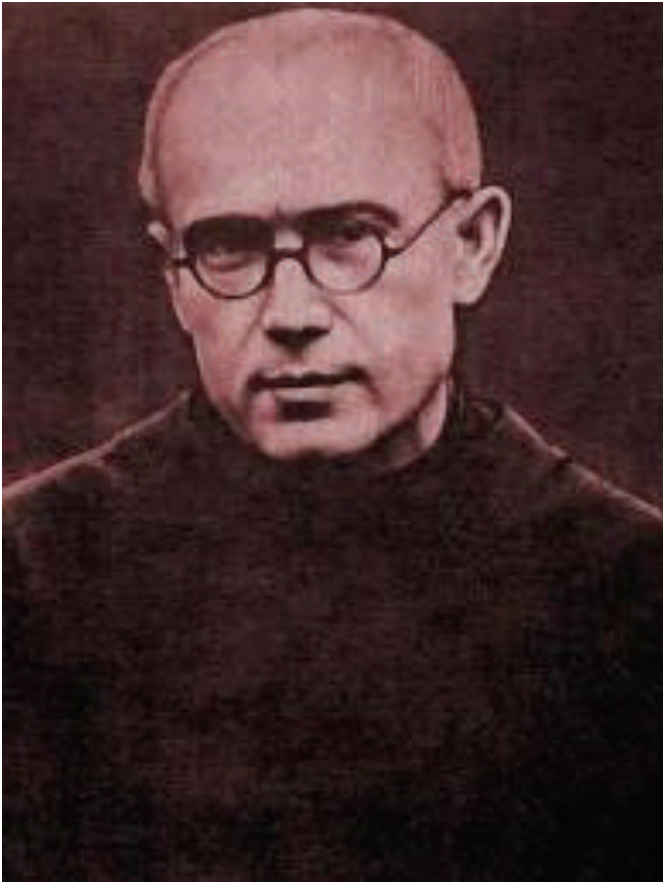


Los Pequeños Pepper

Publication of Los Pequeños de Cristo

August 2012



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*Cover: Saint Maximilian Kolbe—
August 14*

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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.

Will the Immigration Circle Be Unbroken?

By Mark Tooley

Some prominent conservative evangelicals have joined with liberal groups to resuscitate Comprehensive Immigration Reform.

A June 12 press conference in Washington, D.C. announced an “Evangelical Immigration Table” backing these principles for desired U.S. immigration policy:

- Respects the God-given dignity of every person.
- Protects the unity of the immediate family.
- Respects the rule of law.
- Guarantees secure national borders.
- Ensures fairness to taxpayers.
- Establishes a path toward legal status and/or citizenship for those who qualify and who wish to become permanent residents.



Jim Wallis, founder and CEO of *Sojourners*

The first five principles are laudable but likely will be overshadowed by the final point for legalization of illegal immigrants. Endorsers include officials from the Southern Baptist Convention, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), and Focus on the Family, as well as liberal groups such as Jim Wallis’s *Sojourners* and *Evangelicals for Social Action*, plus *Bread for the World*.

“There are many ordinary days in Washington,” declared Wallis, the Religious Left’s most prominent voice. “I think this is an extraordinary day.” An official from NAE’s relief arm agreed: “To rise above the fray, the Left and the Right, the polarization that simply does not need to be there, and create a better life for immigrants.” The official “Table” statement lamented “political stalemate” over immigration and urged a “bipartisan solution.”

Speakers at the press conference cited polls claiming overwhelming public support for their version of immigration reform. But they did not explain why proposals for legalization keep failing in Congress or why some states, like Arizona and Alabama, have enacted their own controversial laws against illegal immigration. Some polls in fact show evangelicals are the most resistant among American demographic groups to proposals for legalization. Clearly the coalition aims to revive Comprehensive Immigration Reform as a viable issue by trying to energize evangelicals, which are a key constituency among Republicans.

“Together we will create a national groundswell for comprehensive immigration reform,” Wallis promised. But Wallis, whose public persona tends to dominate whatever coalition he joins, is unlikely to persuade the more conservative evangelicals who are the primary target. The Evangelical Immigration Table maybe would have been shrewder to exclude Wallis and highlight its conservative supporters.

Undoubtedly the participating conservative evangelicals in the “Table” are sincere in affirming “fairness to taxpayers” and “secure national borders.” But Wallis and Ron Sider of *Evangelicals for Social Action* are pacifists opposed to all force. In what sense do they support “secure borders” beyond maybe the moral suasion of unarmed Christian Peacemaking Teams encamped at the border? As to protecting taxpayers, the liberal members of the “Table” likely have a different understanding than the others, having typically emphasized the right of illegals to government benefits and services.

The Table was also vague about the desired sequences of events. Would borders, and presumably visa enforcement, be secured well before any mass legalization, as the conservative participants presumably prefer? Or would legalization get priority, as Wallis et al. almost surely prefer?

