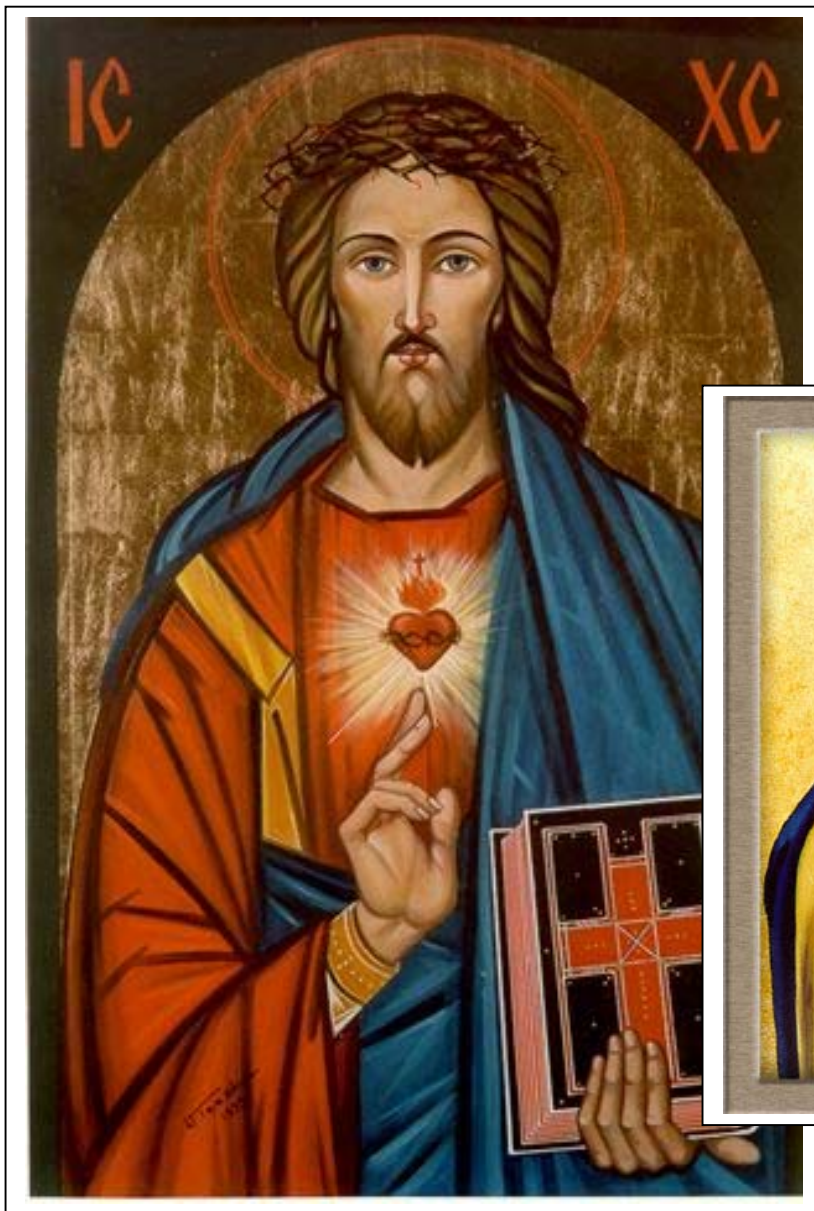


Los Pequeños Pepper

Publication of Los Pequeños de Cristo

June 2005





*Cover: Icon of the Sacred Heart;
The Immaculate Heart of Mary*

Los Pequeños Pepper

Newsletter of Los Pequeños de Cristo

June 2005

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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.

Praying with the Body

Saint Dominic's "prayer with the body"

Dominican Sister Catherine Aubin, a French religious who teaches sacramental theology and spiritual theology at the Regina Mundi Pontifical Institute, the Claretianum Institute of Theology of the Consecrated Life, and the University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome, has recently published the book "Prier avec son corps à la manière de saint Dominique" (To Pray with the Body According to St. Dominic), published by Cerf.

When asked what had inspired her to write the book she said that while living in Paris she had met many people who were in search of interior unity and peace. To find it, they practiced techniques and physical exercises such as Zen, yoga, and Transcendental Meditation. She felt that Dominican spirituality, and St. Dominic's nine corporal ways of prayer specifically, provided a "pedagogy of prayer with the body" from within the Catholic tradition, which she thought might respond to that search.

Sister explained what she meant by "praying with the body." It was analogous to the lover who demonstrates his feelings with gestures, words, and smiles. "The same happens with prayer. The living Christ is before me, in me. How will I manifest my love to him?"

St. Dominic is the teacher. Each attitude of the body corresponds to a spiritual attitude and enables the latter to manifest itself. The gestures represent what is hidden and illustrate the movements of the heart. For example, the gesture of **bowing** corresponds to humility and **kneeling** to trust. **Prostration** demonstrates an awareness of one's sin and compunction of heart. Penitential **scourging** (discipline) expresses a desire to enter into Christ's passion.

These first four ways of praying, Sister said, may be grouped around an attitude of acceptance – acceptance of the condition of creature before God, acceptance of God as creator and savior, and acceptance of one's own limitations before Him who is infinite.

