

# Los Pequeños Pepper

*Publication of Los Pequeños de Cristo*

February 2004



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*February 2004*

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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.*

# THE CATHOLIC RESPONSE TO SCANDAL

By Archbishop Raymond Burke

*This address given at the Milwaukee Wanderer Forum, December 6-7, 2002 Co-sponsored by the St. Gregory VII Chapter of Catholics United for the Faith Wanderer Forum Foundation, & Living Catholic Seminars*

## Introduction

December, 2002 - What has happened in the last eleven months in the life of the Church in our nation is something that I could never have imagined. Having grown up in the Catholic faith, in a family which has always loved the Church and had the deepest respect and affection for her pastors, it has been most difficult for me to comprehend the seemingly unending stories of the sexual abuse of children and young people by Catholic priests and bishops, recounted in the newspapers and through the other communications media. It has been equally difficult to comprehend the reports of the callous manner of handling such abuse on the part of certain Church authorities. What has been a scandal for so many in the Church has also been a scandal for me as a bishop of the Church. I have to confess to times of profound anger with individuals who have perpetrated such crimes and with bishops who have not taken appropriate action to discipline the perpetrators and to protect children and young people from such profound harm.

Having met and spoken with a number of victims of sexual abuse by members of the clergy, I have painfully come to understand more and more the long-term and devastating effects of the breach of the most sacred trust between a child and his or her spiritual father. It has been understandingly difficult, at times, to respond with the attitude of Christ, with the attitude which our Catholic faith teaches us and in which our Catholic faith forms us, to the scandal which you and I have suffered.

For me as bishop, the scandal personally suffered is profoundly deepened by the accusations, frequently expressed, that I, too, have been only interested in covering up the sins

of priests, without concern for the victims who have suffered at their hands, and that I, too, have squandered the patrimony of the Church in doing so.

From a purely human point of view, it is a fact that today is not a good time to be a bishop. When you have given your entire life to the service of the Church and have tried always to teach Catholic faith and morals, and to live accordingly, it is painful to recognize that you now have been placed in a category of persons, subject to the strongest distrust on the part of the very persons whom you have been called to serve and for whom you have given your life in response to God's call.

But, from the perspective of God's will for us, whatever time a priest is called to serve the Church as a bishop is a good time. Our faith teaches us that we are called to live in these times and to bear the cross of Christ in carrying out His mission, no matter how difficult the challenges may be. Our faith leads us to seek a deeper understanding of the Catholic response to scandal, so that the suffering of the scandal will not be useless but rather will become the means of growth in holiness of life for us personally and for the whole Church.



**Archbishop Raymond Burke**

## The Nature of Scandal

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us: "Scandal is an attitude or behavior which leads another to do evil... Scandal is a grave offense if by deed or omission another is deliberately led into a grave offense." (CCC, No. 2284) Scandal becomes more grave if it is caused by a person in authority or if those affected are weak or suffer very much already.

Our Lord used some of his harshest words to indicate the gravity of the sin of the man who would lead one of the "little ones" into sin. (Mt

18:6) Our Lord observes that it is inevitable that scandals will occur. (Mt 18:7) We are sinful human beings and sadly at times we commit sinful acts which are the cause of scandal to another. But our Lord further observes:

“Nonetheless, woe to that man through whom scandal comes!” (Mt 18:7)

So serious is the moral obligation to avoid scandal that we are admonished not only not to do wrong but also not to appear to do wrong. When a person acts, he or she must always consider the appearance of the act to be done. If a reasonable person could take the act to be gravely immoral, then a person is not to commit the act, even if there is no immorality involved at all.

Here there is a delicate balance, for the viewer of the act can engage in what we call pharisaical scandal. Saint Paul teaches the Corinthians: “Take care, however, lest in exercising your right you become an occasion to the weak.” (1 Cor 8:9) We must consider the true weight of our action before another and, if it would legitimately cause scandal, then we must forego the action, even some otherwise good action. On the other hand, we are not obliged to conform our actions to the mind of someone who looks to be scandalized and does not consider reasonably the nature of an action.

As I mentioned before, the gravity of scandal is significantly increased, if the person who causes it enjoys authority, especially authority in the Church. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us: “Scandal is grave when given by those who by nature or office are obliged to teach and educate others.” (CCC, No. 2285) It is difficult for us to comprehend the severity of the wound inflicted upon someone who is led into a sinful act by the very person he or she has been taught to trust as a teacher of faith and morals. Our Lord refers to the perpetrators of such scandals as “wolves on the prowl” who come to us in “sheep’s clothing.” (Mt 7:15)

There is another way by which we become guilty of scandal, that is by permitting or contributing to the erosion of the teaching and living of Catholic morals. (cf. CCC, No. 2286)

Those who have responsibility for handing on Catholic moral teaching bear a heavy responsibility for the erosion of knowledge and conviction regarding what the Church teaches to be right and good. The cause of scandal “by laws or institutions, by fashion or opinion” lies at the root of the scandal of clergy sexual abuse which we have been suffering now for many months.

