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Reform at Chicago CCHD Being Dismantled:

Ring leader says it is insulting for grantees to be asked whether they advocate for abortion or same-sex "marriage"

By Patrick B. Craine (www.LifeSiteNews.com)

Facing pressure from the old guard at the local and national level, the Chicago branch of the *Catholic Campaign for Human Development* has begun dismantling the "real reform" that earned it so much praise from pro-life groups in the summer.

"Despite the attempts made by some well-intentioned individuals in the Archdiocese of Chicago's CCHD, the powers-that-be at the USCCB and some local bishops and priests have plans to return to the national CCHD's guidelines with this program," said former Chicago CCHD director Rey Flores. Flores, among others, had initiated the reforms with the initial blessing of Cardinal Francis George.

But a cadre of liberal priests, led by Fr. Larry Dowling, has been calling on the cardinal to reverse the reforms, which included approving grants for the life-saving work of crisis pregnancy centers. Dowling claimed in a recent letter to Cardinal George, for example, that "It has been an insult to many (grantees) to be asked, "Does your organization support abortion or same-sex 'marriage'?"

The same group of priests, who sought the removal of Flores last March, were recently also targeting Flores' former boss, Office of Peace and Justice Director Nicholas Lund-Molfese.

"People really need to keep the CCHD program in their prayers, especially the Chicago CCHD staff, priests and bishops," said Flores, who lost his position in the fall.

Under Flores' leadership, Chicago's CCHD had committed to defunding any group opposing Catholic teaching, particularly on life and family issues, as well as funding groups such as crisis pregnancy centers and the Pro-Life Action League, contrary to previous CCHD practice.

The former director told LSN that the rationale for funding such groups, and for ensuring that grantees are in line with Church teaching on life and family issues, is that "the lack of respect for the sanctity of life and the destruction of the necessary societal institutions of traditional marriage and family are the major reason for the moral, physical and spiritual poverty we suffer in the western world."

Cardinal George - under the recommendations of Auxiliary Bishop Francis Kane, who serves on the U.S. Bishops' CCHD subcommittee - has agreed to recommit the diocese to CCHD's long-time policy of not funding groups that offer direct service to the poor, and will also require again that grantees' boards be mostly composed of low-income people.

The Chicago reforms, which were held up by pro-life groups as a model for the nationwide organization, were especially significant because Chicago is where CCHD began and their collection still brings in the most funds of any diocese every year.

"For a brief moment in Chicago, we had everyone on the same page," said Flores. "It was awesome to teach people on the social justice side of things about the value of respect life causes as being social justice issues and teaching the respect life warriors about the God-given human dignity of immigrants and workers. I pray that these efforts were not in vain."

"It's sad that the unborn and the innocent poor must suffer because of our misunderstanding of what true social Catholic justice is as Jesus Christ taught us," he added, saying, "We must never sacrifice our Catholic faith and values for secular humanitarian causes."

LifeSiteNews was refused an interview with Lund-Molfese to ask about the status of future funding to pro-life groups. According to Susan Burrirt, the diocese's media relations director, "There has been no change in the policy of the Archdiocese of Chicago regarding groups eligible for CCHD funding. Reports to the contrary are mistaken."

"While we certainly pray that the new leaders of Chicago's CCHD have the courage to continue Rey Flores' excellent reform effort, it sounds like they're returning to business as usual," said Michael Hichborn, American Life League's lead researcher on the CCHD. "Given the push to remove Flores from his post by a member of the CCHD's subcommittee, one has to wonder just how committed to reform the National CCHD office really is."

"We really commend Rey for his courage and fidelity to the Church for working so hard to make these reforms as the CCHD director," said Hichborn. "But the strength and courage it took to go public with what really happened is a sign of his deep faith in Christ."✠

At least 10 bishops, dissatisfied with reform efforts, did not participate in the national 2010 CCHD collection.