There was also some doubt at the press conference as to the political priority evangelicals should attach to Comprehensive Immigration Reform versus other issues of concern to evangelicals and other traditional religionists, such as marriage, abortion, and religious freedom issues especially relating to the Obamacare contraceptive/abortifacient mandate. Historic Christian teaching is pretty unequivocal about marriage and sanctity of life, and

since religious freedom is central to the church's ability to function, presumably the answer would be obvious. Neither the Bible nor Christian tradition offers clear policy guidance about immigration policies for modern civil states.

In this election year, should evangelicals prioritize or not marriage, abortion, and religious liberty over a more prudential issue like immigration law? The Evangelical Immigration Table left the waters muddied. No doubt Jim Wallis and the Evangelical Left are pleased, since their exertions have long tried to steer evangelicals away from traditional social conservatism in favor of issues like immigration liberalization.

There is also likely the belief among some evangelicals supporting the "Table" that they are representing and appealing to the growing number of evangelical Hispanics. And perhaps they are. But polls don't show automatic mass support by Hispanic citizens for legalization. And evangelical Hispanic churches, which are mostly charismatic and Pentecostal, overwhelmingly are non-political. Possibly some Anglo evangelicals, influenced by a few Hispanic activists, are superimposing their own expectations onto Hispanic evangelicals. Like other Americans, Hispanic voters this year are most concerned about the economy. And like Anglo evangelicals, evangelical Hispanics tend to care deeply about marriage and abortion as public issues to which their faith speaks directly.

Many fine Christian leaders, including several friends whom I greatly admire, have endorsed the "Table." But likely they will be disappointed by the Table's ultimate inability to motivate many traditional evangelicals. Meanwhile, liberal participants, chiefly Jim Wallis, who represents no church but is mainly a media presence, will adroitly exploit the "Table" to amplify their own influence and preferred policies.✎

Mark Tooley is president of the Institute on Religion and Democracy. The above article first appeared on the *American Spectator* website.

Why Do "Social Justice" Christians Ignore Pro-Life Issues?

By David French

An abortion is the intentional killing of an unborn child inside (or partially inside) the womb.
Social justice is . . . what exactly?



Again and again I see young social justice-focused evangelicals abandoning any effective voice for the unborn for the sake of an ephemeral, culturally-fashionable concept that as a practical matter means little more than advocating a utopian ideal through a grab-bag of banal, functionally socialist policies. Moreover, the embrace of social justice often drives them functionally into the arms of a political party and political movements that are dedicated to protecting and even subsidizing the "right" to kill children on a vast, industrial scale. Social justice must be virtuous indeed to be worth such a high cost. So, what is it?

Well, it turns out that to many on the Left, legalized abortion is an indispensable aspect of social justice. Is that the social justice evangelicals are fighting for? No?

In his new book, *The Tyranny of Cliches*, *National Review's* Jonah Goldberg discusses the origin of the term and how liberals often simply equate social justice with "goodness," or the kind of society they'd like to see. As a practical matter, that's how most Christians use the term. "Social justice" is little more than the term they use to describe a nation that is more "fair" in a thriving environment with less poverty, less oppression, and more opportunity than the society we currently have. But by that definition, isn't everyone for social justice? Don't we all want to live in a thriving environment with less poverty, less oppression, and more opportunity?

But that's not really what the more serious "social justice" Christians seek. It's not merely a set of outcomes — then we'd all be on the same side — but rather a set of policy choices (almost always leftist or socialist in orientation) that are designed to achieve those outcomes.

Let's take the environment. Social justice Christians just adore the environment. (Don't we all?) They want us to be good stewards of creation (who can disagree with that?) and as a result decry dependence on fossil fuels and tend to embrace the full agenda of the environmentalist Left — carbon taxes, cap and trade, emissions caps, etc. etc.

But . . .

Social justice Christians hate poverty. (Don't we all?) They want us to care of the “least of these” (who can disagree with that?) and as a result seek greater economic development not just in the poorest parts of our own country but also in the developing world. During my time in the Third World, I'm always struck by the extreme lack of infrastructure . . . families walk miles and miles to visit a single, tiny hospital that services hundreds of thousands, precious few roads cut through even densely populated land, without water treatment plants, schools, transportation, people are trapped on subsistence farms, living at the mercy of capricious weather and dangerous diseases. Rectifying this requires development, which means . . . uh oh. Cars. Buildings. Industry. Trucks. Emissions!

And . . .

Social justice Christians hate oppression. (Don't we all?) They want to end sex trafficking, the oppression of women, and tyranny of all kinds (who can disagree with that?) Two of the most tyrannical regimes on Earth as of 2001 were Saddam Hussein's Iraq and Mullah Omar's Afghanistan — regimes that were collectively responsible for more than a million deaths and subjected their people to the *most grotesque forms* of violent repression. Those regimes no longer exist, and the regimes that replaced them — while hardly perfect — are now among the most socially enlightened in the region. Much to the delight of social justice Christians, right?

Oh, wait. They're not delighted?

I could go on and on and on. The point here is simple: in exchange for adopting fashionable leftist policies that at worst actually harm the people they're trying to help and at best represent debatably-effective solutions to complex and intractable problems, the social justice Christian Left has thrown under the bus the most vulnerable citizens of this (or any) culture — unborn children. Because, you see, if you're truly effective and outspoken in your opposition to abortion, then you're just a “culture warrior.” And God knows, you don't want to be one of those.

