

Los Pequeños Pepper

Publication of Los Pequeños de Cristo

February 2008

In This Issue...

The Rise of the Religious Left

The Culture of Death can look pious, too.

Page 5

40 Days for Life

We can save babies

Page 13

Desperately Seeking ...Something

*That can be found, right there,
in the Sacraments*

Page 14



*"I say as do all Christian men, that it is a divine purpose that rules, and not fate."
King Alfred's addition to "Boethius"*



Logo of Los Pequeños de Cristo

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Newsletter of Los Pequeños de Cristo

February 2008

Volume 10, Number 2

No Longer Rewarding the Immoral <i>Mother Teresa Awards gave her no honor.</i>	Page 4
The Rise of the Religious Left <i>This will be a force to reckon with in the November elections.</i>	Page 5
The Holy Family <i>A meditation on righteousness</i>	Page 7
Around the World <i>Some cold water on ecumenism and the Jesuits</i>	Page 10
Around the Nation <i>Bishop Morlino challenges Plan "B" and Cardinal O'Malley challenges the Democrats</i>	Page 11
Around the Archdiocese <i>Yoga Tantra practice, homosexuality and general absolution...how convenient</i>	Page 12
40 Days for Life <i>What would you do to save a life?</i>	Page 13
February Calendar	Page 13
Desperately Seeking...Something <i>Online confessions and general absolutions</i>	Page 14

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.

No Longer Rewarding the Immoral

Sursum Corda!

By Stephanie Block

Here's a bit of good news for the Church in New Mexico. Last spring, the Board of Directors for the St. Bernadette Institute of Sacred Art's *Mother Teresa Awards* dissolved its controversial awards program. The Missionaries of Charity, founded by Mother Teresa of Calcutta - in whose name the Institute gave its awards - protested honoring those who were clearly "outside the realm of the Magisterium."

One they particularly disputed was Sister Jeannine Gramick. Gramick was a 2006 *Mother Teresa Award* Laureate, honored "for her role as American Human Rights Activist, especially in the field of Spirituality." The Awards website also noted that she co-founded the "social-justice" organization *New Ways Ministry*.

Sr. Gramick's public life, in reality, has been dedicated almost exclusively to promoting the idea that homosexuality is a legitimate "alternative" lifestyle and is morally acceptable to the Catholic Church. In 2000, Gramick and *New Ways Ministry* co-founder Father Robert Nugent received Vatican notification to discontinue the ministry, charging that their positions "caused confusion among the Catholic people and have harmed the community of the Church." In response to the Vatican notification, Sr. Gramick insisted she would neither be silenced nor stop her ministry. She continues to promote the homosexual lifestyle, including homosexual "marriage", and publicly denounces Catholic teaching on homosexuality. Little wonder that the Missionaries of Charity found this an objectionable award.

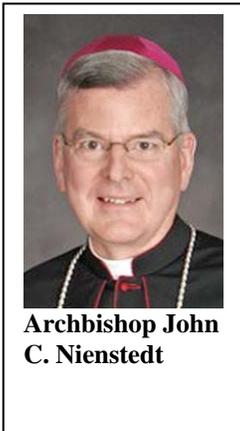
Other honorees of the *Mother Teresa Awards* included Bill and Melinda Gates in 2005. Their Gates Foundation gave nearly \$9 million to the pro-abortion International Planned Parenthood and another approximately \$30 million over the past 10 years to various Planned Parenthood subsidiaries. The anti-Catholic *Call to Action* dissenters Miriam Therese Winter, John August Swanson, and Sr. Joan Chittister received 2005 awards, too.

Authentic Church organizations cannot afford to ignore aberrant behavior or heterodox opinion among those ostensibly representing Catholicism. Therefore, it's with great optimism one notes signs of growing impatience with "pastoral" indifference.

Last year, Archbishop John C. Nienstedt published an article, "Four Points on the Church's Teaching about Homosexuality," in the archdiocesan newspaper, *The Catholic Spirit*. (Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis, November 26, 2007) His four points, meant as "footnotes" to previous remarks in the paper about Church teaching on homosexuality, were these:

- Catholic churches, colleges and other institutions should not give awards, honors or platforms to persons who - whether Catholic or not - hold public positions contrary to the Church's defined teaching.
- Those who actively encourage or promote homosexual acts or a homosexual lifestyle formally cooperate in a grave evil and, if they do so knowingly and willingly, are guilty of mortal sin. They have broken Communion with the church and are prohibited from receiving Holy Communion until they have had a conversion of heart, expressed sorrow for their action, and receive sacramental absolution from a priest.
- The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' statement "Always Our Children" is not a normative teaching statement of the bishops' conference. The majority of bishops at the time of its publication never had the opportunity to discuss or vote on the document. It was written, published, and promulgated in the committee's name only - in contrast to "Ministry to Persons with a Homosexual Inclination: Guidelines for Pastoral Care," which was adopted by the USCCB general assembly.
- Persons with same-sex attractions can find support to live chastely within the community of the Church through the work of *Courage*. Their families can turn to *Encourage*.

