

Los Pequeños Pepper

Publication of Los Pequeños de Cristo

May 2004



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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.

USCCB Seeking a Few Great Hymns

Timely response to *Liturgiam Authenticam*

Oakland California's new bishop, Allen Vigneron, is heading a United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) subcommittee charged with the preparation of composition guidelines to ensure that Church hymns conform to Church teaching. The subcommittee's work is a response to the 2001 instruction from the Holy See, *Liturgiam Authenticam*.

Liturgiam Authenticam cautions that "the greatest prudence and attention" in preparation of liturgical books must be used to assure that they reflect sound doctrine, are exact in their wording and are free from all ideological influence. It also calls on bishops' conferences to provide "for the publication of a directory or repertory of texts intended for liturgical singing" within five years.

Msgr. Anthony Sherman, associate director of the bishops' secretariat for liturgy, explains one of the problems found in much contemporary hymnody. "There are some hymns that you could look at and say there is too much emphasis on what we are doing and not enough on God's action in our life or on God's grace that uses our instrumentality to achieve things."

Some hymn texts, however, deliberately undermine Church teaching. "For the Healing of the Nations," to use an example, complains to God about "dogmas that obscure your plan." Other hymns refer to the Eucharist as a "symbol."

A great hymn, on the other hand, is singable, biblically and liturgically based, worshipful, and literate. While the bishops' committee could devise a list of 100 core hymns that every Catholic in the United States should know, given the enormous volume of hymns on the market, it's more likely that they will prepare guidelines explaining what makes a hymn acceptable or unacceptable. ☞



... AS A ROHR'ing LION

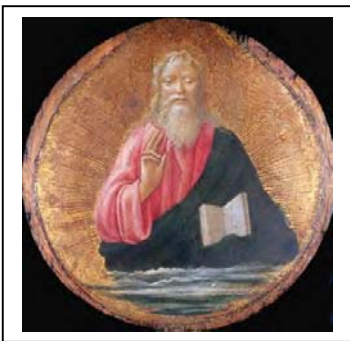
Ravening Ignorance

By Marie P. Loehr

Be sober, be watchful! For your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, goes about seeking someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith . . .

- 1 Peter 5:7-9

We could write a book on the dozens of erroneous, or contradictory, statements that fill Rev. Richard Rohr's much-touted books. In the interests of time and sanity, here are several Rohr-schachs to illustrate the problem.



Mother and Father: "As these human relationships are healed and matured, we become capable of true union with a God who is both Mother and Father." (*The Wild Man's Journey*, p. 109.)

Scripture does use some maternal images to describe God's love and mercy. However, we cannot characterize God as Mother. God Himself tells us His name: Father. This is not to imply that He is male or masculine in human sexual terms, but that He is *generative*, the fullness of Being, the source of all Creation and of all life in Creation. Our sexuality is a pale shadow of His covenant, communion, and creativity.

YHWH names Himself "I AM" to Moses. Christ repeats this, saying: "Before Abraham was, I AM." In short, God is a linking verb in both a grammatical and a generative sense. God is FATHER, as seen in the procession of the Trinity, in the creation of Adam and Eve, in His espoused Israel, in Christ and His Church. Christ tells Philip, "he who sees me sees the Father." (See *The Pequeños Pepper*, January 2004, "Androgyny, New Age Confusion and Inclusive Language" on this false use of Mother.)

The Church: "The Gospel...is not at all concerned with the organization of the Church...Scholars have to work hard to piece together fragments of the New Testament to come up with even a vague guess as to how the early Church was organized." (*TWMJ*, p. 75)

Are such men scholars – or fools – each grasping at parts of the Word like the blind men unable discern the elephant? We do not need certified scholars to see that Christ has an organization in mind from the beginning, *as the Church has always taught*. He picks twelve men. He trains them as an elite core. He chooses seventy-two, trains them, and sends them out to preach, teach, and heal. He lays down the framework of each sacrament. He bases his final instructions on his previous choices, organization, and training. Acts and Paul confirm this in detailed descriptions of Pentecost and the spread of the Church.