So, please, let's drop the false moral pretense of “social justice.” You're not fooling anyone. You're a leftist seeking leftist solutions to known cultural problems, and in so doing you've elected to side with those who seek the legal right to intentionally kill children. Oh, you may claim to be pro life even as you work diligently to maintain and increase the power of those individuals and institutions that advance and protect our abortion regime, but you've made your choice in the real world.☞



LifeNews Note: David French is an attorney with the American Center for Law and Justice.

Oh, Sisters!

Not only are the renegade LCWR Sisters in hot water with the Vatican but they are waging a media campaign to cover their tuchases.

By Stephanie Block

Here's what it says on the T-shirt, if you're interested in buying one:⁽¹⁾

"We Are All Nuns" (2) - In solidarity with the nuns who support radical feminist themes: social justice, rebuilding of schools, political asylum, the unemployed, the broken, the earth, the homeless, death and dying, protection of biodiversity, education for all, elderly, unwed mothers, collaboration, the abused, holistic health, anti-human trafficking, the ordination of women, abolishing the death penalty, interfaith work, the end of war, homeless teens, abused women, campus ministries, joy, orphanages, fidelity, displaced persons, fathers, equality for all persons, ending domestic violence, the immigrant, the lonely, the arts, the elimination of torture, self-direction, equal pay for equal work, the indigent, fair housing, human



rights, no racism, no gender bias, the war on climate change, loving your neighbor, the disabled, planned parenthood, theology, the abandoned, legal rights, healthcare reform, prevention of child abuse, women's rights, peace, respect for diversity, celebrating the liturgy, charity, global responsibility, love, praying, rehabilitation, individuality, parish ministries, living the gospel message, the sick, the alienated, leadership, the infirmed, civil rights, nursing, teaching, researching, soup kitchens, visiting, counseling, the silent, service to Native Americans, common ground, being free of oppression, healing, ecumenism, community living, pastoral care, visitation, improving standards of food, the abused, hospitality, no interest loans, the hungry, parenting, the gay and lesbian community, freedom of choice, reliable irrigation, the addict, social work, science, authoring, respect, no fracking, meditation, food pantries, critical thinking, rebuilding of the schools, the poor, non-violence, banning guns, mothers, no strip mining, mountain top

removal, poverty, generosity, no nukes, service, freedom of choice, hope, medicine, democracy, Hispanic ministry, formation for peace, religious life, empowerment, global transformation, cultural diversity, food pantries, healthcare for all, shelters, ecology, dignity, foreign missions, farming, day care, HIV/AIDS ministry, tolerance, families, the environment, centers of spirituality, corporate social responsibility, beauty, prisoners, knowledge, non-partisan get-out-the-vote, singles, listening, same-sex marriage, mental health, child care, oppressed, human services, to proclaim liberty."

The folks producing this walking billboard are apologists for the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), the group that was recently chastened by the Vatican. We owe the apologists a debt of gratitude. They have demonstrated – in very intuitive, feminista style, of course – the Vatican's complaint.

1. The T-shirt apologists imply that the Vatican's *Doctrinal Assessment of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious* is a critique of *all* women religious.

Of course, the Vatican was quite careful to make the distinction. The document's title is, again, the *Doctrinal Assessment of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious*, not the *Doctrinal Assessment of Women Religious, Generally-Speaking*. LCWR represents many of the communities of consecrated Catholic women in the United States, but not all.

Furthermore, the Vatican document recognizes that even within the LCWR organization, there is a spectrum of individuals. Some are out in left field; some are faithful: "[T]his doctrinal Assessment concerns a particular conference of major superiors and therefore does not intend to offer judgment on the faith and life of Women Religious in the member Congregations which belong to that conference."

The apologists are confusing *certain* (i.e., renegade) Sisters with *all* Sisters. This appears not only to be delib-

erate – “We are all nuns” could just have easily have been “We are all LCWR,” but it wasn’t – but part of a larger media campaign. For example, *New York Times* writer Nicholas D. Kristof published a piece on April 28, 2012 titled “We Are All Nuns.”

A few days earlier (April 25), Mary E. Hunt, a feminist theologian who co-founded and co-directs the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER) – and an advocate in the women-church movement – also wrote an article under that title. Hunt opens it with: “When it comes to the Vatican’s crackdown on women religious, I believe it’s time to declare that for the purpose of this struggle: *we are all nuns.*”⁽³⁾

It’s a clever bait and switch maneuver...but dishonest.

2. The T-shirt apologists imply that accusing the “nuns” of “radical feminism” is preposterous. They have only been doing “good works,” which are enumerated with cheerful redundancy.

Of course, the Vatican isn’t chastening the LCWR for anyone’s good works. “The Holy See acknowledges with gratitude,” the Doctrinal Assessment reads, on the first page in its introduction, “the great contribution of women Religious to the Church in the United States as seen particularly in the many schools, hospitals, and institutions of support for the poor which have been founded and staffed by Religious over the years.”

The apologists are confusing *all* of the activities (of renegade Sisters) with the good works traditionally done by women Religious and for which, they know, most Catholics are deeply grateful.