Clearly, the problem is bigger than homosexual issues, but it's refreshing to see a bishop display some common sense and moral fiber. May his tribe increase! J



**Archbishop John
C. Nienstedt**

The Rise of the Religious Left

By Steven Malanga

Everyone knows the potent force of the Christian right in American politics. But since the mid-1990s, an increasingly influential religious movement has arisen on the left, mostly escaping the national press's notice.

This new religious left does not expend its political energies on the cultural concerns that primarily motivate conservative evangelicals. Instead, working mostly at the state and local level, and often in lockstep with unions, its ministers, priests, rabbis, and laity exert a major, sometimes decisive, influence in campaigns to enforce a "living wage," to help unions organize, and to block the expansion of nonunionized businesses like Wal-Mart.

The new religious left is in one sense not new at all. It draws its inspiration in part from the Protestant "social gospel" movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, especially Baptist Minister Walter Rauschenbusch, who believed that the best way to uplift the downtrodden was to redistribute wealth and forge an egalitarian society. Rauschenbusch called for the creation of a kingdom of heaven here on earth—just as presidential candidate Barack Obama did last week at a church in South Carolina.

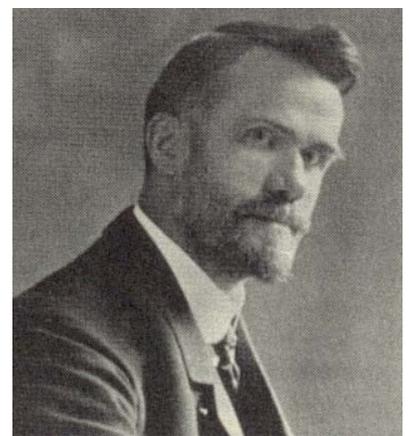
The popular Catholic writer John Ryan also advocated that government enact pro-union legislation, steep taxes on wealth, and more stringent business regulation. When FDR adopted several of Ryan's ideas, the priest was given the sobriquet "the Right Reverend New Dealer." His popularity reflected the tightening alliance between America's mainstream churches and organized labor. That alliance disintegrated during the 1960s, when clerics like the notorious rebel priests the Berrigan brothers began to agitate for a wider range of radical causes—above all, a swift end to the Vietnam War. The more culturally conservative blue-collar workers who formed the union movement's core wanted no part of this.

The alliance has been revitalized thanks in large part to savvy labor bosses such as John Sweeney, who grew up in a prototypical Catholic pro-union household. When Mr. Sweeney took over the AFL-CIO in 1996, union membership was shrinking—from 24% of the work force 30 years ago to 14.5% in 1996 (and just 12% today). He told church leaders that "unions need aggressive participation by the Church in our organizing campaigns."

The AFL-CIO launched "Labor in the Pulpits," a program that encouraged churches and synagogues to invite union leaders to preach the virtues of organized labor and tout its political agenda. Nearly 1,000 congregations in 100 cities nationwide now take part annually. Mr. Sweeney himself has preached from the pulpit of Washington, D.C.'s National Cathedral, urging congregants to join anti-globalization protests in the capital.

Under the auspices of Labor in the Pulpits, Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist and Presbyterian clerics have composed guidelines for union-friendly sermons and litanies, as well as inserts for church bulletins that promote union legislation. One insert asked congregants to pray for a federal minimum-wage hike and also – if the prayers didn't work, presumably—to contact their congressional representatives. Another urged congregants to lobby Congress to pass the Employee Free Choice Act—controversial legislation that would let unions organize firms merely by getting workers to sign authorizing cards, rather than by conducting secret ballots, as is currently required.

The Chicago-based, union-supported Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ) arranges for seminarians to spend the summer months working with union locals. Some 200 seminarians have helped unionize Mississippi poultry workers, aided the Service Employees International Union in organizing Georgia public-sector employees, and



Baptist Minister Walter Rauschenbusch, a prominent promoter of the Protestant "social gospel" movement.

bolstered campaigns for living-wage legislation in California municipalities.

Working with IWJ, the labor movement has spawned some 60 new religious left groups, ranging from the Massachusetts Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice to the Chicago Interfaith Committee on Worker Issues to the Los Angeles-based Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (Clue). In Los Angeles, Clue clergy helped crush several 2005 statewide ballot initiatives that unions opposed, including one that gave union workers the option of not paying dues that would fund union political activities.

In Memphis, clergy fought relentlessly—via newspaper op-eds, public fasts, and preaching—for the passage of living-wage bills that since 2004 have forced local businesses to hike wages well above the federal minimum. Labor-religious coalitions have worked spectacularly well: Some 125 municipalities have passed living-wage laws.

More than 100 religious organizations support IWJ financially, including the National Council of Churches of the USA (NCC), an umbrella organization of nearly 40 mainstream Christian denominations. The Presbyterian Church (USA), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Episcopal Church are particularly active. The alliance between labor and the religious left also enjoys the powerful backing of the Catholic Church, whose American hierarchy, though often conservative on social issues, is firmly left-wing in its economic views.