In his latest book, *Soul Brothers: Men in the Bible Speak to Men Today* (cited in *America*, February 9, 2004, p. 12), Rohr says: "Faith, for Isaiah, is not believing in doctrines, finding security in institutions, or belonging to groups (because he has deconstructed all of these), but *an active and positive accepting of what is* – moment by moment, event by event, tragedy by tragedy, grace by grace."

Yet Isaiah does NOT accept *what is*. He demands conformity to God's absolute IS. A prophet is a witness to Truth, to God's essence and order, to God's structures and strictures – as articulated in the first five books of the Old Testament. Isaiah cries that sin and its infidelity to God have deconstructed Israel. Only blind men could miss this.

Homosexuality: “Homosexuality is a surprise that God throws into nature... The rest of us are also bisexual, in the sense of having the capacity to love both sexes. And we all want...to combine the masculine and feminine . . . Those cultures that look on it as unhealthy, in my opinion, have an excessive need for order...What we want when we look for order is...control. The ego likes control.” (*Quest for the Grail*, pp. 85-86.)

First, homosexuality is *not* a surprise that God throws into nature. By Scriptural and doctrinal definition it is a *disordered* condition that can be lived with chastely, however difficult (See *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* under “homosexuality”). In contradiction, Rohr often implies God or the Church is the source of dysfunction in individuals and society.

Second, when Rohr speaks of all of us having the capacity to love both sexes, he is deliberately ambiguous. Friendship and fraternal love do not imply sexual expression and are therefore not “bisexual.”

Rohr’s confusion in this matter is typical of the thought promulgated by some “liberated” priests and religious, who have taught that the only way to express LOVE is by explicit sexual acts. This is the reduction of all relationship and activity to a single material dimension. Expressed in liturgy, this is the idea that only physical community and conformity show participation at Mass. This is a corrupt idea of incarnate reality and relationship in the Spirit.

Third, why does Rohr fear “order”? Is he simply against order, *per se*, or has he defined the term as meaning regulatory minutiae or totalitarianism? What of the order of the Trinity and its Creation, that template from which all other law derives? It is an interior organic necessity. To ignore it is to court injury to soul or body. If you put your unprotected hand in fire, you get burned. That is a law of nature. It is absolute. Spiritual laws are equally exigent, whether we like it or not. We may not re-order those to please ourselves or anyone else.

Fourth, what does he mean by “control”? Control, like pseudo-order, may be totalitarian and manipulative. On the other hand, it may be a legitimate demand for an accurate understanding of God’s willed order – spiritual and moral truth. Like traffic lights, true order and control are confining only to the immature. In fact, they are welcome guarantees of true freedom to the one who has outgrown adolescent rebelliousness.

Feminism: In *The Quest for the Grail*, Rohr discusses masculine and feminine nature in Jungian terms. He describes the masculine consciousness as objectivity, intellect, logic, the word. He says men are awkward with the soul, with feelings, and with the body world. Women, on the other hand, he says, “do the feeling for the family, for the marriage. In the relationship and feeling world the woman moves with self-confidence. She in turn is at her weakest when she moves into the world of opinions and what males call objectivity.... It would be futile to explain a woman from a man’s perspective because you probably are not understanding it anyway.” (*TQFTG*, pp. 88-91.)

Rohr’s mindset produces a catch-22 for a woman. If she bursts into tears, she’s just being her emotional self. If she presents a reasoned argument, she’s being an opinionated annoyance. Either way, she’s the weaker vessel.

It’s hard to understand why religious feminists give Rohr a pass on his defective notions of feminine consciousness. Rohr’s stereotypes have nothing to do with men and women as created and redeemed. They are corruptions due to sin and its effects. Thus, the solution to that problem, as to most, is not Jung or Rohr; it’s Christ and a disciplined interior life.☺

Resource References

What does it mean to be a man? What does it mean to be a father, especially?

