

Los Pequeños Pepper

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April 2004

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Chinese prison*

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Stephanie Block-editor, Carol Suhr-copy editor
Correspondence to *The Pequeños Pepper* may be addressed to:
325 Ellen St. NW
Los Lunas, NM 87031
or phone: 505 866 0977 or www.lospequenos.org
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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.

Celibacy: Fidelity to One's Priestly Identity

By Dominic Tang Yee-ming, S.J.,
Former Archbishop of Canton (deceased)

In consideration of Call to Action-New Mexico's effort to foment a bit of priestly rebellion, The Pepper found Archbishop Tang Yee-ming's words particularly poignant.

I was fourteen years old when I told my mother that I wished to be a priest. She sent me to Macau about 40 miles west of Hong Kong (where I was born) to enter St Joseph's seminary located there. Six years later, I obtained my bishop's permission to enter the Portuguese province of the Society of Jesus. After the usual studies, I was ordained in Shanghai in 1941 and remained in that city ministering to the Cantonese-speaking Catholics until I returned to Canton in 1946 and was assigned to Shekki, a city to the North of Macau. On 1 October 1950, Pius XII nominated me as Apostolic Administrator of the Canton Diocese.

These first years of priestly ministry were difficult ones, for the Communists were already in power and the Catholic faithful were undergoing intense pressures. My approach was pastoral and my first care was to animate the clergy who had been disheartened by the revolutionary changes that were then taking place in China — the Sino-Japanese War and following upon this the Communist take-over of power. I initiated a programme of intense pastoral activity with frequent sermons, retreats and other devotional practices. I invited the clergy and Sisters to take part in this ministry.

Relations with the political authorities deteriorated owing to my refusal to countenance the Patriotic Association they had set up to separate the Chinese Church from the Holy See. I myself was subjected to six public denunciations and finally arrested and brought to jail on 5 February 1958. For the following 22 years, I was kept isolated from all family and friends. During seven years, I was kept in solitary confinement even from my fellow prisoners. Prayer and the Spirit of the Lord sustained me especially in those dark hours when at times I felt far from the Lord.

It is from this background that I have reflected on the theme presented to me for comment: celibacy — the heart of a priest's identity and commitment. How do I view celibacy for the priest? I see it as a response to a call from the Lord, to give oneself totally to him and to the care of his people. A married man has obligations to his wife and family. These are of prime importance and he cannot shirk them without serious detriment to himself and his family. This is his responsibility before the Lord. For his way of life — the married state — is his response to the call of the Lord. If a priest were to be married, this commitment to family would take precedence over his pastoral ministry. Since this is so, I ask, how can a priest, who is called to dedicate himself totally to his people, marry? He would be immersed in his own world, concerned and preoccupied about his wife and children, and would be seriously torn between two polarities - his family and the people to whom he ministers.

A priest's commitment is a response to a call from the Lord. The Lord himself



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did not marry. He gave himself totally to his people. It is in this way that the priest imitates the Lord.

I realize that there are those in the Church today who find this type of celibate commitment difficult, some say even impossible. Perhaps we should learn a lesson from the Chinese Communists. During the Cultural Revolution in China, many of the clergy were forced into marriages. This was one way the Communists attacked the Church and its ministers. They did not understand celibacy, belittled it and wanted to do away with it. There were priests who got married. However, over the years, the Communists have come to realize that Catholics will not accept these married priests as their ministers. They strongly oppose having any Catholic priest who is married to act as their spiritual leader. I do not believe that they are passing personal judgement on these priests, but what they are saying, it seems to me, is that they want celibate priests who can dedicate their whole lives to the Lord and to his people. No other commitment will do. I witnessed many cases of infidelity to celibacy in my long years of pastoral service. It is not to make any judgement on the persons involved, but it is sad to say that most of them did not remain faithful to their Christian life. Some wanted to convert but they were hindered by their 'wives' and not a few even lost their faith in the end. I cite two examples that are common knowledge in China. In Shanghai, a married priest wanted to say Mass in the church. The Catholics would not permit him to do this and took him off the altar. In Kunming, a bishop got married and was going to say a public Mass. Local Catholics heard of this and publicly advertised the fact. The bishop did not say Mass. This opposition coming from the Catholic community has forced the Communist authorities to change their policy. This is not easy for them to do. They have had to admit that only unmarried priests can be ordained to serve these communities. They do this not out of any admiration of the celibate state as such but to preserve harmony in the communities.

