

Los Pequeños Pepper

Publication of Los Pequeños de Cristo

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Put up yer dukes!

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Cover: St Gianna Beretta Molla—
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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.

Deadly Health Risks for Women

The unspoken side of the Obama birth control mandate

By Jenn Giroux

For far too long there has been an ominous silence across America on arguably the most controversial and devastating issue of the day — birth control. As so often we see in history, oppression gives rise to courage and, no question, courage is exactly what we are seeing in Church leaders and layman alike in response to the Obama administration's recent birth control mandate and more recent unacceptable modifications.

The birth control mandate has forced the issue of contraception to move from being the elephant in the room to center stage. Perhaps in time we will see that it was a hidden blessing for our country. For years pro-life organizations refused to discuss or take on this topic despite the fact that free access to birth control increases the number of surgical abortions [1][2]. Most people repeat over and over that birth control decreases the number of abortions. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In fact, today for every child born in the US, there are an estimated 2 children killed in the womb from both surgical and abortifacient-drug abortions [3]. What isn't being talked about is that the new mandate also pre-disposes women to serious long term and permanent health problems. In conjunction with the defense of both religious liberty and the spiritual well-being of women, we must also refute the absurd and deceptive statement that "women are healthier on birth control."

Providing free hormonal birth control to women under the guise of 'preventative services' and 'women's health' is a lie and women of all faiths deserve to know the truth.

Hormonal birth control methods can enter the body in various ways. These ways include 'The Pill' (by mouth), the Mirena IUD (Intrauterine Device), the implant (placed under the skin), 'the Patch' (absorbed through the skin), and the Vaginal Nuvaring. There are many other estrogen-progestin name brands that can be added to this list. Any way you name it, these hormone drugs dispense poison into a woman's body.

Perhaps HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius should inform her President of the following before he makes additional statements to the press like "it is cheaper to prevent than to treat." Consider this:

— Since 1975 there has been a 400% increase in "in situ" breast cancer among pre-menopausal women under 50 years old. This mirrors the increased use of birth control over these same years. ("In situ" is a medical term which means "at the location" [4].

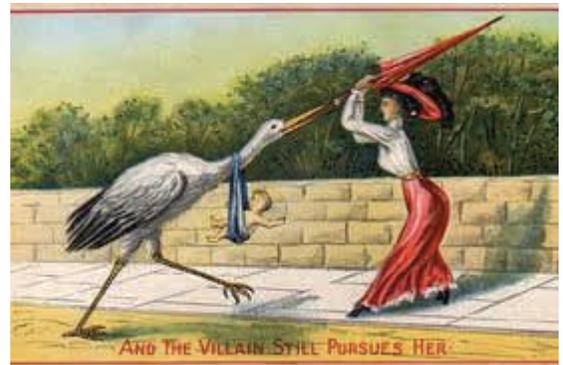
— A Mayo Clinic study confirms that any young girl or woman who is on hormonal birth control for 4 years prior to her first full term pregnancy increases breast cancer risk by 52%. [5]

— Women who use hormonal birth control for more than 5 years are four times more likely to develop cervical cancer. [6]

— The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), a research arm of the World Health Organization, classifies all forms of hormonal contraception as a Group 1 carcinogen. This group of cancer causing agents also includes cigarettes and asbestos. [7] Why is it that the FDA can require cigarette manufacturers to place warning labels and real life photos of corpses on cigarette packages to warn consumers of the health dangers yet take an equally harmful substance (hormonal birth control) and force companies to give it away free to young girls without parental consent and woman of all ages?

— It is a crime for high school boys and men to take steroid drugs whereas girls and women taking steroid drugs (i.e. hormonal birth control) are now treated as if they are taking a sacred, life preserving vitamin that women cannot live without. [8]

— In October 2010 the NY Times carried an article about Hormone Replacement Therapy drugs. It quoted the America Medical Association (AMA) as warning women that these post-menopausal drugs which were originally marketed as keeping a woman "young and sexy" were discovered instead to be more likely to cause advanced and deadly breast cancer.[9] It stopped short of making one other startling revelation: The only difference between hormone replacement therapy drugs which cause deadly breast



cancer and the hormonal birth control drugs (now mandated by the Obama administration) is that the birth control drugs are six times the dosage — and are the very same drug!

Never before has the US government mandated that private companies must provide services and it adds insult to injury when this mandate includes substances that harm women and cause them to unknowingly self-abort their babies a certain percentage of the time when they are using these substances.

How is it possible for women to self-abort when birth control is meant to prevent pregnancy? It is possible because many of these birth control methods still allow the woman's body to ovulate every month. If sexual relations occur during that time, it is possible to get pregnant. Recently doctors tried to figure out why some women could not get pregnant using artificial insemination. They conducted a study which discovered that the lining of a woman's uterus must be at least 8mm thick in order for a baby, in its tiniest form, to implant and grow in the womb. They found that the use of hormonal contraception (in any of the forms mentioned above) generally keeps the uterine lining below 6mm.[10] To be clear, if a baby is conceived by a woman on hormonal birth control the embryo cannot implant and grow to full gestation of 9 months if the integrity of the uterine lining is too thin. Instead the baby, in its tiniest form, is unknowingly self-aborted by its mother. This is what is meant by the word "abortifacient." It isn't just the "morning after" pill or "Ella" that is in the abortion inducing drug category. It is nearly all of the hormonal birth control that is being mandated.

