

Los Pequeños Pepper

Publication of Los Pequeños de Cristo

December 2008



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

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.

The Beggars' Christmas

By Clyde Archibeque

"...*Al fin*...at last, it is now really Christmas morning," Alvino sighed. He awoke with a regret that last week he sneaked a look into the sack of hidden Christmas gifts. He knew that every other Christmas his parents bought winter coats for him and his brother and sister, but what awful looking coats they purchased this year ...hooded parkas! His most prized of all past Christmas gifts was his motorcycle jacket. Even though it was snug and worn, he did not intend to stop wearing his chrome-studded and many-zippered treasure. He vowed to himself to wear the parka only in the presence of his parents and at all other times his prized jacket. Now that he was awake, he reluctantly walked into the living room to open Christmas gifts with the rest of his family.

"*Mi'jo*...son, usually you are here first to open the Christmas gifts," commented Frank.

"*Papa*, I am still sleepy from staying up late serving *La Misa del Gallo*...Midnight Mass" Alvino explained.

"I forgot, *Mi'jo*," apologized Frank. "What time did the Mass end?"

"Two a.m., *Papa*."



Russ Ball, illustrator for the *Albuquerque Journal*, in which *The Beggar's Christmas* was published in 1989

"No wonder you are sleepy, *Gracias a Dios* that your *Padrino*, your Godfather, Valentin, attended that Mass and drove you home."

Frank did not attend Mid-night Mass because he had worked an over-time graveyard shift from 11:30 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. and he had been home only fifteen minutes. Cecilia, Alvino's mother, also did not attend because it was too late a Mass for Lala, Alvino's little sister, and especially Tuti, the baby. The family planned to attend the 10:00 a.m. Mass and afterwards eat their traditional *posole*, *menudo*, *tamale*, and *biscochito* brunch, that they prepared last evening at aunt Zoila's; Since Zoila was bedridden, brunch would be served at her home afterwards.

"*Bueno, bastante plática*... enough talking," scolded Cecilia. Open your gifts!"

In order to prevent chaos, Cecilia, last Christmas, made some rules that each would take turns opening one gift at a time, youngest to oldest, until all gifts were open. Because Tuti was the baby, he was allowed to open his gifts whenever he pleased.

After each opened all the wrapped gifts under the tree, Frank said, "Shh, did you hear that? Someone is in the backyard."

"I think its *Tieta*," suggested Alvino.

"No, it is not your *abuelo*... your grampa," said Cecilia, "Zoila asked him to spend the night and morning with her family this Christmas."

"I better see *who* or *what* it is," Frank said, "*y no tienen miedo*...don't be scared."

Alvino grinned because *Papa* performed this ritual every year just before he brought the sack of gifts that supposedly Santa dropped from his sleigh into the backyard. Alvino was surprised that Lala did not, after these many years, catch on to *Papa's* make-believe. He guessed that her belief in Santa Claus impaired her judgment. Regretfully, Alvino stopped believing in Santa when he was only six years old. That year his cousin, Daniel, showed Alvino the secret sack in *Tieta's* closet where his parents hid Santa's gifts. Alvino still carried a grudge against Daniel for ending his childhood fantasy.

On cue, Frank ran out into the backyard and threw his voice sounding out a loud, "Ho! Ho! Ho!" After retrieving the sack, he ran back into the house and said, "Look what Santa Claus dropped from his sleigh!"

He then laid the sack next to the Christmas tree and invited the children to look inside.

"Tuti, giggling, jumped on the sack first and pulled out a small baby-blue parka coat. Lala, close behind, pulled out a pink parka. To Alvino's surprise, both were ecstatic about Santa's gifts. He thought, "How easily they are fooled."

Lala enthusiastically nudged Alvino and shouted, "What are you waiting for? Get your gift!"

Alvino pulled a grey parka out of the sack and with sarcasm, mumbled, "Oh how nice...a parka coat... *justwhatIhavealwayswanted*."

Lala responded, "It is a lot nicer than that tight, black *pachuco*, hoodlum jacket that you always wear."
"It is an official motorcycle jacket...*pachucos* wear baggy old black or grey top coats," Alvino angrily responded.

Cecilia intervened, "Stop the quarreling, it is Christmas morning! This is a time to be happy. This is the *Santo Niño*'s...Baby Jesus', birthday. "

Both Lala and Alvino apologized, "Sorry, *Mama*, we forgot."

"Lala, Alvino...go get dressed for Mass," Frank instructed.

Alvino whined, "*Papa*, I already attended Christmas Mass...*La Misa del Gallo!*"

"Alvino, this is a special day...today, you will attend a second Mass with your family, O.K.!"

"O.K., *Papa*, but I hope I don't fall asleep in the pew."