Proposal to Establish an Alternative International Catholic Charity

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By Jon Merrill

THE PROBLEM

In his very first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI deplored the current state of international Catholic charity: “An essential responsibility of the Church,” it had become secularized, politicized, and ideological (“at the service of worldly stratagems,” “aimed at improving the world”); it stressed the sufficiency of mere technical competence in the delivery of only material assistance; it was without evangelistic impact or even intent; and it had in doctrine and discipline separated itself from the Church. Organized Catholic charity was losing its “splendor” and becoming “just another form of social assistance.”

“The large Church charity organizations have separated themselves from the Church and from their link with the bishops,” said Archbishop Paul Cordes, then-president of the pontifical council *Cor Unum*, shortly after the issuance of that encyclical. “They have identified themselves completely with the nongovernmental organizations and have presented a program that is indistinguishable from the Red Cross or the United Nations.” They are “detaching charity from the spirit and structure of the Church,” leading Church members “toward the secularization of [a] central aspect [i.e., charitable action] of the ecclesial mission” and thus “contradicting the 2,000-year history of our Church, and seriously deteriorating the credibility of its preaching.”

We believe that behind this corruption of organized Catholic charity are two fatal flaws; two fundamental misunderstandings or misapplications of Catholic charity that have more to do with evil, unethical, or inappropriate *means* than with charitable ends:

(1) Many of those “large Church charity organizations” are funded – massively – not by freewill, voluntary contributions, but by *governments* (and, not incidentally, by morally relativistic governments which no longer acknowledge a natural, let alone a divine, law). Such “charities” thus rely for their very existence and mode of operation on the coerced, involuntary, unconscious “contributions” of taxpayers, most of whom (in the American case) are not Catholic. This is a sham; a simulacrum of Catholic charity. For “government charity” is a meaningless – or maybe, pernicious – contradiction in terms. True charity can only be freely, intentionally given; it cannot be taxed into existence. “Catholic” institutions which use this method of perpetuating themselves are operating unethically (for “a good end does not justify an evil means”) while perverting the meaning and practice of true Catholic charity. It is not surprising that the resulting Catholic system of material-relief distribution (*not* charity) should resemble that of a secular welfare state, for the real managers of this system are the secular-government agents who, the better and more covertly to “serve their worldly stratagems,” are simply “laundering” their money through compliant, complacent, nominally Catholic institutions.

(2) A large number of those same Church “humanitarian” organizations are “owned” by, or have direct links to, nationalistic groups of First-World bishops. This is inappropriate for several reasons. First, as *Deus Caritas Est* points out, the direct management of charitable activities or organizations is not a proper episcopal function. The role of the bishop is, rather, one of doctrinal and disciplinary *oversight* of “autonomous” charitable organizations which claim the Catholic name. Second, such proper supervisory responsibility is “incumbent upon each Bishop in his [own] diocese,” *not* on a *group* of bishops far removed from the scene. Conflict and disunity, among bishops as well as laypeople of different countries, can be caused when one foreign group of bishops directs “charitable” activities in the territory of another. Finally, the bishops’ direct ownership of these “monopolistic,” government-contracted, politicized agencies of ostensible Catholic charity – as it implies that the bishops’ particular way of “doing charity” is the single “authorized version” for the faithful (from whom criticism is not permitted) – tends to discourage and hinder the full participation of the

laity and members of missionary congregations in alternative efforts of *genuinely charitable* action; genuine, that is, as to both *means* and ends. *And yet it is those last two categories of the faithful – not bishops, not priests, and certainly not governments – who have primary responsibility for the direct accomplishment of organized Catholic charity.*

THE GENERAL SOLUTION

Due to those two intrinsic flaws, it is misguided and futile to call for the mere “reform” of the existing mainstream, bishop-controlled, government-funded and, in practice, government-*directed* “Catholic” “charitable” institutions. Loyal Catholics, including Pope Benedict XVI and Archbishop Cordes, are rightly alarmed by the lack of religious identity of the main “Catholic” charities, and by the worldly uses to which those institutions are being put. But their stated or implied solution of “capturing” those organizations for the Church ignores the un-Catholic and immoral *means* being used by those existing, dominant institutions...means which, it seems to be presumed, loyal Catholics would unreflectively continue to use once the existing institutions were captured.