But then, the T-shirt apologists tuck in among the list of themes (understood as the “good works” of the “nuns”) several immoral positions. There we read support for “freedom of choice” (a cultural code word for abortion), “planned parenthood” (a cultural code word for contraception), and “same-sex marriage.” In other words, the apologists have confirmed what the Vatican’s assessment of the LCWR observed: “[T]he Assessment reveals serious doctrinal problems which affect many in Consecrated Life...these sisters collectively take a position not in agreement with the Church’s teaching on human sexuality.”

If you speak the language of ordinary people, the apologists have confirmed that they and the women religious in question are, indeed, supporting “radical feminist themes.”

Abortion, contraception, and same-sex “marriage” are serious problems that Catholic moral teaching has consistently challenged, in one form or another (obviously, the Church never addressed same-sex “marriage,” *per se*, before recently – the idea never crossed anyone’s mind. The Church has taught clearly about the perils of homosexual behavior, however), since the Church’s founding. For the LCWR to hold positions that are contrary to the Church is problematic.

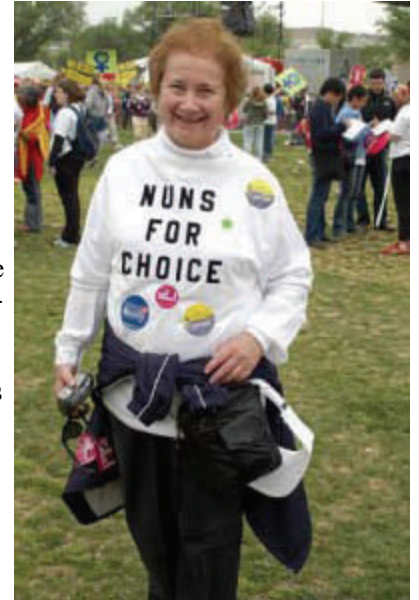
The apologists are speaking as though the “nuns” hold the traditional moral position but it just ain’t so, babe.

3. The T-shirt apologists leave out some interesting things and replace them with some interesting other things. There is nothing in their list that indicates traditional Catholic spirituality – no Masses, no Divine Office, no Rosary, no anything a Catholic would recognize as *Catholic*.

What we do get, as a window into the spirituality of the renegade LCWR “nuns” is “celebrating the liturgy,” “praying,” “meditation,” “living the gospel message,” and “centers of spirituality.” Now, any of those *could* be Catholic but they could also be...anything. Vague, nondescript words have been preferred to specific, descriptive words *for a reason*.

No doubt, this is why the Assessment says, “Religious can and should be a fruitful means of addressing the contemporary situation and supporting religious life in its most “radical” sense—that is, in the faith in which it is rooted.... The Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours will have a place of priority in LCWR events and programs.”

4. The T-shirt apologists have tried to muddy the water about the particular politics in which they and the “nuns” coming under Vatican scrutiny are *particularly* engaged. Together with traditional works of mercy, of course, and with virtuous nouns like “fidelity,” “love,” and “joy,” the apologists have included ideologically-loaded concepts that, like “freedom of choice,” are conveyed in coded language. “Ordination of women,” “no gender bias,” “the war on climate change,” “healthcare reform,” “global transformation,” and so forth, describe positions that have nothing to do with Catholic understanding social justice.



For those who don't like nuance.....

Yet one of the reasons certain individuals within the LCWR are coming under Vatican scrutiny has to do precisely with the recalcitrant insistence of these women to misidentify their advocacy in these areas with Catholic social justice teachings. The Assessment is remarkably restrained about this activity, merely noting that LCWR links with organizations such as Network and Resource Center for Religious Life is something the Vatican intends to “review.”

Now, these are worldly-savvy ladies and they are very aware that this is where they are most threatened. While there is nothing to prevent them from *personally* advocating for anything they like, if the Vatican takes from them their ability to connect ideological positions with Catholic social teaching, it will have eviscerated them.

Enter the media supporters. The Faith in Public Life blog ran angry postings throughout the following month. “Don’t expect Catholic sisters to shrink like delicate flowers in the shadow of the Vatican’s recent crackdown,” said one. “For centuries, women religious in the Catholic Church have been marginalized and often maligned even as they exemplify what it means to be Christians who bring healing to a wounded world.”⁽⁴⁾



“Nuns” Bus Tour

From Religion News Service, David Gibson writes, “Now it turns out that conservative American churchmen living in Rome -- including disgraced former Boston Cardinal Bernard Law -- were key players in pushing the hostile takeover of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.”⁽⁵⁾ Cable News Network’s Michael Martinez writes his coverage from the LCWR perspective only, interviewing and quoting Sister Simone Campbell, executive director of Network and John Allen, senior correspondent for the National Catholic Reporter – but no one representing the Vatican position.⁽⁶⁾

Stephanie Simon, writing for Reuters, is particularly interested in how the Sisters will fight back. “Following their discussions in Rome, the nuns will convene a national convention in St. Louis in August to further shape their response to the Vatican. ‘This response shows Catholic sisters are not backing down from their

social justice mission and are handling a troubling situation with great dignity,’ said John Gehring, the Catholic program director for Faith in Public Life, a liberal advocacy group.”⁽⁷⁾

Are we seeing a concerted pattern here? A conspiracy, perhaps?