Before Frank could correct Alvino's rude response, a chant of "*Mis Creemas! Mis Creemas*," was heard outside the front door. Alvino and Lala peeked out the window and saw three small children standing on the porch. Each held and thrust out an old opened flour sack in front of them. They were the first of several groups of children who would go from house to house in the neighborhood chanting "*Mis Creemas*, My Christmas," begging for Christmas treats. Every Christmas, Cecilia and Frank stocked an ample supply of apples, oranges, bananas, nuts and hard Christmas candies for the Christmas beggars. The children were the poorest of the neighborhood families and for many these were the only gifts that they received for Christmas.

Frank opened the door and Cecilia asked, "Lala y Alvino, please drop some fruit, nuts, and candies in each *po-brecito*... poor child's bag."

As the children were dispensing the treats, Cecilia and Frank noticed that one of the boys was shivering. The poor child did not wear a coat. He only had on a threadbare shirt, pants and curled-up oversized shoes to keep him warm. Frank's heart broke for the boy. He saw himself in that little boy as a painful memory of his poverty during the Great Depression. He then said, "Alvino, give this *pobrecito* your coat."

With a smile of relief on his face, Alvino quickly placed his new parka around the boy's shoulders and said, "Here take it...it is yours."

Frank said, "No, not the parka, it is too big for him. I meant your small old motorcycle jacket. It is just his size and it will keep him warm."

"No, *Papa*, not my jacket!"

"Alvino, go get that jacket, now!"

Alvino knew by his father's tone of voice that he was adamant. His eyes welled up with tears as he slowly walked to his room and lifted up his jacket that was hanging from the bedpost. He slowly walked back to the living room, hugging his jacket close to his chest. He dropped it at his father's feet and ran out the back door to *Tieta*'s apartment. As he knocked on the door, he remembered that *Tieta* spent the night at *Zoila*'s. He slumped down to his knees in front of the door and began to cry.

He heard some children talking and laughing. He looked to his right and saw at a distance the little boy to whom he had given his jacket, smiling from ear to ear as he showed it off to his companions. Alvino stopped crying and glared at the little boy with much contempt. He then was startled by a voice...it was *Tieta*'s.

"*Mi'jito*," *Tieta* asked, "*por que estás llorando*...why are you crying?"

Alvino began to sob uncontrollably and *Tieta* reached down and embraced him in his strong arms and said, "*Mi'jito*, *que pasó*...what happened?"

It took about a minute for Alvino to regain his composure. Alvino then recited: "*Papa* made me give away my most favorite gift to that dirty little boy walking across the street. He is the one wearing my motorcycle jacket. I think I hate that boy and right now I think I don't like *Papa*, too."

"*No digas eso*...don't say that. Hate is a very bad word."

"*Tieta*, I am so mad I can't stand it "

"*Mi'jito*, I know how much you treasure that jacket, but let me tell you about the best gift that your *Papa* just gave you."

"What? *Tieta*, the gift he gave me this year is an ugly parka coat."

"No, not the parka, this Christmas he gave you something more precious than gold."

"*Tieta*...I don't understand...what do you mean?"

"*Mi'jito*, he just taught you a valuable lesson. As hard as it was to give away your most prized gift...you just



received something far more important.”

“*Tieta*, what is it?”

“You just now learned something that only very few people learn.”

“What?”

“In your life, *Mi'jito*, you will own many things...maybe, many valuable things. All things that you own will someday disappear but the memories of the good that you do for others will never disappear. Someday that motorcycle jacket will no longer exist, but the memory that you have today will last as long as you live. Your father taught you that the best thing that you can give to another requires some sacrifice. When you give your most prized gift, as you did today to that poor little boy, you gave from *love* and not from *hate*. All that you own will someday disappear but the memories of the good things you do will last forever. Today your *Papa* gave you the best Christmas gift...ever!”

“What do I do now, *Tieta*? I acted so bad, especially to *Papa*.”

“*No te preocupes, Mi'jito*...don't worry ...just follow where God leads you.”

Alvino then walked back into the house and told his father, “Thank you, *Papa!*” √



“*Die Madonna auf der Mondsichel im Hortus conclusus verehrt von einer Stifterfamilie*” (Madonna on a Crescent in an Enclosed Garden with Donor Family). By an anonymous painter known as the “Master of 1456.”

Science and the Church – Cosmic Conundrum?

By George C. Loehr

Can scientific thought coexist with “religious belief”? First of all, it seems like it does for an awful lot of scientists. Bro. Guy Consolmagno SJ, director of the Vatican Observatory, says that, in his experience, about the same percentage of scientists and engineers are believers as is true among the general population. Many noted scientists have written books about their faith. Most major discoveries throughout scientific history were made by believers, many of whom were actually churchmen. Copernicus, the first astronomer to formulate a scientifically-based heliocentric cosmology (with the planets revolving around the sun), was a devout Catholic and church official. George Lemaitre, who in 1927 first proposed the Big Bang theory of the origin of the Universe, was a Catholic priest.