Does this demand of Chinese Catholic communities for celibate priests rest solely on traditional practices? This is to say, do these communities wish to have celibate priests only because that was what was done in the past and therefore should continue for the future? I believe not. I believe that the reasons behind these Catholic communities demanding celibate priests goes much deeper than mere tradition, although this may be one of the factors involved. Celibacy for the kingdom of God has its own value as the Lord himself states. St Paul counsels celibacy. One of its values he sees is the freedom it gives to the person. Celibates enjoy their freedom as a special gift by which they can fully dedicate themselves to the Lord and to his work. This sets such persons apart. This does not mean that these people are better than others who follow a different calling from the Lord. What it does mean is that the celibate person is set apart for total service to the Christian community. This is, I believe and as my experience teaches me, one of the chief reasons why our Chinese Catholic communities demand celibacy for their spiritual leaders. They want to have a person dedicated and determined to follow the Lord completely and who will in turn lead them to know, love and follow him. They themselves realize that they have many concerns and occupations. Owing to these concerns, they may not always have clear insight into the ways of the Lord. They trust their spiritual leaders who have completely dedicated themselves to the Lord, to help them discover his ways in their lives.

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Celibacy is not something completely foreign to our Chinese culture. Buddhist monks and nuns do not marry. They are seeking liberation from desire, a detachment from worldly pleasures that may impede them from attaining Nirvana. In the eyes of the Buddhist faithful, monks and nuns are expected to be faithful to their vows. They should not marry and if they do the Buddhist faithful would prefer them to return to the world rather than continue being a 'married monk or nun'. I note this fact not because I wish to identify the Buddhist motivation for celibacy with the Christian profession of celibacy undertaken from the kingdom of God as proclaimed by Jesus in the Gospel. I just wish to emphasize the value placed upon celibacy, and the expectations even non-Catholics have for fidelity in living such vows. As in the case of Catholic priests, the Communist authorities have been compelled to recognize this fact and so they have ceased forcing Buddhist monks and nuns to marry.

I have personally witnessed many times over the inner strength the Lord gives to a person facing the loss of freedom, suffering and even death. Specifically, I wish to talk about those who have vowed celibacy and who have persevered in their commitment. I am well aware that not only celibate Christians have had to witness to Christ. The Annals of the Chinese martyrs, once it is written, will be long with the names of the lay persons, men and women, young and old, who along with priests and sisters have had to endure suffering, imprisonment and even death for their commitment to the Lord. I wish to point out that a celibate life, one that is lived in close union with the Lord, does prepare one very well for the supreme sacrifice of one's life if this is the path that the Lord leads his faithful disciple to follow.

There was my secretary, Fr Anthony Ngan Tak-Kang. Many called him a living saint. He would have smiled at this title and be amazed that his very ordinary life would merit such acclamation. He would refuse such praise and would continue to carry out his daily duties and live his life in accord with the promise he had made to the Lord many years before. He would see nothing heroic in this. However, when the moment of testing did arrive, he showed more than ordinary courage and fortitude. His outstanding example is but one among many that his brother priests from all over China have given and who had to undergo the same crucible of suffering. In his relations with women, Fr Ngan was always courteous and reserved. This did not prevent him from performing his pastoral work for whoever requested it, men or women. No one ever suggested that he was unfaithful in the smallest degree in his obligations to priestly celibacy. This is one of the main reasons why he was so respected and even venerated by all the Catholics who knew him.

He was a very good secretary. He understood my mind well and was an excellent advisor especially helping me make the many hard decisions during those difficult days when the Communists were applying more and more pressure to the Church. On one occasion, we were trying to find the means of paying the heavy taxes the authorities were imposing upon us. At the same time, we had to support our clergy and the sisters. Some counseled the selling of Church property and possessions. He simply said no; we could not dispose of Church property in violation of canon law, even if this meant that we had to live a poor life and suffer any privations. He wished that we walk with the poor Christ and preserve Church property. Certainly the pride of possessions did not motivate him. He just wanted to make sure that the Church had the means and wherewithal to continue its mission in the future when more difficult days were to come. A few months later we did lose all Church property. It was confiscated by the so-called 'Real Estate Management

Committee' — cadres of the Communist government and members of the Patriotic Association comprised this committee. In no way does this change the correctness of Fr Anthony's advice given at a time when good men and women were hard put to see beyond present travails.

