

# *Los Pequeños Pepper*

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# The Terrible Legacy of the Pill

*Mainstream Media Misrepresents Pill's Danger*

By Jim Fritz

News stories from the mainstream media have been 'celebrating' the 50 years of the birth control pill. All of them have touted the tremendous health benefits, even claiming it decreases the risk of ovarian cancer and uterine cancer. In reality studies show the Pill increases the risk of cancers of the breast, liver and cervix. **More than twice as many American women die every year from the cancers the Pill causes than from cancers it may prevent.**

Mainstream journalists unconscionably ignored last year's study on oral contraceptives and triple-negative breast cancer (TNBC), an aggressive form of breast cancer associated with a high mortality rate. The study reported that users of the Pill within the last one to five years multiply their risk of TNBC - by 4.2 times. Women who started using the Pill before age 18 multiply their risk of TNBC by 3.7 times. Women who had had abortions in the study had a statistically significant 40% increase in risk for breast cancer, whether or not it was TNBC.

*Time Magazine* stated that one of the world's largest studies of the Pill - 46,000 women followed for nearly 40 years - found that women who take the Pill are less likely to die prematurely from any cause, including cancer and heart disease, yet many women still question whether the health risks outweigh the benefits. *The truth:* Of the 46,000 in the original study, only 10,000 were actually followed for the whole study, and even so, the follow-up for those 10,000 ended in 1996. An analysis shows no significant difference in longevity between Pill users and non-users. Not taken into consideration was the fact that most Pill users now are very young (teens and early 20s), unmarried and with no children. These are the women whose future risk of breast cancer and other life-shortening illnesses is increased the most by the Pill.

The *Wall Street Journal* ran a lengthy and misleading article, "The Birth Control Riddle" by Melinda Beck, calling the arrival of the birth control Pill the "dawn of dependable contraception" which "ignited the sexual revolution, ended the post-war baby boom and helped millions of women enter the work force." Beck's column includes such blatant lies and misrepresentations as claiming the benefits of taking the Pill outweigh the risks.

Hopefully, both scientists and journalists dedicated to the cause of reproductive rights will ask themselves in good conscience whether it is really worth causing large numbers of women to undergo radical mastectomy or cut short their lives. Is it really worth causing children to lose their mothers to cancer?

## The Facts

In any study focusing on the link to breast cancer it is important to know *when* women choose to take the Pill (or have an abortion). Women in the 1960s took the Pill *after* they had already completed their families. Today, women take the Pill *before* the birth of a first child during the "susceptibility window" - the period between puberty and first full term pregnancy when nearly all of the breast lobules are cancer-susceptible Type one and two lobules. Ninety-seven percent of all breast cancers develop in Type one and two lobules (where ductal and lobular cancers arise).

On the other hand, by the end of the first full term pregnancy, 85 percent of the lobules are permanently cancer-resistant. The more carcinogenic time to be exposed to the Pill is before first full - term pregnancy. **Abortions before first full-term pregnancy are called "highly carcinogenic."**

## Dawn of Demonic Deception

*Human Life International* (HLI) states the Pill and the widespread use of other contraceptives in reality ushered in the 'Dawn of Demonic Deception' in America. One need only review some of the bitter fruits of "The Pill" to appreciate why. A Mayo Clinic study said women who use hormonal contraceptives for a minimum of four years prior to their first full term pregnancy have a 52 percent higher risk of developing breast cancer. Women who use a hormonal contraceptive for more than five years are four times more likely to develop cervical cancer.

HLI comments that prior to the sexual revolution and the Pill, there were known to be five sexually transmitted diseases: Today there are more than 30 and most of these apply to women only. There are over 50 medical studies which indicate that use of oral contraceptives and Depo-Provera place women at higher risk for almost all known

risk factors of HIV.

### **Alternatives to the Pill**

Natural Family Planning (NFP) is not the rhythm method used many years ago. Its advantages over the use of contraception are enormous. It is extremely reliable for preventing pregnancy.

Physically: In comparison to the Pill there are no side effects. Used with ecological breast feeding, promotes important bonding and reduces chance of breast cancer.

Social: It costs nothing to use. It is difficult for unmarried to use. Upon learning about NFP, sexually active teenagers often stop being sexually active and cohabitating couples generally either break up or marry.

Relational: Very few NFP marriages end in divorce. ‘Surprise’ pregnancies are accepted. There is better communication between couples, mutual respect, greater trust. Abstinence can be good for a married couple: it fosters the virtue of self-mastery and generosity, promotes self-esteem, creates a courtship period to be followed by a honeymoon, and couples become better lovers. Couples become less materialistic and more open to life.