We should always refer to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for definitions and examinations of doctrine. It’s helpful to have John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body* on hand, as well. The references listed below cover a wide range from the most simple and direct discussion of the nature of the Father, fatherhood, and the meaning of masculinity to difficult works in mystical theology and its asceticism, which also reveal the meaning of manhood in its toughest, most disciplined sense. All men must cultivate humility, and the humor that grows from that virtue--which Teresa of Avila defines as TRUTH--about God, about oneself. They must also learn discipline, discernment, and detachment to be truly protector and provider, patriarch and bridegroom.

Andrew Doze. *Saint Joseph: Shadow of the Father*. Alba House: NY, 1992. As head of the Holy Family, St. Joseph is a particular example of the nature of the masculine, true manhood, the role of the father in the family. He follows the Father Himself in self-effacement, in covenant keeping, in living St. Paul’s “cherishing” of wife and children even unto death, as Christ so loved His Church and Bride.

F.X. Durrwell, C.S.S.R. *In the Redeeming Christ: Toward a Theology of Spirituality*. Sheed and Ward: NY, 1963. Christ is our primary model of redeemed humanity, particularly as Lord, priest, prophet and Bridegroom, thus men must particularly follow on His way, in His footsteps. The more we learn about Christ, the easier it is to love Him. The more we love Him, the easier it is to follow Him in SERVICE, which is expressed in a distinctive way through the masculine.

Jean Galot, S.J. *Abba Father: We Long to See Your Face*. Alba House: NY, 1992. The Father as the source and template of human manhood and its paternity . . .

Scott Hahn. *A Father Who Keeps His Promises*. Charis Books: 1998.

_____. *First Comes Love: Finding Your Family in the Church and in the Trinity*. Doubleday: NY, 2002. Uniformly excellent and down-to-earth . . .

John of the Cross. *Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*. Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D. ed. ICS publications: Washington DC, 1991. For the Marines of the spiritual life and manhood in Christ!

John Paul II. *Catechesis on the Creed. God: Father and Creator, I. Jesus: Son and Savior, II. Spirit: Giver of Life and Love, III*. Also, *Familiaris Consortio*. Available from various Catholic sources.

Towards a Civilization of Love: A Symposium. Ignatius Press: San Francisco, 1985. This deals with the Sacred Heart, but it provides valuable insights into Christ, His love, and the nature of true manhood, as a result. See especially Ignace de la Potterie, S.J.; Leo Joseph Cardinal Suenens; Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger. This is more general, and also more “hard-core” theology, but useful in learning to live in Christ, to love as Christ.

Supreme Court Rules

Pro-life protestors cannot be prosecuted for blocking clinic doors

The Supreme Court has ruled that pro-life protesters cannot be prosecuted for blocking clinic doors and other disruptive behavior.

At issue was the use of federal laws against racketeering and extortion to go after anti-abortion groups who use sit-ins and demonstrations that obstruct public access to medical clinics. Federal prosecutors have normally used such anti-racketeering and extortion laws – RICO laws – to go after organized crime.

The 8-1 majority report said that because the protesters “did not obtain or attempt to obtain [clinic] property, both the state extortion claims and the claim of attempting or conspiring to commit state extortion were fatally flawed.”

The National Organization for Women first filed a lawsuit on behalf of abortion clinics in 1986, and the Court eight years later ruled in its favor. Leaders of the anti-abortion movement, including Operation Rescue and the Pro-Life Action Network, filed a new legal claim the justices heard last fall.

Protest tactics, including picketing and handing out leaflets are protected free speech activities. However, pro-abortion activists have attempted to argue that all confrontations between pro-lifers and clinic workers or their patients were planned and organized, and therefore represented “a pattern of extortion.” The Hobbs Act, a federal law that made it a crime to obstruct or affect interstate commerce “by robbery or extortion” when “induced by the wrongful use of actual or threatened force, violence and fear” has been cited as applicable to pro-life protests.

The justices concluded that while anti-abortion activists have certainly disrupted the clinics and crimes may have been committed during some of their protests, that pro-lifers have not done these activities for economic gain. “...[E]ven when their acts of interference and disruption achieved their ultimate goal of ‘shutting down’ a clinic that performed abortions, such acts did not constitute extortion.”



Gay Friendly?