He was arrested on the same day as I was and, like myself, was imprisoned without trial. He was sent to a labor camp in the North of Guangdong province. All that he owned at the time were the few rags on his back. He had always lived poorly and was constantly giving things away to those poorer than himself. Coarse food, hard labor and illness — his legs became infected and swollen so that he could not walk — caused his death. He never once wavered in his commitment to the Lord and fidelity to the Church.

I could go on to mention other priests as well, men such as my vicar general, Fr Andrew Chan Jik-san who took my place when I was arrested. He was brought to Beijing and pressured to become a bishop in my stead by joining the Patriotic Association under government control. He always refused. Back in Canton he was arrested. Beaten and kept in a police station, he was able to sneak out and crawled home on all fours. Some Christians took him in and he died soon after.

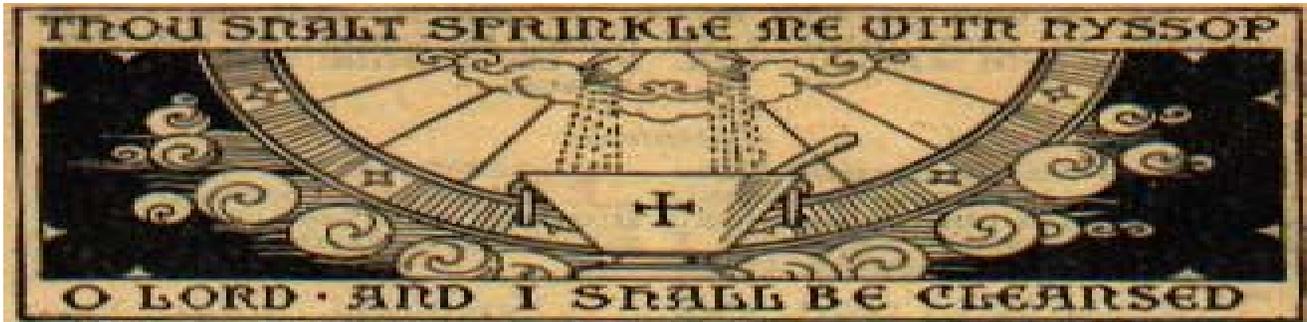
There were many more such witnesses to the faith in China. The words of the Letter to the Hebrews come to mind and they encourage us who are left behind: "Let us persevere in running the race that lies before us, while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus" (12:1).

Just before I was released from prison, I underwent a final examination. I was questioned on my attitude towards the Vatican, I answered: "I am a Catholic and I cannot separate from the Pope." This angered the official. "After 22 years you are still the same stubborn old man." Ten days later he came back to me and said: "First of all, you are honest. You have never used money given to the Church for your own personal benefit, not even the money given to you by your mother. Second, you never played around with women and, finally, you never have harmed the people." These were the three reasons given for my release. "Never playing around with women" was the negative way that officials used to attest to the fact that I had kept my celibacy intact. Of course, this was a grace of the Lord. It was a grace even manifest to an atheistic government that had no use for celibacy. Yet in releasing me from prison and inducing this as one of the reasons, they were forced to admit that something about celibacy was good. They could not say why, but we Christians can, for it is Jesus who said: "Some have renounced marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Whoever can accept this ought to accept it" (Mt 19:12, New American Bible). ♦



Chinese Martyrs

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Excerpts from...

Can Bishops Deny Catholic Pro-abortion Politicians Communion?

by Barbara Kralis

Many in the media have reported on the January 8, 2004 canonical actions of Archbishop Raymond Burke (then bishop of the La Crosse, Wisconsin diocese) to discipline persistent, obstinate, manifest pro-abortion Catholic legislators. Because of some misinformation, speculation and outright resentment, confusion reigns regarding the Archbishop's promulgation of his 'canonical notification' based on canon 915.

As Bishop of the over 200,000 Catholics in the diocese of La Crosse, Wisconsin for the past nine years, Raymond L. Burke, D.D., J.C.D., a canon lawyer, first conducted private communications with three 'Catholic' legislators, imploring them, "to make their consciences correct with Magisterial teachings." After all three politicians refused to meet with him, saying they instead reject the Church's infallible teachings, Bishop Burke issued a four paragraph 'canonical notification' to address the scandal they were causing in his diocese by their conduct 'which is seriously, clearly and steadfastly contrary to the moral norm' (EE n.37).