No; the solution is to “replace, not capture.” Faithful Catholic laymen, in the prevailing environment of coerced, statist faux-charity, must establish new institutions which are conspicuous in being voluntary. Forthrightly and directly assuming their own charitable responsibilities – as every pope of the past century has urged – they need to fundamentally transform the Catholic charitable “system” by reclaiming it from governments and bishops.

OUR SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTION TO A SOLUTION

We propose to establish an exemplary *alternative* international Catholic charity; a lay public association of the faithful with the mission of fostering authentically and integrally Catholic actions of organized charity around the world. By its dedication to *evangelistically* charitable actions which are faithful to the perennial Magisterium of the Church, in particular to Church teachings on what the Holy Father has called the “decisive issue” of life and family, and through its encouragement of the legitimate oversight authority of “each bishop in his diocese,” the association will be fully united with the Church and the bishops.

Striving to serve as a positive example of true Catholic charity to and in the Church, by its charitable “accomplishments” but even more by the moral, fully-Catholic means that it employs, it will have the following conspicuous characteristics:

Honestly, genuinely, catholically Catholic: Orthodox in doctrine and practice, with necessary special and vocal emphasis on orthodoxy and orthopraxis in support of the Church’s “controversial” teaching on life, marriage, and the family; necessary, that is, due to the massively-funded assault on that teaching by all of the secular humanitarian organizations with which it will “compete,” and especially crucial due to the treacherous evasion or undermining of that teaching by the major international “Catholic” relief agencies.

Managed and staffed by loyal, non-cafeteria Catholics: Personnel is policy. The above claim to be “genuinely Catholic” is objectively mendacious or meaningless if our association’s members are not fully-believing Catholics, especially as regards those litmus-test life issues.

Lay-run and staffed: In keeping with traditional teaching on the distinction of roles between laity and clergy; with Pope Benedict XVI’s call for “a change in mentality with regard to the laity,” moving from considering them “collaborators” of the clergy to recognizing them as “truly ‘co-responsible’ for the being and action of the Church”; and with recent Church prudential exhortations that the laity take primary responsibility for directly carrying out, at their own initiative, organized charitable action, we are an “international *lay* public association of the faithful.”

United with the local bishop: Subject to and encouraging of the legitimate, apolitical doctrinal and disciplinary oversight authority of “the bishop in his diocese,” we are independent of the management control of any local, regional, or foreign group of bishops. This managerial independence, together with a straightforward doctrinal accountability to a single authority – the bishop in his diocese – avoids putting bishops or the lay faithful of different countries or regions in conflict and assures our uncomplicated unity with the Church and her bishops.

Private, voluntary, non-coercive: It is unethical and immoral to use for purposes outside the proper scope of State action – e.g., charitable endeavors – money which has been coercively extracted from others through taxation. A “charity” which uses financial resources derived through taxation is collaborating with the partner government in theft. Organized charity is no more exempt from the obligation to be voluntary – by mere virtue of being organized – than is individual charity. The charitable *individual*, regardless of his good intentions, has no right to steal from “the rich” in order to fund his worthy endeavors in behalf of “the poor.” The charitable *organization* is

under the same constraint.

We will therefore be:

Truly nongovernmental: Absolutely independent of and avoiding even the appearance of affiliation with any secular state, we reject any funding whatsoever from governments, *as a matter of both charitable principle and prudence*. In addition to being a fundamental and corrupting violation of the principle that true charity must be voluntary, we believe that experience has amply demonstrated that it is a practical impossibility, given the nature of Catholic Faith-denying and even natural-law-ignoring secular governments, for a Catholic association to accept government money without compromising its Catholicity.