Despite decades of economic progress that have reduced unemployment levels to record lows and made America a magnet for opportunity-seeking immigrants, leading clergy of the religious left depict the free market as a vast exploitative force, controlled by a small group of godless power brokers. Clergy describe Wal-Mart, for example, in terms that its thousands of suppliers, millions of employees, and tens of millions of customers would hardly recognize. The Reverend Jarvis Johnson, an IWJ board member, has urged congregants to invite the “hurting, blind and crippled” to a metaphorical banquet. Who are these poor, abused souls? “They are Wal-Mart associates who have to wait six months to a year to qualify for a health-care plan,” Mr. Johnson explained.

Religious left leaders blindly refuse to acknowledge the considerable academic research showing that mandated wage hikes often eliminate the jobs of low-skilled workers—the very people whom it seeks to help. David Neumark, for example—a researcher at the University of California at Berkeley’s Institute of Business and Economics Research and one of the world’s foremost authorities on wage laws—has found that while living-wage laws do boost the income of some low-wage workers, they also have “strong negative employment effects.” That is, they vaporize jobs. In one study, Mr. Neumark noted that a 50% boost in the living wage produced a decline in employment for the lowest-skilled workers of between 6% and 8%.

Religious left clerics also ignore the evidence that much poverty in prosperous, opportunity-rich America results from dysfunctional—dare one call it “sinful”?—behavior. Around two-thirds of poor families today are single-parent households, largely dependent on government subsidies and headed by women with little education. The entry-level, low-wage work for which these mothers are qualified makes it hard to support large families. And the time they must devote to raising their kids makes it hard to climb the economic ladder. Poverty is increasingly about the irresponsible decision to have children out of wedlock. In many inner city communities where poverty is entrenched, 75% of all children are now born out of wedlock.

In any event, the religious left’s sympathies do not seem to be those of churchgoers. While the NCC and its member churches pursue a variety of left-wing causes—even partnering with the activist organization MoveOn.org and featuring speakers like Michael Moore at events—a Pew poll found that 54% of white, mainline Protestants and 50% of Catholics voted Republican in the 2004 presidential elections. Those who attended church regularly voted Republican even more heavily—at nearly the same rate as evangelical Christians, in fact.

For four decades, as the leadership of America’s mainline churches has moved steadily leftward, those churches’ memberships declined as a percentage of the U.S. population while the number of Christian evangelicals exploded. Left-wing clerics may be buying greater political influence with their alliance through organized labor, but the price may be further alienating their shrinking flock. J

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The alliance between labor and the religious left also enjoys the powerful backing of the Catholic Church, whose American hierarchy, though often conservative on social issues, is firmly left-wing in its economic views.

The Holy Family

An Offering in Righteousness

By Marie P. Loehr

Behold, He comes, says the Lord of Hosts; and who shall abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appears? For He is like a refining fire....and He shall purify the sons of Levi...and they shall offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

- Malachi 3:1-4

The presentation of the Lord in the Temple in Jerusalem is truly “an offering in righteousness.” The celebrants of this offering are in fact Mary and Joseph, who are themselves the first fruits of the righteousness of the Lord. What is this righteousness?

The word “righteous” has its roots in the concept of both straightness and kingship. It is rule, in the sense of both measure and governance. It is order. It is justice. We have seen that “just” is the word used to describe Joseph, flourishing like a palm tree, straight and true, in the courts of the Lord. Mary is the fullness of this justice, blessed with the plenitude of God’s grace. Justice is also a synonym for grace, the life of God in us. It is in this measure and order and grace that Mary and Joseph bring their Child to the Temple, to be presented to God, to be consecrated to God - as all firstborn sons were presented and consecrated to God - even though this Son is God himself. So also Mary, the purest of the pure, pure as no other human since Adam and Eve were created by the hand of God and planted in the Garden, comes to the Temple to be purified, as it is specified in the Law, after the birth of a child. Immaculately conceived and perpetually virgin as she is, still she comes to be purified. A man like us, in all things except sin, Christ Is brought before the priests to be consecrated, as every fallen first-born male must be. Even though he is God himself, the one who in fact and alone consecrates ALL, he and his Mother and his foster father submit in humility and obedience to the smallest requirements of the Law.

Why such meticulous submission to the straightness and order of the Law, even in God made man, Jesus Christ, as well as his human parents?

To understand that, we must first look at the roots of “righteous” and “rightness,” and also at the roots of man’s need for redemption.

Man’s need for redemption is the result of his disobedience against God’s warning to avoid the fruit of the tree of good and evil, his overturning the order of Creation--preferring the purely spiritual to the constraints of body. As a result, we see in Christ and his teaching two crucial themes: obedience - his and ours to the will and work of the Father in the Spirit; and the necessity of putting on his own flesh - “we must put on Christ,” as Paul says - by eating his body and drinking his blood. This is the ultimate obedience. In doing so, we can then be incorporated into Christ, and know, love, serve God in all fullness of body AND spirit.