Since Roe v Wade there have been over 55 million surgical abortions. Chemical abortions add an estimated 250 million additional abortions to our nation's holocaust. [11]

This is not information that should be kept from the public. Women deserve to be told the truth. They are not being warned that birth control methods are causing breast, liver, and cervical cancer. They are not being told about the "silent killer" effect which is causing them to unknowingly abort their babies. They are instead being told that they are healthier on birth control because it decreases ovarian and uterine cancer. According to the American Cancer Society, out of 100 women with cancer, 31 have breast cancer, 6 have uterine cancer, and 3 have ovarian cancer. This is not a healthy tradeoff of risks that is worth taking. [12]

If, indeed, "it is cheaper to prevent than to treat," then it is time for the White House, Kathleen Sebelius, and all health agencies within the government to sound the warning trumpet to warn women on hormonal birth control about these devastating medical consequences.

Clearly, birth control does not help women at risk, *it places women at risk.* ☹

Jenn Giroux has been a Registered Nurse for 26 years where she has seen both the physical and spiritual harms of contraception. She also founded the "Speaking of Motherhood" project in an effort to educate women of the harms of birth control and to elevate the profession of motherhood. She and her husband, Dan, live in Cincinnati, Ohio and have 9 children.



NOTES:

[1] http://www.gutmacher.org/pubs/fb_induced_abortion.html ;

[2] Jones RK, Darroch JE and Henshaw SK, Contraceptive use among U.S. women having abortions in 2000–2001, Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, 2002, 34(6):294–303.

[3] International Pharmacists for Life 2003; <http://www.prolifephysicians.org/abortifacient>

[4] www.cancer.org

[5] Kahlenborn et al., "Oral Contraceptive Use — as a risk factor for pre-menopausal breast cancer: a meta analysis," Mayo Clinic proceedings 2006 pp. 1290-1320, 2006

[6] Bosch, et al, "Effect of oral contraceptives on risk of cervical cancer..." International Agency of Research on Cancer, 2002

[7] International Agency for Research on Cancer, a research arm of the World Health Organization, 2010

[8] <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/performance-enhancing-drugs/SM00045>

[9] New York Times, Oct. 19, 2010

[10] Rabe T., et al, "The Effects of Monophasic and Triphasic Oral Contraceptives on Ovarian Function and Endometrial Thickness," *European Journal of Contraceptive and Reproductive Health Care*, 1997 Mar: 2(1), 39-51.

[11] Kuhar, et al, "Infant Homocides through Contraceptives," International Pharmacists for Life, 5th Edition 2003

[12] www.bcpinstitute.org

98% Figure Debunked

Catholic women use birth control in disturbing numbers but not so high as reported

By Steven Ertelt

LifeNews.com Abortion advocates and the White House are using a misleading figure to defend the new mandate the Obama administration put in place that requires insurance companies to offer, at no cost, birth control drugs that may cause abortions.

Both Obama administration officials and pro-abortion advocates like Planned Parenthood and NARAL are telling their members that 98% of Catholic women use contraception, a myth based on a misreading of a study published by the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute, a former Planned Parenthood affiliate.

Lydia McGrew has published a lengthy refutation of the figure that is drawing praise for its insight and accuracy.

“The survey was limited to women between 15-44. Ah, well, that explains how we weren’t including the elderly, but it also means that the silly “percent of all Catholic women” thing should be chucked out right from the beginning,” she notes.

McGrew indicates the Guttmacher study also “excluded any women who were a) not sexually active, where that is defined as not having had sexual intercourse in the past three months (there go all the nuns), b) postpartum, c) pregnant, or d) trying to get pregnant. In other words, the study was specifically designed (as the prose discussion on p. 8 makes explicit, in bold print) to include only women for whom a pregnancy would be unintended and who are “at risk” of becoming pregnant.”

She continues: “Whether or not it included women who considered themselves neither trying nor not trying to get pregnant (there are some such women in the world) is unclear. It’s also unclear whether it included women who have had their reproductive organs removed because of some medical problem. Presumably the study was intended to exclude women in both of these categories, as neither would count as a woman “at risk of an unintended pregnancy.”

McGrew writes: “Now, consider what all of this means as far as the representativeness of the sample for Catholic women. Surely there are a fair number of Catholic women between 15-44 who are not “at risk of an unintended pregnancy” for various reasons. It is plausible that this number is higher among Catholics than among non-Catholics. For one thing, a faithful Catholic woman in this age category who is not married is supposed to be remaining celibate. Hence she won’t fall into the “at-risk” category, and by the same token she won’t have any use for the “services” that the Obama administration is mandating be provided. Similarly, married Catholic women are probably more likely not to be attempting to avoid pregnancy, even using Natural Family Planning, than non-Catholic women. One would think they are also more likely to be pregnant or postpartum. And so on and so forth. In short, the deliberate design of the study to cover only women who, at the time of the study, were having sexual intercourse while regarding a pregnancy as unintended would be likely to make it unrepresentative of Catholics and particularly unrepresentative of devout Catholics. Yet the study is now being cited to show the percentage of Catholic women generally who are not following the teaching of the Catholic Church in this area! What is wrong with this picture?”