Spiritual: Couples learn to appreciate the wisdom of the Church. They respect the truth of sexuality and the language of the body. They become cooperators and co-creators with God.

### ***Humanae Vitae***

When Pope Paul VI wrote and published the prophetic encyclical *Humanae Vitae* July 30, 1968, over one hundred American bishops and priests objected to it in writing, and the bishops have not recovered since. In this encyclical the pope prophesized the long-term effects of the Pill. In every country (over 83) where contraception became legalized, abortion followed almost immediately. Then the more subtle destruction of marriage and increase in promiscuity soon became rampant.

*As we look around today, we see how accurately Pope Paul IV predicted what would follow if contraception were adopted on a wide scale: a general lowering of moral standards, an increase in infidelity, ever-greater objectification of women, and the use of contraception as a weapon.* Smaller and more broken families, rampant homosexuality, pornography, and China’s coercive one-child policy are just some of the sad and obvious reminders of Pope Paul’s wisdom in reaffirming the Church’s perennial teaching against contraception in *Humanae Vitae*.

### **Father Paul Marx**

Father Paul Marx is often called the founder of the Pro-Life Movement. He was a strong advocate of NFP which he sometimes jokingly said meant “Not for Protestants.” He believed that Catholics cannot practice contraception, rarely go to confession and routinely receive communion without losing their faith. He stated the biggest problem was the disobedience of many bishops, priests and intellectuals. They felt that *Humanae Vitae* was impossible to follow. Many bishops and priests will not mention contraception in their homilies as they don’t want couples leaving the Church. As Father Marx said, “Guess what? They are leaving the Church *because* they are contracepting.” If a priest does not talk of contraception, sterilization and *Humanae Vitae* he is destroying his parish.

Father Marx also jokingly said in a talk in 1991 that most of the seminaries should be burned down and rebuilt with emphasis on teaching family life. At that time, no seminaries taught NFP. He said in ten years he had only met one priest who really understood women’s fertility, sperm life and knew about NFP. How many priests hear confession with no knowledge of NFP? We need a spiritual revival. We need prayer. We need training for priests and we need training for couples planning to marry, and this training should include NFP.

Father Marx asked bishops and priests to look at the world as it really exists and ask God for help, then change the world we are living in. We need informed bishops and priests who know their duty, the real world they are living in and how to teach and preach.

Father Marx was also prophetic, predicting the coming of chemical abortions and the near elimination of surgical abortions. This will end pro-life counseling at abortion clinics due to the increase of in-home abortions. In just this past month, 20 years later, we are reading about a new “morning after Pill” and the remote dispensation of chemical abortion Pills by abortionists. Father predicted the abortion industry would work on sex education as their next objective, and you have seen the results in our schools. He also stated that a civilization that accepts killing a baby before it is born will accept euthanasia, and you will see this in the coming government-provided “health

# Quibbles, Quodlibets,\* and the Scientific Method: Aquinas

By Marie P. Loehr

*Each science has its own appropriate questions, replies, and arguments;  
and correspondingly its own snares and ignorances.*  
-Thomas Aquinas, Commentary, *I Posterior Analytics*, 21

When we think of Thomas Aquinas, we might think of a great mind, or a sizable body. At one point he writes that in eternity, “corpulence will be cured, but not corporeity.” There is humor in this, a characteristic we are not likely to associate with Aquinas. And yet, a truly great mind of equally great humility, as his was, cannot be without a sense of humor, especially a self-deprecating and ironic humor. Toward the end of his life a vision he had left him crying, “Compared to what I have seen, all I have written is straw!” Yet this “straw” is capable of setting the world on fire for God. Thus Leo XIII named him the Church’s primary and foundational theologian, first among many, such as Augustine, Bonaventure, Duns Scotus and other doctors of the Church.

To read Thomas, after slogging through the morass of modern illogic and irrationality, is like falling into a cool lake on a hot day. Here is logic, reason, order, clarity.

It is thus fitting that Thomas spent much of his career teaching at the University of Paris in the 1200s. The French have long had a favorite saying: “*Clarté, claret, toujours la clarté!*” Thomas is a primary exponent of clarity. His teacher, Albertus Magnus, was considered the finest mind in Europe in his day. In *The Beginnings of Western Science*, David C. Lindberg describes Albert the Great as “the best field biologist of the entire Middle Ages.” Albert wrote a treatise correcting Avicenna on the mating habits of partridges, and proclaimed that he had visited a specific eagle’s nest six years in a row. He was a meticulous observer. He passed this legacy, or habit of mind, to his pupil—who was already apt in his own ability to discern, distinguish and debate with finesse.

The method of analysis and synthesis used by medieval scholars was further refined and honed by Aquinas to a high degree, becoming a flexible tool for research and exposition of ideas.