Missionary: (1) *Evangelistically charitable:* We recognize a true Catholic charity's responsibility, as reiterated in *Deus Caritas Est*, to serve the spiritually, as well as the materially, poor. We will thus be evangelistic not only through our charitable-action witness, but also *in word* – the explicitly *Catholic* word – when and where the word is appropriate and potentially fruitful. (2) *Charitably evangelistic:* We will not use the Church's rightful warning against "proselytizing" – understood in the sense of attempting to coerce or "incentivize" conversions – as a convenient excuse to avoid the evangelizing imperative. But our missionary attempts – confident, unashamed, appropriately humble – will always be *charitable*: We dutifully propose – this is, after all, the Good News, and a matter of life and death – but you, quite obviously, dispose.

Supportive of traditional sacred liturgies; ("Save the Liturgy, Save the World"): Pope Benedict XVI has written that "the crisis in the Church [and the world?] that we are experiencing is to a large extent due to the disintegration of the liturgy." Other churchmen have emphasized the link between concern for the poor and concern for a reverent, "re-integrated" liturgy. Cardinal Cañizares Llovera: "The liturgy (a gift of Christ, not something made by men) is and will be the true and only antidote to the ills of this modernity and to this world that is further and further distant from Jesus and from his Mystical Body, the Church. Only with the rediscovery of the liturgy is it possible to discover" a devotion to the poor. Archbishop Malcolm Ranjith stresses "the urgency to live the Eucharist in daily life through well-coordinated and directed works of charity. We need to break ourselves for others, and be pressed and crushed for justice and peace simultaneously as we believe and celebrate this most holy Sacrament."

Thus, at this moment of historical crisis in the Church, it is logical and important – maybe even imperative – for our alternative Catholic charity to make the "rediscovery" of sacred liturgies, in their traditional, organically developed forms, a particular element of its evangelistically charitable mission. As a matter of prudence and *pietas* – i.e., "respect for tradition; honoring what has been handed down to us by former generations; fidelity to our ancestors and their works" – taking our cue from an officially sainted pope, and without prejudice to other authentically Catholic corporate or personal bodies who attempt alternative methods of liturgy rediscovery, we will focus our "world-saving" efforts on those liturgical uses that have a history of organic development of more than two hundred years.

A positive and supportive response to Pope Benedict XVI's *motu proprio Summorum Pontificum* being obligatory for any "fully-believing" Catholic association, we will work, in those areas of the world where the Roman Rite is celebrated, to make more widely available the classical use of the rite, where the lack of financial resources and trained priests and laymen may have hindered the implementation of that papal directive. In areas of one of the Eastern Catholic Churches (e.g., Eritrea, Ukraine, Egypt), we will assist in preventing from disintegration the "gift of Christ" proper to the particular Church.

Tough-Mindedly Charitable; Anti-Sentimentalist: True Christian charity, the aim of which is not to provide "a gratifying glow of self-regard" to the giver but actual, enduring, often difficult-to-find "solutions" for the receiver, involves primarily the tough, unsentimental exercise of the reasoning faculty, rather than of the affective sense. "Corporeal charity must be immediately accompanied by the *intellectual charity* of truth." "Without truth," Pope Benedict XVI has said, "charity degenerates into sentimentality." American Catholic writer Flannery O'Connor, perceiving a "secret link between sentimentality and pornography," had a proper repugnance – which this alternative charity shares – for a self-referentially soft-hearted and indolently soft-headed "compassion" for the poor. True charity was "tough-minded" and quite "judgmental": "Tough-minded charity discerns the worth of human beings through the aperture of God's own costly sacrifice, while soft-core pity sees them through the lens of easy and all-sanctioning emotions."