The gesture of **rising and standing** is the attitude of the resurrection, listening intently to the Word. With **arms open in the form of a cross**, the worshipper expresses a desire to give his life to Christ. **Stretching one's arms toward heaven** is indicative of the yearning to be with the One who is there and expressive of the encounter with God in a face-to-face dialogue.

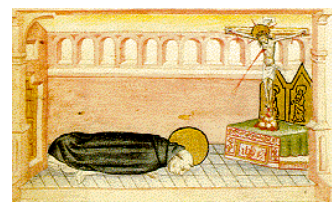
The eighth gesture finds the worshipper **seated at a table, reading and listening** to what the Lord says to him through his Word. And lastly, the worshipper, in imitation of Jesus' friendship, **goes off with a companion on the paths of the world to transmit what he has contemplated**.

These last two ways are ordered around a gift, Sr. Aubin explains: the gift of God in His Word and in His life, the gift of God leads to giving and to giving of oneself.

"The nine ways of praying are divided therefore in three stages: acceptance, encounter, gift. They enable us to enter in His way of salvation to cure us of our devaluation of ourselves and to listen to what the Lord says to us: I receive you as you are; you are my friend, be fruitful, give fruit." *



Bowing



Prostration



Discipline



Kneeling & Rising



Imitating the Cross



Reaching toward Heaven



Standing



Reading & listening



Walking with a companion

COMBAT FAITH: A SPIRITUALITY FOR THIS PRESENT EVIL AGE

Rev. Charles Dahlby

It's easy to write articles pointing out the problems in the Church. They, like the man who was possessed, are "legion!" When we have exhausted each other with "can you top this" horror stories about liturgy, catechetics and even dogma, we are left with that awful empty feeling of frustration that no one but a pre-Vatican II Roman Catholic can truly appreciate! Sure there are terrible things going on in the Church and the truth is the sins of commission pale in comparison to the sins of omission! But it's a hierarchical Church and we are not part of the hierarchy! So, as we recite the current list of atrocities, and our blood pressure approaches meltdown, we begin to drown in our own frustration until someone throws us the old life preserver: "We'll just have to pray about it!" That soothes the sting, but leaves an empty ache behind. Prayer alone seems so inadequate. It is!

Have we forgotten that we are the "Church Militant?" Pope Paul the VI told us that the "smoke of Satan has entered the Church!" When Christ entrusted the Church to St. Peter and his successors, Jesus said the "gates of Hell will not prevail against it!" How can a gate "prevail"? It doesn't move or fight, it simply stands there. The only way a gate "prevails" is when it withstands a force seeking to beat it down. That force was intended to be the Church! Jesus Christ "did not come to bring peace, but a sword!" It isn't adequate to stand before the power of Hell with teacup in hand and pinkie extended! The Church Jesus founded was intended to be a race of warriors that would beat down the gates of Hell for the salvation of souls and the building up of the Kingdom of God. If you're going to stand up to Satan and his power, you'd better have the faith that made saints and prophets. The battle for your soul and the souls of the ones you love is what we called in a more enlightened time "spiritual warfare," and you'd better show up in full armor with weapons in hand. You're going to need Combat Faith! Before you can put on the "armor of God" and wield the "sword of the Spirit" there are a few presuppositions you have to deal with:

Myth 1. *Numbers are important.* Remember the story of Gideon in the Old Testament? Before the battle God said Gideon had too many men. So by the time God finished trimming them down, there was only a remnant to go against a much larger force. Guess who won! So it seems that a small number with God is greater than a larger number without God. The fact is most people are useless in a fight.

Many centuries ago a Greek philosopher/general named Heraclitus was involved in a war and he sent a famous letter back to his city-state of Athens. He said that out of every 100 men they sent, 90 were useless! They just got in the way and cluttered up the battlefield. Only 10 of that hundred were fighters, and only 1 would be a true warrior! He said it was on that one that the battle would turn!

After the battles of the American Civil War, they would pick up rifles on the battlefield that had multiple charges in the barrel. They had been loaded and re-loaded but never fired! This is like those 90% who talk and talk to one another about the battle but never pull the trigger. The 10% who will fight will be more



**St. Michael Archangel,
Casting down Satan**



St. John the Baptist, Prophet and Martyr

than enough if we can find that one who is a true warrior!

In the entire history of the Roman Catholic Church there has never been a true spiritual renewal by committee, council, or document! These things have never caused Hell to tremble. The only time the Church has risen up to do battle with evil was when God raised up warriors, to lead the way. They were prophets and saints, wild-eyed and uncompromising! They may have lacked some social skills, but they burned with the love of God and that flame cleansed and enlightened the Church.

They also died, because as true warriors they were in the front lines. They were martyred, sometimes by their own Church and spiritual leaders. Remember, when Jesus returns to gather His true Church, the Bible says it will be a “remnant?” We think numbers are important because we live in a democracy and that is how you get elected, but true Christianity is not a democracy! Christ is our King, not our president. God doesn’t need a lot of people; He just needs the right people!