Yesterday upon the stair
I met a God who wasn't there.
He wasn't there again today;
I wish by gosh He'd go away.

Apologies to William Hughes Mearns

“Well, you're a Roman Catholic, so you can't believe in Evolution, or a universe more than 4000 years old. But here's why you're wrong....” Many intelligent, college-educated Catholics have been drawn into just such a conundrum!

Richard Dawkins is a master of this disreputable approach, and politicians use it all the time. How're you doin', Nancy Pelosi?

But there can be no conflict between the Universe and the God Who created it. This is a theme used by Galileo during his infamous trial. It's also a theme used by John Paul II in his magnificent encyclical, *Fides et Ratio*. Ironically, and I'm sure quite consciously, the Pope uses the exact same line of argument. Yet I've never seen this recognized by any theologian or commentator writing about the encyclical. What a pity.

Catholic theologians often fall into the Dawkins trap. To begin with, few understand Science, so they see it as a threat. Then atheists and materialists have told them so often there's a major conflict between Science and Religion that many (most?) have come to believe it themselves. Thus many of the articles in theological magazines like *Communio* contain, at best, a grudging acceptance of Science, or at worst, an outright hostility towards it. This is most unfortunate.

Modern Science might not exist at all were it not for the Church. Judaism, with its emphasis on God's interest in and love for Man, was the starting point. Christianity's view that Christ's incarnation sanctified all creation took this to the next level – if you understand God's creation better, you understand God better. Pair that with the Church's emphasis on the individual as a unique creation, and it's no surprise that Science came into its own in the Christian West.

Yet many Christians make the fundamental error that “spirit” is good, and “matter” is evil. In the early days, they were the Manicheans and Albigensians. The Church condemned both as heresies. One of the purposes of Christ's incarnation was to sanctify the created Universe by becoming a part of it. He wasn't some sort of holographic projection of the Godhead – He was actual flesh and blood – molecules and atoms – protons, electrons and quarks. Oh my.

Why, then, are we constantly bombarded with allegations that Science is incompatible with Religion? Why are journalists amazed when they discover that the Vatican operates astronomical observatories in Rome and Arizona – and even ask, quite seriously, if Catholic astronomers are looking for God in space? Not surprisingly, much of the answer harks back to atheistic materialists. But we Catholics share in the blame.

One of the oldest tricks in the competitive debater's arsenal is the technique of “telling” your opponent what he believes, and then beating it down. The trick is to present a *false* image of his beliefs – not his actual belief system, but a fictional one – and one that is easily debunked. An atheist might say to a Catholic,



One frustrating (and sometimes maddening) corollary to the matter-is-evil heresy is apparent in the “evolution” debate. Many Catholics seem to think they’re “not allowed to believe in evolution.” Likewise, many promote the teaching of Intelligent Design as an alternative to Evolution. But this is apples and oranges. As believers, we acknowledge God as the ultimate Creator – He maintains everything in existence every second of time. Indeed, He is the Author of time itself – “I Am Who Am.” But there’s no conflict between that *belief* in God and the *tools* He uses – biology, evolution, the laws of physics, etc. The trouble with Intelligent Design is that it confuses the worker with his tools, the artist with his paints and brushes.

Catholic writers who truly understand Science, like John Paul II and Guy Consolmagno, have consistently shown that there is no conflict between Science and Religion – none whatsoever – and that Science, correctly viewed, will actually *increase* one’s faith. How can anyone not be awed by God’s power and majesty while contemplating the vastness of the Universe, or looking at the magnificent photographs beamed down from the Hubble Space Telescope?

Or, think about being in love. Do we not want to learn all we can about the beloved – his or her history, work, dreams? So, too, with God. Does not our love for Him extend to learning all we can about *His* work?

The more we learn about the Universe, the better we know its Creator. Here’s a little thought experiment, just for fun. Einstein discovered that nothing can travel faster than the speed of light. But, and this has been verified experimentally, time actually slows down as you approach the speed of light. Theoretically, at the speed of light, time would stop. So a beam of light traveling from one end of the universe to the other would take many billions of years – by our measurement of time. But, if the beam were intelligent and self-conscious, from the experience of the light itself, no time would pass. In other words, the light would experience being at both ends of the Universe, and everywhere in between, *at the same time*. Consider *that* the next time you see Christ described as the Light of the World. √



Madonna in a Rose Garden,
Lochner, 1440

Primary Wonder Denise Levertov

Days pass when I forget the mystery.
Problems insoluble and problems of-
fering
their own ignored solutions
jostle for my attention, they crowd its
antechamber
along with a host of diversions, my
courtiers, wearing
their colored clothes; cap and bells.