The modern science we know has its roots in what the Greeks and medievals knew as “natural philosophy.” Philosophy, from the Greek, simply means “love of wisdom.” Science comes from the Latin for knowledge. Love of wisdom and the search for knowledge, the asking of questions, seeking answers is the mark of the scholar of any age, and a particular attribute of man in general. For Thomas it was a love second only to his love for God.

Benedict XVI notes in his audience for 16 June 2010 that Aquinas was the first to make the proper distinctions between philosophy and its roots in reason from theology with its roots in faith, and to give each its proper sphere of activity and development, while yet acknowledging their compatibility and usefulness for one another.

Benedict says, “Together with the agreement between reason and faith, it must be acknowledged that they make use of different cognitive procedures. Reason accepts truth on the strength of its intrinsic evidence, indirect or immediate; faith, instead, accepts a truth based on the authority of the Word of God who reveals Himself.” [*The Wanderer*, June 24, 2010] Thomas himself says:

The order of the sciences is twofold; some proceed from principles known through the natural light of reason, such as mathematics, geometry and similar ones; others proceed through principles known through a higher science, as perspective proceeds from principles known through geometry, and music from principles known through mathematics.

He goes on to say that “. . . in this way the sacred doctrine (namely theology) is a science because it proceeds from principles known through the light of a higher science, namely, the science of God and of the saints.” [*Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 1, a. 2]

Thomas takes a view significantly, if subtly, beyond Augustine’s idea of philosophy as the handmaiden of theology. He separates philosophy from too close a dependence on theology, giving it more freedom to operate in its own sphere, to develop along its own lines. He himself states clearly that because both seek truth, there can never be a conflict between true theology and true philosophy or science. If conflict appears, it is due to either bad theology, bad philosophy or science, or both. Both must be re-examined and clarified.

Like Bonaventure, he is well aware that a mistake about Creation, *aka* nature, leads to mistakes about its Creator.

The method he refined, based on medieval scholastic practice, uses question and answer. This goes back to Socrates, of course, one of the greatest teachers in Western history. But it also goes back to Christ *par excellence*, and the rabbinical tradition. We first see Christ at the age of 12, in the Temple, asking questions of the teachers, and answering their questions, to the astonishment of all.

Question-and-answer is how humans learn from the time they can first speak as toddlers. The student asks a question; the teacher answers. The answer, properly phrased, should stimulate new questions. The teacher's questions and answers should stir the student to discover the answer for himself by deduction and logical chains of reasoning. Over time in the teaching situation, the teacher draws the student to think, to reason, to discover truth in any given field for himself. Thus, education means "to lead out . . ."

Thomas is the master of this method.

To read the *Summa* is an education in the proper method of framing questions, stating the primary points of the question at hand, presenting the objections to the question itself, and to the various points in order of importance.

Thomas often presents opposing arguments against a given position better than his opponents themselves. After presenting these objections, he then says: "On the contrary . . ." He presents the contrary position, then says, "I answer . . ." stating his case, often citing precedent and recognized authorities. Finally, he replies to each objection one by one in order.

We see this meticulous formula used in the university debates or quodlibets, where the teachers debated one another publicly, or threw the floor open to students for debate. A quodlibet was a disputation or debate "as you please," or meaning "what you will." Nevertheless, despite this freedom, these debates were in fact so formal in format, so precise and painstaking in their attention to the most minute detail of a given premise and its explication that they were parodied in the term "quibble" - to quibble is to cavil, to be overly finicky about trivia, say, how many angels can dance on the head of a pin? This particular, probably apocryphal, question anticipates, in fact, modern particle physics and its explication of matter down to its most infinitesimal quarks and virtual particles!

The Jesuits refined this methodology into a method of meditation and Scripture discussion, as well as a way of life. "See, judge, act." Take a small section of the Gospels, examine it in whole and in part, overview and detail, make it vivid in our minds. Then ask what is going on, what does this mean, what does this suggest to our minds and experience? Finally, how can we put this into practice in our own lives, if following Christ and his saints or, conversely, how can we eliminate this from our lives, by examining sinners and opponents of Christ?

They also use it to teach us how to live our daily lives—see, judge, act. Or as Thomas might say, use your senses to inform your intellect. Examine each situation. Then draw your conclusions and act accordingly, preferably in imitation of Christ. But even in secular terms, this method makes for competence and efficacy in living and working.

This formula and format is still with us in many disciplines.

The practice of law requires presenting a case, using questions and answers, cross-examination and refutation, precedent and authoritative sources, to discover if not the whole truth, a certain rough justice at least.

French *explication du texte* uses it to parse grammar, define terms, discover meaning—both in denotation and connotation, word and image, symbol and allusion.