Myth 2. Warriors look like warriors! Maybe so, if you see as God sees, but otherwise picture the scene at Harvard University a few years ago when Mother Teresa received an honorary degree. She may have weighed 90 pounds if she were carrying an abandoned baby in each arm, and she stands there on a box so her head clears the top of the podium, and she talks about the horror of abortion. Behind her the most powerful man in the world, the president of the United States and his wife are squirming in their seats.

Jesus once asked people who went into the desert to hear John the Baptist, what they went into the desert to see? A reed swaying in the wind? No! People like reeds swaying whichever way the wind blows them are everywhere. Did they go to see a saint and a prophet? Yes! And the people at Harvard saw even more. They saw a warrior for God! So did the Clintons.

God’s warriors will not be known by bulging muscles or political clout, but by their courage to stand and speak the truth! Jesus told Pilate: “The reason I was born, the reason I came into the world is to testify to the truth and those who seek the truth will hear my voice!” Then Pilate asked the saddest question ever asked; “Truth, what is truth?”

Yes, the truth can be painful, but as Pope St. Gregory The Great said: “It is better that scandals arise than the truth be suppressed!” Saints and Prophets are truth-speakers, and nothing is more frightening to the powers of darkness than the light of truth!

Myth 3. If we follow Christ we will be loved. At funerals I have heard people say: “Everybody loved old Joe!” Why, “Old Joe didn’t have an enemy in the world!”

What a terrible thing to say! Jesus Christ was perfect love and yet every Good Friday you shout “Crucify Him, Crucify Him!” Jesus was perfect but there were a lot of people who were very happy when Jesus died!

There is an old saying that you’re known by your enemies as well as by your friends! If everyone loves you maybe it’s because you’ve never challenged, confronted, questioned or stood up for anything! There are certain people, some in positions of authority, who dislike me rather intensely. I accept this as affirmation. If I thought they liked me I would be deeply worried!

As a follower of Christ your task is not to call people to happiness, but to holiness! Have you forgotten that Jesus said: “I come not to bring peace, but a sword!” He whipped the moneychangers out of the temple and told the religious leaders (The Pharisees) they were “empty tombs filled with corruption!” If a person is so weak and insecure as to need constant

affirmation, he will never be a warrior. The trick is not to have everyone love you, but to be sure the right people hate you!

Myth 4. *We'll put it all in God's hands!* Most people who say this are not really concerned that it's in God's hands, but rather that they get to wash their own. But they will learn as Pontius Pilate did that you can't wash away your guilt so easily.

Once Jesus had a man with a withered hand stand before the Pharisees who complained that Christ was healing on the Sabbath. Jesus asked them a simple question: "Is it right to do good or evil on the Sabbath?" The Pharisees thought they had a third option - doing NOTHING! That option does not exist for God's warriors. If you *can* do good and yet refuse to do it, then you have done evil! How vast is the category of "sins of omission" and how few go there to examine their conscience!

Remember how the Master treated the man who buried his money in the ground? The reason that God left the Israelites in the desert for 40 years was because they had been slaves and they had a slave's mentality. This made them unfit to enter and possess the Promised Land. That generation had to "die out" and a new strong people be raised up, a people who had been formed in the crucible of the desert. The nation that fled Egypt and the nation that entered the Promised Land were vastly different. They had been slaves looking for a master but now they were warriors ready to fight to build a kingdom for their God!

Does it sound risky? It is! But there's an old saying: "Ships in a harbor are safe...but ships weren't built for harbors!" Christians with teacups in their hands are safe.... but God didn't design the hands of his warriors to fit the handles of teacups, but rather the handles of swords!

The Bible says: "The Kingdom of God suffers violence and the violent bear it away!" There is no greater act of violence than the dying to self that is necessary in order to say with the Mother of God "Behold the servant of the Lord! Be it done to me as you will!" Only that "surrender" insures our victory!

Fr. McNamara said; "The difference between us and the saints is that the saints throw themselves into the fire of God's Love and they emerge burnt, but magnificently transfigured, while the rest of us spend our lives walking around the fire, close enough to be warm, but never so close as to risk being touched by the flames!" Remember, we are looking for a small group, a remnant, a "band of brothers" who have walked in the fire of God's love and have emerged transformed. Are you one of them? Here is a little test: Picture the last and greatest prophet, John the Baptist, the night before he was beheaded, lying on the floor of his cell. Tomorrow he will die for daring to speak the truth and offending powerful people. Jesus Christ is addressing John's disciples and he declares: "I tell you, there has never been a greater man born of woman than John the Baptizer!" Do you think John was a fool? Did he throw his life away? Or would you say it was worth it and you would lay down your life, too, if only you could hear God himself say such glorious things about you? If so, you have the values of a warrior! Do you also have the courage to live them? *

Rev. Charles Dahlby is a pastor of St. Rita's Church in the diocese of Springfield, Illinois.



The "Other" Side of Christ - Jesus Cleansing the Temple

With the Love of Christ:

Reflections and Concerns Regarding Ministerial Approaches to Gays and Lesbians

By Cate Van Lone-Taylor

Introduction

In the summer of 2004, the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., published a special report entitled “*In Search of Best Practices in Ministry with Gay and Lesbian Catholics.*” The report is a summary of findings taken from a study conducted by the National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian and Gay Ministries (NACDLGM). This report was mailed to every diocese in the United States. CARA assisted with the study and prepared the report.