### **Disobedience or dissent: Cause of scandal**

There is no question that individual disordered and immoral acts committed by priests and bishops are the principal and direct cause of the grave scandal which the whole Church is suffering in our nation at this time. But how is it that priests or bishops commit such acts which betray completely their priestly character and office?

Surely, it is a question of human weakness, of a failure to fortify oneself morally and spiritually, of placing oneself in the occasion of sin, of engaging in vices which easily lead to such sin. But it is also a question of failing to accept and hand on the Church’s moral teaching in its integrity. I have frequently recalled the words of an elderly professor of canon law, who was my professor some twenty years ago, regarding the Church’s discipline of clerical celibacy. He frequently told us: “Where there are problems of chastity, there are problems of obedience.” We must recognize that the immoral acts which are the cause of

***We must recognize that the immoral acts which are the cause of scandal are fundamentally acts of rebellion against God’s commandments. Such disordered acts are committed by persons who refuse to bend their heads in obedience to the teaching authority of the Church and become, instead, a law unto themselves.***

scandal are fundamentally acts of rebellion against God’s commandments. Such disordered acts are committed by persons who refuse to bend their heads in obedience to the teaching authority of the Church and become, instead, a law unto themselves.

Specifically, many of the acts which are the source of the present scandal are homosexual acts committed with young people. Granted that there are some cases of true pedophilia, that is disordered acts committed with pre-adolescent children, which have the most devastating, long-lasting effect on the victims, the majority of the acts of sexual abuse are, in fact, committed with adolescent children and are homosexual in character.

Although such acts have been committed throughout the history of mankind, the frequency of such acts is greatly increased in a society which no longer upholds the sanctity of the marriage act which, by its nature, expresses the perpetual, faithful and procreative love of man and woman in marriage. Once sexual union is separated from its inherently marital and procreative nature, once contraception is taught as moral, then the way is open for sexual activity, contrary to God's law, according to the world's way of thinking. It is not by accident that the attack on the Church's perennial teaching regarding contraception was accompanied by the erosion of the Church's teaching regarding solitary sexual activity and same-sex sexual activity, both of which can never be truly unitive and procreative.

The dissent from the Church's moral teaching regarding artificial contraception, sterilization, homosexual acts, and self-abuse, which permeates culture, in general, and has also entered into the Church, has its profoundly harmful effect on the thinking and acting of the faithful, in general, and also of the shepherds of the flock. It is not uncommon today to witness a kind of pick-and-choose approach to the Church's moral teaching on the part of many Catholics. If the shepherds do not teach clearly and consistently the truth about human sexuality, then the flock will be likely led astray by the thinking of the world.

For Satan, the victory is even more complete, if he can corrupt the thinking of the shepherds themselves. According to an old canonical adage, "*Corruptio optimi pessima est*," "The corruption of the best is the worst." Recall the words of the Prophet Zechariah: "Strike the shepherd that the sheep may be dispersed, and I will turn my hand against the little ones." (Zech 13:7)

Dissent is fundamentally rebellion against the teaching authority of the Church, a refusal to practice the virtue of obedience. At first, it may express itself in rebellion against some doctrine of the faith. But, once it becomes a habit, it will express itself in immoral practices, a rebellion against the moral order which God has written in

our nature and teaches us through the word of Christ.

Seminary education must be especially attentive to the danger of dissent, lest in teaching morality immorality be taught. Rightly, the Holy See has announced an Apostolic Visitation of seminaries as a key part of the response to the scandal of clergy sexual abuse. The Apostolic Visitation will "focus on the question of human formation for celibate chastity based on the criteria found in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*." (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People [June 2002], Article 17) The United States Bishops have publicly pledged their complete cooperation with the Apostolic Visitation. (cf. *Ibid.*)

In his address to the Cardinals of the United States on April 23, 2002, our Holy Father underlined the essential connection between sound doctrine and moral integrity. He reminded the

Cardinals: "It must be absolutely clear to the Catholic faithful, and to the wider community, that Bishops and superiors are concerned, above all else, with the spiritual good of souls. People need to know that there is no place in the priesthood and religious life for those who would harm the young. They must know that Bishops and priests are totally committed to the fullness of

Catholic truth on matters of sexual morality, a truth as essential to the renewal of the priesthood and the episcopate as it is to the renewal of marriage and family life." (No. 3b; quoted in Benedict J. Groeschel, C.F.R., *From Scandal to Hope*, p. 202)