Finally, we see this method most visibly applied in modern science itself. Science has grown beyond simple natural philosophy. It is more than basic questions about nature and Creation, with answers based on simple observation and deduction. It has used these origins to develop not only research into the most hidden functions and activities and behaviors of created being, but also to devise the tools which make more intense exploration of even formerly invisible matter possible, replicable, and visible to our eyes. This has led to applied science or technology that makes our life richer, easier, busier, and more complicated than ever in human history.

Wikipedia says that "in its restricted contemporary sense, science refers to a system of acquiring knowledge based on scientific method, and to the organized categories of knowledge gained through such research.

A scientist encounters a problem. He examines it. He forms theories and hypotheses that might account for the phenomena under his study. Then he collects all observable evidence relating to this phenomena, in whatever field it might be. He experiments, if at all possible, collecting observable data relating to his observations. He analyzes his results, arriving at a viable explanation/explication. He publishes his research and results so other scientists can attempt to replicate his results and confirm his findings.

We saw this process at work decades ago during the "cold fusion" excitement—which fizzled when the experiments could not be replicated.

But whatever the field of science or applied technology, we can trace the methods used, and question/

answer process—however it may be veiled — back to Aquinas, who refined the technique and put it into hard copy, hard copy that survives to this day.

Those who claim the Church suppressed knowledge and invention are ignorant not merely of Church history and its astonishing array of saints, doctors and ordinary layfolk; they are ignorant of history in general. A very fine overview of the development of science from pagan civilization through the Middle Ages is *The Beginnings of Western Science* by David C. Lindberg.

Anything by Fr. Stanley Jaki is an excellent presentation of how the Church encourages true science, and screens out the false. And at least a glance at a few pages of the *Summa* of Aquinas, compared with a high school lab manual in chemistry or biology is instructive. ∞

\* *The “quodlibet,”* roughly meaning “whatever it pleases,” was a form of teaching employed in the medieval university at which questions on any topic which pleased the audience were put to a teacher. These questions and answers were sometimes written up and published, most famously in the *Quaestiones de quodlibet* of Thomas Aquinas.

# Religiously Dissing America's Independence Day

By Mark Tooley

Predictably, Jim Wallis's religious left *Sojourners* blog dishonored Independence Day by featuring an op-ed headlined "Why Christianity and July 4th are Incompatible."

In it, a young pacifist pastor explained why Christians can't "celebrate" having "killed thousands upon thousands of people because they [the British] were taxing us without giving us representation in parliament."

Of course, the reasons for the American Revolution were far more complex than a tax dispute. As the Declaration of Independence summarized the former colonists' grievances against their once monarch:

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow citizens taken captive on the high seas to bear arms against their country, to become the executioners of their friends and brethren, or to fall themselves by their hands.

Prior to the outbreak of hostilities, the American colonists had already over a decade peacefully resisted various royalist schemes to tax and exploit them. The Declaration of Independence came after more than a year into the military conflict, and the Continental Congress had initially convened with hopes of reconciliation with Britain. The actual war did not begin until British troops unsuccessfully attempted to seize both the arsenal, and local leaders, of Massachusetts, in what resulted in the Battles of Concord and Lexington. Led by the royal governor, British troops attempted a similar plot in Virginia. After failing, Virginia's royal governor retreated to a British royal ship and shelled various Virginia coastal towns, which hardly excited local support for the royal cause. St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Norfolk still displays a British cannonball in its walls.

Animosity towards America's founding by the religious and evangelical left is perhaps best embodied by popular Anabaptist theologian Stanley Hauerwas. Guru to much of the evangelical left, he has pronounced July 4 one of history's worst dates because of the ostensible arrogance of founding a nation upon a premise rather than a culture. The author of the *Sojourners*' piece was young Mennonite Brethren minister Kurt Willems, who contemptuously asked in true Hauerwas style: "Is it honorable to kill because people don't like being taxed?"

Mennonites, like most in the Anabaptist tradition, are historically pacifist. But their pacifism historically was primarily binding on themselves and not wielded as a sanctimonious and accusatory sword against the vast majority of Christians, and even against the state itself, for not equally bending to pacifism. Hauerwas's anti-Americanism and infallible pacifism appeal to many on the evangelical left, who find it seductively subversive, despite its separatism from universal Christianity. It also generates a grossly distorted historical narrative, in which the United States is the paramount global villain, whose notions of "freedom" should be idolatrous to Christians.

"I challenge the idea that my freedom to choose came from our independence," Willems insisted. "I am free to choose because God has given me a free will. Just like the Christians who suffered persecution during the first century and so on, I have the ability to choose because of the grace of God." Well, it's true that Christians always have the freedom of martyrdom. But absolute pacifism insists that even in the face of a genocidal holocaust, the faithful may only give non-violent witness. In contrast, nearly all of Christianity has always insisted on the state's divine vocation to wield the sword against evil. And most of Christianity has asserted Christians' own personal responsibility to defend the defenseless with more than their own martyrdom.