Mary and Joseph had each “put on Christ” long before He was conceived in her womb, and welcomed into Joseph’s house.

In its Hebrew root, “tzdek” or righteousness is a quality. It is law, and conduct according to law. It is opposed to sin, wickedness, and corruption. John McKenzie, S. J., in his *Dictionary of the Bible*, says that to seek righteousness is to seek God. It is in good conduct that Yahweh is to be found. It is honesty as opposed to deception, truth as opposed to lies. It is the



Holy Family with a Lamb,
Raffaello Sanzio

administration of justice--as truth and right order. McKenzie notes that in Hosea 10:12 the writer plays on this word to show that if Israel sows *tzedek* as good conduct, *i.e.*, the proper order of Creation as intended in God, then God will rain *tzedek* on Israel as salvation. In Genesis and in the Psalms Melchizadek means priest-king of righteousness, who consecrates bread and wine, and offers blessing to Abraham. In the Roman Catholic rite of ordination to the priesthood, a recurring theme from the Psalms is "*Tu es sacerdos in aeternum, secundum ordinem Melchizadek.*" "Thou art a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizadek." The priest himself is an offering in righteousness, after the pattern of the mysterious priest-king of the Old Testament.

In English, the word "righteousness" comes from the Indo-European root, "reg" - in its first meaning, certainly. It means to move in a straight line, to lead, to rule. It is the root not only of right and righteousness but also of "rule" as in kingship, "rule" as in measure, and "rule" as in order. Indeed, we might say the king is the measure of order. The psalms speak of the king as upright. Straightness, as opposed to crooked, bent, or corrupted, is the mark of the true king in all his words and works. He lives truth, and expresses that in love - the love that is law and its order for his people.

In its second form, "reg" denotes moisture, rain. Thus in Latin we find it in "rigare"- to wet, to water, or to irrigate. We can see that this is in fact what Christ does for us in his coming. He makes the desert an oasis, flowering in the water of his life. "Drop down dew, ye heavens of mercy, and ye clouds rain down the just," sings an old hymn. This is pre-eminently seen in baptism, its water, the living water of Christ and his Spirit, cleansing us from our sins, healing us of our spiritual dryness, forming a moat of protection around us. His life waters our earth and makes it bloom again.

In its third form, "reg" means to dye, to color - and in some forms to make red. We might say that we are to be dyed, dyed in the wool - branded with the mark of the Good Shepherd, red with the blood of the Lamb, permeated not only with the living water of God but with his blood running through every vessel and cell of our bodies, hearts, minds, and spirits: red for caritas, love, passion, surrender and sacrifice.

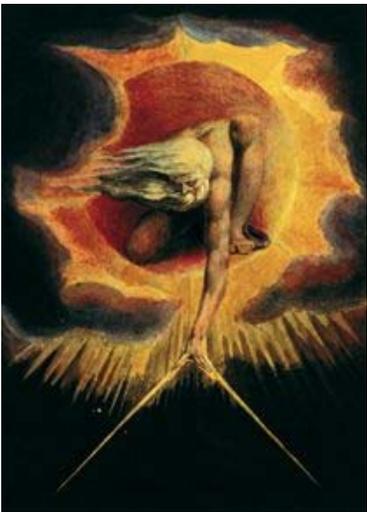
The Holy Family - Jesus, Mary and Joseph - exemplify this totality of right, right order, righteousness, the fullness of grace, as they enter the Temple. They surely sing in their souls for joy. And perhaps they sang out loud with their bodily voices, too, during the trip to Jerusalem, as pilgrims sang the psalms going up to Jerusalem and the Temple for each festival at different times of year.

Because Simeon and Anna themselves are focused entirely on God, his will in precept, his word in Torah, his work in Temple, they both recognize this quiet grace and joy in the couple who bear the long-awaited Infant Messiah into the Temple to fulfill all righteousness. They recognize the innocence, righteousness, fullness of God in the Holy Family because God has restored to them a measure of innocence beyond most fallen humans.

What is innocence? It is the perception of interior essence, as well as external appearance--undistorted by sin, undiluted by fear, undistracted by ego.

So Mary, guided by Joseph, enters the courts of the Lord, in all righteousness and the full flowering of grace, the life and fruits of the Holy Spirit. She enters in this flowering glory of grace, thus justice or righteousness. The "straightness" or order of Creation in God is restored in her, and made manifest in her Child, God's only-begotten Son, the totality and pleroma of grace, the Sun of justice, the true measure and order of Creation, its only king, priest, and prophet.

Surely, Joseph, that truly just man, blessed by God, is aware of his wife's holiness and his foster Child's plenitude, by spiritual discernment and angelic



**Creator God,
William Blake**

revelation. He must have brought them to the Temple as David brought the Ark of the Covenant home to the house of the Lord. David danced physically, before the Ark made by human hands, going up to Jerusalem. How could Joseph's spirit, mind and heart not dance as he escorts Mary and Jesus up to Jerusalem and into the Temple? He knows more truly than anyone that she is the living Ark of the New Covenant, fashioned by God. He knows that the Infant is the living Torah, Word-made-flesh, tabernacled among us in that flesh and its presence.