The purpose of the study was to identify the “best practices” and lived experiences of successful ministries that serve gay and lesbian Catholics. The information was gathered specifically to assist parishes and archdioceses in the development of their own ministries.

NACDLGM is an influential network of diocesan, parish, and campus-based ministries with lesbian and gay communities and their families. Their ministry hosts a national conference annually, publishes a newsletter, RECLAIM, and provides resource and outreach activities to gay and lesbian individuals and groups throughout the country. In the *CARA Special Report* and on their official website, NACDLGM’s mission statement is included. It states:

“Inspired by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and grounded in Catholic moral and social justice tradition, the National Association of Catholic Diocesan Lesbian and Gay Ministries, as a resource and network, encourages pastoral care with lesbian and gay persons and their families. We urge those in ministry to: Reflect on Sacred Scripture, reflect on church teaching and pastoral practice, study the social and physical sciences, and listen to and ponder the lived experience of lesbian and gay persons and their families. This ministry respects the human dignity and human rights of lesbian and gay persons, and affirms that all who are baptized are called to full participation in the life, worship and mission of the church.”

“*The CARA Report,*” as well as the official NACDLGM website, refers frequently to the document *Always Our Children: A Pastoral Message to Parents of Homosexual Children*, published by the USCCB Committee on Marriage & Family in 1997 and revised as a result of Vatican directives in 1998. This document, specifically aimed at parents whose children believe they have a homosexual orientation, is pastoral in nature. It demonstrates pastoral sensitivity in that it stresses Christ’s commandment to offer love, understanding and encouragement to their children. An important statement in this document clearly teaches that:

“Homosexual persons have a right to be welcomed into the community, to hear the word of God, to receive pastoral care. Homosexual persons leading *chaste lives* (emphasis added) should have the opportunity to lead and serve the community...”



Synopsis of the CARA Special Report:

The document presented helpful information related to the types of social and pastoral services that are provided in the dioceses surveyed. Data shows that every ministry offered resources on Catholic teaching on homosexuality. In addition, 95% of dioceses surveyed provided resources on Catholic teaching on pastoral care of gay and lesbian people and their families. Referrals to support groups, counselors and spiritual directors are also important components of these ministries.

The research indicated that few of the diocesan ministries were stand-alone programs; at least half the programs are a component of a larger ministry, such as that of social justice. The report went on to say that less common services at the diocesan level were the establishment of support groups and the training of volunteers to address issues related to the gay and lesbian community.

On a specifically parish-based level, ministries existed at metropolitan and non-metropolitan levels. Ministries on the parish level were led either by priests (40%), religious sisters (10%) or laywomen (40%) trained specifically to work with the gay/lesbian community (10% were "other"). The services most utilized at the parish level consisted of referrals to counselors, spiritual directors, or confessors. Most of the responding parishes did offer a support group(s).

AGLO, a ministry provided by the Archdiocese of Chicago, to give one example, offers faith-sharing groups, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and days of reflection throughout the year, as well as a weekly liturgy, which has fostered a strong sense of 'belonging' and community. Another program, "Reclaim" located in Severn, Maryland, offers a seven-week structured support program and helps (according to its literature) people to "discover ways in which they are both Catholic and gay or lesbian."

Ministries both at the diocesan and parish level felt support and understanding from their Bishops, clergy and parishioners.

Concerns...

- As a result of exploring the websites of the three ministries featured in the report, links and resources were discovered which did not fully support official Church teachings regarding homosexuality.
- Ministries/organizations such as COURAGE and NARTH, which fully embrace the magisterial teachings of the Church, and which advocate abstinence and chastity through God's grace are not mentioned.

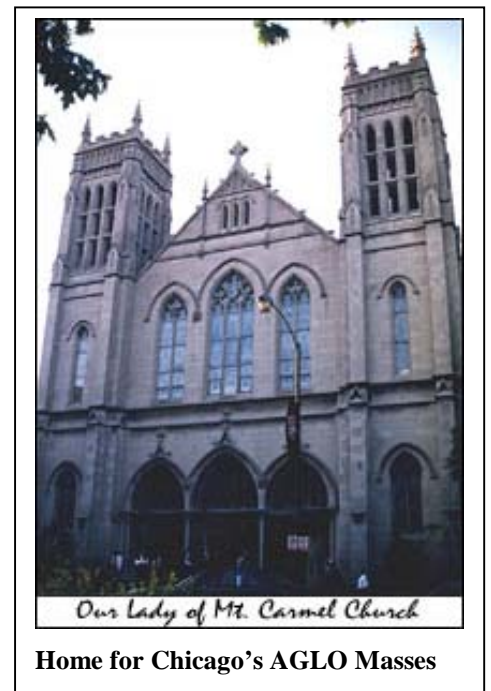
The Role of NACDLGM

As stated previously, this organization acts as a catalyst for other ministry organizations: providing resources, advocacy, influencing activities that they believe are related to anti-discrimination issues and support to both diocesan and parish ministerial outreaches.