Superficially, Willems concluded: "Even if we had not separated ourselves from England, most likely it would have turned out pretty good." After all, "Canada never revolted, and they are doing just fine." He cited a decade old column by evangelical scholar Mark Noll, himself sometimes aligned with the evangelical left, who claimed the American Revolution failed to meet Christian Just War principles. According to Noll, Americans "fought a war to gain the kind of freedom that Canada, New Zealand, and Australia were simply given after not too many dec-

ades,” and establishing an “evil precedent” of America’s ignoring “classical Christian justifications for warfare.”

Commonly many on the evangelical left, claiming not to be pacifist, interpret Christian Just War criteria so tightly as to make all armed force morally impossible. But there is also the sometimes common assumption, almost unique to liberals in Anglo-American culture, that all will be well, regardless. Without exertion, America would have gently eased into independence and democracy like Canada. Likewise, the slaves would have been freed even without the Civil War, German expansionism, even Nazism, would have eventually deflated on its own, and the Soviet Union peacefully collapsed even without American resolve.

Human history is far more complex than progressive determinists assume. People of faith trust that Providence ultimately prevails. But traditionalists also know that Providence often permits evil to persist for long seasons, depending on human choices. Would Britain’s dominions have peacefully achieved their own democracy absent America’s example? Would Britain itself have expanded its own once highly limited franchise absent the American Revolution? Didn’t Britain’s own constitutional freedoms depend partly on the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the parliamentary led civil war of the 1640s against the Stuart monarchy? Absent the American Revolution and subsequent British parliamentary reforms, would Britain have been spared the revolutionary violence that shook continental Europe for much of the early 19th century?

Only Providence truly knows. But America’s Founders understood that lawful freedom is an exception to human history, not the norm, and prevails only through great exertion and vigilance. British premier Lord Lansdowne, who negotiated Britain’s peace with the new United States, admirably received and displayed Gilbert Stuart’s famous portrait of George Washington commissioned specifically for him. Lansdowne, like many British who cherished lawful freedom, understood the American Revolution was about significantly more than petty complaints about taxes.

Will *Sojourners* feature an anti-Bastille Day column later this month to excoriate the blood-soaked French Revolution, which facilitated much of modernity’s worst barbarities? In October, will *Sojourners* rail against the Bolshevik Revolution, whose totalitarian victory ultimately murdered tens of millions? Almost certainly not.

The historically unparalleled American Revolution, initiated reluctantly, and led by temperate and mostly Christian statesmen, created a republic that cherishes private property, personal liberty, free speech, and religious freedom. They believed in limited government because they knew that no state could replicate the Kingdom of God, as utopians so often disastrously insist. For this reason, among others, the left, including the religious and evangelical left, often uniquely despises the American Revolution and the incomparable republic it founded.☞

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# Church Bulletins Promote the Darndest Things....

By Stephanie Block

The July 11, 2010 Sunday bulletin of Sacred Heart Church in Albuquerque carried two announcements. One was for a workshop to be given by Sister Joan Brown, who formerly worked for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe's Office of Social Justice running an "Ecology Ministry." The other was for a weekend-long conference by Fr. Richard Rohr, Sister Ilia Delio and Pamela Wood. For those who might be interested in attending either of these conferences, a bit of background information might be useful.

Besides longstanding associations with the dissident Catholic movement *Call to Action* and its pseudo-peace organization, *Pax Christi*, Sr. Brown has made a career of environmental "oddments" - as one might expect from a person "influenced by the work of Brian Swimme, Thomas Berry, and Joanna Macy." For example, Sr. Brown led an Earth Vespers Service in celebration of the September 2005 Fall Equinox at Las Placitas Presbyterian Church. (Sister also has led a Summer Solstice Earth Vesper service there.) Leland Bowen, chair of Las Placitas Presbyterian's Earth Care Committee, and Charles Little described the event as taking place at a "circle of ancient cottonwoods, considered by many to be one of the most sacred places in the area, with nearby petroglyphs dating back hundreds, if not thousands, of years. The observance included talks on the Native American origin legend of the Sandias, the long history of sacred groves around the world, a 'ritual of healing waters,' and 'prayers from the trees...'" ["Summer solstice celebrated at Del Agua Cottonwoods," *The Sandoval Signpost*, July 2005]

Sr. Brown assisted *New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light* in over 60 showings of former Vice President Al Gore's movie on alleged global warming, "An Inconvenient Truth..." which has inconveniently been demonstrated to contain very scant truth—and over nine blatant lies. (A photo of Sr. Brown at the website identifies her as "Director," but doesn't list her on the staff or with Board of Directors.)