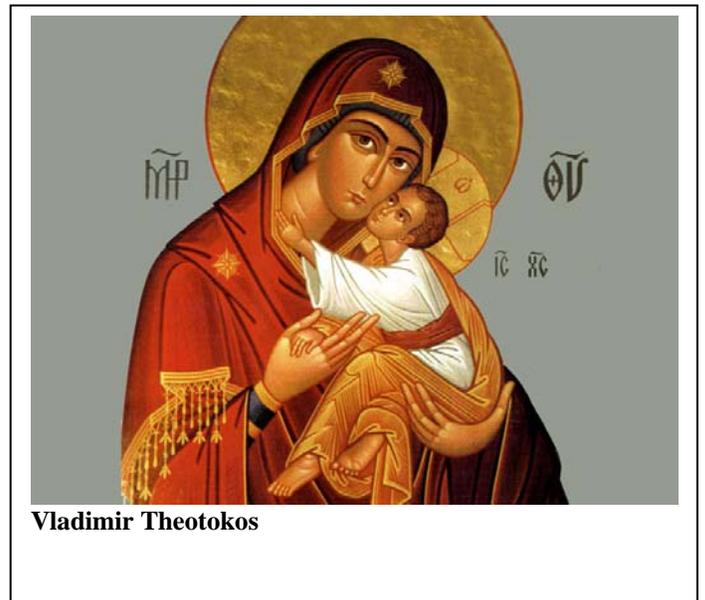
Surely Mary's blood and being rejoice in God her Savior AND Son here above all, in His Father's House. This is home, as Christ reminds her twelve years later. True home is always the presence of God. When they return to the cloister of their simple house in Nazareth, they take the living fulfillment of Temple and Torah with them. They live in the courts of the Lord wherever he is. They restore all things with Christ, minute by minute, day by day. The most minute thought, word, gesture, act is lived in righteousness, straightness, justice, *i.e.*, the fullness of the grace and life of God.

Why then do they need submit themselves to the external Law, and the laws regulating what is clean and unclean, pure and impure?

It is not need or external exigence. They are so entirely straight and true that they embrace the Law not only in dead letter - as we so often do--but in "Spirit and truth," in fullness and humility and obedience. It is not only to begin the restoration of all things in Christ, to make straight the way that has been bent and twisted by sin. It is no mere external conformity to set an example for us to follow. We see through eyes damaged by sin's distortions and astigmatisms. Mary does not. Christ does not. Even Joseph, by his surrender to God in all things, sees and acts with a clarity we do not. Thus, they submit to the Law and its exigence, despite their holiness, because of their holiness, with a fullness and joy and interior delight that far surpass David's ecstasy before the Ark as it enters its true home in Jerusalem and its first Temple.

The Holy Family's total abandonment to Divine Providence, in ALL, is because this straightness and rightness is their home, their milieu, their delight. As the fish in water or the bird in air, so they seek this measure, this order, this trueness that draws them like a magnet. For them, self-emptying, simplicity, service is the fullness of joy. In this they reflect and show forth their image and likeness to God, as we were all made to be.

How so? Because God's perfection is his self-emptying, his majesty is his simplicity, his authority is his service. He offers himself in this righteousness to draw us, to educate us, to lead us to offer ourselves to him in righteousness. J



Around the World

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith released a document in December 2007 called **“Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelization”** to clarify “a growing confusion” about the Church’s missionary mandate. Catholics have a duty to evangelize, since the ultimate fulfillment of the human person is found in accepting God’s revelation as proclaimed by the Church.

The document notes that some people think an attempt to convince another person about a religious matter is a violation of freedom. It added that others see no need to promote conversion to Christ because it is possible for people to be saved without formal incorporation in the Church.

However, authentic “human freedom cannot be separated from its reference to truth.” As the “search for truth cannot be accomplished entirely on one’s own...teaching and entering into dialogue to lead someone in freedom to know and to love Christ is not inappropriate encroachment on human freedom, but rather a legitimate endeavor and a service capable of making human relationships more fruitful.”

The statement reaffirms that coercion or improper enticement (which it calls “proselytism”) fails to respect human dignity and religious freedom and has no place in Christian evangelization. Personal testimony and example, however, are persuasive evangelical tools. “If the word is contradicted by behavior, its acceptance will be difficult.”

“The love which comes from God unites us to him and makes us a “we” which transcends our divisions and makes us one, until in the end God is all in all.”