The NACDLGM Board of Directors is comprised of 18 members, who serve three-year terms. Currently, there are 12 men and 6 women on the board. Six are Catholic priests; seven are parents. Thirteen Board members are gay or lesbian.

In their December 2004 newsletter, a book review refers to the work of the organization in this way: "Some dioceses maintain various outreach programs for gays and lesbians, grouped under the umbrella of NACDLGM. Most of these are designed to keep gay and lesbian Catholics connected to the church by offering opportunities for spiritual enrichment, *without challenging church teaching* (emphasis added)." At a time when our Church is in the midst of a public debate regarding the morality of homosexual acts, a statement that emphasizes a willingness to adhere to Church teaching is indeed, comforting.

NACDLGM promotional materials and literature consign an important position to *Always Our Children* because the document "allows leaders to reach out to gay and lesbian Catholics who feel frustrated with their Church and provides them with



Increasing numbers of people today, even within the Church, are bringing enormous pressure to bear on the Church to accept the homosexual condition as though it were not disordered and to condone homosexual activity. Those within the Church who argue in this fashion often have close ties with those with similar views outside it. These latter groups are guided by a vision opposed to the truth about the human person, which is fully disclosed in the mystery of Christ...

Excerpt from "On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons," Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (1986)

affirmation while adhering to Church teaching on homosexuality".

As a result of this, the organization has developed a resource entitled: "*Implementing Pastoral Recommendations from Always Our Children In Parish Communities*" This document has been used extensively throughout the US. The majority of the recommendations included in the document are helpful for the reason that understanding of gender identity issues, the necessity of 'safe environments,' knowledge of Church teachings regarding homosexuality and familiarity with a wide-range of community resources are integral building-blocks for effective ministerial outreach.

Concerns...

- Although NACDLGM communicates with other Catholic organizations, including two USCCB Secretariats, material found on their website (see 2005 Lenten Reflections) as well as affiliations with dissident groups such as DIGNITY, generate doubt as to the authenticity of its claims that it does not challenge Church teaching. [Dignity USA-San Jose Update, Feb. 2003]
- Some of NACDLGM's literature refers to the original, 1997 version of *Always Our Children*. Many readers are not aware that it was revised in 1998 in response to Vatican directives, because of potentially misleading wording regarding core teachings of the faith. [see Dignity USA-San Jose Update, Feb. 2002]
- Website articles, some Board members and Fr. Schexnayder (Resource Director) have frequently expressed opposition/and or dissent to official Church teachings. [2005 Lenten Reflections; June, 2003, Memorandum by Massachusetts Catholic Conference regarding the erroneous testimony of Fr. Richard Lewandowski; Open Letter to Rev. Ludmila Javorova: A Priest of the Roman Catholic Church, National Catholic Reporter, May 31, 2002; "Where's the Dignity?" San Francisco Faith, Jan. 1998 edition]
- Organizations linked to NACDLGM use sexually derogatory language in reference to individuals who are homosexual which demeans the dignity of the human person who is created in God's image [Queer Berkeley News: Lavender Lunch: Roman Catholic Ministries to Lesbian & Gay People, October 18, 2001]

"Always Our Children" (AOC)

As stated previously, *AOC* is a pastoral letter, issued by the USCCB Committee on Marriage and the Family. The overall message of the document conveys compassion and concern shown by the Bishops for parents of children (it does not clarify whether 'child' refers to an adolescent or adult) who have developed a homosexual orientation. It urges families to draw upon the strength, hope, love, and grace which is offered to them by the Catholic Church.

"*Always Our Children*" is an outstretched hand of the bishops' Committee on Marriage and Family to parents and other family members, offering them a fresh look at the grace present in family life and the unfailing mercy of Christ our Lord."

The message speaks of the importance of parents accepting themselves, following the way of love, as Christ taught, and allowing the grief process to find its way towards healing and acceptance.

A strength of the document are statements which reflect Church teachings regarding chastity in relationships, God's plan that sexual intercourse occur only in a marriage between a man and a woman, and that every act of intercourse must be open to the possible creation of new life. Further, it confirms that homosexual intercourse cannot fulfill the above conditions- and as a result, the Church teaches that sexual behavior between persons of the same-sex is 'objectively immoral'. It distinguishes between active sexual behavior and a homosexual orientation, which in itself is not immoral, however disordered.

The letter addresses the importance of expressing Christian love and care towards persons with HIV/AIDS while rejecting the idea that HIV/AIDS is a direct punishment from God.

Concerns...

