word against the Son of man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.” (Matthew 12:32) This age obviously refers to our time on earth now. The age to come refers to a time after death. It cannot refer to Hell because Hell is an eternal state and no sins are forgiven there. It cannot refer to Heaven, because when we enter heaven we will already be cleansed of all sin (Rev. 21:27). There is an implied temporal, third state after death where sins may be forgiven.

In the “Sermon on the Mount,” Jesus teaches that those who do not live according to the New Law in this life, even by being unduly angry, will be liable to judgment and imprisonment in the next. But in saying this, Jesus also implies that this punishment is not necessarily eternal: “Truly I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny” (Mt. 5:21-26).



“Purgatory” refers to the state of being after death in which people do penance for sins not atoned for on earth.

Both St. Peter and St. Paul write about a cleansing fire which tests a man and his works (1 Cor. 3:10-16; 1 Pet. 1:7). In 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, the gold refers to righteous works which will be purified and remain while the straw (sin and sin's consequences) will be burned away. "If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire" (1 Cor. 3:15). This test man will undergo cannot be Hell since it also states that the man who builds on the foundation of Christ will be saved. It cannot be Heaven since there is no suffering in Heaven (cf. Rev. 21:4). St. Paul teaches us that "God is a consuming fire" and that through Him we are purified. As noted in the Catechism, the Catholic Church teaches that those who have not been completely purged of sin and its consequences here on earth can be purged of sin and its consequences after death.

Scripture also speaks of a "place" (or state) where the just who had died before the redemption were waiting for Heaven to be opened to them. After his death and before his resurrection, Christ visited these souls and preached to them the good news (1 Pet. 3:19). These people thus were not in Heaven, but neither were they experiencing the torments of Hell. Whether this state refers to Purgatory or to some other temporary, intermediate state, it is another example that Scripture says such a state can exist. It proves there is "something" in addition to Heaven and Hell.

TRADITION AND CHURCH TEACHING

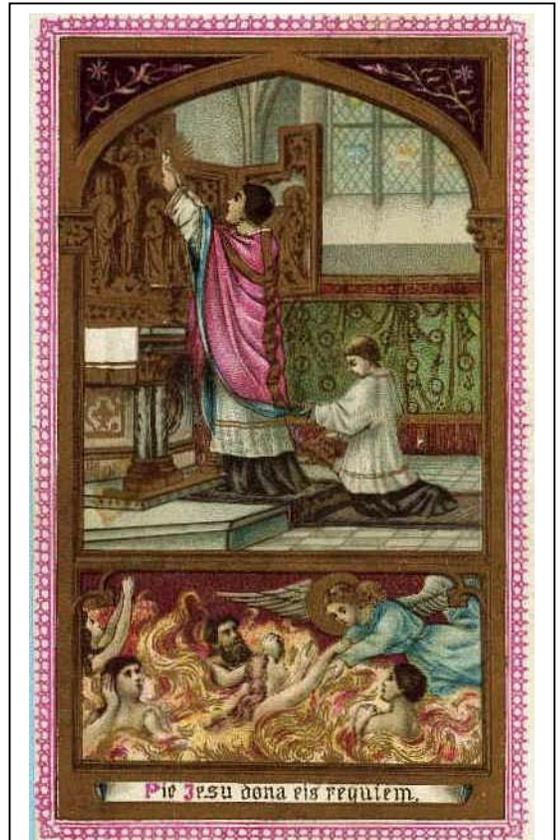
How is one to explain the graffiti in the catacombs, where Christians during the persecutions of the first three centuries recorded prayers for the dead? Some of the earliest Christian writings outside the New Testament, like the *Acts of Paul and Thecla* and the *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity* (both written during the second century), refer to the Christian practice of praying for the dead. Such prayers would have been offered only if Christians believed in Purgatory, even if they did not use that name for it.

Pope St. Gregory said, "Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them."

St. Ambrose (d. 397) preached, "We have loved them during life; let us not abandon them in death, until we have conducted them by our prayers into the house of the Lord."

Monica, mother of Augustine, asked her son in the fourth century to remember her soul in his Masses. This would make no sense if she thought her soul would not benefit from prayers, as would be the case if she were in Hell or in the full glory of Heaven. And Augustine wrote, in *The City of God*, that "temporary punishments are suffered by some in this life only, by others after death, by others both now and then; but all of them before that last and strictest judgment" (21:13).

The believer was given assurance of the truth of this teaching when Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254) provided a synthesis of the doctrine of Purgatory and declared its name for the Universal Church. The Second Council of Lyons (1274), the Council of Vienna (1311-1312), the Council of Florence (1438-1445) and the Council of Trent (1545-1563) affirm the doctrine.



Monica, mother of Augustine, asked her son in the fourth century to remember her soul in his Masses. This would make no sense if she thought her soul would not benefit from prayers, as would be the case if she were in Hell or in the full glory of Heaven.

GRACE

The Fundamentalist Protestant resistance to the biblical doctrine of Purgatory stems, in many cases, from the misconception that its existence would contradict the work of Christ, namely His suffering and death in atonement for our sins. They believe that if once we accept Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior, nothing can keep us from Heaven. Therefore, they find a belief in Purgatory to be superfluous.