And then
once more the quiet mystery
is present to me, the throng’s clamor
recedes: the mystery
that there is anything, anything at all,
let alone cosmos, joy, memory, every-
thing,
rather than void: and that, O Lord,
Creator, Hallowed One, You still,
hour by hour sustain it.

[From *The Stream & the Sapphire: Selected Poems on Religious Themes* (1997)]

[Levertov was arguably the finest English language poet of the second half of the 20th Century. She was brought up in a Jewish/Anglican tradition in the UK, and converted to Catholicism late in life.]

Just in time for Christmas...

The Bad Catholic's Guide to Wine, Whiskey & Song

A Spirited Look at Catholic Life & Lore from Apocalypse to Zinfandel

Text by John Zmirak, recipes by Denise Matychowiak
Crossroads Publishing; 240 pages; \$14.95

Book review by Susie Lloyd

A funny thing happened on my way to read a serious apologetics book to my teens: I couldn't find it. After turning the house upside-down, ranting and raving a bit, and offering a cash reward, somebody remembered that Dad had loaned it to a non-Catholic friend.

Great. Just great. It had been on my syllabus for weeks. Even in high school, the girls have already faced harsh criticism against the Church; there would be more as they ventured further into the world. Now there sat my number-one resource - collecting dust, I suspected - in the home of a guy who was just married by a priestess to a staunch Lutheran.

(Hold on, the funny part is coming.)

So later that night as I was cackling in bed over *The Bad Catholic's Guide to Wine, Whiskey and Song*, it came to me: "I'm reading this to the girls!" I told my husband, jarring him awake.

In the late 19th century, scholarly skeptics such as Sir James Frazer attempted to explain away the uniqueness of Christianity by finding precedents for its practices among the pagan cults. Unsurprisingly, they looked to the cannibalistic custom of the Baccantes as the origin of the Eucharist. We must admit the close resemblance: whenever we attend a bloodless offering of bread and wine conducted by a celibate Irishman, our thoughts turn to gangs of naked Greek women, roaring drunk, gouging flesh out of passersby with their fingernails. It's positively distracting, some Sundays.

It struck us both as the kind of apologetics Chesterton used - a blend of logic and ridicule, producing orthodoxy. A funny looking sort of baby, but undeniably effective.

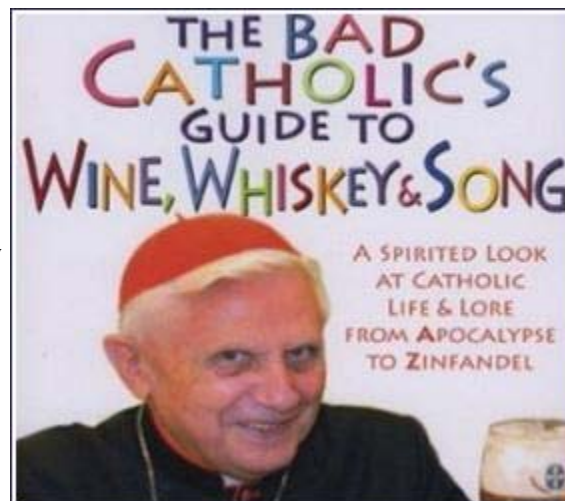
If you've seen its older brother, *The Bad Catholic's Guide to Good Living*, you may be wondering how I, a homeschooling mom of many years, many children, and many jean skirts, could ever think of reading such stuff to impressionable children.

Perhaps you agree with the manager of one Catholic shop who refused to carry it because it was "tasteless." Even though the same shop does hawk plastic glow-in-the-dark Madonnas made in China, I, as a mom, do understand his reservations. Kids and certain conservatives are not the target audience of that book; Generation X Catholics are. Both *Bad Catholic* titles stand a better chance of finding their way into the bathrooms of, well, bad Catholics, than a book that overtly glorifies Catholicism - unless used as toilet paper.

While I liked its older brother, I am much more partial to John Zmirak and Denise Matychowiak's second child. (That's just how it is in some families.) It's fatter and funnier and, yes, more kid-friendly. It shares the same merry features and is animated by the same spirit of obedience to the Church's Papa, who is pictured on the cover holding a Malteser Weissbier. Those in our household who have sampled such fine German brews are not scandalized.

Inside is a list of similar brews and their often monastic origins. There are also wines and liqueurs dating from the period most ex-Catholics call the Dark Ages. We who have tasted German beer and Italian wine like to think of the period in more favorable terms - when Catholics were busy building culture and giving people a reason to live, founding hospitals, schools, and institutions to protect the worker and his family. No wonder modern folks don't get it. They're drinking synthetic substitutes, like "Zima and Other Culinary Inventions from the Devil."