The notification declares: "...Catholic legislators who are members of the faithful of the Diocese of La Crosse and who continue to support procured abortion or euthanasia may not present themselves to receive Holy Communion. They are not to be admitted to Holy Communion, should they present themselves, until such time as they publicly renounce their support of these most unjust practices" (canon 915).

Burke exhorted, "No good bishops could stand by and let this happen. These public legislators are in grave sin."

CANON 915 – HOW BROADLY APPLIED?

Canon 915 places the responsibility on the minister - *ne admittantur* - who, in some canonists' opinion, could be punished according to canon 1389 §2, should he unlawfully administer the sacrament with the consequent danger of scandal for the rest of the faithful. In addition, canon 1339 prescribes the possibility of punishing any person who causes grave scandal by any violation of a divine or ecclesiastical law.

Canon 915 is a 'sacramental law' that talks about the Eucharist and how not to suffer scandal; it is not a penal law. There are four parts to canon 915 that must be satisfied: 1) The sin must be obstinate; 2) the person in question must persist in the sin; 3) the person in question must be a



Archbishop Raymond Burke

‘manifest’ (that is ‘public’) sinner; and, 4) it must be a grave sin. When all requirements are met, the Bishop, bound by canon 915 to protect the integrity of the Eucharist, must give the public sanction to his priests and deacons not to allow sacrilegious Communions, and to not cause scandal to the people. The Bishop here is not putting ‘sanction’ on the persons in question; they have, in fact, fallen under the canon 915 sacramental prohibition themselves.

This is not the first time American bishops have grappled with the problem. On November 11, 2003, during the USCCB’s Fall plenary meeting of its 275 active bishop members, several bishops attempted to consider which dissenting Catholic politicians should be denied the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Their consideration included abuse of such human rights as the death penalty, questions of war and peace, the role of marriage and family, the rights of parents to choose the best education for their children, the priority for the poor, welcome for immigrants. These Bishops were trying to revive from the grave the late Cardinal Bernardin’s false ‘seamless garment theory.’

Archbishop Burke said in an EWTN interview, “The ‘seamless garment’ can be interpreted incorrectly. Many fail to recognize the particular gravity of abortion and euthanasia. These are the gravest matters. If we care about abortion and euthanasia, all the other (human rights) will be therefore cared for.”

Some Catholics, both clergy and laity, falsely say that the death penalty is on a par with abortion and euthanasia, and therefore anyone who defends the death penalty should be sanctioned under canon 915. Burke argues: “Pope John Paul II’s ‘Gospel of Life’ teaches clearly the death penalty is not on a par with abortion and euthanasia. Abortion is the greatest evil attack on innocent, defenseless life. John Paul II said it is difficult to understand why a State would have to put someone to death (EV n.56), but it is not a definite exclusion (CIC, c. 2267). To say the death penalty is on the same level is not correct.”

In a similar vein, when Chancellor Nguyen was asked if supporting the Iraq War, as some Bishops have claimed, was a condition for imposing canon 915, he said: “Pope John Paul II certainly criticized the American invasion of Iraq, but he at no time ‘condemned’ the war, that is, issued a statement binding on the conscience of the faithful.”

The Bishops themselves stated back in 1998: “Indeed, the failure to protect and defend life in its most vulnerable stages renders suspect any claims to the ‘rightness’ of positions in other matters affecting the poorest and least powerful of the human community” (LGL n.23).

And Pope John Paul II teaches in his 1988 apostolic exhortation, “Above all, the common outcry, which is justly made on behalf of human rights - for example, the right to health, to home, to work, to family, to culture - is false and illusory if the right to life, the most basic and fundamental right and condition of all other personal rights, is not defended with maximum determination” (CL n.38).

SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE?

We next approach the erroneous understanding of separation of church and state and canon 915. Archbishop Burke said, “There’s an ongoing scandal in our country with pro-abortion politicians. If they want to remain Catholic, they need to know how to act. They must publicly rescind their support for abortion and euthanasia. ‘What the majority wants’ is an

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**Sen. John Kerry, Catholic pro-abortion politician
But U Can't B Both Catholic and Pro-choice!**

erroneous argument if it is contrary to natural laws and God's laws."