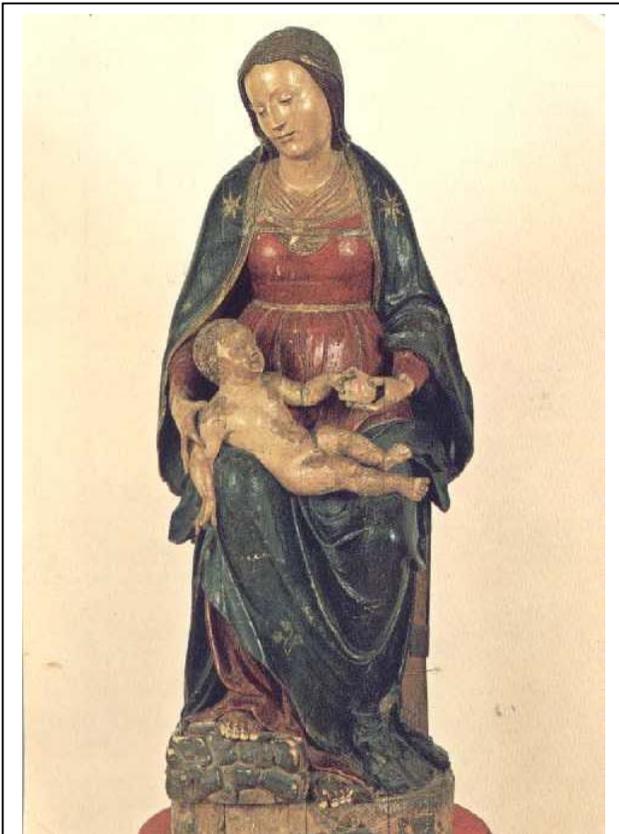
Catholic teaching admits of no contradiction. Christ did accomplish all of our salvation for us through His death on the cross. However, we must cooperate with Him, by accepting sanctification through suffering (Rom. 5:3–5), which for some will include a period of purification after death.

BUT DO WE HAVE TO BELIEVE IT?

The *Catholic Encyclopedia* describes belief as “that state of the mind by which it assents to propositions, not by reason of their intrinsic evidence, but because of authority.”

To be a *Catholic* believer is to give intellectual assent (belief) to truths that have been deposited in the Church and accepted on Divine authority. This is not a mindless submission – far from it – nor are believers asked to accept the unreasonable (cf. *Fides et Ratio*). But the interior disposition of the Catholic believer must be a humble willingness to learn from the Church.

Is the doctrine of Purgatory one to which the Catholic believer must give assent? A “Summary of Categories of Belief in *Professio fidei*,” prepared by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith says that assent is required to all divinely revealed doctrines, that is, those contained in the Word of God, written or handed down, and defined with a solemn judgment of the Church as divinely revealed truths. Assent is also required to all doctrines definitively proposed by the Church on faith and morals which are necessary for faithfully keeping and expounding the deposit of faith, even if they have not been proposed by the Magisterium of the Church as formally revealed. Also, assent – religious submission of will and intellect – is required to all authentic teachings of the ordinary Magisterium, even if they have not been defined with a solemn judgment or proposed as definitive by the ordinary and universal Magisterium. **The doctrine of Purgatory falls within the parameters of truths that the Catholic must believe.** ☩



Our Lady of Grace

Open Letter to Our Priests:

After what I hope has been a fruitful Lenten season and an uplifting Holy Week, I thought this would be a good time to thank our many holy priests.

This year has been particularly tough. I don't need to tell you about all the sufferings in the archdiocese. You are already very aware of them. With each passing day, families are taking a beating in every way imaginable. My own family has experienced some of this.

I just wanted you, the priests, to know that we, LPC, are very aware of how much you are doing in your various parishes. Most LPC members pray for priests every day. We are also continuing to pray for an increase in vocations. Please don't get discouraged. You are our heroes. We know that you put up with a lot from the laity. Wherever there is a chink in the character of a person, it is likely to make itself felt in the priest's experience.

You also are aware that the Church is getting whipped. You are feeling that as well. Please know that we are also suffering with you. You're not alone.

There are some priests who are extraordinarily brave in view of the difficulties. There are some priests who "speak the truth" in season and out of season. People tell me all the time about how good you are. We are very aware we can't have "Church" without you, to quote a favorite priest. Father Robert J. Fox wrote a book "Only Heroic Catholic Families Will Survive." Those families are multiplying because of you.

I personally want to thank all of you for your service to the Church. I am most grateful to be living in these times, so as to be acquainted with courageous men like you.

I would encourage our readership to pray hard for the priests, to thank and encourage them, *often*. They are the reason that grace continues to be poured out into the world, through their administration of the sacraments, through their sacrifices, and through their immense charity.

In Jesus & Mary,
Valerie Lubitz, President of Los Pequeños de Cristo ☽



April Calendar

Friday, April 15, 2005:

LPC monthly meeting.
Call (505) 293-8006 for information.
All members welcome.

Pro-life Prayer Each Tuesday:

8:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
Join Fr. Pio O'Conner for prayer
Planned Parenthood Abortuary
701 San Mateo Blvd.
For other times, call (505) 286-1655

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*Please consider a
donation to Los
Pequeños.*