### **Failure of catechesis and dissent**

The dissent which is at the foundation of the sexual abuse scandal has had its most devastating effect in catechesis, especially in the teaching of the faith to children and young people but also to adults, for example, those who are preparing to come into the full communion of the Roman Catholic Church. Saint Paul reminds us: "Faith then comes through hearing, and what is heard is the word of Christ." (Rom 10:17) When catechesis has not presented the Catholic faith in its integrity, then the faith of the

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catechized will be weak and their moral life lacking. We are reaping today the fruits of more than thirty years of catechesis which has not been attentive to presenting the Catholic faith in its completeness. Especially regarding morals, fundamental principles like the principle of cooperation have not been taught and are not understood. Even more serious is the loss of a sense of the first laws of nature which safeguard and promote human life, the family and the practice of religion. (cf. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-IIæ, q. 94)

What we do not teach as catechists, whether we be priests or members of the laity or consecrated persons, we do not believe as we ought. In our case, there may be yet some vestige of the teaching within us, which, with the help of God's grace, will be fanned again into flame. For those we catechize, however, the truth of faith or morals may never have been taught and, therefore, the catechized is done a grave injustice, touching upon his own salvation.

There is a radical need to teach again, in its integrity, the natural moral law, especially in a post-Christian culture still influenced so heavily by rationalist philosophy, and the law divinely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and faithfully handed on through the Magisterium. The natural moral law regarding human life and human sexuality must be taught as the foundation upon which to understand the divinely revealed law.

### **The Catholic response to the scandal**

In considering the Catholic response to the scandal, it will help us to consider the teaching of Saint Francis of Assisi, who wrote the following in his Admonitions to the friars: "Nothing should upset a religious except sin. And even then, no matter what kind of sin has been committed, if he is upset or angry for any other reason except charity, he is only drawing blame upon himself." (No. XI)

The first response to the great scandal which we are now suffering must be an act of the greatest possible charity both toward the victims and the perpetrators of the crime. Prayer and reparation must be primary and will be the most efficacious in healing all who have been so

deeply wounded. Any other response fails in the charity which is most required in the situation.

In this regard, I wish to say a word about the healing of victims. For the victim, there is the great temptation to make the grave injustice, the deep wound, which he has suffered the whole point of reference of his life. Then, there is no place for Christ to enter into the soul and to pour forth the healing ointment of his love upon the wound which aches so painfully. The victim also is not able to go forward with his life, placing his wounded heart into the Sacred Heart of Jesus and receiving the grace of healing immediately. No matter how grave the act of sexual abuse, our response in Christ must be to hate the sin, but to be filled with hope in the healing grace of Christ and filled with love for the sinner.

Secondly, for priests and bishops, there must be a renewed attention to practice prayer and the acts for reparation for the "grave offense to God and the deep wound inflicted upon his holy people." (cf. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, Conclusion) The Bishops observed in the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People: "Closely connected to prayer and acts of reparation is the call to holiness of life and the care of the diocesan/eparchial bishop to ensure that he and his priests avail themselves of the proven ways of avoiding sin and growing in holiness of life." (Conclusion) There must be a new energy and enthusiasm among priests and Bishops for prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, the offering of the Holy Mass which is the heart

and source of the entire priestly ministry, for the regular confession of sins in the Sacrament of Penance and the practice of acts of mortification by which the soul is purified and prepared for acts of holiness.

In his Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, our Holy Father calls us "to rediscover the full practical significance of chapter 5 of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, dedicated to the "universal call to holiness." (No. 30c) As he rightly points out, "the gift in turn becomes a task." (No. 30d) In urging that holiness be the foundation of all pastoral planning, he states strikingly: "It implies the conviction that, since Baptism is a true entry

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into the holiness of God through incorporation into Christ and the indwelling of his Spirit, it would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalist ethic and a shallow religiosity.” (No. 31b) The temptation to follow a minimalist ethic and to live a shallow religiosity besets us all in our time, including priests and Bishops. Now, as our Holy Father reminds us, “[t]he time has come to repropose wholeheartedly to everyone this high standard of ordinary Christian living: the whole life of the Christian community and of Christian families must lead in this direction.” (No. 3c)

If the high standard of ordinary Christian living is to be effectively proposed anew, it will come through a renewal of catechesis at all levels and the dedication of faithful theologians and teachers of the faith in providing the practical tools for teaching the Catholic faith and its practice, with integrity, to our children and young people especially. Above all, it will come from a sound teaching of moral theology in our seminaries and Catholic universities.

The Catholic response to scandal is charity. Yes, the scandal must be acknowledged, the gravity of the sin must be recognized and deplored, but, not out of any self-righteousness or other motive, but out of love of God and neighbor. True abhorrence of the sin will lead to the ever greater love of the sinner, to prayer for his reconciliation and acts of reparation for the grave offense given to God and the grave harm caused to the Body of Christ. The temptation is to remain in our horror at the sin and to leave unexamined and uncultivated the deepest motive of the horror at the sin, which is divine charity.