But wait. The plot thickens. News reports shift from poor, misunderstood “nuns” to a social justice road trip. “In a spirited retort to the Vatican, a group of Roman Catholic nuns is planning a bus trip across nine states this month, stopping at...facilities run by nuns to highlight their work with the nation’s poor and disenfranchised.”⁽⁸⁾

The poor are always useful – in this case shifting attention from criticisms against the LCWR Sisters to... Representative Paul D. Ryan and his proposed federal budget. “‘I think he was so direct in draping himself in the mantle of Catholic social teaching,’ Campbell said. ‘He took the words but he took none of the meaning in the forming of the budget.’”⁽⁹⁾ Whoa! It’s a whole, other discussion suddenly! And Faith in Public Life wants to know “Will Catholic Bishops Join Nuns on the Bus?”⁽¹⁰⁾

Meanwhile, Sister Joan Chittister, writing in the progressive evangelical publication *Sojourners*, speaks of “the Vatican’s ‘hostile takeover’ of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.”⁽¹¹⁾

This is the way progressive political activists manipulate the discussion, using their media allies to reframe it, rename it, repurpose it. The Vatican’s review of LCWR links to Network, Resource Center for Religious Life, and similar organizations can’t come soon enough.

It’s all there, on the T-shirt. ☞

Notes

1. You can order your T-shirt at www.stbenedictsguild.com for \$25.00. Or, the same message on a tote bag is \$15.00.
2. The women under discussion are, for the most part, *not* nuns. The term “nun” properly refers to cloistered women who have taken religious vows. Women who have taken religious vows and who actively serve in the world (teachers, nurses, etc.) are simply called “religious.” All consecrated women are addressed as “Sister.”
3. Published in *Religion Dispatches Magazine*.
4. Bold Faith Type, blog of Faith in Public Life, “Catholic Sisters on Trial,” 5-2-12.
5. David Gibson, “Are Americans in Rome behind the nuns crackdown?” Religion News Service, 5-7-12.
6. Michael Martinez, “Leaders of U.S. Catholic nuns to address Vatican reprimand about ‘radical’ feminism,” Cable News Network, 5-27-12.
7. Stephanie Simon, “U.S. nuns push back against Vatican crackdown,” Reuters, 6-1-12.
8. Laurie Goodstein, “Nuns, Rebuked by Rome, Plan Road Trip to Spotlight Social Issues,” New York Times, 6-5-12.
9. Dan Merica, “Nuns’ group plans bus trip to protest the Ryan budget,” CNN, Belief Blog, 6-6-12.
10. “Will Catholic Bishops Join Nuns on the Bus?” Bold Faith Type, Faith in Public Life blog, 6-13-12.
11. Sister Joan Chittister, “A ‘Hostile Takeover’ of Women Religious,” *Sojourners*, 6-13-12.

Important New Study on the Effects of Same-sex Marriage

By Susan Yoshihara, Ph.D.

When I testified last year about a proposed law that would redefine marriage in my state, the legislation's proponents rested much of their case on a study saying lesbians make better moms than the rest of us. No significant report has emerged to counter it, and so in the public debates the marriage equality side has had the edge in peer reviewed research. That changed this week with a new study that shows why children raised by homosexual couples suffer more and why previous studies are flawed. The new study by Mark Regnerus was published in this month's *Social Science Journal*.

Here is NRO's assessment of the bottom line:

Children with a parent in a same-sex relationship “underperform” in almost every category. Some of these differences may be relatively benign — whether one voted in the last presidential election, for example — but most are decidedly not. One deficit is particularly worrying: Less than 2 percent of children from intact, biological families reported experiencing sexual abuse of some nature, but that figure for children of same-sex couples is 23 percent. Similarly disturbing is that 14 percent of children from same-sex couples have spent some time in foster care, compared with around 2 percent of the American population at large. Arrest, drug experimentation, and unemployment rates were all higher among children from same-sex families.



Mark Regnerus

And here is Ross Douthat's conclusion from the NYT:

Regnerus's study is a reminder of why marriage has traditionally been regarded as something other than just a celebration of love and a signifier of civic equality, and why the rationale for the institution has involved a child's rights to his or her biological parents as well as in two lovers' rights to one another. Marriage's purpose, in this sense, has not been just to validate the consenting adults who enter into it, but to provide support and recognition for a particular way of bearing and rearing children — one whose distinctive advantages remain apparent, even as that recognition declines and disappears. ∞



The above blog posting was published at Turtle Bay and Beyond: www.turtlebayandbeyond.org/2012/homosexuality/important-new-study-on-the-effects-of-same-sex-marriage

They Show Us What to Be Living For

The reality is hard to believe

By Archbishop Jose Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles.

The anti-Catholic persecutions in Mexico in the 1920s and 1930s are long forgotten, it seems.

The reality is hard to believe. Just a generation ago, not far from our borders, thousands of men, women and even children, were imprisoned, exiled, tortured and murdered, all for the “crime” of believing in Jesus Christ and wanting to live by their faith in him.