Mainstream secularized international Catholic charity has descended into precisely that kind of "soft-core pity," almost inevitably, as it is has made a fatal alliance with secular welfare states which, when dealing with the materially poor, know no religion, no "cult" but the "cult of sentimentality." When such charities occasionally turn directly for voluntary contributions to the Catholic people – people whose muscles of "intellectual charity" have atrophied as their own proper charitable responsibilities have progressively been taken away by governments and

state-funded bishops' organizations – they are obliged – or *claim* they are obliged, “for the good of the poor” – to resort to disingenuous half-truths and emotionally overwrought appeals. In so doing they dehumanize, demean, and objectify both the charitable giver – seen as a vulnerably guilt-ridden, stupidly sentimental target who will do “the right thing” only if he is shown soft-core pictures of allegedly “starving” children – and the receiver – a pathetic, helpless, perpetual victim of circumstance or oppression.

This is another instance of organized Catholic charity using corrupt, dishonest means for a good end. By contrast, our alternative charity, unencumbered and uninfected by ideological or financial ties to government or party, and as scrupulously attentive to moral means as to good ends, will eschew sentimental and deceptive approaches in its publicity and fundraising. It will thus be free to treat its donors as *rational* compassionate adults, and its beneficiaries, not reductionistically, as people whose defining characteristic is being “poor” – which, in any case, is often a misleadingly subjective designation misapplied by comfort-obsessed Westerners – but as men in full, for better and often for worse; brothers in Christ to whom is owed conspicuously unsentimental charitable solidarity.

PLAN OF ACTION

This alternative charity will provide assistance in the following two major ways:

(1) Financial support will be provided to the charitable efforts – corporal and spiritual works of mercy – of local Church institutions (e.g., religious congregations, parishes, dioceses, Catholic lay associations). These projects will initially be located in resource-poor, “developing” countries, where the Church lacks the financial and human wherewithal to adequately address the overwhelming demands for charitable assistance that are put upon it. Based on the specific needs being expressed by bishops, priests, religious congregations, and lay leaders in Africa and other areas of the global South, funded activities will be mainly in the sectors of education and aid to orphans, but charitable projects of any type will be considered for funding.

We will have no one-size-fits-all, miracle-cure, “end-poverty-now” agenda or plan, imitative of the latest fads of the relief-and-development “professionals,” to be imposed on our “beneficiaries.” Although prior to a commitment of funding for any particular Church-run social project we will obviously consider its common-sense merit, analyze the costs compared to the expected benefits, and attempt to pre-determine its likely degree of effectiveness and efficiency, appropriate deference will be given to local knowledge, judgment, and priorities. We will be funding the local Catholic “searchers,” rather than the distant expatriate “planners,” in the subsidiarity-like formulation of one prominent writer on foreign aid and development. In our choice of worthy Catholic charitable efforts, and in the face of the inextricably complex problems of “poverty alleviation,” we agree with that economist that “the ‘right’ plan is to have no plan.”

Support to Catholic education – a combination spiritual and corporal work of mercy – is particularly appropriate to our identity as an evangelistic charity serving both the spiritually and materially poor. There is also a huge objective unmet need for such support in many developing countries, where formerly Catholic schools have lost their identity, been secularized, or been taken over by governments. In this focus on education we will be heeding the counsel of our current head servant who, noting “the noxious effects of a certain Western secularism and consumerism” in developing countries, encouraged the young “to draw new energies from the Risen Lord, to be able to be evangelical leaven in society and to commit themselves...to *charitable activities, and even more so to educational and school activities.*”

(2) A lay-missionary service arm of the association will provide personal, human-resource assistance to the projects that are also supported through the direct-funding arm. Something of an authentically Catholic, nongovernmental analog of the U.S. Peace Corps, it will offer service opportunities overseas to loyal, orthodox Catholics, identifying and partially funding appropriate teaching, administrative, or technical-support positions with local Catholic schools and charities, and providing placement and in-service support.