### **The question of “zero tolerance”**

The immensity of the present scandal, which has been so heavily cultivated by the communications media, has led to a response by the Church called “zero tolerance.” Clearly, there has to be “zero tolerance” for the sin of sexual abuse of children and young people. In other words, everything must be done to prevent any future acts of such abuse. At the same time, it is fundamentally contrary to the Gospel to speak of “zero tolerance” of any sinner, including a priest who has so gravely betrayed his priestly character and mission. Rather, care must be taken to come to know the true nature and extent of his sinful acts, and to assist him in living a life of repentance. The sinner must be helped by our acts of reparation, and he must be helped to make reparation for the sin committed.

On the part of all, the love of the truth, which expresses itself always in charity, must guide the response to the sin of child sexual abuse by the clergy and to the sinner. The response to the sinner cannot be guided by any agenda, but, rather, must be guided by the good of the individual and the good of the whole Church. When the truth is sought above all else, both the good of the individual and the good of the Church will be served without any contradiction. It is never permitted to serve only the good of the individual or only the good of the Church. Both must be served always.

### **Conclusion**

I offer these reflections out of deepest love of the Church and of you who love the Church deeply and desire to serve the Church, the Bride of Christ, and to make her beauty shine forth in the world for the salvation of all. I offer these reflections out of deepest sorrow for the wounds inflicted upon the Church by us, her sinful members, and out of the deepest desire for the repentance and reparation which will heal those wounds, so that the beauty of the Bride of Christ may be seen by all and all may be attracted to Christ alive for us in the Church.

Before the profound harm to the Church in America and her members, caused by the scandal of child sexual abuse by the clergy, we turn to Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mother of God and Mother of America. She came to our continent in 1531 to announce the message of God’s merciful love, incarnate in the Child conceived in her immaculate womb. Only the holiness of her Child, our Redeemer, will overcome the gravity of the present scandal and heal the deep wound which it has inflicted upon the Church. Let us pray, through the intercession of Our Lady, for holiness of life for bishops and priests, and all members of the Church.

I conclude with words of our Holy Father, which express what must be our deepest conviction and our greatest desire: “We must be confident that this time of trial will bring a purification of the entire Catholic community, a purification that is urgently needed if the Church is to preach more effectively the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all its liberating force. Now you must ensure that where sin increased, grace will all the more abound (cf. Rom 5:20). So much pain, so much sorrow must lead to a holier priesthood, a holier episcopate, and a holier Church.” \*



# Going to the Dogs? New Age Esotericism and Gender

By Marie P. Loehr

*He is the Anti-Christ who denies the Father and the Son.  
-- First Epistle of John, 1:22-23*

On 15 October, the feast of St. Teresa of Avila, the *Albuquerque Journal* ran a review in its West Side Journal. The headline reads "Former Nun Embraces Crow Mother in Book." Former nun Meinrad Craighead is quoted as saying, "Religion has nothing to do with rules. A better word is spirituality. It's large enough to encompass many beliefs."

This quote states two major fallacies of New Age gnosis in all its forms:

1] **Religion and spirituality are separate and distinct from one another.** Religion confines us to rules, regulations and dogmas. Spirituality frees us from that institutional body. (Of course, mature persons know that rules give freedom. Traffic lights, for example, are a discipline that promotes both order out of traffic chaos otherwise, and freedom to drive without constant fear of getting hit crossing intersections--most of the time.)

2] **If it's spiritual, it's got to be good.** Spirituality has no distinctions, no boundaries, no division into good or evil. (Of course, both the Church and most of the other paganisms or gnosés New Agers embrace do teach that it is extremely important to make proper distinctions between good spirits and evil spirits, good works and evil works, holy men and evil men.)

Craighead remembers looking in her dog's eyes at the age of about seven, in her essay, "Immanent Mother," in *The Feminist Mystic*: "I would never travel further than this animal's eyes. They were as deep, as bewildering, as unattainable as a night sky....I gazed into the dog's eyes and listened to the sound of rushing water inside me. I understood 'This is who God is. My Mother is water and she is inside me and I am in the water.'"

As an adult, she became a nun in order to foster her own contemplation and mystical life. While living the life of a Catholic Benedictine for fourteen years externally, interiorly she lived a mystique of goddess worship and spiritual autonomy. She lived in a state of schizophrenic contradiction all those years.