So I welcome the new film, *For Greater Glory*. It tells the dramatic story of this unknown war against religion and our Church’s heroic resistance. It’s a strong film with a timely message. It reminds us that our religious liberties



are won by blood and we can never take them for granted.

That such repression could happen in a nation so deeply Catholic as Mexico should make everybody stop and think. Mexico was the original cradle of Christianity in the New World. It was the missionary base from which most of North and South America, and parts of Asia, were first evangelized.

Yet following the revolution in 1917, the new atheist-socialist regime vowed to free the people from all “fanaticism and prejudices.”

Churches, seminaries and convents were seized, desecrated and many were destroyed. Public displays of piety and devotion were outlawed. Catholic schools and newspapers were shut down; Catholic political parties and labor unions banned. Priests were tortured and killed, many of them shot while celebrating Mass.

The dictator, Plutarco El’as Calles, used to boast about the numbers of priests he had executed. His hatred of organized religion ran deep. He really believed his reign of terror could exterminate the Church and wipe the memory of Christ from Mexico within a single generation.

He was wrong. In the forge of his persecution, saints were made.

It became a time of international Catholic solidarity. American Catholics opened their doors to refugees fleeing the violence. My predecessor, Archbishop John Cantwell, welcomed many here to Los Angeles - including Venerable Maria Luisa Josefa de la Pe’a and Blessed Mar’a Ines Teresa Arias.

We need to ask for the strength to be *Cristeros*. By their dying, they show us what we should be living for.

Ordinary Catholics became *Cristeros*, courageous defenders of Jesus Christ. Many felt compelled to take up arms to defend their rights in what became known as the *Cristeros* War. Others chose nonviolent means to bear witness to Christ.

“I die, but God does not die,” Blessed Anacleto González Flores said before his execution. His words were prophetic.

Martyrs are not defined by their dying but by what they choose to live for. And the *Cristeros*’ blood became the seed for the Church of future generations in Mexico.

Today, we need to know their names and we need to know their stories.

We need to know about the beautiful young catechist, Venerable Mar’a de la Luz Camacho. When the army came to burn her church down, she stood in front of the door and blocked their way. They shot her dead. But the church was somehow spared.

We need to know about all the heroic priests who risked their lives to celebrate Mass and hear confessions. Growing up, we had prayer cards made from a grainy photograph of one of these priests, Blessed Miguel Pro. He is standing before a firing squad without a blindfold, his arms stretched wide like Jesus on the cross as he cries out his last words: *¡Viva Cristo Rey!* (“Long live Christ the King!”)

We need to learn from the examples of all the *Cristeros* who have been canonized and beatified by the Church. And today especially, we need to pray for their intercession.

As it always has been, today our Catholic religion is under attack in places all over the world. In Mexico and America, we don’t face suffering and death for practicing our faith. But we do confront “softer” forms of secularist bullying. And our societies are growing more aggressively secularized.

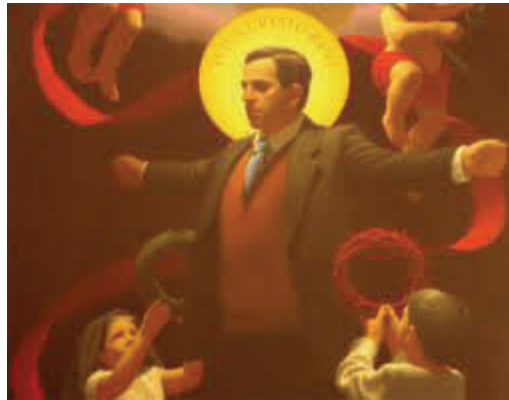
Already, sadly, we've accepted the "rules" and restrictions of our secular society. We keep our faith to ourselves. We're cautious about "imposing" our beliefs on others – especially when it comes to politics. In recent months, our government has started demanding even more – trying to coerce our consciences, so that we deny our religious identity and values.

We need to ask for the strength to be *Cristeros*. By their dying, they show us what we should be living for.

So, let's make that our prayer this week, that like the *Cristeros*, we might be always ready to love and sacrifice to stand up for Jesus and his Church.

And may Our Lady of Guadalupe – Mother of Mexico and the Americas, and the bright star of the New Evangelization – pray for us

Archbishop Jose Gomez, Ordinary of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, wrote the following in the May 29 edition of the Archdiocesan paper, The Tidings.



**¡Viva Cristo Rey!
¡Viva la Virgen de Guadalupe!**

Blessed Miguel Pro was a Mexican Jesuit Catholic priest executed under the presidency of Plutarco Elías Calles after trumped up charges of bombing and attempted assassination. Father Pro's arrest, lack of trial, and evidential support gained prominence during the Cristero War.

From a letter written by Blessed Pro:

We carry on like slaves. Jesus help me! There isn't time to breathe, and I am up to my eyebrows in this business of feeding those who have nothing. And they are many—those with nothing. I assure you that I spin like a top from here to there with such luck as is the exclusive privilege of petty thieves. It doesn't even faze me to receive such messages as: "The X Family reports that they are twelve members and their pantry is empty. Their clothing is falling off them in pieces, three are sick in bed and there isn't even water." As a rule my purse is as dry as Calles's soul, but it isn't worth worrying since the Procurator of Heaven is generous.