- The document does not mention that a homosexual act is a grave sin forbidden by God. In 1st Corinthians 1:6-9 St. Paul lists those who behave in a homosexual fashion among those who shall not enter the Kingdom of God.
- It must be pointed out that *Always Our Children* is a work of a committee of the USCCB. It carries no ecclesiastical or magisterial weight. It remains a pastoral recommendation.
- Parents are given no specific encouragement to seek therapeutic interventions for their children aimed at the elimination of a homosexual orientation.
- Suggests that homosexual adolescents should be given the power to determine for themselves whether or not to seek therapy.
- While the Catechism of the Catholic Church (#2333) urges the faithful to accept their sexual identity as man or woman, AOC does not state this explicitly- this can be misinterpreted as acceptance of homosexuality.
- The document fails to accurately distinguish the difference between personal identity and sexual orientation. Our uniqueness as persons is not rooted in our sexual identity. Hence, the terms “gay” and “lesbian” seem to define a person based on their sexual orientation, rather than their identity in Christ, “modeled on His image and likeness.”
- In regard to the ‘recommendations’ section at the end of the document, retreat masters and psychologists should be chosen for their Catholicity and loyalty to the Magisterium of the Church. Parents, priests, religious and the faithful must beware of the magnitude of false teaching that exists not only in the secular world, but within the Church as well.



Conclusions: “Male and female He created them....”

The problem of homosexuality in our world- and the Church- is shrouded in layers of complexity, pain and misunderstanding.

If *all of the faithful*, who are members of the Church that Christ founded, are to be fully Roman Catholic, we must embrace the Teachings and Traditions of our faith. We must live lives of fidelity, discipline and humility.

While scientific theories about the nature of homosexuality abound, such theories are not compatible with natural law, which is the foundation of our moral teachings. We must follow the teachings of our Church if we are to truly live out our baptismal call.

The documents of the Church regarding all forms of sexuality call us to chastity. Webster’s Dictionary defines the word “chaste” as meaning “pure”. Synonyms for ‘chaste’ are ‘virtuous’, ‘unblemished’ and ‘faithful’.

The grace of chastity can be brought about in the vocation of marriage, the vocation of a single life, or a vocation to the priesthood. In all of these instances, if we dedicate our lives to God, He will give us strength to draw close to Him. In so doing, we are able to glimpse the Promise of Paradise. We are in this world, but not of this world. +



Mary, Mother Most Chaste

The MASS: Meal or Sacrifice?

By Marie P. Loehr

So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover meal for us, that we may eat it..."
- Luke 22:7-20

A number of modern theologians and liturgists attempt to dissociate the sacrifice from the meal in the Mass. They speak of the importance of the meal. It is a community event, a banquet, a feast, a celebration--but the priest is not the "celebrant." He is merely the presider, the head of the community. It is the community itself that represents Christ. The community effects the Eucharist by their presence and belief. This is wrong, of course, but this false concept of the Mass has misled many.

If the priest is reduced to glorified headwaiter, the congregation becomes the focus of attention as the enabling community. So also the altar is reduced from spiritual fortress and foundation, the sacrificial ground which signifies Calvary, to merely a communal table. This is where the meal is prepared, from which it is served.

The bread and wine also lose their power as sacramental matter. They are reduced from being visible signs of the deeper, invisible, transubstantiated reality of Christ, now really present among us, after the Consecration. They become mere symbols of Christ's wish to feed us and minister to us, instead. A full set of dominoes collapses one after the other once the Mass is seen only as meal, with no association with the uncomfortable truths of sacrifice.

Indeed, after Vatican II, in a well-intentioned haste to promote ecumenical consensus and unity, this protestantized theology of the Mass and Eucharist exploded in the Church. The meal was exalted at the expense of the sacrifice. The new theology of the liturgy was seen as more advanced, more palatable because it was more pure, more "spiritual." So many heresies begin with a denigration of the body and incarnation--human and divine. The squeamish complained vociferously when Mel Gibson's movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, appeared in theaters. Academic elites cried horror, all that BLOOD!

An Episcopalian of my acquaintance said many years ago that Christ didn't have to do any of that stuff. Why choose scourging and crucifixion? It's so bloody, so naked to the bone, so disgusting! Christ is God. He could have left out the blood, right?! Alas, he couldn't leave out the blood, as the cries of the horrified prove. The torture and the blood reveal the face of sin. We see what sin does to us in the mirror of the crucified Christ, in all its dismembering and disjuncting, in all its wounds and blood. We also see the totality of his passion for us and for our salvation in that.

The other reason he could not leave out the blood is because his redemption insists on humanity's incarnate reality and its goodness, as created. We are a unity of soul and body. We are not fully human, even as disembodied spirit in death, without our bodies.

Blood is the life of our bodies. Even Neanderthal man recognized that, as their graves show. Every modern medical use of blood reminds us of this. Redemption insists on the importance of BODY, its lifeblood, and its necessity for us and for our salvation--our souls and bodies fully



integrated in communion with Christ, as God intended us to be--and God himself incarnate. The Second Person of the Trinity insists we must eat his body and drink his blood, if we are to have life in us. "This is my BODY," he says. "This is my BLOOD," he says. Eat this. Drink this.