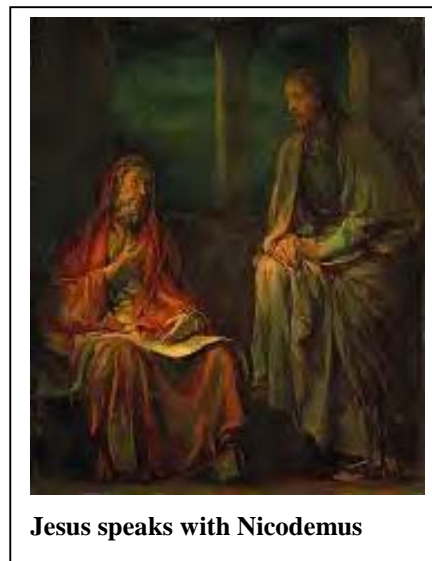
We can learn several things from her experience at the age of seven or so:

**Never trust anything your dog tells you!** Our family Yorkie is a master con man, when he wants a doggie treat. Dogs do lie.

It is rumored that Matthew Fox of creation spirituality and Mary Daly of radical feminism hear their dogs giving them spiritual direction. Serial killer Son of Sam said his dog was telling him to kill certain people. Are such cases over-sentimentalism, psychosis, or demonic possession? Or simply a matter of immaturity and spiritual infantilism?

By their behavior pets can teach us many things applicable to our relationship with God: humility, obedience, trust, abandonment in their dependence on us, unconditional love, delight in our presence. But they cannot give us spiritual direction, good or bad.

**Spiritual discernment is necessary in ALL things.** What did Craighead



experience in that moment of revelation? Was it a diabolic message? John the Evangelist says those who separate us from Father and Son are the Anti-Christ, dog, devil, or not! Was this necessarily a message from the devil? It may have simply been the blood beating in her ears, which we all experience from time to time, especially pressed against something else.

But it could have been a true experience of the nature of God--as the living water which Christ speaks of when he tells Nicodemus we must be born again "of water and the Spirit," the living water flowing from his side, which he will give us if we come to him. This is the Spirit of whom he speaks. The Hebrew word for the Holy Spirit takes the feminine gender in Hebrew.

There is no embodied masculine or feminine, as we know it, in God. Yet we are created in His image and likeness, male and female, as Genesis 1 tells us. God is beyond sexuality, not as a bland, blank vapor, but as the source and fullness of *all* union and distinction. The Tridentine Preface defines the Trinity as "distinction in persons, oneness in being, equality in majesty." This defines humanity as well.

The Spirit is the Person in the Trinity who is Advocate or Paraclete or Counselor, the helpmate and comforter, the Person who brings the work of Christ, Son and Word, seed falling into the ground, to flower and fruition. The Spirit bears the Church and brings forth new life in our souls, in the Church, in Creation through the Son as sent by the Father. The Father and the Son initiate and generate and beget. The Spirit receives and germinates and bears. This is evident all through Scripture, liturgy, and the Fathers of the Church. It is expressed most visibly in the Discourse at the Last Supper in John's Gospel, and at Pentecost.

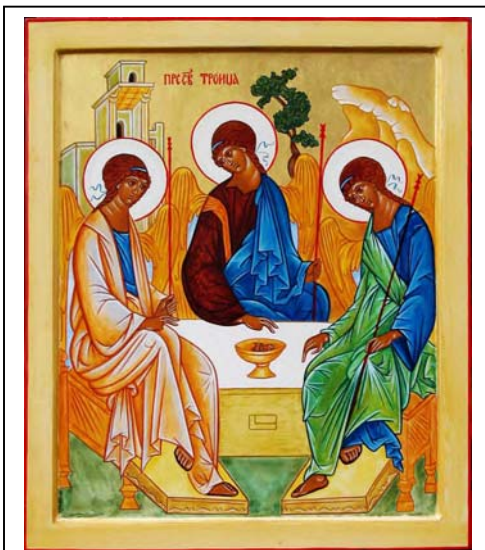
A seven year old could not know this. Most of us still don't know this. John Paul II has only begun explicating the Trinity for us through his explication of the theology of the body, and humanity as icon of the Trinitarian commitment, communion, and creativity. So Craighead might well have had an experience of the true God that she was too immature to understand at the age of seven, or perhaps at any age.

**Whatever experiences of God we have as children, we must submit them to our adult understanding, in order to transcend error and arrive at truth.** Many children encounter God directly at an early age. SS. Teresa of Avila, Thérèse of Lisieux, and Faustina are only three who encountered God at an early age, and knew they must pursue Him with their whole being, at whatever cost.

The living water that Craighead *may* have experienced finds a deeper, truer, mature explication in St. Catherine of Siena's *Dialogues*. God says to her:

Dearest daughter, contemplate the marvelous state of the soul who receives this bread of life, this food of angels, as she ought. When she receives this sacrament she lives in me and I in her. Just as the fish is in the sea and the sea is in the fish, so am I in the soul and the soul in me, the sea of peace.