People give me valuable objects to raffle off, something worth ten pesos that I can sell for forty. Once I was walking along with a woman's purse that was quite cute (the purse not the woman) when I met a wealthy woman all dolled up.

"What do you have there?"

"A lady's purse worth twenty-five pesos. You can have it for fifty pesos which I beg you to send to such-and-such a family."

I see God's hand so palpably in everything that almost—almost I fear they won't kill me in these adventures. That will be a fiasco for me who sighs to go to heaven and start tossing off arpeggios on the guitar with my guardian angel.

Biblical Words, Marxist Analysis

By Rick Plasterer

From time to time those who seek to make the 1960s social revolution the “new normal” advance ludicrous claims for the unreflective. This recently happened in a *New York Times* piece by Mark Oppenheimer on May 25. Oppenheimer made the claim that the religious version of sixties radicalism, liberation theology, is the true and original doctrine of Jesus Christ. Quoting Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary theologian Shannon Craigo-Snell, Oppenheimer reported that “Liberation theology, at its most simple, is the Sunday School Jesus who healed the sick or took care of the poor people ... It’s what your Sunday school teacher taught you if you grew up in a church. It isn’t something people should be afraid of, unless they’re invested in poor people not getting fed or sick people not getting healed.”

This is the basic claim of the religious left, also made by the early twentieth century Social Gospel, that Jesus’ teaching has been misunderstood by traditional Christianity, perhaps even by the apostle Paul, who mistook Jesus’ gospel of salvation from suffering as a gospel of salvation from the wrath of God, and the consequent need to be saved, and then sanctified. People don’t need salvation from the wrath of God, liberationists think, they need personal and social liberation. What distinguishes liberation theology among ideas of this type is its Marxist basis. Rather than seeing the gospel as just “doing good,” or “helping the poor,” liberation theology attempts to identify oppressors and oppressed, views the world through the lens of the claimed oppression, and struggles for a complete social change to liberate the victims.

That this is not the gospel of Jesus Christ should be very evident in the Bible. There is no reason to think Jesus saw his message as a radical break with the faith of ancient Israel. The Old Testament’s concern for the poor was in the context of a nonpartisan idea of justice: “you shall not be partial to a poor man in his dispute ... you shall not pervert the justice due to your needy brother in his dispute” (Ex. 23:3, 6). After this, the Old Testament Law and Prophets were indeed exceptionally concerned for the needy, prescribing a tiered sacrificial system for the poor in Israel (Lev. 5:7, 11; 12:8; 14:21-22, 30), gleaning of fields by the poor (Lev. 19:9), the return of pledges (Ex. 22:26-27), non-alienation of inherited land (Lev. 25:13-15), and advancing repeated references to the oppression of the poor (in which authorities were condemned for deviating from the revealed standard of justice). Consistent with this, Jesus’ teaching and miracles involved meeting human needs. Jesus indeed condemned the Pharisees, but for their hypocrisy, not their ideals (Matt. 23:1-3). Jesus accepted the Pharisees’ ideals, which were based on the holiness expounded in the Old Testament, and he clearly accepted an understanding of personal sin as making people culpable, indeed damnably culpable, before God. In fact, in declaring the human heart a source of evil thoughts and words, Jesus very reasonably advanced a doctrine of original sin (Matt. 15:18-19; Mk. 7:21-23; Lk. 6:45).

Unlike the Old Testament, which presents a legal code, the New Testament advances no set order for society. The Kingdom of God, which we do not now fully know, will come fully at the end of the age; until then it can only be partially realized in the church, and perhaps in the wider society as Christians, by reason and moral suasion, seek to realize the Bible’s moral precepts there. But as to the things in the contemporary world that we might call “policy,” the Bible does not offer prescriptions. We can only look at the Bible’s general moral precepts, try to understand what experience in our day has taught us, and draw conclusions as Jesus taught us, with good and bad fruits testifying to good and bad sources (Matt. 7:15-20). And indeed experience of recent generations has taught us that the self-denial and personal responsibility of the Christian past, not autonomous individuals and societies as a primary commitment to liberation would imply, leads to justice and prosperity.

It is ironic that having quoted the claim of one theologian that liberation theology is “the Sunday School Jesus,” Oppenheimer then advances the claim of another liberation theologian, Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, who (correctly) denies that liberation theology is biblical. It is the victim’s “experience and our struggle for survival, not the Bible, which are the source of our theology and the starting point for how we should interpret, appropriate, and use the Bible,” she is quoted as saying. So liberation theology starts outside the Bible and proceeds to use the Bible for its own purposes. The starting point is Marxist claim that ending suffering supersedes all other considerations (such as truth and reality). The correct starting point for biblical theology is God’s holiness, and human sin and redemption. Any salvation from suffering can only occur within that context. Liberation theology, like the Social Gospel before it, uses biblical words with non-biblical meanings, but is perhaps more directly influenced by Marxist thinking. The destructive effect of both on Christianity (which is about obedience to God, sin, and salvation), and America (which is based on individual responsibility) is apparent in both movements. Both are anti-Christian and anti-American. ❧

Rick Plasterer’s article appeared on June 22, 2012 at Juicy Ecumenism, the blog of the Institute on Religion & Democracy.