This international-exchange arm of the association will provide a “safe haven” alternative to young and not-so-young Catholics who wish to avoid the at-least material cooperation in evil that in our day almost inevitably goes with employment by secular, governmental, statist, amoral-if-not-immoral “humanitarian” agencies such as the Peace Corps. More importantly, it will offer them an alternative to the major, fraudulently Catholic aid organizations. For just as dishonest, Catholic-in-name-only universities represent a greater danger to the faith of those who frequent them than do the overtly secular institutions of not-so-higher learning, so are the secular-humanitarian, “social-justice” international aid organizations that pose as Catholic more corrupting of the Faith than the honest Peace Corps of the world. Our association – in imitation and emulation of the few authentically Catholic colleges that have been founded in the USA as courageous alternatives to the Notre Dames and DePauls – will give sincere Catholics who wish to engage in international service to the poor a way to steer clear of the secu-

larized, ideological “Catholic” aid agencies.

Back in the day before the Church had essentially outsourced much of its organized charity to governments, and prior to the secularization and vocations crises of the international missionary congregations, opportunities available to faithful lay Catholics for evangelistically charitable service overseas were relatively abundant and easy to identify. No longer. Our association will seek to remedy that situation, using in particular a relationship of mutual support with the restored or new, often local, more traditionally orthodox religious congregations which have inherited schools and other charitable projects from their disintegrated predecessors...but without inheriting the financial means to support them.

Because we are simply, traditionally Catholic, unaffiliated with any particular Church “movement” or tendency or religious order or priestly society, our association will be able to offer the widest range of financial-support and direct-service opportunities to its members. We will be able to work with *any* religious community, *any* lay Catholic group, *any* parish, diocese, or apostolic vicariate, in connection with *any* rite, provided “only” that the Catholic entity be orthodox, fully faithful to Church teaching on life and family, and not be (ab)using “social justice” as a cover for the promotion of worldly ideologies.

For examples of the type of charitable endeavors that our association will support, and of the kind of service opportunities that it will provide, see the list of hypothetical projects, with explanations, attached. ☞

*Endorsers include **Russell Shaw**, Catholic writer, journalist, syndicated columnist, **Philip F. Lawler**, Director, Catholic Culture (CatholicCulture.org); Editor Emeritus, Catholic World Report; **Steven W. Mosher**, President, Population Research Institute; **Jeffrey Tucker**, Managing Editor, Sacred Music, of the Church Music Association of America (CMAA); **Matthew Hanley**, co-author, Affirming Love, Avoiding AIDS: What Africa Can Teach the West **Dr. Andrew Abela**, Chairman, Department of Business and Economics, and Associate Professor of Marketing, Catholic University of America; Chairman of Ethics Committee, American Marketing Association, **Fr. Fabian Hevi**, Regional Superior, Kenya, Society of African Missions (SMA).*

Riptides, Tide pools: Secular Nostrums and Ecclesiastical Shallows

By Marie P. Loehr

*For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having **itching ears**, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths.*

– St. Paul, Timothy 4:1-5

There has been a spate of media reports that marriage is as dead in the coming decades as God was in the Sixties. Naturally, the imminent demise of the Church is also predicted by these pundits. God is not dead, of course; that's a Dawkins delusion. Mark Twain was reputed to have said, "Reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated!" So have the perennial reports of God's death been. So have reports of the death of marriage and the demise of the Church been. Simply wishful thinking, no more – despite surface appearances.

What we see on the surface rarely reflects the providential activity of the Spirit at the roots of being. Yet, as Catholics, we are expected to cooperate with the Spirit to bring what is happening around us into coherent, visible unity with the work of the Spirit that we cannot see. That means going beyond the rip tides of secular alarms, and the tide pools of shallow ecclesiasticism to discover the hidden springs and sources of the living water.

There are many who think and speak of the Church in this country as experiencing a golden age in the first half of the 20th century. It enjoyed increasing numbers of vocations to the priesthood and the religious life. It supported a considerable number of parishes, parochial grade schools, diocesan high schools, and orthodox Catholic colleges and universities. It produced educated lay leaders who took their place in corporate and community development and activity. It presented a united front to the non-Catholic and secular world. It appeared to be a deep wellspring; was it merely a tide pool, cut off from the flow of running water?

Between the riptides of secular ferment of the 1960s and Vatican II, the entire edifice of the Church appeared to totter and crack before our eyes.