The Conference for Catholic Lesbians' website provides a state by state list of "Lesbian and Gay Friendly" Catholic parishes. New Mexico has four on the list – though one suspects there may be others that will feel slighted. They are:

- St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center (University of New Mexico),
- Holy Family – Albuquerque
- Risen Savior – Albuquerque
- Sacred Heart of Jesus –Española

It's easy to understand how **St. Thomas Aquinas Newman Center** made the list. For years, Dignity – an "advocate for change in the Church's teaching on homosexuality" and a member of Call to Action's COR network (Dignity brochure, 1996) – has been meeting at the Center for Mass. The current schedule, according to Dignity's website, is 7:00 p.m., every first Sunday of the month.

Other weeks, the Dignity Mass is held on Saturday, 5:30 p.m. at **Holy Family Catholic Church**. Holy Family has been host to P-FLAG, an organization that, like Dignity, seeks to change opinions about homosexual activity. For many years, the parish was also the home of the Center for Action and Contemplation, where Fr. Richard Rohr "blessed" a same sex relationship and where a New Ways Ministry "Bridge Building" program taught that scripture has nothing to say about the morality of same-sex attractions.

In 1986, the Vatican issued a *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*. This document instructed bishops to withdraw all support, or even the semblance of support, from any group vague on the immorality of homogenital acts. Dignity was one of the first such organizations targeted, and the following year over a dozen dioceses expelled chapters from Church property.

*We wonder what has put **Risen Savior** and **Sacred Heart of Jesus in Española** on the gay-friendly map. Parishioners at either parish are invited to contact *Los Pequeños* and explain what makes your "worship community" outstandingly inclusive and welcoming. ☺*



The Jay Report

The National Review Board's Report on the Crisis in the Catholic Church

By Cecelia Martin

The National Review Board's Report on the Crisis in the Catholic Church may be found at www.usccb.org/ocyp/charter.htm. Print copies may be ordered from the USCCB at the above web address.

Background

In the early winter months of 2002, Boston, Massachusetts became the epicenter of a series of scandals that rocked the Roman Catholic Church to its roots. Lurid but factual news accounts revealed that the Archdiocese of Boston had transferred a serial pedophile priest from parish to parish for decades even after complaints surfaced that he had molested young children. The tragic story of Father John Geoghan, now deceased, opened a floodgate of accusations against a number of priests who had similarly sexually abused youth. Just as quickly, it became known that bishops, aware of the proclivities of and charges against their priests, failed in their duties to respond adequately to that abuse.

In June 2002, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), assembled in Dallas, Texas amidst a firestorm of nationwide media coverage. On the eve of the conference, the *Dallas Morning News* reported two-thirds of the 177 Latin rite dioceses (111) had harbored priests who had been accused or convicted of sexual crimes. All eight Cardinals, along with numerous bishops, were implicated; Church leaders did not dispute the findings. There was a scramble for causes and solutions.

At the conclusion of the Dallas meeting, the bishops adopted the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*...that included a “zero tolerance” policy for priests who engage in sexual abuse. The *Charter* established a National Review Board composed of lay Catholics who would prepare a report evaluating the “causes and context” of the crisis. After a bit of fine-tuning by Rome, the *Charter* was approved by the Vatican as policy for the Catholic Church in the United States. (The problem of clerical sexual abuse however, is not limited to the U.S.)

On February 27, 2004, the Review Board presented its report to Bishop Wilton Gregory, president of the USCCB, and to the public. The board was made up of thirteen lay Catholics selected by the bishops. The Honorable Anne Burke served as Interim Chair and Robert S. Bennett, Esq., the Research Committee Chair. The Conference commissioned a research group at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the City University of New York to conduct a survey of all U. S. dioceses and religious orders to determine the number of allegations of abuse, the nature of the abuse, and the response of the Church.