Tom Hoopes of CatholicVote reviewed both McGrew’s numbers and the initial study Guttmacher conducted. “The results are even more skewed if you ask people at the top of a survey what religion they are. People who have never darkened the door of a Catholic Church will happily mark “Catholic” on such a survey. The behavior they report will count for or against Catholics the same regardless of their actual contact with Catholicism,” he writes. “This particular survey even admits that less than a third of its “Catholic” respondents even go to Mass once a week.”

“So, what do we know from the start: We aren’t dealing with practicing Catholics. In fact, a two-thirds majority of the Catholics in the survey are not eligible to receive communion, according to the U.S. bishops (see page 9), since they skip their Sunday obligation,” Hoopes continues.

“The most shocking news, though, is that the White House is spreading false information about Catholicism in order to provide cover as it removes religious liberties for Catholic organizations,” he concludes. “White House: Retract this statement and correct the record. Stop misinforming the public about my religion for your purposes.”



The Parable of the Kosher Deli

By Bishop William Lori

Once upon a time, a new law is proposed, so that any business that serves food must serve pork. There is a narrow exception for kosher catering halls attached to synagogues, since they serve mostly members of that synagogue, but kosher delicatessens are still subject to the mandate.

The Orthodox Jewish community—whose members run kosher delis and many other restaurants and grocers besides—expresses its outrage at the new government mandate. And they are joined by others who have no problem eating pork—not just the many Jews who eat pork, but people of all faiths—because these others recognize the threat to the principle of religious liberty.



They recognize as well the practical impact of the damage to that principle. They know that, if the mandate stands, they might be the next ones forced—under threat of severe government sanction—to violate their most deeply held beliefs, especially their unpopular beliefs.

Meanwhile, those who support the mandate respond “But pork is good for you. It is, after all, the other white meat.” Other supporters add “So many Jews eat pork, and those who don’t should just get with the times.” Still others say “Those Orthodox are just trying to impose their beliefs on everyone else.”

But in our hypothetical, those arguments fail in the public debate, because people widely recognize the following:

First, although people may reasonably debate whether pork is good for you, that’s not the question posed by the nationwide pork mandate. Instead, the mandate generates the question whether people who believe—even if they believe in error—that pork is not good for you, should be forced by government to serve pork within their very own institutions. In a nation committed to religious liberty and diversity, the answer, of course, is no.

Second, the fact that some (or even most) Jews eat pork is simply irrelevant. The fact remains that some Jews do not—and they do not out of their most deeply held religious convictions. Does the fact that large majorities in society—even large majorities within the protesting religious community—reject a particular religious belief make it permissible for the government to weigh in on one side of that dispute? Does it allow government to punish that minority belief with its coercive power? In a nation committed to religious liberty and diversity, the answer, of course, is no.

Third, the charge that the Orthodox Jews are imposing their beliefs on others has it exactly backwards. Again, the question generated by a government mandate is whether the government will impose its belief that eating pork is good on objecting Orthodox Jews. Meanwhile, there is no imposition at all on the freedom of those who want to eat pork.

That is, they are subject to no government interference at all in their choice to eat pork, and pork is ubiquitous and cheap, available at the overwhelming majority of restaurants and grocers. Indeed, some pork producers and retailers, and even the government itself, are so eager to promote the eating of pork, that they sometimes give pork away for free.

In this context, the question is this: can a customer come to a kosher deli, demand to be served a ham sandwich and, if refused, bring down severe government sanction on the deli? In a nation committed to religious liberty and diversity, the answer, of course, is no.

So, in our hypothetical story, because the hypothetical nation is indeed committed to religious liberty and diversity, these arguments carry the day. In response, those proposing the new law claim to hear and understand the concerns of kosher deli owners, and offer them a new “accommodation.”

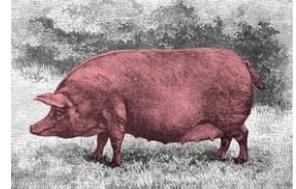
You are free to call yourself a kosher deli; you are free not to place ham sandwiches on your menu; you are free not to be the person to prepare the sandwich and hand it over the counter to the customer. But we will force your meat supplier to set up a kiosk on your premises, and to offer, prepare, and serve ham sandwiches to all of your customers, free of charge to them. And when you get your monthly bill from your meat supplier, it will include the cost of any of the “free” ham sandwiches that your customers may accept. And you will, of course, be required to pay that bill.