This horrifies those who crave existence as pure spirit, free from such messy, gross realities, as body implies. My acquaintance also complained that, if she thought about what she was doing when she received communion, she would not receive. She could not. This was cannibalism. As recounted in John 6, many of those who had followed Christ turned away when he presented what we title the discourse on the Eucharist. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" When Christ insisted, they objected, "This is a hard saying. Who can listen to it?" Such objections ignore a basic reality of incarnate Creation and being. **EVERY MEAL IS A SACRIFICE! †** [To be continued]

Letter to the Editor

Response to Stephanie Block's "Window to Heaven or Road to Hell?" (Pepper, February 2005, concerning the iconography of Bro. Robert Lentz and Fr. William Hart McNichols)

This is such a sad day in the life of the Holy Catholic Church, when we see someone with a God given gift to produce such art work, yet it is the very sword used that was thrust within the Heart of Jesus. This sword was made of sin, decay, pain, abomination, lack of humility, pride and above all a warped sense of true Love. This is the truth, God did not make man to sin against Him. Though we are born with original sin due to Adam and Eve's disobedience, God did not create them to sin against Him. This is true for also every descendant of Adam and Eve. Though we are all born of original sin, we are through Jesus Christ reborn in baptism. It is not so when we hear these words, "I was born gay." No, evil exists, but not at the hand of God. God does not make us or create us to be evil.

However, we are born into the world and the world contains evil spirits and it is these that warp our senses and our minds from the time of our birth into the world. So, though we are prone to human weaknesses, we are not made to be sin. Sin is not of God; therefore, sin is removed by baptism and again by confession. So our promised Messiah, Jesus, is born that we may have eternal life through Him. In living through Him we are graced with understanding, and then again we are faced with temptations, as He was, that we may over come them through Him. If we do not understand, then humility in obedience and trust in Jesus Christ's Church is required by us. For He said He would guide His church into all truth, and the gate of Hell shall not prevail against it. Everyone knows God's truth, even Satan; however, Satan mixes the truth of God and makes it half-truths rather than the whole truth. For those who desire the whole truth, we must die to self that Jesus may reign within each soul. This is possible through the Holy Sacraments given to all those who seek the truth. It is these seven sacraments that bind and build up the soul to recognize the Voice of the Shepherd. Those who hear the Bride of Christ speak, hear His voice. Those that suffer the agony of truth through regret, and sorrow are graced in humility by the mercy of God to the souls responsive to His call.

The fact is, that the truth is difficult for a soul to hear if it is saturated in the sin of self-indulgence. God is merciful. However, if we do not respond to His mercy, the soul becomes corrupt with desires of fleshly passions, due to the soul being unresponsive to God Almighty, in Jesus Christ. What does God want? He wants loyalty from His Holy People, who are bound to Him through His Son Jesus Christ. Anything less, is not of Himself, but of our weak nature against Him who loves us. We must all pray and be responsive to all the graces He showers upon us, that we may not stray into the lies and deceits of our previous fallen nature. In order to be in the truth, we must be vigilant in doing our best, in following what He has given to our souls. When we fall into temptation, we open the doors to grave sins. It is the mercy of God working in the hearts of the faithful, that graces then fall upon the sick soul, who is then cleansed by the Mercy of God. To follow God as His children, we must embrace Him by following His Holy Laws and not those of the world that contradict His laws of perfect love.✠

Mrs. Richard Lucero, Santa Fe, NM



ORTHODOXY: Fact and Fiction

By Marie P. Loehr

And the glory that thou hast given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me; that they may be perfected in unity... – John 17:22-23

In the media coverage of the death of John Paul II there was a generous outpouring of praise for his pastoral initiatives to all parts of the world, his travels, his ecumenical conferences, his desire for unity among the Christian churches and denominations, expressed most clearly in the encyclical *Ut Unim Sint (That All May Be One)*.

This ecumenical outreach to all churches, all faiths, all men was given full impetus by the Second Vatican Council. “The Decree on Ecumenism” is one of the groundbreaking documents from Vatican II. It does not diverge from previous Church teaching on those churches, Orthodox or Protestant, who are not in communion with the Roman Catholic Church. Rather it clarifies the Church’s understanding of proper relationships between Rome and Orthodoxy, Rome and Protestantism, in Christ. Belief in Christ as our Lord and Savior, baptism in Christ, even celebration of the Eucharist in its fullness or as a simple sign are all grounds for working together for specific temporal goals that witness to Christ and his service.

But there is apparently considerable confusion, when it comes to understanding orthodoxy, rite, communion in Christ as a general community, and communion with Rome as specific community. Let’s attempt to separate fact from fiction here, by defining these terms, and clarifying their meaning.

What does “orthodox” *per se* mean? **To be orthodox is to hold right or true doctrine, to hold established opinion.** It means soundness of doctrine. It comes from the Greek, *orthos* --right, and *dokein* --to think. *Orthos* also means straight [there is a whole complex of words going back to Sanskrit that link rightness, straightness and ruler or kingship]. Thus we can say to be orthodox is to think straight, according to one’s beliefs, to be measured against a general standard of belief and practice.

When we say someone holds the orthodox Roman Catholic faith, we are saying his belief and practice match the general standard or declaration of faith by the Roman Catholic Church in union with the Holy Father, who is pope, i.e., the bishop of Rome. This encompassing body of truth is stated in the 16th century *Catechism of Trent* and in the 20th century *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The CCC clarifies the teaching of Trent and expands that teaching in keeping with Newman’s principles of the legitimate development of Christian doctrine, a development in understanding through prayer and reflection under the guidance of Tradition and the Magisterium of the Roman Catholic Church.