Vocations not only dropped, but plummeted into the basement. Vowed priests and religious left the priesthood and religious life in droves. Parishes closed schools due to a lack of teachers. Parishes themselves began to fold or be consolidated into fewer operations, due to lack of Mass attendance and financial support. Colleges and universities sold their souls for infusions of federal financial support. The laity took off in all directions, very much like sheep without a shepherd. To some extent, that does appear to be the case in certain geographical and spiritual regions of the Church, in this country at least.

In short, what had looked like the house built on rock turned out to look like a house built on sand, after the rains came down and the floods came up!

What happened?

Before Vatican II, the intellectual content of the faith was emphasized – presented in catechism Q&A format or in dry textbook analyses so abstruse sometimes even those teaching it, usually priests, or religious, clearly did not understand it. They parroted it by rote, and students parroted back by rote. Aquinas was taught, but he was rarely read in his own words in translation. Rather, he was presented through the minds of commentators—some first-rate, some worse than third-rate.

Reaction to this shallow, mindless "intellectuality" and dry as dust presentation was predictable. Those same third-rate commentators who didn't "get" what they were teaching still held sway after the Council, and were quite happy to throw that difficult baby out with the bath water after Vatican II.

Thus they decreed that doctrine was declared stultifying, as it certainly was to them. Thus grade school religion texts taught sociology, Buddy Jesus, Martin Luther King and good self-image. Thus, love, or their tide pool grasp if it, was in vogue—although love was rarely defined as anything but warm fuzzies – a form of sentimental secular piety that substituted easily for the sentimental religious piety of a previous age. Emotion was in, intellect was out. Speaking in tongues, no matter what the tongues might mean, was preferred to simply speaking truth.

Priests and religious abandoned their actual charisms and vows to get married. Married couples abandoned their vocation and vows to "find themselves" in adulterous relationships, homosexual lifestyles, and even their own religious communes! The world was quite literally turned upside down.

The rumor of "the spirit of Vatican II" was sweeping in the land. This putative "spirit of Vatican II" did not

open the windows to *aggiornamento*. It blew them out. Intellect, order, rules and regulations were swept out, the baby, along with the bath water.

Obviously, this was not the intent of the Council or its documents. Vatican II, V2 for short, was not intended to fall on Catholic heads like a real V2 bomb on London during WW2. Rather, it was conceived as a much-needed renewal that would unite intellect and will, truth and love, contemplation and action once again.

Over the centuries the unity and union between each of those necessarily related realities had been eroded, or even lost. As humans, we need both intellect and will – intellect to know truth, will to act on truth. We need intellect to recognize love, will to practice it. We need intellect to contemplate, and will to bring that contemplation to fruition. Vatican II intended to restore that unity and union after several centuries of erosion and distortion.

In other areas, of Church attitude and practice, there were in fact greater divides between letter and spirit that needed correction and healing.

The primary examples of a certain split between intellect and will, truth and love, contemplation and action can be found in the two spousal sacraments that live out the Eucharist in specific daily practice: Matrimony and Orders.

It is ironic that in the past months two articles, claiming the demise of marriage is upon us, appeared in the popular press. Another article recently claimed that people are dubious about the current direction the Church is taking, the wrong direction. This reporter details certain trends in selected geographical areas of this country, pertaining to closings of churches and parochial schools, vanishing congregations, and financial bankruptcy due to the sexual scandals of the past ten or more years, the financial drain the monetary settlements awarded to victims. But her perception of the problem is skewed. She sounds like someone trapped in Rip Van Winkle time warp.

What is this Scripps-Howard reporter's solution to this perceived problem?

The usual, and long discredited, liberal nostrums!

To whit, the Church has to get its head out of the sand of the Middle Ages. No one will follow a preacher crying "Obey my rules or go to hell!" Liberalize the rules. Abandon a celibate priesthood. No doubt she would also recommend ordaining women, permit divorce and remarriage, offer a ritual for aborting babies, and so on.