Some who supported the deli owners initially began to celebrate the fact that ham sandwiches didn't need to be on the menu, and didn't need to be prepared or served by the deli itself. But on closer examination, they noticed three troubling things. First, all kosher delis will still be forced to pay for the ham sandwiches.

Second, many of the kosher delis' meat suppliers, themselves, are forbidden in conscience from offering, preparing, or serving pork to anyone. Third, there are many kosher delis that are their own meat supplier, so the mandate to offer, prepare, and serve the ham sandwich still falls on them.

This story has a happy ending. The government recognized that it is absurd for someone to come into a kosher deli and demand a ham sandwich; that it is beyond absurd for that private demand to be backed with the coercive power of the state; that it is downright surreal to apply this coercive power when the customer can get the same sandwich cheaply, or even free, just a few doors down.

The question before the United States government—right now—is whether the story of our own Church institutions that serve the public, and that are threatened by the HHS mandate, will end happily too. Will our nation continue to be one committed to religious liberty and diversity? We urge, in the strongest possible terms, that the answer must be yes. We urge you, in the strongest possible terms, to answer the same way. ↵



Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Using the vernacular phrase, “we need to move beyond” the concern about employer mandates to provide “contraceptive services.” As you know, the Affordable Care Act requires that hospitals and physicians constantly work to reduce health care costs. When women receive the results from their soon-to-be required amniocenteses, if there are any indications that the baby may have a “health issue,” she will be informed that if her baby is carried to term, the infant will not be eligible for continued government health care. As many writers have noted, that is why there are fewer babies born today with Down syndrome – something similar is already happening.

One bizarre situation we will observe going forward is when a perfectly healthy baby is born after an unfavorable amniocenteses, the parents will petition the government for an insurance renewal.

Alan Peter
Albuquerque, NM

Surveys to 3,150 mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters of people with Down syndrome—and to people having Down syndrome—revealed:

- 99% of people with Down syndrome said they were happy with their lives
- 97% of people with Down syndrome liked who they are
- 99% of parents said they love their child with Down syndrome
- 5% of parents felt embarrassed by their child
- 97% of brothers/sisters, ages 9-11, said they love their sibling

*All of the surveys' results have just been published in the *American Journal of Medical Genetics*.

Child Abuse Protected and Promoted by NM Government and Schools

Carnage on many levels

By Joe Cieszinski

This legislative session I attended a New Mexico committee hearing on the proposed Parental Notification Bill. It was partisan politics at its worst. I am so surprised that in New Mexico, the interest of children comes last. The consent of a parent is needed to give a child an aspirin. For an abortion, no parental notification is necessary.

The main argument by the trio opposing the bill (Democrats Chasey, O'Neill, and Maestas) was that if such an incident arises from within an abusive home, then more abuse might result, so it is better not to tell parents. So, the logic is this: child abuse is going on and the recommendation is to not tell parents? Where does the Department of Children, Youth and Families stand on this? Why were they not present in this hearing that so obviously deals with child abuse? Why did Governor Martinez not direct someone from CYF to attend this meeting?

It gets worse. People with no long-term commitment to a teen can influence her decision. As a result, she may deal with feelings of guilt, depression, and suicide for the rest of her life, realizing that she terminated a human life. It is the young lady's parents who have to deal with the unhappy consequences, sometimes knowing something is wrong, but never knowing just what it is.

If we are honest, we will see two similar scenarios in the worlds of abortion and contraception.

- There is a frightening increase in the possibility of breast cancer for those women who have had abortions, especially abortion of their first pregnancy.
- The pill is sometimes prescribed at school without knowledge of the parents. It can be prescribed for birth-control, or to help reduce acne, etc. Evidence is mounting that many young girls are having horrendous and *permanent* side-effects, such as infertility, loss of bone density, and osteoporosis. One close friend's daughter was given the pill by the clinic at Santa Fe High to help combat her acne. The parents were not told. They would not have consented. After she got off the pill a couple of years later, her menstrual cycle never came back. At 28 years of age, the daughter now has osteoporosis. The doctor said she has the bone density of an 86 year old woman. Others have similar stories.

Where will Chasey, O'Neill and Maestas be in a few years? Will Chasey be around to comfort those who have developed breast cancer due to abortions during high school? Will O'Neill be there for those depressed and dealing with drug and alcohol abuse after sobering up to the fact that they terminated lives of their children? Will Maestas be there for parents who are grieving because their daughter, who had an abortion, and died from either an abortion related suicide or an abortion related fatal substance overdose?

And of course, will there be large monetary settlements against the state of New Mexico to pay for lawsuits arising from breast cancer related to abortions recommended by school clinics? How about related lawsuits of those whose entire life is ruined because they took birth control pills received from Santa Fe schools, and consequently, cannot conceive, cannot enjoy normal health and exercise, and have severe osteoporosis before age 30?

Some politicians have more allegiance to Planned Parenthood than to the well being of families in New Mexico. Such politicians have violated our trust, and should not have the privilege of representing us. They do not represent us. We need to vote them out. ☹



American Life League Video Exposes (Ahem) Planned Parenthood

By Stephanie Block

I'm not sure I can recommend that you watch the video prepared by American Life League (ALL) about Planned Parenthood's sex education programs – but, if you don't watch, you won't have any idea the depth of depravity under discussion.