Regarding the proper understanding of separation of church and state, Chancellor Nguyen said, "Archbishop Burke is not asking the legislators to impose beliefs distinctive to the Catholic faith on an unwilling populace. It would be a sad day for America when only Catholics believe in the protection of innocent life. Rather, he is calling upon them to defend innocent human life, which is a basic responsibility of all civil institutions. Archbishop Burke is not trying to 'influence legislation.' Rather, as a pastor of the faithful in the Diocese, Archbishop Burke is protecting the dignity of the sacraments, and addressing the grave scandal of Catholic legislators who fail to defend innocent life. It is the obligation of the Bishop to follow canon law for the salvation of souls."

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's (CDF) 'Doctrinal Note' regarding the participation of Catholics in politics (November 24, 2002) says further: "John Paul II, continuing the constant teaching of the Church, has reiterated many times that those who are directly involved in lawmaking bodies have a 'grave and clear obligation to oppose' any law that attacks human life. For them, as for every Catholic, it is impossible to promote such laws or to vote for them [DN n.4; cf. JP II, EV n.73].

In January, 2003, two months after the CDF's 'Doctrinal Note' was issued, both Massachusetts' Senators Kennedy and Kerry cited church-state separation as their guiding principle. Kerry, who is running for president, said: "As a Catholic, I have enormous respect for the words and teachings of the Vatican, but as a public servant I've never forgotten the lasting legacy of President Kennedy, who made clear that in accordance with the separation of church and state no elected official should be 'limited or conditioned by any religious oath, ritual or obligation [sic].'

In response, the Church says that the Pope and diocesan bishops possess legislative power and they have a right to enact laws for their dioceses, including penal laws which impose *latae sententiae* penalties on its members (canon 1315, canon 1318). The Church has an innate and proper right to coerce offending members by means of penal or sacramental sanctions (canon 1311).

The Catholic Church consistently teaches that Catholics who are in the state of grave sin should not receive Holy Communion, for this itself is a grave sin and a sign of grave contradiction. St. Paul teaches this in 1 Cor. 11:27-29, as does the CCC (1385, 1415). St. Thomas Aquinas applies this particularly to the public sinner: "A distinction must be made among sinners: some are secret; others are notorious, either from evidence of the fact, as public usurers, or public robbers or from being denounced as evil men by some ecclesiastical or civil tribunal. Therefore Holy Communion ought not to be given to open sinners when they ask for it" (STh, III: q 80: art 6).

One Bishop out of the 195 U.S dioceses had the rectitude of intention to follow the clearly defined canonical disciplines of the Catholic Church. ♦

Abbreviations: EE = *Ecclesia De Eucharistia*; EV = *Evangelium vitae*; CIC = *Codex Iuris Canonici* or *Code of Canon Law*; USCCB = *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*; CL = *Christifideles laici*; CDF = *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*; JP II = Pope John Paul II; LGL = *Living the Gospel of Life*; DN = *Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life*; c. = *Canon*; STh = *Summa Theologiae*;

Full text of this article can be read at www.catholicmedia.org.



Good Friday Prayer Vigil

You are invited to participate in a **Good Friday** prayer service which will include:

Rosary
Jericho Walk
Stations of the Cross
Divine Mercy Chaplet
Litanies and Hymns

WHERE **Planned Parenthood Abortuary**
701 San Mateo Blvd. NE, Albuquerque
Follow balloons in alley behind abortuary (SW corner of San Mateo Blvd. and Marquette) to meeting lot off alley.
Park on Truman, Marquette or Roman.

DATE **Good Friday, April 9, 2004**

TIME **9:00am to Noon**
You may come earlier, stay later, or pray with us only an hour or two.

**Please Join us in Spending Time
with Our Lord at America's Calvary**



Wild Man or Christ?

By Marie P. Loehr

I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord," as said Isaias the prophet.
– John 1:23

Now Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit...was led by the Spirit about the desert for forty days, being tempted the while by the devil. And he ate nothing those days.... – Luke 4:1

John the Baptist is the final prophet of the Old Testament. He enters the desert wilderness, wearing camel skins and subsisting on locusts and honey. Thus he appears to be another Wild Man archetype to the untutored. Rev. Richard Rohr calls John the Baptist "the archetypal wild man . . . the perfect patron saint for the . . . journey to the deep masculine." Rohr views John and the Old Testament prophets as "wild men, sons of a wild God" [Richard Rohr, *The Wild Man's Journey*, pp. 33-39].