Sr. Brown is also the President of *Partnership for Earth Spirituality* [PES], an ecumenical organization that aims "to promote a better understanding of the interdependence of ecology and spirituality." (*Partnership for Earth Spirituality*, [www.earthspirituality.org](http://www.earthspirituality.org)) The Board includes three members of Fr. Richard Rohr's *Center for Action and Contemplation*. Started in 2002, PES programs and projects include:

—**"Earth Seminars."** One held February 8, 2007, is designed to equip participants with the skills they need to address ecological issues. This particular seminar discussed George Lakoff's book *Thinking Points: Communicating our American Values and Vision*.(4) Lakoff, a professor of linguistics at the University of California, Berkeley and a Senior Fellow at the Rockridge Institute, which published the book, is an important figure in the *Network of Spiritual Progressives* and in *Faith in Public Life*.

—**Women's Wilderness and Earth Retreats**, offering "time within the natural world to reflect upon one's spiritual journey within the context of the entire Sacred Earth Community."

— **"Change of Season" celebrations** – collaborations "with other faith communities like Las Placitas Presbyterian Church and organizations such as Erda Gardens to offer rituals and prayer services to celebrate the solstices and equinoxes and deepen our relationship within the natural world." The Earth Vespers celebrating the Fall Equinox were held in Placitas at the Jubilee Garden, beginning with a gratitude prayer for the waters from the acequias, remembering those who have passed, followed by a short walk to the gardens where prayers, songs, blessing of seeds and prayer "formed the context of a special ritual."

—**Vernal Equinox:** Some of the rituals Sister has led are available at the website. Composed for a Vernal Equinox service held at Las Placitas Presbyterian Church in Placitas, New Mexico, on St. Cuthbert's day, March 20, 2006, for example, is an adaptation of the Catholic Tenebrae, traditionally prayed on Good Friday. This has been combined with another adaptation, the Stations of the Cross, but rewritten to reflect the environmental crisis and the alleged growing impact of global warming. At each station, using Jesus' sufferings as a metaphor, worshippers are asked to consider some aspect of environmental damage that humanity has done to the earth, and then, as in the Tenebrae service, a candle is snuffed. The eighth station – Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem – is transformed into "An Ecofeminist Lament." The last station – Jesus is laid in the tomb – is the point in this eco-ritual when all candles have been extinguished. It represents the "late, great planet earth" and the coming apocalypse caused by mankind's sinfulness. Here there is only a single sin: the environmental destruction of the earth...excuse me, of the *Earth*.

—**Welcoming the Day:** Another ritual offered on the website is called "Welcoming the Day." This, Sr. Joan tells us, is used by her both personally and in retreat settings to start the day "in a more Spirit-filled, meaning generating way." It is designed to imitate the spiritual traditions of the "First Peoples" and their sense of "revelatory"

time as distinguished from those who use time to measure work. This ritual begins with drumming or perhaps the soft tapping of two stones together, trying to find the Heartbeat of the Universe, a chant (“Behold, a sacred voice is calling us...”), readings from a sacred text – preferably earth-centered — praying “the eight directions,” four times each, a sort of kiss of peace or thoughts of peace, depending on whether one is in a group or alone, a blessing of the paths – with cornmeal, if possible — and closing with a chant that repeats “All shall be well.”

—**Eight Directions:** Ritual materials explain praying “the eight directions.” Its purpose is not to worship nature – pantheism – but to recognize God’s presence in all creation – *panantheism*. Therefore, among the gifts the worshiper seeks, one from each direction, is “community” – a gift that informs us that the “Earth is composed of a rich variety of communities, not just species and subspecies, not just what’s useful and what’s not, not just what’s natural, unnatural, not just what is human and non-human. These communities grow out of a consciousness of each other. If consciousness is awareness, than no entity is devoid of some kind of awareness.”

—**Welcoming the Night:** Another ritual, “Welcoming the Night,” closes with prayer to “Beloved Father and Holy Mother.” It asks, seeming to identify Father and Mother both as “god,” that: “we your creation drink one last time from the pool of the Sun’s energy. With great caring you have helped me this day to walk as your child, a pilgrim on a sacred path. At one with you and all of your creation, I enter into the night. Still me that I might listen to the sounds of this night. You are the source of my existence. Your heart is my home. From you I have come and to you I journey this night.”