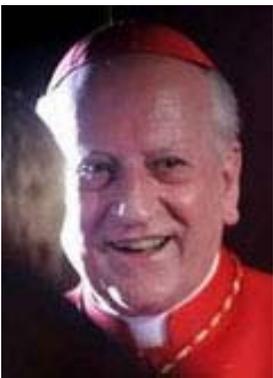
Cardinal Franc Rode, the top Vatican official who deals with religious orders, addressed the 35th General Congregation of the **Society of Jesus [the Jesuits]** on January 7, 2008. Cardinal Rode spoke of his “sorrow and anxiety” at the Jesuit order’s infidelity to Church teachings.

“It is with sorrow and anxiety that I see that the *sentire cum ecclesia* (thinking with the church) of which your founder [St. Ignatius] frequently spoke is diminishing even in some members of religious families,” he said. “With sadness and anxiety I also see a growing distancing from the Hierarchy. The Ignatian spirituality of apostolic service ‘under the Roman Pontiff’ does not allow for this separation. In the Constitutions which he left you, Ignatius...wrote ‘we must always keep our mind prepared and quick to obey’...the Hierarchical Church.”

The Jesuits, once great defenders of faith, over the last 40 years have been steeped in dissident controversy and the homosexual priest scandal. In particular, Jesuit universities and their theologians have contradicted Church teachings on life and family.

Cardinal Rode encouraged the Jesuits to reform. “The Tradition of the Society, from the first beginnings of the *Collegio Romano*, always placed itself at the crossroads between Church and society, between faith and culture, between religion and secularism. Recover these avant-garde positions which are so necessary to transmit the eternal truth to today’s world, in today’s language. Do not abandon this challenge.” ☩

Cardinal Rode’s full address may be obtained at:
<http://www.lifesite.net/ldn/2008/jan/080107b.html>



**Cardinal Franc Rode,
Prefect of the
Congregation for the
Institutes of
Consecrated Life and
the Societies of
Apostolic Life**

Around the Nation

The Diocese of Madison's Bishop Robert C. Morlino broke ranks with the Wisconsin Conference of Catholic Bishops for its failure to condemn a bill to mandate all hospitals, including those under Catholic administration, to dispense the morning after pill (so-called "emergency contraception") to women who have been raped. In a letter to the Wisconsin legislature, dated December 17, 2007, the Bishop wrote, "I urge you, by this letter, to oppose AB 377 (the legislation in question). ...Our conference's neutrality stance has also unintentionally provoked scandal among Catholics. It is my judgment as Bishop of Madison that the earlier position of neutrality did not have its hoped for effect, and so it is now moot, and this neutrality position has now expired."

At issue is the abortifacient nature of the morning after pill, which several studies show have abortion as a possible outcome. The Vatican's Pontifical Academy for Life condemned any use of the morning after pill in a document issued in 2000 (see: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_academies/acdli...)

Furthermore, Pope Benedict XVI warned pharmacists at the 25th International Congress of Catholic Pharmacists in 2007 against dispensing drugs "that have the goal of preventing the implantation of the embryo."

Bishops conferences that permit the use of the morning after pill in Catholic hospitals for rape victims base that decision on an interpretation of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops document: *Ethical and Religious Directives (E.R.D.) for Catholic Health Care Services*. It states, "If after appropriate testing, there is no evidence that conception has occurred already, she [a rape victim] may be treated with medications that would prevent ovulation, sperm capacitation the process by which spermatozoa in the ampullary portion of a uterine tube become capable of going through the acrosome reaction and fertilizing an oocyte."

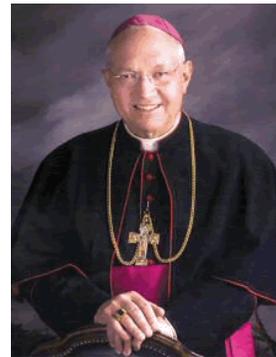
However, the document adds, "It is not permissible, however, to initiate or to recommend treatments that have as their purpose or direct effect the removal, destruction, or interference with the implantation of a fertilized ovum." (See the document: <http://www.usccb.org/bishops/directives.shtml>, paragraph 36)

As the 2008 presidential elections loom, so do partisan politics. **Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston** attempted to provide some perspective when he told the *Boston Globe* in an interview that while he has policy differences with the Republican Party, he is even more concerned about the Democratic Party because of its pro-abortion stand.

Catholic voters who continue to support the Democratic Party despite its pro-abortion stance are doing the Church a disservice, according to the Cardinal. He says the party has been openly hostile to pro-life advocates and Catholic support for pro-abortion Democratic candidates "borders on scandal."

"I think the Democratic Party, which has been in many parts of the country traditionally the party which Catholics have supported, has been extremely insensitive to the Church's position, on the gospel of life in particular, and on other moral issues," O'Malley said.