Many never go beyond their childhood revelations, never realize their misunderstanding or misinterpretation of their experiences. We should not dismiss such moments out of hand, in ourselves or our children. We should not accept them uncritically either. St. Paul says "test everything, hold fast what is good," *i.e.*, what the Church teaches through Scripture, Tradition, the Magisterium, the liturgy, the saints, and the popes. All else is ancient delusion and New Age dream. \*



Icon of the Blessed Trinity

# Another Approach to Scandal

*There's the Christian approach...and then there's the 'cover your tush' approach*

By Stephanie Block

In the scramble to satisfy the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) 2002 Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and requirements of insurance companies -- that dioceses have in place sexual abuse prevention programs -- various "Good Touch, Bad Touch" curricula have been implemented around the country.

But the programs are controversial. In Arlington, angry parents demanded that a proposed program be canceled, hooting and booing a handful of diocesan employees attempting to present it. Parents complained that the curriculum was inappropriate for young children, that parents had little or no input in selecting the program, and that the true problem was abusive clerics, not children.

"If clerical abuse was the problem to be addressed, I don't understand why children are being made repositories for information that's beyond their ability to comprehend," said Virginia state Rep. Bob Marshall, a Catholic representing Loudon and Prince William counties in the 13th District, in a January 14, 2004 *Washington Times* article (Julia Duin, Diocese's Anti-abuse Program Rejected).

One parent asked: "What would my little girls do with a question like: 'What is good touch and bad touch?' I don't want them even thinking about those things. I don't want any teacher, no matter how Catholic or well-intentioned, talking to children about these things."

Another parent turned to the 1995 Vatican document, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, which states that parents "are the first and foremost educators of their children" on chastity. "Other educators can assist in this task," the document says, "but they can only take the place of parents for serious reasons of physical or moral incapacity."

Among concerns is the manner in which sexual abuse prevention programs seek to convey their message to children. Rev. Paul deLadurantaye, director of catechesis for the Arlington Diocese, gave an example. Children are told not to let anyone touch them on parts of their bodies covered by a bathing suit or underwear. They are taught that "Some people try to trick you or force you into showing your private parts."

A mother asked, "How can I bathe my child and wash her hair when there's a teacher saying this is a bad touch because they don't have their bathing suit on?" The fear is not unfounded. Workers for child protective service have reported phone calls from children who accuse parents and grandparents of "sexual abuse" for spanking or bathing them.

In the Archdiocese of Boston, similar concerns about mandatory child-abuse prevention programs have been raised. As of the moment, they will be required for all children in the archdiocese's parochial schools and religious education classes. John Bettinelli, father of three students at St. Catherine of Siena school in Norwood, complained that materials he previewed were completely secular. They made "no mention of chastity or love, that the two people should be married, or even that they should be of the opposite sex." (Domenico Bettinelli, "Talking about Touching," *Catholic World Report*, June 2003.)

In the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, there are two sexual abuse prevention programs. A workshop on recognition and prevention of sexual abuse is mandatory for all volunteers working with youth.

In addition, parishes are expected to offer the program "Promise to Protect and Pledge to Heal" for catechists and students, which includes training on proper touch and ability to say no to perpetrators. It presents the video "Yes, You Can Say No" and lesson plans geared for K-12. Parents can opt their children out of the program. ✱



Guardian Angel

## Archbishop Hughes Details Catechetical Deficiencies

Archbishop Alfred Hughes of New Orleans, chair of the U.S. bishops' ad hoc committee for the Implementation of the Catechism, reported that nearly two-thirds of high school catechetical materials used throughout the United States are not in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

In a December interview with ZENIT news service, Hughes was asked about the conclusions of his committee, which reviewed over 25 individual high school catechetical texts. "The greatest concern for the members of the committee," said Hughes, "is that many of the materials found to be inadequate are still in wide use throughout the United States."

One widespread "deficiency" found in catechetical textbooks is relativism about the Church and the faith. Students, said Hughes, are led to believe that one religion or church is as good as another, and that the Catholic Church is just one church among many equals.

"In many of the texts we have found that there is an effort to state clearly the doctrine and the Church teaching. Unfortunately, this doctrine and Church teaching is sometimes introduced with a formula such as: 'Catholics believe this or that ...' This tentative language gives the impression that the teaching is just one legitimate opinion among others, rather than a matter of truth.

"In sacramental theology, our young people are sometimes being taught that the sacraments were instituted over an extended period of time with the implication that they still can be changed. These same sacraments are often presented as a way to celebrate special moments in life and not as a privileged moment of encounter with Christ.

"The distinctive role of the priest may be sidelined or even ignored. Sometimes the impression is given that the community baptizes, or confects, the Eucharist. The unique presence of Christ in the Eucharist is often obscured. They may be led to believe that the sacramental power to forgive sins and anoint the sick was once shared by all the faithful. In some texts, the teaching about the Church's restriction of ordination to men is ambiguous or even misleading.

"Often the moral life is not adequately presented. There seems to be a reluctance to name premarital or extramarital intercourse as sinful. Virtue may be encouraged primarily in order to make personal life or the world better. The relationship between living a moral life and eternal life is often not treated.