Two Questions

The study was predicated upon two fundamental questions: “*Why did individuals with a disposition to prey sexually upon minors gain admission to the priesthood?*” and “*How did they manage to remain in the priesthood even after allegations and evidence of such abuse became known to their bishops and other Church leaders?*”

The John Jay College states that from 1950 to 2002, Church records indicate that 4,392 priests, a representation of four percent of the 109,694 priests, were accused of engaging in the sexual abuse of a minor. There were approximately 10,667 reported minor victims of clergy sexual abuse. Eighty-one percent of the victims were male, 19 percent female. The Report states, “...any evaluation of the causes and context of the current crisis must be cognizant of the fact that *more*



than eighty percent of the abuse at issue was of a homosexual nature.” (emphasis added)

Approximately seventy-eight percent of the victims were between the ages of eleven to seventeen when the abuse began. More than three-quarters of the victims were of an age wherein the conduct is not classified as pedophilia; however, “there were substantial numbers of very young children who were victimized by priests during this period,” almost 2,000. Nevertheless, the media’s labeling of the crisis as one of “pedophile priests” was inaccurate.

In addition, the abuse occurred throughout the country. However, contrary to initial reports, there doesn’t appear to have been much transferring of predator priests to other dioceses. The prevalence of abuse was highest among diocesan priests, 4.3%. By contrast, 2.7% of religious order priests were abusers. “Priests ordained in the early 1970’s were more likely to have been accused of sexual abuse of a minor than priests ordained in any other period.”

The Report states that the bishops’ inadequate response to the crisis over the past twenty-five years is even more distressing than the facts of the abuse. “Their responses were characterized by moral laxity, excessive leniency, insensitivity, secrecy, and neglect.” Coupled with their failure, the amount of monies paid out to victims in counseling fees, settlements, and attorney fees is very near the one-half-billion dollar mark.

Did the Bishops Know?

The short answer is yes. Since the scandals broke, hundreds of priests have been removed from ministry. Why did these priests remain active after their bishops knew of their activities? Hindsight reveals a majority of bishops did not grasp the gravity of the problem nor did they appreciate the trauma and subsequent suffering endured by the victims. In the 50’s and 60’s the nature of sexual abuse of the young was not well understood. Nevertheless, such conduct always constituted a criminal act.

Church culture heavily favored the accused priest; belief in and protection of the priest took precedence over the accusations and suffering of the victims. Often the cleric charged with interviewing an accused priest was his friend or a former classmate. The priest investigator rarely heard directly from the victim and was quick to believe his brother priest’s protestations.

Clericalism played a part in the bishops’ determination that nothing untoward would happen on their watch. A cult of secrecy grew up which was maintained to such a degree that bishops did not even speak to other bishops regarding the escalating problem of predator priests. The report states, “Finally, the haughty attitude of some bishops, which has exacerbated the crisis, is a byproduct of clericalism. Just as priests are often placed on a pedestal far above the laity that they serve, certain bishops appear far removed from their priests.” Sadly, the laity trusted the Church to take care of them. When it did not, anger, grief and a loss of faith followed.

In addition to what became known as an “institutional cover-up,” Church leaders relied heavily on attorneys who cautioned them, even in the face of an exploding crisis, to never meet with or apologize to the victims even when the allegations had been substantiated. Consequently, the bishops remained preoccupied with litigation and missed the massive amount of human suffering those individuals and families were enduring. Some of the victims eventually committed suicide.

Summary

Although commissioned by the bishops, the Report is a scathing indictment of their failure in their guardianship and teaching role. The lack of accountability by the bishops is thoroughly exposed. The Report states despite the fact that “Canon law 1389 provides for a penalty, including dismissal from office for a Church official who with culpable negligence fails to perform an act of ecclesiastical governance,” it has never been applied to Church officials in the United States. “Authority without accountability is tyranny....” ☹

*...[T]he
media’s
labeling of the
crisis as one
of “pedophile
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St. Pius X High School Review

The much anticipated independent review of St. Pius X High School has finally been completed. The Archbishop promised this review almost two years ago in response to ongoing parental concerns about the Catholic identity of the school. *The Pepper* has described a number of those concerns.

Despite the intense and understandable interest in the report by a number of parents, the Archbishop has released only a page and a half summary of the recommendations and his own cover letter, identifying a number of positive findings. The full report has been withheld. Why?