Sure, the video's content can be delicately described and the reader will be left wondering what the problem is. After all, isn't sex a natural, normal part of life? When they're at the appropriate age, don't kids need to know "the facts?"

The trouble is, which "facts" are being used to educate this country's children? Are they that men and women are wonderfully and distinctly made, or are they that sexual organs are like junk food, frivolous objects of self-pleasuring? Those are two rather disparate positions and, until you have seen what ALL has seen and then shows, you really can't appreciate *how* disparate they are.

In fact, Planned Parenthood's materials are so coarse and graphic – as sexuality that has been divorced from moral values invariably becomes – that ALL asserts that Planned Parenthood fosters sexual experimentation as a "gateway drug." Its "education" materials are *calculated* to create and exploit sexual urges in children, initially promoting masturbation, heavy petting, and anal sex...and later affirming the child's "right" to all sexual experiences, without constraint of any sort. That is to say, sexual activity is encouraged in order to create addicts who will provide Planned Parenthood with a steady stream of clientele seeking a variety of products, including abortion.

Surely, this is a prudish exaggeration.

I wish it were, and if I had only *heard* someone describe Planned Parenthood's materials, I'd be tempted to think the same. I would reason that even if Planned Parenthood is as utterly debased as ALL claims, surely no teacher would permit these materials in a classroom. Yet, the sad truth is that teachers do.

So, let's leave it at this: if you are already persuaded that Planned Parenthood needs to be stopped, visit Stop Planned Parenthood (STOPP) at www.stopp.org.

If, however, you're on the fence, thinking that perhaps Planned Parenthood means well and is being maligned, here's the address for the ALL video report, "Hooking Kids on Sex:" www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=j7XR9yH2ETk. I apologize for it but, if you don't watch, there will be no one to step between Planned Parenthood and our children. ↪



American Life League Report, "Hooking Kids on Sex"

"In 2007, Planned Parenthood New Mexico provided educational services to more than 6,000 adults, school-aged children, and youth serving programs. These include presentations in schools, churches and community centers, rental of films and videos, consultations with teachers and group leaders, and public-service advertising. In addition, the affiliate houses a variety of education materials available for public use."

– Planned Parenthood New Mexico website:
www.plannedparenthood.org/new-mexico/our-history-3150.htm

The Quest for Cosmic Justice

By Thomas Sowell

When you try to condense a book representing years of thought and research into a half-hour talk, a certain amount of over-simplification is inevitable. With that understood, let me try to summarize the message of *The Quest for Cosmic Justice* in three propositions which may seem to be axiomatic, but whose implications are in fact politically controversial:

- The impossible is not going to be achieved.
- It is a waste of precious resources to try to achieve it.
- The devastating costs and social dangers which go with these attempts to achieve the impossible should be taken into account.

Cosmic justice is one of the impossible dreams which has a very high cost and very dangerous potentialities. What is cosmic justice and how does it differ from more traditional conceptions of justice—and from the more recent and more fervently sought “social justice”?



Traditional concepts of justice or fairness, at least within the American tradition, boil down to applying the same rules and standards to everyone. This is what is meant by a “level playing field”— at least within that tradition, though the very same words mean something radically different within a framework that calls itself “social justice.” Words like “fairness,” “advantage” and “disadvantage” likewise have radically different meanings within the very different frameworks of traditional justice and “social justice.”

John Rawls perhaps best summarized the differences when he distinguished “fair” equality of opportunity from merely “formal” equality of opportunity. *Traditional* justice, fairness, or equality of opportunity are merely formal in Professor Rawls’ view and in the view of his many followers and comrades. For those with this view, “genuine equality of opportunity” cannot be achieved by the application of the same rules

and standards to all, but requires specific interventions to equalize either prospects or results. As Rawls puts it, “undeserved inequalities call for redress.”

A fight in which both boxers observe the Marquis of Queensberry rules would be a fair fight, according to traditional standards of fairness, irrespective of whether the contestants were of equal skill, strength, experience or other factors likely to affect the outcome—and irrespective of whether that outcome was a hard-fought draw or a completely one-sided beating.

This would not, however, be a fair fight within the framework of those seeking “social justice,” if the competing fighters came into the ring with very different prospects of success—especially if these differences were due to factors beyond their control.

Presumably, the vast ranges of undeserved inequalities found everywhere are the fault of “society” and so the redressing of those inequalities is called *social* justice, going beyond the traditional justice of presenting each individual with the same rules and standards. However, even those who argue this way often recognize that some undeserved inequalities may arise from cultural differences, family genes, or from historical confluences of events not controlled by anybody or by any given society at any given time. For example, there was no way that Pee Wee Reese was going to hit as many home runs as Mark McGwire, or Shirley Temple run as fast as Jesse Owens. There was no way that Scandinavians or Polynesians were going to know as much about camels as the Bedouins of the Sahara—and no way that these Bedouins were going to know as much about fishing as the Scandinavians or Polynesians.