What would happen if instead they tried one of the many "healthy, natural, mostly organic-based dishes that



celebrate the intrinsic perfection of God's creation," like "Dom Perignon: Champagne and Caritas are Always Appropriate," "Easter Beer: Miracles and Yeast" or "Cider: O Happy Fall!"

At first they might smack their lips in wonderment and think it a freak accident that stodgy, narrow-minded Catholics actually produced this glory. A few more sips, and who knows? They might well sample some doctrine: "Original Sin -- We've fallen and we can't get up." A belly laugh makes history hard to resist: "Henry VIII -- A Gouty Man is Hard to Refine." After "Crashing with the Benedictines," they might find Catholics more broad-minded than their high school social studies teacher led them to believe.

If their newfound faith - or at least respect - puts them in the mood to sing, they've got their pick of drinking songs. There's one to fit every mood. My favorite? *Le Marseillaise*, with alternate lyrics penned by the Catholics of the Vendée who valiantly rose up against the forces of the French Revolution. The ditty is now available in English and - you guessed it - nowhere else.

Our predecessors in faith sure enjoyed a good parody. It seems like they enjoyed a lot of things, so perhaps we can safely follow their example in this, too. v

Susie Lloyd is the author of the award-winning humor book [Please Don't Drink the Holy Water!](#) Look for the sequel from Sophia Institute Press, available 2008.



Nativity scene in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, Christmas Eve

“And the Word became flesh . . .”

By Marie P. Loehr

“...and pitched his tent among us...” - John 1:14

What does it mean, to pitch his tent among us? It seems obvious. Those of us who were Boy Scouts, or camped beyond the recvee, will say, gee, you set up a tent with poles and stakes and whatever fabric tents use - canvas, fancy modern fibers, whatever. Some campers just string a line between trees in their allotted camp space, and throw a tarp, or a large sheet of whatever will keep the wind and chill, the dew and ground squirrels off them, over the line, and stake it down. Then they huddle cozily in the “tent”, food stowed as far away as possible - and hope no bears come prowling.

The ancient tent could be skins stretched to cover the poles. It might or might not be stripped of its outer covering of fur or wool. It was also made of woven camel’s or goat’s hair. It is probably no coincidence that Paul was a tentmaker by trade.

In his entire discussion of “veil” in 1 Corinthians, especially chapter 11, Paul plays on concatenations of profound realities. The dwelling tent is a “house of hair,” as it was known to the desert tribes for millennia. Woman weaves the cloth for the tent. Weaving has always been an archetypal image delineating woman and her function as child bearer and homemaker. Woman is literally a homemaker when she weaves the animal hair that becomes the desert tent. She is the biological home and homemaker when she weaves sperm and ovum into that whole, living, breathing fabric who is child, within the loom of her own flesh. She is the primary, primeval tabernacle and tent.



Tabernaculum is also the root for our “tavern.” Wassail!

The original Tabernacle of the Holy of Holies in Exodus is a tent, well described in both Exodus and Deuteronomy.

It is both the earthly dwelling place of the hidden God, and the meeting place between God and man. Even today we speak of the place in church, where we encounter the Real Presence of Christ Messiah dwelling, day and night, as the tabernacle. Even now that tabernacle is veiled, the image of the Holy of Holies in Sinai, the Body of Christ hidden in that small container on the altar, so like the womb or our hearts,.

The word “tent” comes from the Latin, “tabernaculum.” Its etymology is rooted in “tend,” to take care of, but also to stretch. Indeed, the Psalmist and the saints cry “*Dilatasti cor meum*”, enlarge my heart, stretch my heart, expand my heart, to God. And in pregnancy the womb tent does in fact expand, stretch, enlarge to accommodate the growing child.

Tabernaculum is also the root for our “tavern.” Those who remember the old TV series, “Cheers!” know that the theme song described the tavern as a place “where everybody knows your name, and they’re always glad you came.” It’s a place of “comfort, light, and peace,” which is how the Tridentine Mass prayers describe heaven, in the remembrance for the dead after the consecration. Tavern, however cheap or tawdry, and tabernacle are both places

where troubles are transfigured in alcoholic spirits or in Christ and his Spirit. Perhaps it is also no wonder that the Pharisees accused Christ of hanging out with “winebibbers and gluttons!” He who pitched his tent among us understands our deepest needs and fears and wounds. He addresses those, and us, right where we are: in our emptiness, in our need - the gutter, the field, the cave, desert or oasis.

It is also true that the reality of God is intoxicating to man, as Peter, James and John show us on Mt. Tabor. The tavern is not entirely the negative, defective black sheep brother of the ecclesiastical tabernacle. The association has legitimate links and resonances.