We can also mean, when we say someone is *Orthodox*, that he is a member of those churches who share with Roman Catholicism the fullness of belief in the core doctrines of the Catholic faith, including the Trinity, the Incarnation, the teaching of Christ, the sacraments, the Mass, and the role of the apostles and their successors – but which do not accept the authority of the Pope. **The Eastern Orthodox Churches, as a single body, disagree with the Roman Catholic Church primarily in their refusal to accept the Roman pontiff as head of the Church united, East and West.**

In Our Sunday Visitor’s *Catholic Encyclopedia* we find this definition under Orthodox Church:

That body of Eastern Christian believers identified as possessing and maintaining a valid sacramental and hierarchical system, but separated from full Communion with the Catholic Church by remaining independent of the Pope.

The Orthodox Church--in fact a series of autonomous national churches united by their common doctrine and practice--differs from Rome in several additional particulars, as well. It accepts only the first seven ecumenical councils. It permits remarriage of divorced persons, although not quite as casually as many non-Orthodox might believe. It questions such Catholic dogmas as purgatory, and the Immaculate Conception, although it shares with Rome a deep love and praise for Mary Theotokos, Mary the Mother of God.

When Thomas Hopko of the Orthodox Church of America was still simply Fr. Hopko, he wrote an excellent summary of Orthodox doctrine, *The Orthodox Faith*. In Vol. I, “Doctrine,” p. 123, he notes:

In non-Orthodox Christian groups the Orthodox claim that there are certain formal obstacles, varying in different groups, which, if accepted and followed by men, will prevent their perfect unity with God and will thus destroy the genuine unity of the Church, (e.g., the papacy in the Roman Church).

In *Byzantine Theology*, Fr. John Meyendorff, also OCA, writes on p. 215:

In the West, the Church developed as a powerful institution; in the East, it was seen primarily as a sacramental (or “mystical”) organism, in charge of “divine things” and endowed with only limited institutional structures.

These differences in ecclesiological perception continue to present Rome with obstacles to full and formal communion with Eastern Orthodoxy.

It is true that Rome recognizes the Mass and sacraments, including Holy Orders, of the Eastern Orthodox Churches as valid. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* says that “the Church knows that she is joined in many ways to the baptized who are honored by the name of Christian, but do not profess the Catholic faith in its entirety . . . “

Further, the *Catechism* speaks of a “certain, although imperfect, communion with the Catholic Church in these instances. But where the Orthodox are concerned, “this communion is so profound ‘that it lacks little to attain the fullness that would permit a common celebration of the Lord’s Eucharist.’” The spiritual bond is so deep and true that in case of emergency a Roman Catholic may attend Orthodox liturgy, and receive Orthodox sacraments.

Although symbolic gestures of reconciliation have been made, under both Paul VI and John Paul II, the ***Eastern Orthodox Churches are not yet in full or formal communion with Rome***, as the *Albuquerque Journal* mistakenly cited, 3 April 2005, in their exuberant and generous editorial homage to John Paul, on the occasion of his death. Alas, such formal communion has not yet come to pass, although it was dear to John Paul’s heart.

On the other hand, KOBTV’s Ten O’clock News that same night denied Byzantine Rite Catholics their actual full and formal communion with Rome! A reporter visiting the Byzantine parish in town spoke of Byzantine Catholics differing “on fundamental religious issues” but holding a memorial Mass for the Holy Father to express their sympathy with Roman Catholics, and their unity in *faith*. The anchorperson spoke of them as “Catholics with differences from the Roman Catholic Church.” The only difference is in liturgical rite. The confusion here is between an Eastern Church and an Eastern liturgical rite.

Byzantine Catholics are fully in communion with Rome. They accept the pope as their head, and their memorial Mass was fully Catholic, their sorrow not merely sympathy, but actual pain at the loss of their Father and head of their communion and community.

Eastern Rite churches, a.k.a. Eastern Uniate, are united with Rome.

The only differences from the Latin rite are in elements of liturgical worship and practical disciplines. There are actually nine authentic rites in the Roman Catholic Church, all in full union with the Holy Father. Those rites are: Latin or Roman, Byzantine, Armenian, Chaldean, Coptic, Ethiopian, Malabar, Maronite, and Syrian. “In this sense,” says the *Encyclopedia*, “the word ‘rite’ is often considered synonymous with ‘liturgy.’”

In other words, an Eastern rite may be in perfect communion with Rome. An Eastern Church may not be! We need to be vigilant in catching such errors and correcting them. What does Christ say? Those who are not faithful in small things cannot be trusted with greater responsibilities. That applies to media reports, as it does to all else!

One editorial unites Eastern Orthodoxy to Rome in formal communion, against all fact and doctrinal or institutional obstacles. The other TV report separates a perfectly legitimate Byzantine Church and rite from its full, formal, legitimate union and communion with Rome, by journalistic misunderstanding!

Although media memorials to John Paul II meant well, such errors as these do no justice to his memory. But they do warn us to accept all media coverage of the Church with a grain of salt, or better, a full shaker of salt.✚

June Calendar

Friday, June 17, 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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