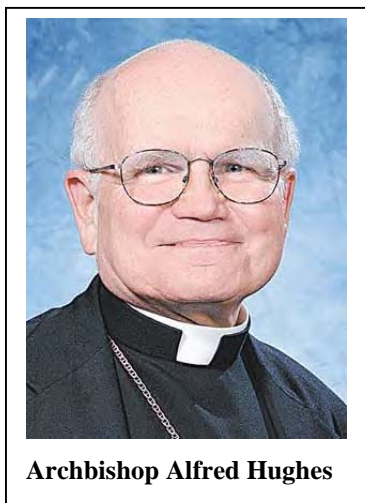
"There is in some texts a studied avoidance of the revealed proper names or personal pronouns for the persons of the Blessed Trinity. The Father may be referred to as God. Jesus may not be identified as the Son of God and the Holy Spirit may be called the Spirit of God or God's Spirit.

"The interpretation of sacred Scripture tends too much to rely upon the historical-critical method without drawing upon the rich patristic and spiritual interpretation in the Church.

"The approach to church often overemphasizes the role of the community. The ideal church is sometimes presented in such a way that a student would be led to believe that we should live without reference to the role of the hierarchy in the Church.

"Although high school texts are generally strong in their emphasis on the social mission of the Church and the moral responsibilities of Catholics in this area, the social teaching is not always grounded in the divine initiative of the Holy Spirit or related to personal moral teaching and to eschatological realities."

Archbishop Hughes concluded "the widespread use of these books perpetuates a religious illiteracy that is all too prevalent in the Church today." \*



## Helping Turquoise Lodge

In response to last month's appeal, a beautiful priest offered to spend some of his day off to hearing Confessions at the Turquoise Lodge, a rehabilitation facility for people trying to escape substance addictions.

Unfortunately, the Lodge cannot permit visitors – including priests– on any day but Sunday. Is there perhaps a retired priest who might be available one Sunday a month to hear Confessions?

Also, there is a continual need for Bibles, Rosaries and Holy Cards. If you can contribute in any way to this work, please contact Sylvia Lopez at (505) 877-4232. Thank you.

### In Gratitude

*Los Pequeños* was overwhelmed by a generous \$1000 gift and another \$250 gift from benefactors this month. That will keep us in ink for a few months! Many, many thanks.

Others desiring to assist this work should know that *Los Pequeños* is a 501(c)-3, tax-exempt nonprofit. Please keep all the individuals or groups that we discuss on these pages, as well as us, in your prayers.

A year subscription to *The Pepper* is \$10. Clergy and religious receive a copy *gratis*. Subscriptions can be placed by mailing a check to:

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

***Remember to pray and sacrifice for priests: faithful priests, unfaithful priests, zealous priests, tepid priests, holy priests, abusive priests, priests who are bishops and cardinals, and our priest papa Pope John Paul II. Never take your priests for granted and NEVER stop praying for them, especially those who are in danger of damnation for being false shepherds. Our priests are under constant assault by the devil. Some may fall because we fail to pray and do penance for them. Don't be a member of the ungrateful laity.***

-- Mary Ann Kreitzer, Director of Les Femmes

### February Calendar...

**February 13, 2004**

***POPE TEACHES  
CONFERENCE***

**Fr. Terry Brennan**

***Ut Unum Sint***

(On Ecumenism)

University of New Mexico Continuing  
Education Building

6:30 p.m. Rosary

7:00 p.m. talk

Call (505) 293-8006 for more information.

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**Friday, February 20, 2004** LPC monthly meeting.  
Call (505) 293-8006 for information. All welcome.

#### **Pro-life Prayer Each Tuesday:**

- from 8:30 am – 9:30 am, join Fr. Pio O'Conner for prayer at the Planned Parenthood Abortuary on San Mateo
  - from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m., join Fr. David Phillipson for prayer at the Planned Parenthood Abortuary on San Mateo
- Call (505) 286-1655 for more information.

#### **Theology on Tap**

February 12, 2004: Fr. Terry Messer of Franciscan Friars of the Renewal will speak about marriage, celibacy, and homosexuality (Golden Corral on Menaul)  
Call (505) 797-5628

**Sunday, February 22, 2004** – talks beginning at 1:00 PM

“God's Plan for Human Love.”

- Fr. Matthew Habiger, OSB, Director of Human Life International
- Dr. Martha Garza, MD
- Steve and Angelique Garcia
- Rev. Mr. Rudy and Mrs. Lucille Zamora

There is no charge for this conference.

Call (505) 865-7385 to register.

Child care provided for children 2 and older.

*Father Habiger will be the celebrant at all weekend Masses, preaching about Natural Family Planning and the evils of contraception.*

## New Archdiocesan Superintendent of Schools Announced!

Early in January, Sr. Mary Klersey, MPF, principal of St. Thomas Aquinas School in Rio Rancho, announced to the deep sorrow of teachers and parents – and the great joy of the rest of the archdiocese – that she had accepted a new position as Superintendent of Catholic Schools.