Paul as tentmaker would thus be sharply aware of the reality, the history and the symbolism behind his use of words and images in 1 Cor 11. His word play is itself a weaving of subtle patterns: the business of tent-making informs his entire teaching here. How can we miss his re-membling the nature of the Tabernacle of Exodus as the dwelling place of God and his meeting place with man? John the Evangelist understands this intimately. It is a whole complex of images for glory, *shekinah*, veil, crown, flowering, hiding and revelation. Even hair itself is an

image of “hevod/kabod” or glory: the glory of woman just as woman is the glory of man. We can say that the child she bears - as flower is the glory of the tree, and its fruit is the glory of the flower itself - is the glory of the spousal two-in-one-flesh.

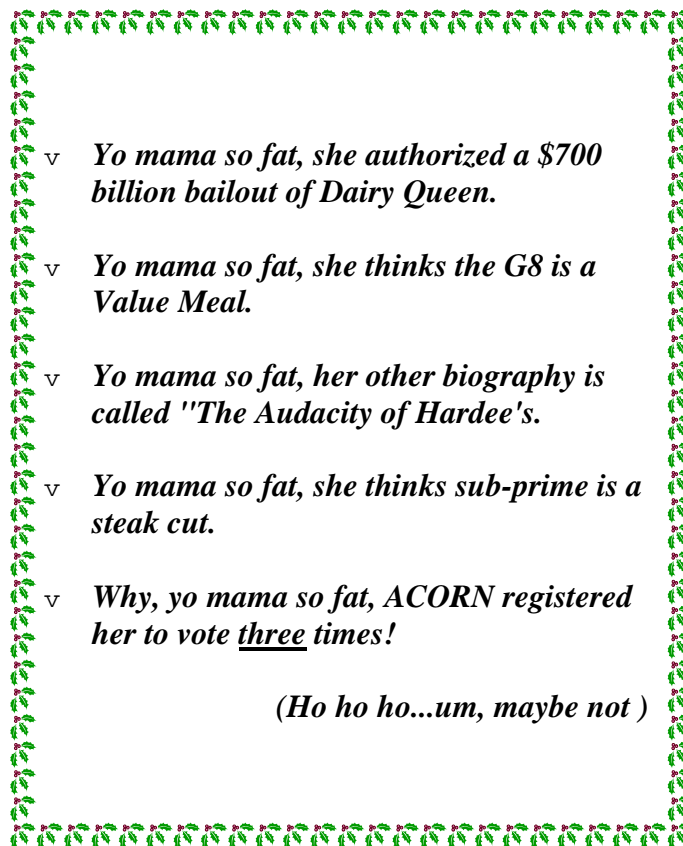
In fact, of course, we should speak of the couple’s three-in-one-flesh, because - as Paul teaches - as the Father is the root and source of the Trinity, Christ is the root and the source of marriage. As the Son is the trunk, branch, and channel of the Trinity, the husband is the same in the marriage. As the Spirit is leaf, flower, fruit and fullness of the Trinity, so the wife is such in the marriage. As Creation is the outpoured delight of the Trinity, so children are in the marriage.

In marriage, it is the woman who provides the tent of flesh, her womb its holy of holies. Her hair is the tabernacle veil. That veil both hides and reveals her participation in the Shekinah as its living icon, in its light and weight of glory, in her ability to bear and bring forth a living person, the individual child. This is part of her share in the fullness of Being and Life-giving who IS God.

This is who Mary is in Trinity, Scripture, Church, history. She is the living icon of those hidden realities. It is her flesh that provides the tent and tabernacle, weaving, shelter, veil for the in-dwelling of the Word made flesh. She is the cave and the manger. She is the Ark of the Father, the Tabernacle of the Son, the Temple of the Spirit in a very particular immediate immaculate way.

We are to be all those things ourselves. But in order to live that in Spirit and truth, we must be born in Christ, as he is born in us through his actual birth in the Palestinian hills, as he is born in us through his sacraments, in his Church. Christmas - Christ’s Mass! And so it is. He shelters in the tabernacle of Mary’s flesh. He comes forth onto the altar of the manger, in the rocky cave-stable-church. He feeds us with his very Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity as the animals are fed from the straw and grains in the manger. He has pitched his tent among us: in Bethlehem, the House of Bread, in truth—in Mary’s flesh, in ours, now and forever Emmanuel, God-with-us.