If God is wild, in Rohr's sense, it is because we look at him through the wrong end of the telescope. We see him through sin-darkened intellect, sin-weakened will, timidity and fear. His presence is absolute Otherness and true order. It reveals our own wildness to us. We mistake that revelation of ourselves for God. In psychological terms, we project our own wildness on God. We also see him in terms of perfection, authority, majesty. Such attributes are threatening to our own egocentric self-idolatry. In fact, God's perfection is not a laundry list of virtues, but his self-emptying. His authority is not flaunted power, but his service. His majesty is not totalitarian arrogance, but his utter simplicity. These are not the attributes of a Wild God. These are the attributes of the fullness of Being.

In the same way, John the Baptist is not the archetypal Wild Man he first appears to be, despite his habitat, his clothing, his food, his confrontations with sinners. The prototypical Scriptural Wild Man is Esau--who has no self-discipline, who indulges his own pleasure, who prefers the wilderness to responsibility and obligation. Although John may look like the "hairy" man at first sight, he is the antithesis of Wild Man. How?

First of all, he submits to discipline, shown in his retreat to the desert to be alone with God. In the early Church the first monks followed his example, living alone in the wilderness, but following a specific order of prayer, fasting, work, and rest in the company of the angels and the Trinity. To them, as to John, sinful civilization was the wilderness. The wilderness, redeemed by Christ's forty days in the desert, was true civilization in monastic, liturgical and spiritual order--to which the flesh must submit.

Second, he surrenders his entire self to God, and cultivates spiritual discernment--of himself and others. He submits to the discipline of seeking God before all else, thus putting his interior life in proper order. Then he is able to offer himself to God entirely, discern God's will in his own vocation--and discern God's will in and for other people. Only when he has removed the beam from his own eye, can he go back to other people and show them the mote in their eyes.

Third, he sacrifices himself to acquire true detachment. What does that mean? In French a "tâche" is a spot in the ordinary sense--a stain or blemish. In Old French it also meant a "fastener." To detach oneself is to unfasten



ourselves, to release our grip on our possessions--spiritual and material, to move away from "spot" as in the spotlight's center of attention, to leave behind the stain or blemish of sin. Thus, to detach oneself is to step out of one's egocentric self. Ecstasy means the same thing. John detaches himself from unredeemed reality and its wildness, *i.e.*, refusal to submit to God. He attaches himself to God alone and entirely, in whom all things are contained. He lives "seek first the kingdom of God, and all else shall be added unto you" in his own flesh. He lives it to the point that he can confront Herod, and condemn the king's sinful relationship with Herodias. He can say of his relation to Christ, his cousin: "He must increase; I must decrease." He is imprisoned, abandoned, and executed for his integrity, his fidelity to God's word and work. He steps aside for Christ. He points to Christ. He leads to Christ--and redemption.

Sinful man, redeemed or not, is the true Wild Man--whether primitive and shamanistic, pagan and spiritualistic, New Age and occultist. John the Baptist is not *wild* in that sense. He is the forerunner of Christ, who is Truth, Love, and Service. John rejects his own personal sin in his submission to God and his self-discipline. He rejects public sin in the Chosen People by his surrender to God and its characteristic discernment of self and others. He rejects what we might call preceptorial sin in our rulers and role models by his self-detachment and the sacrifice of his life.

John puts on the animal skins of Adam's sin, and eviction from Eden into the wilderness, not to live that fall, but to break that pattern in preparation for Christ's Word and Work, Christ's redemptive regenerative order. John's retreat to the wilderness witnesses to the reality of sin and its refusal of order. He lives only its appearance in order to break its pattern in himself, in the people, in the king. This is a true preparation for Christ, because Christ does not break this pattern of sin, or reform its wildness to order in a symbolic or purely spiritual way. He does it in fact, and reiterates it sacramentally. He enters our flesh, putting it on more deeply, totally, and truly than John can ever put on his camel skins. He takes our sin, all the sins of the entire world in all time, on himself in his life, crucifixion and death in order to break its pattern of wildness in us.

When the devil tempts Christ in the desert, he tempts him with material comfort, moral popularity, and magisterial acceptability. John has already rejected these temptations by his fasting, his conversions, his moral witness and his consequent execution. Turn stones into bread, says the devil to Christ. Settle for mere prosperity and its comforts. Throw yourself down from the Temple and let the angels bear you up, the devil urges. Settle for moral and magical popularity in the credulous eyes of the people. Fall down and worship me, the devil coaxes, and I'll give you all the kingdoms of the world. Settle for magisterial power and the illusion of kingship in a wilderness of sin. Men are still tempted by the "cheap grace" of these Esau-desires every day.