**Father Richard Rohr** has an even more colorful *curriculum vitae*, if that’s possible, than Sr. Brown. He has a finger in just about every New Age cauldron, promoting the Enneagram, celebrating the syncretistic St. Thomas “Mass” in support of Jim Wallis’ *Sojourner* crowd (e.g. progressive politics aimed at religious bodies), denouncing the “patriarchal” Church while selling “male spirituality,” endorsing the work of *Soulforce*, a homosexual advocacy group that, among other things, is working for the acceptance of homosexual “marriage” by the Church, to name a few.

Robert Hogue, one of the writers for the Berean Perspective Blog ([web.me.com/ktpowers/1/Home.html](http://web.me.com/ktpowers/1/Home.html)), has reported on Rohr’s March 2010 Emerging Christianity conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico: “This event was promoted as an opportunity to be inspired and challenged with non-dual thinking and a new theology rooted in the ‘third way.’ To give you a taste of what that means, participants at this event were invited to direct their prayers toward god as our Mother or Father, were inspired by the poetry of the Muslim mystics Rumi and Hafiz, and had some time to do a little Yoga, join in some Contemplative Chant and go for a Labyrinth walk.”

The Emerging Christianity conference featured speakers that:

...included advocates for finding common ground between Christians and the religions of the world. This invitation to join the convergence, which leaders of this Emerging spiritual commune are extending to us, is not about restoring unity to the Church by bringing the hearts and minds of Christians closer to Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour. It is obvious that they have a much broader vision in mind than merely unifying the various Christian denominations under their Emergent banner. Convergence goes beyond minimizing, for the sake of civility, the differences between the Christian denominations. It is broader than just being loving to people of other religions and finding a peaceful way to coexist in harmony with them on this planet. What they are working to bring to life within the Christian community, what this inter-religious conversation is really about, is the creation of a unified Interspiritual society that will grow and expand to include people from all the other faiths. Their inclination is such that they are willing to ignore the obvious differences between the diverse religions of this world in order to bring unification to all people, for the sake of all people, and for the future of life on Earth. To accomplish this we will be required to abandon our previous ways of thinking about, and interacting with adherents of other religions. We will need to develop an appreciation for the elegance of non-dual thinking and then implement it as a replacement for our present way of viewing religion. Christians will be compelled to adopt a more nebulous approach to having an intimate relationship with God and accept the fact that the only theological statement we need to affirm is ‘God, as you understand him, her or it.’

To accomplish this “Deep Ecumenism,” Rohr and his confreres teach that people of all faith traditions must avoid divisive discussions about doctrine and theology and turn to mysticism as humanity’s common ground.

Rohr’s next major CAC-sponsored event, the Creation as the Body of God Conference advertised in the July Sunday bulletin of Albuquerque’s Sacred Heart Roman Catholic parish, appears to be a development of Rohr’s Cosmic Christ ideas, adopted from the terminology of Matthew Fox.

The term “creation as the body of God” has also been floating around eco-theology circles for a while. Hyun-Chul Cho, author of *An ecological vision of the world: toward a Christian ecological theology*, writes, “[C]reation may be conceived as a cosmic body, which is penetrated by and steeped in the spirit. In this perception of creation as the body of God and God as the spirit of this body, the whole creation is viewed as an organic body in which all creatures form a web of relationships in virtue of the spirit. At the same time, the spirit preserves the body by infusing it with life-sustaining breath. This body-spirit perception of the world and God works as a antidote against the strong dualistic and anthropocentric tendency toward nature which is still predominant in us.”

That is more or less Rohr’s theology, what he calls “an expanded view of the mystery of Incarnation in the cosmos” and claims, “What the Christ means is the confluence of divinity and physicality, spirit and matter. When the material and spiritual worlds coexist, we have Christ.” [Rich Heffern, “The eternal christ [sic] in the cosmic story,” *National Catholic Reporter*, 12-11-09. Interview with Richard Rohr]

As further insight in what Rohr would be presenting, Creation as the Body of God Conference materials say, “The whole of Creation, the Body of God, is suffering from oppression and disease. We, as Christians, are called to participate in the liberation and healing of the Earth and ourselves. In this conference, we:

- \* Honor and experience the Oneness of ALL God’s Creation
- \* Enter with the Earth into the transformative space of suffering
- \* Work toward restoring right relationship with Creation and the Creator through the exploration of environmental ethics
- \* Develop and strengthen our own prophetic voices to bring about the renewal of the face of the Earth through compassionate action
- \* Live from the eco-centric, rather than the ego-centric.” ☞

# An Unchanging Church

By Alan Peter

What are the Marks of the Church? How shall we know we have found the True Church? It is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. What is the Mass? The Mass is the un-bloody sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ; a re-presentation of Calvary. What are the four ends for which each Sacrifice of the Mass is offered? Adoration, Thanksgiving, Reparation, and Petition.