Home . . . in his living Body, Blood, Soul Divinity. Thus we may well cry out in joy, Merry Christmas! And to all, including the All who is God, a very good night, and better morning to come ...v

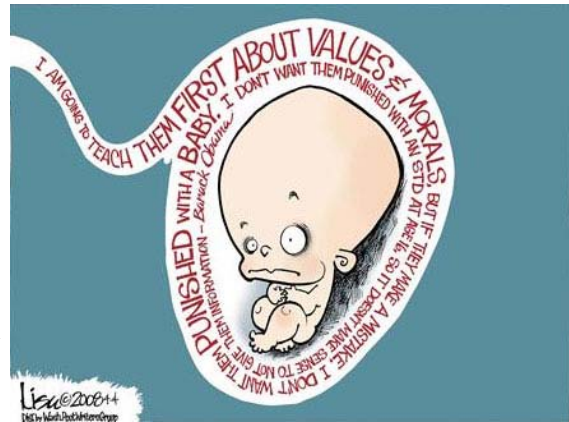


Around the World

UN Pressures Sovereign Nicaragua to Accept Abortion The United Nations' Human Rights Committee (HRC), which oversees the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), took the occasion of a routine progress report on the treaty to interrogate Nicaragua about abortion.

Despite worldwide pressures, Nicaragua banned all abortion in 2006 and rejected a “therapeutic” abortion amendment last year. HRC demanded maternal mortality statistics and insisted the Nicaraguan delegation explain how anti-abortion law could be reconciled with a secular state.

When the ICCPR was signed in 1966, many nations had laws that restricted abortion and the treaty says nothing about the issue. It appears the HRC is now reading a “right to abortion” into the ICCPR. A letter signed by government officials from Canada, the five Scandinavian countries, and several UN agencies – including the Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Children’s Fund (UNICEF) – accuses Nicaragua of violating rights set forth in various international documents such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, or CEDAW. The Swedish government also severed aid to Nicaragua and three other pro-life Latin American nations last year and Finland linked a continuation of aid to changes in Nicaragua’s abortion law.



Pope Benedict XVI and Cardinal Christoph Schoenborn, the Archbishop of Vienna, Austria

sense for life”, so that when “the wave of abortions” and increasing acceptance of homosexuality followed, the Church lacked the courage to oppose them, Schoenborn said. v

Cardinal Schoenborn Defends *Humanae Vitae* Cardinal Christoph Schoenborn, the Archbishop of Vienna, Austria, delivered a sermon at a Neocatechumenate meeting in Jerusalem this spring, accusing fellow bishops of failing to condemn birth control and causing the calamitous birth rate drop in Europe.

The Bishops’ conferences of Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, the US, and later Australia were all guilty of statements, shortly after publication of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* outlawing the use of birth control for Catholics in 1968, which assured the faithful that the issue was a matter of conscience. Those bishops, said Cardinal Schoenborn, were “frightened of the press and of being misunderstood by the faithful”. Bishops have not had, or did not have, the courage to “swim against the tide” and say yes to *Humanae Vitae*, he said.

Schoenborn cited the Maria Trost Declaration, whose signatories included Cardinal Franz Konig, the late Archbishop of Vienna, president of the Austrian bishops’ conference and a Father of the Second Vatican Council, and the Konigstein Declaration, whose signatories included Cardinal Julius Dopfner, the late Archbishop of Munich, president of the German bishops’ conference and another Council Father. The signatories weakened “the People of God’s

Around the Nation

Divine Mercy Care Pharmacy A new Virginia-based pharmacy, Divine Mercy Care, is among at least seven pharmacies across the nation certified as not prescribing birth control by *Pharmacists for Life International*.

In at least seven states, laws require drug stores to fill the prescriptions but in Virginia, pharmacists can turn away any prescription for any reason, according to the National Women's Law Center.

The pharmacy, which is not affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church but is guided by Church teachings on sexuality, was given a blessing from Arlington Bishop Paul S. Loverde. "This pharmacy is a vibrant example of our Holy Father's charge to all of us to wear our faith in the public square," said Loverde, who sprinkled holy water on the shelves stocked with painkillers and acne treatments. "It will allow families to shop in an environment where their faith is not compromised."

Robert Laird, executive director of Divine Mercy Care, believes many of the estimated 50,000 Catholics within a few miles of the store will support its mission and make up for the roughly 10 percent of business that contraceptives represent in a typical pharmacy.

Robert Semler, the manager/pharmacist of Divine Mercy Care, said the pharmacy will offer "superior pharmaceutical care—both traditional and clinical services—focusing on the individual in a family-oriented, pro-life environment, free of contraceptive products and anti-life messages...I am grateful to be able to practice within the umbrella of Divine Mercy Care where my conscience will never be violated and my faith does not have to be 'checked at the door' each morning."