Regardless of the spin, the short summary of recommendations points to some glaring omissions in a school that calls itself Catholic. The recommendations recognize (among other things):

- a need for the school to have a theology curriculum that follows Church teaching,
- a need for the school to recognize the parental right of opting out of sex ed (that ought only to be taught in an identifiable class),
- that Pius teachers must be teaching Church teaching, and
- that the school Chaplain needs to be free to oversee the spiritual needs of students.

Such recommendations imply that there is no theology curriculum in place (as parents have attested), that the school has been pushing sex ed inappropriately (as students have complained), and that some teachers have not been teaching Catholicism (as has been amply demonstrated by the materials students have been forced to read and study).

And it leaves parents with many questions. For example, one recommendation states: “Teaching candidates for teaching positions in the Theology Department will meet the standards set by the Superintendent...” Yes? But one wonders, *How many* of the current theology teachers do not meet these standards?

Another recommendation states: “Theology curriculum for grades 9-12 will be developed or adopted by the high school Theology Department...” What is being taught in the meantime?

The seventh recommendation states: “Instruction and materials that address sex education will conform to the doctrine and authentic teachings of the Catholic Church...” Does this mean that the school was previously unaware that it needed to adhere to Church teachings?

The fourteenth recommendation states: “The high school should follow and consistently enforce its published harassment and behavior policies.” How do we identify and compensate the students who have been victims of harassment without appropriate corrective action?

Finally, the last recommendation states: “All current and future theology faculty will agree to be true to the Magisterium and the authentic teachings of the Catholic Church both in the classroom and as witnessed in their personal lives as believing Catholics as stated in the St. Pius X High School Teacher Contract.” Why has the school maintained teachers who have not been true to the Magisterium or who haven’t lived their personal lives as believing Catholics?

If these are not issues with which the school must grapple, why did the consultant bother to make such recommendations? And if the Archdiocese were *not* attempting to put a “positive” slant on a difficult review, why doesn’t it make the full report available to the parents?

After having excoriated both the concerned parents of St. Pius X High School students and Los Pequeños de Cristo – in private correspondence and in the public media – for bringing up problems about the school, one would expect the Archdiocese to be more forthcoming. ☹

And if the Archdiocese were not attempting to put a “positive” slant on a difficult review, why does it not make the full report available to the parents?

National Right to Life Committee Lobbies against South Dakota Life Bill

This winter the South Dakota legislature considered a bill to legally define human life as beginning at conception, an act that would have outlawed abortion in the state [See *The Pepper*, March 2004].

According to a March 31 statement from the Thomas More Law Center, this would have been the most sweeping anti-abortion state law enacted in the United States since before *Roe v. Wade*. Sioux Falls Bishop Robert Carlson and Rapid City Bishop Blaise Cupich released a joint statement to the legislators in support of the bill.

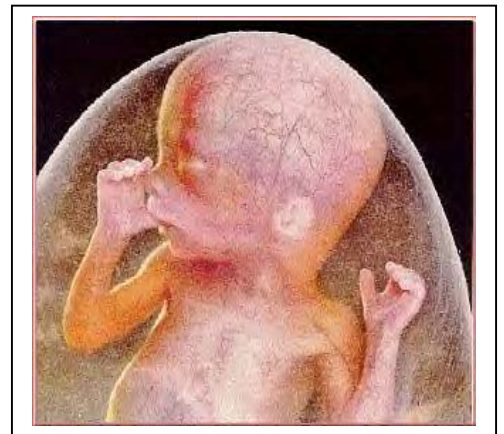
Unfortunately, despite passage of the bill by the South Dakota House of Representatives in February, lobbying efforts of the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC) “knocked the wheels off” it when it moved to the Senate. There, NRLC argued that the legislation was “untimely” and that pro-abortion groups would be awarded legal fees if it were ultimately to prove unconstitutional.

The Thomas More Law Center writes that this assertion of untimeliness is “speculative and shortsighted.” It ignored the unique substance of the proposed legislation, which included recent findings of medical science that “definitively establish that life begins at conception.”