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This First Amendment Fight Is for Freedom to Serve

By Kathryn Hickok

Fifteen million. That is the number of meals Blanchet House of Hospitality estimates it has served to the needy in Portland since 1952. Blanchet House originated as a Catholic social and service group started by University of Portland students in 1938. Today, Blanchet serves an estimated 700 to 900 people every day in Old Town/Chinatown. If fifteen million people stood next to each other, the distance would stretch from about the North Pole to the Equator.

Nearly forty years ago, a Salem priest wanted “to provide a safe and loving home” for pregnant teenage mothers so they wouldn’t believe their only option was an abortion. The Father Taaffe Foundation says: “They were given a home, not just an address. They were treated with respect, love and care, some for the first time in their lives. They were given a sense of safety, structure, and direction; an example of family life and hope for the future.”

Monday through Saturday, volunteers provide help for those most marginalized and forgotten at Saint André Besette Catholic Church, better known by its former name—the Downtown Chapel. Says St. André Besette’s mission statement: “Compelled by our faith, our parish honors the dignity of each person by providing hope, healing and hospitality to all who come to our doors.”

Catholic Charities is the professional social services arm of the Archdiocese of Portland. It offers housing assistance, disaster relief, human trafficking outreach, immigration legal services, pregnancy and adoption counseling and services, Hispanic outreach, and more. It provides these things “regardless of faith, race, marital status or condition in life.

[Catholic Charities’] activities are based upon the fundamental belief in the dignity and sanctity of human life and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.” Catholic Charities served 1,323 people in 1952. Today, Catholic Charities helps more than 100,000 Oregonians in need every year.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul, with a highly active council in Portland, is a “worldwide Catholic organization of laypersons, open to all who wish to live their faith by loving and serving their neighbor...[M]embers...help those in need, regardless of race, ethnicity, creed, gender, orientation, handicap or religion.”

All of these organizations provide vital assistance to the needy in Oregon, all are inspired directly and explicitly by the faith of the people who work and volunteer for them, and all operate in accordance with the moral beliefs and values of the Catholic Church.

But organizations like these would not be considered “religious employers” by the federal government, because they do not exist solely for the purpose of serving members of their own faith.

Last summer, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) directed virtually all employers to include coverage of contraceptives, sterilization procedures, and abortion-inducing pharmaceuticals without copayment in their employee insurance policies. HHS subsequently published a final rule that requires many health insurers to charge all enrollees in order to cover the cost of other people’s elective abortions.

The HHS mandate on contraception, sterilization, and abortion has an extremely narrow conscience exemption only applicable to organizations whose purpose is solely to inculcate religious values and which employ and serve primarily members of their own faith. It will not include the vast majority of religiously affiliated or faith-based institutions like hospitals, colleges, schools, and social service organizations which may have moral objections to paying for or providing these products and services. Grimly dubbed “the parish secretary exemption,” it would apply mostly to houses of worship, not to ministries and charitable agencies which serve all people without discrimination.

For the federal government to attempt to force organizations like Catholic Charities to pay for or to provide contraception and abortion is absurd. Equally absurd is forcing Catholic organizations to assist only members of the Catholic Church or else to be considered “not religious”—and therefore subject to government regulations that violate their moral standards. In fact, this should be ruled unconstitutional.



Reverend Monsignor Charles Taaffe, founder of The Father Taaffe Foundation

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Catholic social services are the fruit of people's faith, but they don't help others because the needy share that faith. Catholics believe that Christ's words and example require them to reach out to all. Restricting assistance only to members of their religion is unacceptable to them. This is why forty-three Catholic dioceses, universities, Catholic Charities chapters, and other entities have brought a historic lawsuit against the federal government. Through the new HHS rules, the federal government, in effect, has created "two classes of religious organizations"—houses of worship which are exempt from its conscience-crushing directives, and service organizations which may have to violate their moral principles or stop serving the needy.

The Catholic Church, and Americans of all faiths or none who are uniting in defense of religious liberty, are not seeking special treatment under the law, but only the freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution. The Archbishop of Washington, D.C., Cardinal Donald Wuerl, said, "Just as our faith compels us to uphold the liberty and dignity of others, so too, we must defend our own." This First Amendment fight is not for believers' freedom to worship behind church doors, but for their freedom to serve millions of their neighbors who stand outside, in accordance with their faith and moral values. ❧

Kathryn Hickok is Publications Director at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization, and a graduate of the University of Portland. www.cascadepolicy.org/news/2012/06/15/this-first-amendment-fight-is-for-freedom-to-serve

August Calendar

Los Pequeños Monthly Meeting
August 24, 2012
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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Check out *Project Defending Life's* radio show, **Lifetalk**, which airs on 1050 AM KTBL every Saturday at 2:00 pm till 3:00 pm.

“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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