Most Rev. Salvatore Cordileone, Auxiliary Bishop Catholic Diocese of San Diego

Open Letter of Bishop Salvatore Cordileone The auxiliary bishop of the Catholic Diocese of San Diego, Salvatore Cordileone, addressed San Diego's mayor and city council in an open letter last October:

Those of us who favor preserving marriage as the union of a man and a woman in California are wondering what ever happened to our democracy.

[The bishop here outlines the history of attempts to place the traditional definition of marriage into the California Family Code and the battles to defeat these efforts.]

A little over two weeks ago, I stood on the same stage with some of you at the **San Diego Organizing Project's [SDOP is an Alinskyian community organization affiliated with the PICO—Pacific Interfaith Community Organizations —network, ed.]** rally for our youth. I was happy to be there and even felt obliged to attend, because I can hardly recognize this city from what it was when I grew up here in the 1960's. I could walk home alone from elementary school and fear no harm. My friends and I could play in the streets without our parents having to worry for our safety, and we all had secure homes to return to. That is why I was so gratified by your commitments to make the youth of our commu-

nities a top priority. What, though, can be a greater benefit to children and young people than growing up with their mother and father married to each other in a low-conflict relationship? We need to be supporting and strengthening the institution of marriage for the sake of children, not redefining and weakening it. Yes, many people find themselves as single parents through no fault of their own, and they need and deserve our praise and support for the sacrifices they make to give their children the best possible up bringing in less-than-ideal circumstances. But to intentionally deprive children of a mother and father is something quite different. After having made such laudatory and inspired commitments to our youth, please, do not now sell them down the river by telling them that it's not important for them to have a mother and a father.

Please do not divide our community any more bitterly than it already is. Please do not betray the trust the public has placed in you. Please do not disenfranchise those who worked so hard to give Californians the op-

portunity to decide. Rather, please place principle over politics, and allow the democratic process to work, unencumbered and objectively. Please, do not give up on the idea that democracy is a good thing when allowed to work according to its principles. Please, let the people decide, fair and square.

What the good bishop doesn't grasp is that PICO is networked with the very people who are fighting placement of a traditional definition of marriage into the California Family Code. Poor guy. He seems so well-intentioned.

CCHD Developments The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is wrestling with a response to recent revelations about ACORN. In addition to suspending *Catholic Campaign for Human Development* grants to this organization's local affiliates around the country, CCHD has also launched an investigation into more than \$1 million in church grants given to the voter registration group this past year, hoping to discern if the money was used in partisan or fraudulent ways which could threaten the Church's tax-exempt status.

Meanwhile, at least one bishop is taking a proactive stance. Bishop Baker of Birmingham, Alabama, has sent a letter to all his pastors that there will be no collection for CCHD taken up this November but one for Latin America instead. ▽



The Most Reverend
Robert J. Baker, S.T.D.
Fourth Bishop of Birmingham

December Calendar

Los Pequeños Monthly Meeting

December 12, 2008

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

Mondays and Tuesdays at Noon

Mass at the Holy Innocents Chapel

&

Thursdays at 9:30 AM

Fr. Millan Garcia

Holy Sacrifice of the Mass

(1962 Missal)

For more information, call

(505) 266-4100

Helpers of God's Precious Infants

1. Planned Parenthood Abortuary

701 San Mateo Blvd.

Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays: 8 AM – 11:30 AM

Wednesdays: 12 Noon – 3:00 PM

&

2. Medical Arts (801 Encino Place)

Saturdays: 8AM-11:30AM

For more information, call Phil Leahy:

(505) 440-3040

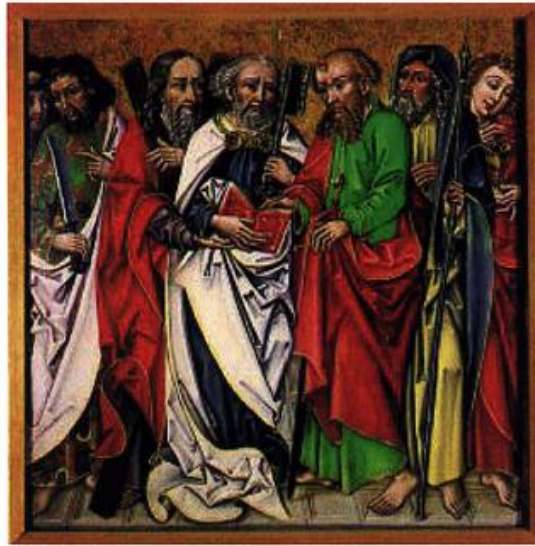
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Check out *Project Defending Life's* radio show, **Lifetalk**, which airs on 1050 am KTBL every Saturday at 2:00 pm till 3:00 pm.



Year of Saint Paul
June 28, 2008-June 29, 2009

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Los Pequeños de Cristo
P.O. Box 16117
Albuquerque, NM 87191-6117
www.lospequenos.org