In a sense, proponents of “social justice” are unduly modest. What they are seeking to correct are not merely the deficiencies of society, but of the cosmos. What they call social justice encompasses far more than any given society is causally responsible for. Crusaders for social justice seek to correct not merely the sins of man but the oversights of God or the accidents of history. What they are really seeking is a universe tailor-made to their vision of equality. They are seeking cosmic justice.

This perspective on justice can be found in a wide range of activities and places, from the street-corner community activist to the august judicial chambers of the Supreme Court. For example, a former dean of admissions at Stanford University said that she had never required applicants to submit Achievement Test scores because “requiring such tests could unfairly penalize disadvantaged students in the college admissions process,” because such students, “through no fault of their own, often find themselves in high schools that provide inadequate preparation for the Achievement Tests.”¹ *Through no fault of their own*—one of the recurrent phrases in this kind of argument—seems to imply that it is the fault of “society” but remedies are sought independently of any empirical evidence that it is.

Let me try to illustrate some of the problems with this approach by a mundane personal example. Whenever I hear discussions of fairness in education, my automatic response is: “Thank God my teachers were unfair to me when I was a kid growing up in Harlem.” One of these teachers was a lady named Miss Simon, who was from what might be called the General Patton school of education. Every word that we misspelled in class had to be written 50 times—not in class, but in our homework that was due the next morning, on top of all the other homework that she and other teachers loaded onto us. Misspell four or five words and you had quite an evening ahead of you.

Was this fair? Of course not. Like many of the children in Harlem at that time, I came from a family where no one had been educated beyond elementary school. We could not afford to buy books and magazines, like children in more affluent neighborhood schools, so we were far less likely to be familiar with these words that we were required to write 50 times.

But fairness in this cosmic sense was never an option. As noted at the outset, the impossible is not going to be achieved. Nothing that the schools could do would make things fair in this sense. It would have been an irresponsible self-indulgence for them to have pretended to make things fair. Far worse than unfairness is make-believe fairness. Instead, they forced us to meet standards that were harder for us to meet—but far more necessary for us to meet, as these were the main avenues for our escape from poverty.

Many years later, I happened to run into one of my Harlem schoolmates on the streets of San Francisco. He was now a psychiatrist and owned a home and property out in the Napa

valley. As we reminisced about the past and caught up on things that had happened to us in between, he mentioned that his various secretaries over the years had commented on the fact that he seldom misspelled a word. My secretaries have made the same comment—but, if they knew Miss Simon, it would be no mystery why we seldom misspelled words.

It so happens that I was a high school dropout. But what I was taught before I dropped out was enough for me to score higher on the verbal SAT than the average Harvard student. That may well have had something to do with my being admitted to Harvard in an era before the concept of “affirmative action” was conceived.

What if our teachers had been imbued with the present-day conception of “fairness”? Clearly we would not have been tested with the same tests and held to standards as other kids in higher-income neighborhoods, whose parents had at least twice as many years of schooling as ours and probably much more than twice as much money. And where would my schoolmate and I have ended up? Perhaps in some half-way house, *if we were lucky*.

And would that not have been an injustice—to take individuals capable of being independent, self-supporting, and self-directed men and women, with pride in their own achievements, and turn them into dependents, clients, supplicants, *mascots*? Currently, the Educational Testing Service is adopting minority students as mascots by turning the SAT exams into race-normed instruments to circumvent the growing number of prohibitions against group preferences. The primary purpose of mascots is to symbolize something that makes others feel good. The well-being of the mascot himself is seldom a major consideration.

The argument here is not against real justice or real equality. Both of these things are desirable in themselves, just as immortality may be considered desirable in itself. The only arguments against any of these things is that they are impossible—and the cost of pursuing impossible dreams are not negligible.

Socially counterproductive policies are just one of the many costs of the quest for cosmic justice. The rule of



law, on which a free society depends, is inherently incompatible with cosmic justice. Laws exist in all kinds of societies, from the freest to the most totalitarian. But *the rule of law*—a government of laws and not of men, as it used to be called—is rare and vulnerable. You cannot redress the myriad inequalities which pervade human life by applying the same rules to all or by applying *any* rules other than the arbitrary dispensations of those in power. The final chapter of *The Quest for Cosmic Justice* is titled “The Quiet Repeal of the American Revolution” — because that is what is happening piecemeal by zealots devoted to their own particular applications of cosmic justice.

They are not trying to destroy the rule of law. They are not trying to undermine the American republic. They are simply trying to produce “gender equity,” institutions that “look like America” or a thousand other goals that are incompatible with the rule of law, but corollaries of cosmic justice.

Because ordinary Americans have not yet abandoned traditional justice, those who seek cosmic justice must try to justify it politically as meeting traditional concepts of justice. A failure to achieve the new vision of justice must be represented to the public and to the courts as “discrimination.” Tests that register the results of innumerable inequalities must be represented as being the *cause* of those inequalities or as deliberate efforts to perpetuate those inequalities by erecting arbitrary barriers to the advancement of the less fortunate.