Christ shows us how to refuse each temptation. He reveals the Father as the Rock and foundation of whom the Psalmist sings when he rejects mere prosperity. He reveals the Son as the Refuge and shelter whom the saints proclaim when he rejects easy popularity. He reveals the Spirit as repose and comfort in whom the Church rejoices, when he rejects the perverted power of the false spirit, who is Lucifer. This



Fr. Richard Rohr, leading a men's retreat.

rejection and its order is the paradigm of the Christian masculine.

The Baptist and Christ are far from wild. They restore order. They are hardly wimpish. They live truth and love even when it costs them material prosperity, moral popularity, magisterial power. They live this order even unto death. This is a tough regimen--at home, at work, at play. Christ in his Word, in his Work, in his humility and in his power is a powerful role model: not one which has failed, but rather one which has not been truly taught, much less lived.

Richard Rohr ignores the true spiritual content of Scripture and Tradition, its Fathers, Doctors, saints and popes. He prefers the wildness of primitive shamanism, Celtic paganism, and occult mysticism in fairy tale and Arthurian cycle to the order of Christ and his Church. Wild Man, king, warrior, magician and lover are his archetypes to educate men into confusion, who are already wandering in the wilderness without a clue or a breadcrumb or a path. The ancient archetypes have power, true enough. But it is an ancient UNREDEEMED power, with only a thin veneer of Christian terminology and understanding--often abused or misused. Shouldn't we teach fathers, brothers, husbands, sons the true Scriptural archetypes of patriarch, priest, prophet, and bridegroom, for starters? Then we bring that truly Catholic content and masculinity to all else.

The patriarchal leaders of Scripture, including St. Joseph, are images of the Father in the Trinity. The priestly servants in Scripture, beginning with Melchisedek, are images of the Son in the Trinity. The prophetic witnesses in Scripture, like John the Baptist, are images of the Spirit in the Trinity. The Bridegroom in the Canticle of Canticles--although he is above all Christ, whose banner over us is truly love--is also a revelation of God who takes Israel as wife, Church as Bride, soul as beloved spouse.

To be a man after all is to live as image of God: Father, Rock and foundation; Son, Refuge and shelter; Spirit, Repose and comfort. To be a man is to be bridegroom--of either a family or a parish or an apostolate, to be head and leader, one way or another. A husband or a pastor is the foundation on which home or parish is built; he is its provider. He is the shelter for his family or flock; he is their protector. He is the comfort for his family or his parish, his employees or his employer, the wings under which they "shout for joy."

This is hard. It means learning self-discipline. It means cultivating spiritual discernment. It means accepting self-detachment. It demands living the Mass and the sacraments as frequently as possible. It means learning to "pray always," in word or work. It means to take off the Wild Man's unredeemed skins in order to "put on Christ." ♦



Fr. Richard Rohr, leading a men's retreat ritual.

Prayer for Priests

Almighty God, look upon the face of Him who is the eternal High Priest, and have compassion on Your priests in today's world. Remember that they are but weak and frail human beings. Stir up in them the grace of their vocation. Keep them close to You lest the enemy prevail against them, so that they may never do anything in the slightest degree unworthy of their sublime vocation.

O Jesus, I pray for Your faithful and fervent priests, for the unfaithful and tepid ones; for those laboring at home and abroad in distant mission fields; for those who are tempted; for those who are lonely and desolate; for those who are in purgatory.

But, above all, I recommend to You the priests dearest to me; the priest who baptized me; the priests who absolved me from my sins; the priests who instructed me or helped me by their encouragement. I pray devoutly for all the priests to whom I am indebted in any other way, in particular for [names here]. O Jesus, keep them all close to Your heart and bless them abundantly in time and in eternity. Amen.

O Mary, Queen of the clergy, pray for us; obtain for us holy priests. Amen.

April Calendar

Friday, April 16, 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.

Project Life Good Friday Prayer Vigil

Good Friday, April 9, 2004
9 AM – 12 AM
At the Planned Parenthood Abortuary at
701 San Mateo Blvd.
Call (505) 286-1655 for more information
(See ad on page 11)

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