When Catholics respond that they're not supporting abortion rights, he told the *Globe*, "I think there's a need for [them] to very actively dissociate themselves from those unacceptable positions, and I think if they did that, then the party would have to change." J



Bishop Robert C. Morlino, Diocese of Madison



Cardinal Sean O'Malley, Archdiocese of Boston

Around the Archdiocese

Prince of Peace Catholic Church in Albuquerque held a highly irregular penance service for about 250 people during Advent. Despite bringing in auxiliary priests, general absolution was showered over all with no mention that penitents who are conscious of serious sin need to make a good, private confession as soon as possible. (See page 14, this issue: “Desperately Seeking...Something”)



Matthew Bubb, left and Ken Ansloan in "The Joan Crawford and Marilyn Monroe Christmas Show"

In the mid 90s, “life partners” Kenneth Ansloan and Matthew Bubb founded the Albuquerque drag troupe *The Dolls*, annually presented as a “Christmas Special.” The show’s core acts involved Ansloan, dressed as Betty Crawford, and Bubb as Marilyn Monroe. Other impersonations included Bette Davis, Liberace, Lana Turner, Loretta Lynn, and Julia Child, among others. Julia gets sauced on the cooking wine while preparing a Christmas dinner. Charles Dickens “A Christmas Carol” is spoofed, with Bubb/Monroe playing the ghosts of Marilyn Past, Marilyn Present and Marilyn Future. According to one review, “Marilyn can bring a man up from the audience to do a sexy number with her. When they are shy and reticent, it’s all the more fun.” Bubb passed away last year, mourned as a “huge loss to the gay community” in New Mexico and a memorial service was held at **Risen Savior Catholic Church**. www.gaychurch.org identifies Risen Savior as “gay friendly”.

The **Archdiocese’s Madonna Retreat Center**, adjacent to the Chancery offices, hosted a winter retreat from December 29 - January 6 to teach Tibetan Buddhist meditations “that align you with the authentic place from which great compassion, the most powerful force in the universe, bursts forth in a brilliant display of caring energy. Each day will include teachings, discussion groups, movement and expressive activities such as yoga, joyful movement, inner singing and more. Most importantly, there will be ample time for personal practice of the Green Healing of Wisdom Light meditation, a special Tibetan meditation adapted for Western students. All participants will receive initiation into this transformative Highest Yoga Tantra practice.” Wonder if the Archbishop plans to peek in?

Fr. Jack Clark Robinson, OFM – former pastor of Holy Family Catholic Church in Albuquerque had an article published in the November-December 2007 issue of *The Gay and Lesbian Review*. Titled “Jesus, the Centurion, and His Lover,” Father Robinson argues that the scripture passage about the centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant, was “Jesus’ encounter with someone who today would be regarded as a gay man.” The “servant” was actually a young, male lover and Jesus’ healing of him was tacit approval of the relationship. Robinson concludes: “One final irony remains. In the Roman Catholic Communion rite, the last words said by every communicant before receiving Holy Communion are: ‘Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.’ Those words may sound familiar now. They paraphrase the centurion’s words as recorded in Matthew. How surprised many of those who condemn homosexuals in Christ’s name would be if they realized that every time they take Holy Communion, the words on their lips are those of a gay man.” ❤️



Forty Days for Life

In just 40 days, one can...

- Dramatically reduce abortions in a community...
- Mobilize hundreds of new pro-life volunteers...
- Help post-abortive women find healing...
- Generate prominent pro-life news coverage...
- Make LIFE the most important issue in 2008...

The first *40 Days for Life* campaign began in Texas. The concept was simple. A local pro-life group committed to 40 days of prayer and fasting for an end to abortion, for conversion of those involved in the abortion industry, and for healing for the many who are hurting after abortion. The project activated 1,000 people and led directly to a 28 percent decline in abortions in that community.

In the autumn of 2007, *40 Days for Life* conducted a national campaign in more than 80 cities throughout the United States. As a result, a Planned Parenthood abortion facility in Indianapolis closed on at least two of their busiest abortion Saturdays and saw a significant decrease in the number of abortions. In New York City, one abortion clinic manager said, "I thought this 40 days thing was over already. You are killing our business!"

A Wilkes County, North Carolina newspaper ran a positive, first time ever, front-page, pro-life article with two color photos. In Baltimore, Planned Parenthood was closed for the entire time those engaged in prayer were present. In Pensacola, 34 lives were saved. In Sacramento, the abortionist didn't arrive for work on two mornings.

Bolstered by a new vigor, *Project Defending Life* – a Catholic pro-life ministry in New Mexico – will launch a 2008 Lenten campaign beginning on Ash Wednesday and ending Good Friday.

Daily Prayer Vigils will take place Monday through Sunday from 7am-5pm in front of the Planned Parenthood abortuary at 701 San Mateo Boulevard and the Holy Innocents Chapel across the street will hold 24-hour Eucharistic adoration.

Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan will be sending a letter to each of the archdiocese's parishes, encouraging them to promote this event, which will culminate with the annual Good Friday Jericho Walk at Planned Parenthood.