The Center further argues that not only have other movements benefited from supposedly “untimely” legislation, but that the NRLC has itself proposed legislation that had little apparent hope of passage, reasoning that the process would, if nothing else, educate citizens about certain aspects of abortion’s grisly reality.

Concerning the argument that pro-abortion groups might be awarded legal fees if the proposed legislation were ultimately to prove unconstitutional, the Thomas More Law Center asks: “Since when has the NRLC cared more about money than unborn babies? And who made NRLC guardian of South Dakota tax dollars?....No award of fees would have gone to Planned Parenthood’s abortion business or resulted in more abortions.” Such fees would have only paid legal costs.

The Center’s public statement closes with the comment that: “Such conduct raises important questions about NRLC’s claim to represent the interests of the unborn, and its right to receive support and allegiance from those who want to serve the pro-life cause.” ☹



Fetal Pain?

Little considered aspect of abortion brutality

Three courts in different parts of the country heard testimony this spring for cases concerning the Partial Birth Abortion Ban. In one, the judge questioned abortionists about infant pain during the procedure, wanting to know if the infant was still alive during dismemberment and if the doctors involved had considered the problem of fetal pain. "

The judge was also concerned with how much information the doctors told the mother. It was reported that he asked, “So you tell her the arms and legs are pulled off. I mean, that’s what I want to know, do you tell her...[that] you are going to remove parts of her baby?....Do you describe in detail what the intact D&E or the partial birth abortion involves...including sucking the brain out of the skull?” ☹

SEX EDUCATION STUDY

Strong families; low teenage pregnancy rates

The Family Education Trust, an independent English think-tank that researches the causes and effects of family breakdown, has published a study that examines claims made about the nature of sex education in the Netherlands, and its relationship to the low teenage pregnancy rate in that country. The British government's teenage pregnancy strategy places great emphasis on the role to be played by sex education in lowering high teenage pregnancy rates, and the Netherlands has been held up as an example. However, research conducted in primary and secondary schools in the Netherlands by Joost van Loon, a Dutch academic who is now a reader in social theory at Nottingham Trent University, calls this into question.

In fact, the Family Education Trust asserts that the primary lesson to be learned from the low teenage pregnancy rate in the Netherlands is that we should cut welfare benefits to teenage mothers and strengthen the family. The detailed study of what is actually taught in a selection of primary and secondary schools finds, surprisingly, that parents and school governors have more control over what is taught, and the influence of the churches is stronger than in Great Britain.

Even more to the point, it argues that teenage pregnancy is a result of the early sexual activity associated with non-traditional family structures. In particular, girls who grow up in fatherless households are more likely to be sexually active at younger ages. It is therefore significant that the family is more intact in the Netherlands than in the UK. British children are five times more likely to live in a household headed by a lone parent than their Dutch counterparts (p.53). They are more likely to be in third-party care and to find no one at home when they get back from school because their mothers are at work (pp.55-57).

Sex education, on the other hand, tends to remove the stigma from early sexual activity, so long as it is accompanied by contraceptive use. ☺



“Deconstructing the Dutch Utopia: Sex education and teenage pregnancy in the Netherlands” by Joost van Loon is published by Family Education Trust, The Mezzanine, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London SE1 7NQ, tel 020 7401 5480, www.famyouth.org.uk. Price £8.50 inc. pp.

Pope John Paul II on the Removal of Feeding Tubes

His words have important implications for the Terri Schiavo case

Terri Schiavo is a brain-damaged woman who made international news last year when her feeding tube was removed and then reinserted 10 days later, after massive public outcry. Pope John Paul II's recent declaration that the removal of feeding tubes is immoral seems almost to be written with Schiavo's situation in mind.