In short, to promote cosmic justice, they must misrepresent what is happening as violations of traditional justice—as understood by others who do not share their vision. Nor do those who make such claims necessarily believe them themselves. As Joseph Schumpeter once said: “The first thing a man will do for his ideals is lie.”

The next thing the idealist will do is character assassination. All those who disagree with the great vision must be shown to have malign intentions, if not deep-seated character flaws. They must be “Borked,” to use a verb coined in our times. They must be depicted as “A Strange Justice” if somehow they survive the Borking process. They must be depicted as having some personal “obsessions” if they carry out the duties they swore to carry out as a special prosecutor. In short, demonization is one of the costs of the quest for cosmic justice.

The victims of this process are not limited to those targeted. The society as a whole loses when its decisions are made by character assassination, rather than by rational discussion, and when its pool of those eligible for leadership is drained by the exodus of those who are not prepared to sacrifice their good name or subject their family to humiliations for the sake of grasping the levers of power. This loss is not

merely quantitative, for those who *are* willing to endure any personal or family humiliations for the sake of power are the most dangerous people to trust with power.

In a sense, those caught up in the vision of cosmic justice are also among its victims. Having committed themselves to a vision and demonized all who oppose it, how are they to turn around and subject that vision to searching empirical scrutiny, much less repudiate it as evidence of its counterproductive results mount up?

Ironically, the quest for greater economic and social equality is promoted through a far greater inequality of political power. If rules cannot produce cosmic justice, only raw power is left as the way to produce the kinds of results being sought. In a democracy, where power must gain public acquiescence, not only must the rule of law be violated or circumvented, so must the rule of truth. However noble the vision of cosmic justice, arbitrary power and shameless lies are the only paths that even seem to lead in its direction. As noted at the outset, the devastating costs and social dangers which go with these attempts to achieve the impossible should be taken into account. ❧



Notes

1. Jean H. Fetter, *Questions and Admissions: Reflections on 100,000 Admissions Decisions at Stanford* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 45. This way of looking at the fairness of the college admissions process is by no means peculiar to Ms. Fetter. See, for example, John Kronholz, “As States End Racial Preferences, Pressure Rises To Drop SAT to Maintain Minority Enrollment,” *Wall Street Journal*, February 12, 1998, p. A24; Nancy S. Cole, Educational Testing Service, “Merit and Opportunity: Testing and Higher education at the Vortex,” speech at the conference, New Direction in Assessment for Higher Education: Fairness, Access, Multiculturalism, and Equity (F.A.M.E.), New Orleans, Louisiana, March 6-7, 1997; Thomas Sowell, *Inside American Education: The Decline, the Deception, the Dogmas* (New York: The Free Press, 1993), pp. 122-126.

Portrait of a Radical

By Stephanie Block

The first half of the week 9 JustFaith program spends 50 minutes listening to Father Richard Rohr, a Franciscan priest who has built a small New Age empire around books and talks on subjects ranging from the Enneagram, the Cosmic Jesus, Liberation Theology, and the Men's Movement. Titled "Portrait of a Radical," this talk seems to be a surprising detour. There is nothing in it about social justice other than a passing comment that even peace and justice activists can be happy because it's not *their* job to save the world – it's God's.

That's a true enough point but it's unlikely that's *all* the JustFaith participants are meant to take from the talk. The facilitator materials, describing "Portrait of a Radical" as an attempt "to draw the viewer into a space where Jesus can be seen from the perspective of his radical, compassionate, and inclusive teachings," clarifies the intention of the JustFaith program to leave the participant with additional messages, which are confirmed in follow-up questions: "How did this representation of Jesus' ministry add to... understanding of Jesus as a person? As the Son of God?" (p 4, JustFaith facilitator's materials, week 9: 2011-12)

Rohr's talk is largely a challenge to the institutional church, what he dubs "managed" religion. Jesus, he says, has been largely misunderstood by European Christendom. "In so many ways, it didn't matter what He [Jesus] said; it's what we wanted Him to say and many people really thought He said these things that they presumed they wanted Him to say." Rohr wants to get us back to the honest, Jewish Jesus so we can get away from dealing with Jesus as "the divine savior of our denomination."

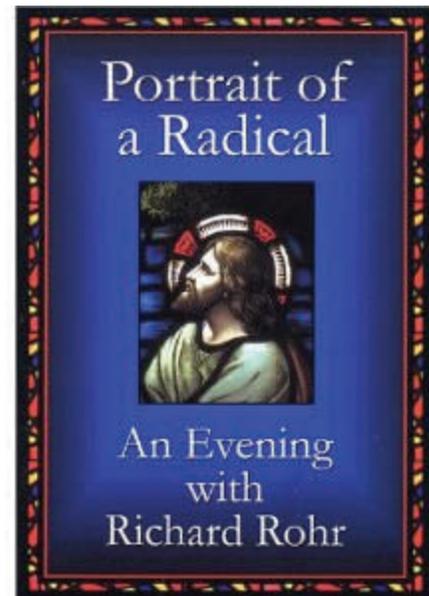
The Bible, according to Rohr, moves us from a violent, angry, "toxic" God demanding to be placated with human – and later with animal substitutions – blood to a God who has taken away human shame about being naked and unworthy. Far from demanding our blood, Rohr says, we are confronted with "the most extraordinary turn-around in the history of religion – God spilling [His own] blood to get to us."