Sr. Mary comes from the *Religious Teachers Filippini*, via New Jersey, brought to New Mexico with several other members of her community by Msgr. Raun for their traditional, orthodox teaching.

The brand new St. Thomas Aquinas School is one of the largest K-8 schools in the Archdiocese and has demonstrated not only spiritual but academic excellence. The 8th graders' Iowa test scores were the highest in the Archdiocese, scoring on the average at the 11th grade level. According to parents, Sr. Mary has taken children just out of public schools and created a solidly Catholic school.

Sr. Mary has two Master's degrees and is well informed about other schools in the archdiocese. She is, according to the parents who work closely with her, an ideal combination of authority and Christian charity. "I have two children in her school," said one enthusiastic fan of Sr. Mary. "I've seen the kind of work Sr. Mary does and hate to lose her at St. Thomas School. The teachers think she's wonderful and we very much applaud the archdiocese for this decision." ❄



**The Institute of the Religious Teachers Filippini was founded by Lucy Filippini and Cardinal Mark Anthony Barbarigo who, in 1692, looked ahead with a vision to fulfilling their generous, ardent and profound mission of faith and charity. The schools they founded were intended to promote the dignity of womanhood, and help influence a healthy family life.**

# Catholic Media Coalition Responds

The Catholic Media Coalition issued a statement in January, commending Bishop Raymond Burke for denying Holy Communion to pro-abortion politicians. "Bishop Burke, who will soon be installed as Bishop of St. Louis," the statement reads, "has come under fire for issuing a formal decree barring Catholic politicians who promote abortion and euthanasia from receiving Holy Communion. The prelate affirmed Catholic doctrine that those 'directly involved in lawmaking bodies have a grave and clear obligation to oppose any law that attacks human life,' and are forbidden 'to promote such laws or vote for them.' The bishop warned that legislators who persist in supporting procured abortion and euthanasia commit a 'manifestly grave sin' and 'universal Church law provides that such persons are not to be admitted to Holy Communion.'" (Code of Canon Law, can. 915)

CMC president, Mary Ann Kreitzer, said that Burke first admonished the politicians privately and they refused to listen. "Denying Communion is an act of charity. Catholic politicians who advocate abortion give serious public scandal, a deadly sin. To receive Holy Communion in that state is a mortal sin of sacrilege. They also confuse others who may think that one can support killing unborn children and still be a faithful Catholic. Bishop Burke's decree makes crystal clear the Catholic doctrine that killing the innocent, whether an unborn child or someone sick and helpless like Terri Schiavo, is a grave moral evil."

## Who's Divisive?

On December 19, 2003 two dozen Chicago priests wrote an open letter accusing the Vatican of "vile and toxic" references to homosexuality. They called such references "divisive and exclusionary" and increasingly "violent and abusive."

The letter implied that affirmation of moral principles is incompatible with treating another human being with dignity and respect. Then the letter asked if any other group of people "within the Body of Christ [have] been so assaulted and violated by such mean-spirited language?" To

support its point, the letter cited examples from a recent Vatican document that refers to homosexuality as a "troubling moral and social phenomenon," "a serious depravity," and "harmful to the proper development of human society."

Lastly, the letter invited duplication and dissemination among pastors, local bishops, the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, and the Vatican. The Catholic Gay & Lesbian Family Ministry (CG&LFM) in the Diocese of Rochester immediately endorsed it and a national GLBT organization has encouraged a letter-writing campaign.

The Catholic Media Coalition, believing that it is neither respectful or compatible with the dignity of a child of God to deceive him or her about the nature of a disordered

orientation or to conceal the full consequences of a deviant behavior, defends Church teaching. The Church, with equally straightforward and unambiguous language, has addressed alcoholism, divorce, contracepting and a host of other social problems. At the same time, the Church has been at

the forefront of helping individuals who find themselves entrapped by these problems. Honest, plainspoken identification of a disorder is the first step to rectifying it. A dysfunctional individual, family, or institution, on the other hand, takes great pains to use euphemisms and denial to explain aberrations.

The Catholic Media Coalition understood the December 19<sup>th</sup> open letter from a handful of Chicago priests to be typical of this dysfunction. A priest cannot adequately love or serve alcoholic people if he does not first understand the highly destructive nature of alcoholism. Similarly, a priest cannot adequately love or serve homosexually oriented people if he does not first understand the highly destructive nature of same sex attraction.

*The complete responses prepared by the Coalition on the above issues can be viewed at its website: [www.catholicmediacoalition.org](http://www.catholicmediacoalition.org) \**



Catholic Media Coalition

*In line with the Church...  
...on line with the world.*