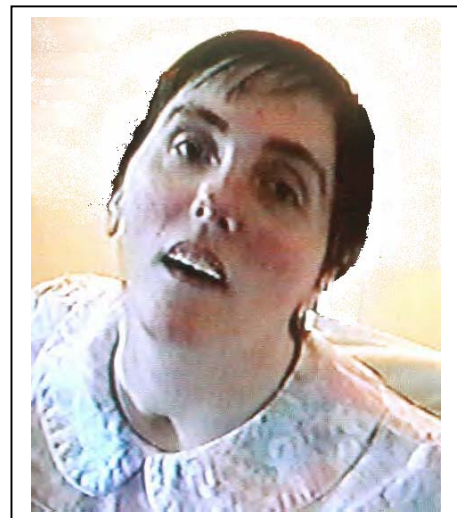
In March 2004, the World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations and the Pontifical Academy for Life (a Vatican advisory body) organized a Vatican conference on the ethical dilemmas of dealing with incapacitated patients. Following the conference, the Holy Father said that the removal of feeding tubes from people in vegetative states was immoral, and that no judgment on their quality of life could justify such "euthanasia by omission." He said that even the medical terminology used to describe people in so-called "persistent vegetative states" was degrading since such a person "is and will always be a man, never becoming a 'vegetable' or 'animal.'"

In a so-called "vegetative state," patients are awake but not aware of themselves or their environment. The condition is different from a coma, in which the patient is neither awake nor apparently aware. Both, however, are states in which the patient appears devoid of consciousness. If that state continues for a month, the patient is said to be in a persistent vegetative state; after a year without improvement, the patient is said to be in a permanent vegetative state. Terri Schiavo's case is particularly poignant, as she is responsive to her environment, smiling at music and loved ones, frowning when tickled, and making guttural sounds at appropriate moments of a conversation.

Providing food and water to such patients should be considered natural, ordinary, and proportional care -- not artificial medical intervention, the pope told members of the conference. As such, it is morally obligatory to continue such care.

If minimal care, including food and water, is knowingly and deliberately denied a patient, euthanasia by omission has been committed, according to the pope, and is always a violation of God's law.

Terri Schiavo's husband has battled her parents for years to have his wife's feeding tube removed so she can die. He has denied her any therapeutic stimulation, access to her family, and even the presence of a priest. In his comments, John Paul said families of such people need more emotional and economic support, so that they can better care for their loved ones. In addition, he said, society should commit more money to find cures for them. ☹



Around the Archdiocese

- Call to Action's survey of priest opinions on celibacy has blossomed into the Corpus Christi Campaign for Optional Celibacy. Optional celibacy – rather than increased holiness – is touted as the answer to priest shortages in the world of cafeteria Catholicism. (In the Catholic country of Malta, where contraception and abortion are rigorously outlawed, roughly one tenth of the population has embraced the celibate religious life.)
- The Dominican Spiritual Renewal Center hosted two Call to Action related events.
 - Sharon Pikula – one of the founding members of Call to Action New Mexico –spoke in March and April on “Exploring the Images of God,” and
 - Pax Christi – a Call to Action affiliated organization – held a “Tools of Peace” retreat, April 30- May 2.
 - In addition, the Center had a Centering Prayer Retreat, a yoga class, and a Tai Chi Retreat this Spring.
- Richard Rohr (see pg. 5-6, “As a Rohr’ing Lion,” or Rohr Dossier, which may be viewed at www.lospequenos.org) was a keynote speaker at the National Catholic Catechetical Leaders 68th Annual Meeting and Expo – which was advertised in the archdiocese’s newspaper, *The People of God*, and its April 2004 *PMD Express*.
- Fr. John Dear, S.J. – a priest in good standing with the Archdiocese of Santa Fe – spoke at the Call to Action, Southern California Conference, held March 19-21, 2004.
- New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, a Catholic who held his inaugural festivities at the archdiocese’s St. Francis Cathedral in Santa Fe, attended a February news conference for the abortion rights group, NARAL, helping them to launch a \$25 million fund-raising effort.

May Calendar

Friday, May 22, 2004:

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

Pro-life Prayer Each Tuesday:

- from 8:30 am – 9:30 am, join Fr. Pio O’Conner for prayer at the Planned Parenthood Abortuary at 701 San Mateo Blvd.
- from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m., join Fr. David Phillipson for prayer at the Planned Parenthood Abortuary at 701 San Mateo Blvd.
Call (505) 286-1655 for more information.

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