Please contact *Project Defending Life* at (505) 266-4100 to volunteer, sign up, or to get more information. J



**Friar Roderic Mary and Father Angelo Geiger
at the abortion clinic in Norwich
for the start of the *40 Days for Life*.**

February Calendar

Los Pequeños Monthly Meeting

February 22, 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

Tuesdays at Noon

Mass at the Holy Innocents Chapel

Fr. Stephen Imbarrato
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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Desperately Seeking....Something

By Stephanie Block

You can submit your deepest secrets to the ethereal cosmos – anonymously. Get your acts of jealousy, despair, lust, and anger off your chest by writing them to any of the hundreds of online confessionals available to the troubled heart:

i cut myself and none of my friends now. and im so jealous of my best friend because she is just so perfect. i can never be like her.
[sic]

Scores of churches – such as the nondenominational Flamingo Road Church of Florida – recognize an opportunity when they see one:

A woman kept her secret for nearly two decades. Finally ready to confess, she turned not to a minister, but to her computer.

“I am sorry God for not keeping that baby,” her anonymous confession reads. “I had an abortion and had kept that secret for over 18 years. I feel so ashamed. Please forgive me!”

...The 6,500-member church created the site as part of a 10-week series on the ways people mess up - in marriage, parenting, finances and more. The goal of the series is to help congregants learn from their mistakes.



If only Lady Macbeth had this...

It's not a bad goal, to learn from one's mistakes, but it's awfully limited. Confession is only a *step* – necessary, but only one of several – toward real liberation. One craves absolution, too, and a change from the enslaving *status quo*. This is why one online site places one's written confession on a virtual palm, which is then virtually washed in a porcelain sink to the sound of running water. The sins, presumably, go down the drain and the virtual confessor says cheerfully “You are clean”.

Only, one isn't, really. A virtual bath does nothing for an actual body or an actual soul. While recognizing that the Internet is a useful tool for evangelization and religious dialogue, the Vatican draws the line at online confessions. The sacrament of confession requires the physical presence of the priest and the penitent. One can't make sacramental, efficacious confessions or receive sacramental absolution via e-mail, phone, or snail mail.

What about general absolutions?

Still seeking anonymity, however, the thrashing sinner smells a loophole. Why not attend a *group* penance service that dispenses *general* absolution? Couldn't one then satisfy the requirement for the physical presence of the priest and the penitent without the discomfort of actually *telling* anyone...except God, of course?

With the craft born of desperation, the sinner discovers that general absolution, though extraordinary, is *possible* - if the number of penitents is prohibitively large or the danger of death is great. The understanding that they must go to individual confession at the earliest opportunity is conveniently...overlooked.

There's poignancy to this phenomena, reflecting tremendous depths of brokenness and burden. Bewildered Catholics, discovering exactly such services held by their beloved parish priests write to various experts on all things Catholic, wondering if their absolution was *valid*. Have their sins really, truly been forgiven?

How does one respond? Pope John Paul II repeatedly issued documents and other public statements explaining that general absolution was being abused. Canon 960 (Church law) stresses that individual and integral confession and absolution constitute the sole ordinary means by which one who is conscious of grave sin is reconciled with God and with the Church. What does that mean?

Confession - except in rare, emergency situations - is **individual**. One penitent confesses his sins to one priest.

Confession is **integral**. Every mortal sin of which the penitent is aware must be confessed.

Which means that a priest needs to hear confessions one sinner at a time and penitents need to confess, in full, all the serious sins that they can recall.

But...but...doesn't a large parish that has only a single priest available to shrive the many souls in his care satisfy the extraordinary situation in which general absolution is permissible?

No, says licensed canonist Cathy Caridi, J.C.L. Large numbers of parishioners who want the sacrament of penance at a given moment is not, in and of itself, a situation of "grave necessity." The diocesan bishop, for one thing, must determine what constitutes "grave necessity," not the parish priest. Furthermore, regardless of what the bishop determines, the ordinary requirements of an individual and integral confession remain. They've only been *postponed* a while, not abolished, during the period of grave necessity.

Okay, but are one's sins *forgiven* during a general absolution, even though the priest is - perhaps deliberately, perhaps ignorantly - breaking Church law? Caridi responds, "As Catholics, we believe that if we act in accord with canon law - law which follows Catholic theology and has been promulgated by the Pope, the Vicar of Christ - the sacraments we receive will have spiritual effect. But we should also keep in mind that God, Who is Almighty, is not bound by the Code of Canon Law, and can act outside of it if He so chooses. If you had intended last Christmas to confess any mortal sins, these must be mentioned in an individual confession, as discussed above. But otherwise, perhaps it's best simply to commend this past experience to God, and to trust that while we want Him to forgive us our sins, He wants this even more than we do."

What of the parish priest who holds such services? What ought the faithful to do in the face of an apparent abuse of the Sacrament? It would seem that the first step would be to ascertain whether the bishop, for some reason, has given Father authority to give general absolution within a penance service. If the bishop hasn't, an underlined copy of the appropriate passages in Canon Law might help the pastor, followed by some discussion about why the canons say what they do. If that doesn't help, the incident should be written up and sent to the bishop, who may or may not choose to put an end to the abuses in his diocese. Hope, however, springs eternal. J