How many rites of the Catholic Church are there? A *rite* is “an ecclesiastical tradition about how the sacraments are to be celebrated.” There are the Western Rites, with several Churches, such as the Roman. There are also the Eastern Rites, also with several Churches. In Albuquerque, in addition to the Roman rite, you may attend the Divine Liturgy following the Byzantine Ruthenian rite every Sunday, 10 AM, at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, 1837 Alvarado Drive.

How many languages of the Catholic Church are there? In 2010, Latin is the language of the Roman Catholic Church. For those members of the Romanian Catholic Church of the Eastern Rite, the liturgical language is Romanian. Before St. Peter established the Church in Rome, his first *See* was in Antioch, and the language of the liturgy was Aramaic, as it remains now for Catholics of the Maronite rite. Even today, two languages are found in the Tridentine Mass (also called the *Extraordinary Form*) - Latin and Greek, showing the relationship between Rome and Constantinople.

Can the Mass change? Paraphrasing a recent US president, it depends what you mean by the word “change.” Certainly the *accidents* can change - an automobile can come in many colors but the *essence* of the automobile (a self-contained, non-tethered contraption with four rubber-tired wheels, a source of locomotion, a steering mechanism, capable of carrying one or more humans, and no wider than the traffic lanes) can not change. In my St. Andrew's missal, in the Canon, there is a footnote that says St. Leo added the words “a holy sacrifice, a spotless Host” in the Fifth century. To “add” words implies that there are other words preceding and following this phrase already present. But did the *essence* change? What is *essential*? It is essential that the Mass is the un-bloody re-presentation of the Sacrifice on Calvary.

Why has the number of people attending Mass each Sunday declined? Why are there so few priests and sisters? What happened to morality and justice within society? Are any of these changes related to what *appears to our senses* to be a *changed* Mass? Are the laity justified in saying, “the Mass has changed?” Are the laity justified in resisting the efforts of the Church hierarchy to bring them (the laity) along into the “reforms of Vatican II?”

The Mass cannot change. If the essence of your Mass is not the un-bloody re-presentation of the Sacrifice on Calvary, then you're not in the Church that can lead you to Heaven. Can the *accidents* of the Mass change? They change all the time. My missal was printed in 1925, before John Bosco was canonized a saint in 1934. When I attend Mass on January 31st, I'm slightly lost because the Propers of the Mass commemorating this “new” saint aren't there. The *essentials* of the Mass - the Sacrifice - have not changed, however.

But, what if large parts of the Mass *appear* to have changed? What if our senses are overwhelmed with *accidents* that lead us to largely different dispositions than Adoration, Thanksgiving, Reparation, and Petition? Maybe the question from the previous paragraph becomes “*should* the *accidents* of the Mass change? And if so, how?” Imagine if your husband or wife came home each day with different color hair. Would their *essence* change? No. Would their *accidents* change? Yes, and some might even say, “they're nuts!”

Probably the most unsettling outcome of the Second Vatican Council was major and abrupt changes affecting things the laity *perceive* every day. Change has actually become a goal unto itself - witness the last presidential campaign. Was it Plato who said “All change, except from that which is evil, is dangerous.” The laity has resisted, and continues to resist, efforts by the Church hierarchy to accept *accidental* changes to the Mass. It is unfortunate that priests and bishops can not (or will not ?) recognize the desire of their faithful, and do not at least consider that these changes have been too much, too fast. Large portions of the laity have concluded that a Mass, which they *perceive* to be continually changing, can not have much value. They have “voted with their feet” and left the Catholic Church. Another, much smaller, group of the faithful have resisted the *accidental* changes and have clamored for “a return to Tradition” by which they mean “before Vatican II.” Meanwhile, priests and bishops cater to the *feelings* of a third group of Catholics - those who come docilely to church on Sunday and contribute to the collection to maintain empty parish buildings left to us by our parents in the 1950's, when the Church was larger and growing.☞

**Dr. Alveda King, the niece of Martin Luther King Jr., spoke on June 22nd 2010, at a meeting of the Working Group on Human Dignity, in the European Parliament in Brussels:**

*My talk today and my work as a civil rights activist are based on three very simple truths –*

*\* that every human being is worthy of respect by virtue of his being human;*

*\* that at no time does anyone's life become less human or more human;*

*\* that each human life begins at its physical beginning*

*....So much bloodshed and heartache happened because some people in the United States thought that African Americans were not worthy of respect. We were spat upon. We were clubbed and beaten. And we were lynched. We were killed because we were regarded as less than fully human. So it is with the lives of unborn babies – who are womb-lynched today....Today's unborn are yesterday's blacks...*

*....I believe that the denial of the right to life is the greatest injustice we face in the world today. There is no compassion in killing. There is no justice in writing people out of the human race. ...*