"But how do you give away God?" Rohr asks. Nobody wants Him; He's too frightening. Yet, God could not be content to be a theology, which we'd like because we can argue about it and "keep God as a private possession in our pocket." So, He became a person, and "we see in the Risen Christ a God Who blames nobody... The Good News is that the end of the Bible is a totally non-threatening, non-blaming, non-violent God" – not that God was ever violent, Rohr adds, but that we had created Him in our own image.

This "non-blaming" Jesus says nothing about the things the Church is obsessed about, such as premarital sex – He is only concerned with violence and greed... and in overcoming those diabolical possessions with possessing us Himself. "We've been so comfortable with violence – we've been comfortable with greed – since the 3rd century, since Constantine made us the established religion. It almost seems like some kind of smoke and mirrors game is going on here – some kind of shadow game, diversionary tactic: 'Look over here, so you won't see what He's really talking about...'"

Of course, Rohr is quick to say that he's not condoning pre-marital sex but "the Christianity is much more about mystical issues than about moral issues." Get the mystical issues right and "the moral issues will take care of themselves."

That mystical relationship is about intimacy, the "emptying of self so there's room for another person inside of me." "It's almost sexual, cannibalistic language, this Eucharistic language. Jesus saying, basically, "Eat Me. Drink Me. Get Me inside of you."



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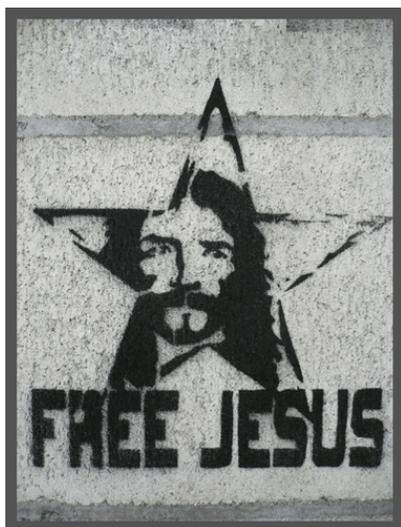
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Rohr insists that faith isn't a *head* thing, as opposed to *doubt*, but is a *trust* thing, as opposed to *anxiety*. Jesus doesn't worry about the hot sins – like premarital sex – but worries about power, prestige, illusion, and the other things that blind us. Jesus came to say it's radically OK, that life is great simplicity and comfort. We don't have to control it all.

If Jesus takes away the sin of the world – and Rohr stresses the Biblical use of the singular “sin” (John 1:29) – what is “the sin”? Rohr answers that Jesus didn't go to a brothel or to a bar but to a place of execution, a place where people try to “destroy evil” and then feel good that they've done away with the impure and are themselves superior. *That* behavior, says Rohr, is the sin of the world Jesus will take away.

There is much more in this vein. Managed religion – or institutional religion, Rohr explains – makes the law complex to keep us safe (e.g. no premarital sex). Jesus, on the other hand, wastes no time on the shadow but focuses on the ego, respecting the infinite complexity of people – honoring that people break the rules in very unique ways – but keeps his law very simple: Love one another.

One is at a loss to see how this brings JustFaith participants into any deeper understanding of the Church's social teachings. Rather, it seems designed to reinforce within them a qualified relationship with the Church – the liberationists' view of “church” – that either bends to the will of the social activist or is dismissed as merely “institutional” and “immature.” ☞



April Calendar

Los Pequeños Monthly Meeting
April 20, 2011
Call (505) 293-8006 for information.

Pro-life Prayer:
Planned Parenthood Abortuary
701 San Mateo Blvd.
Holy Innocents Chapel:
(505) 266-4100
Times: Daily 8 AM – 3 PM

Helpers of God's Precious Infants
Planned Parenthood Abortuary
701 San Mateo Blvd.
Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays: 8 AM – 11:30 AM
Wednesdays: 12 Noon – 3:00 PM
For more information, call Phil Leahy:
(505) 440-3040

Mass at the Holy Innocents Chapel
Tuesdays, Thursdays: noon
Fridays—Extraordinary Form of the Mass: 9:30 AM
For more information, call
(505) 266-4100



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“I must say that, among educated people, politics occupies far too great a proportion of time. . . . In truth, questions of higher spirit cannot even be compared to the sort of blinking frivolity of politics. The ultimate problems of life and death show the colossal nature of this difference even more. Modern mankind is characterized precisely by the loss of the ability to answer the principal problems of life and death. People are prepared to stuff their heads with anything, and to talk of any subject, but only to block off the contemplation of this subject. This is the reason for the increasing pettiness of our society, the concentration on the small and irrelevant.”

- Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

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