She was surprised that one bishop in this country sent a DVD to all his flock, explaining why gay marriage is wrong. "It upset people!" Secularists tend to view reality in quantitative terms. We want as many warm bodies and cold cash as possible. They somehow ignore Christ's equanimity when the people deserted him over the "hard saying" that "Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you will not have life in you."

We've been hearing these nostrums for at least 45 years now. Yet the disasters this reporter partially discerns are the direct result of her rote nostrums, that false spirit of Vatican II that did loosen and liberalize so much in this country, in liturgy, ritual, sacraments and practice.

Where the people surrendered to their "itching ears," all these ills she decries followed. Where true doctrine was preached, and priests, religious and laity observed and practiced it, the Church held its own, and today is flourishing.

The problem for both laity and religious after Vatican II was not the true spirit of the Council, but the false secular spirit of all those who had lost their faith or never really had true faith.

The essence of the problem for both religious and laity was shallow intellectual teaching in doctrinal explication and superficial piety in spiritual practice. "Mindless obedience" was the order of the day in religious formation and practice, and in marital preparation and practice as well.

The intellectual content of the faith was reduced to dull dry formulae – and to make God boring is close to blasphemy. After Vatican II it was all emotional ferment – "happy, happy, joy joy," – a touchy-feely tent-revival religion.

The nouveau shallows!

Both tsunami riptides and tide pool shallows were visible and tangible early on.

In 1966, the national Newman convention was held in Dallas. A pre-convention Newcor retreat, one version of many new-style dialogue retreats, was held for students from various Newman Centers around the country. The students who attended were committed Catholics, or they wouldn't have spent the money to attend. Most of the chaperones were married faculty members at the various colleges and universities represented. Only one chaperone was single, twenty-something, a lowly instructor in English. Every group had its chaplain in attendance and participation as well.

Lasting a five-day week, this trendy retreat involved all the latest psychological techniques for becoming transparent to one another, for sharing feelings, for challenge. The only spiritual content was the debunking of the doctrine and practice taught prior to Vatican II. The Dominican "facilitator" kept students and adults up in the air by challenging them to, yes, "get their heads out of the sands of the Middle Ages."

The last discussion conference was on love and marriage. Already, the students had, by osmosis, absorbed the spirit of the age. "How do you express affection?" asked the facilitator. To a naive man and woman, the students agreed, "Sex!"

When the chaplain from Wyoming objected – along with the English instructor – no other chaplain or chaperone

said boo. There was consternation.

Affection is physical, isn't it? And the facilitator raised that question himself, with a sneer of a smile.

If you love your parents, the two dissenters challenged, or your siblings or your children, does that mean you have sex with them? That's where the logic of the "affection is physical, and that's sex" leads, doesn't it? More consternation and confusion...

It was this confusion and counterfeit of love that led John Cardinal Wright, then primate of Pittsburgh in the late 60s, to plead for someone to come forth and develop a true theology and spirituality of marriage, love and sexuality. He understood that the Church had been paddling in the shallows up to that point, and was now faced with a tsunami of secular sexual sewage . . .

A decade later John Paul II stepped forward to present his answer to Wright's challenge, and the challenge of the age: the ageless heresy against incarnation as a good, and marriage as a witness to that. In developing his "theology of the body," he not only defended marriage and explicated its true depth, its image and likeness to God, he also made it possible to defend the priesthood against those who would destroy it by ordaining women, eliminating celibacy, and encouraging a homosexual cadre of priests.

We have examined the Holy Family and family in the Old Testament in the past. Now let's examine marriage as family and image of the Trinity, in our age and in our experience.

This year's columns will explore the nature of love and marriage – and its relation to priesthood – in general doctrine and in particular practice. If we are called to restore all things in Christ, as Paul says, then secular methods and techniques cannot be the primary tool to teach marriage or to re-vitalize it in Catholic life. We need to look at its roots and its proper spirituality, and we need to begin teaching this spirituality and the practice of love as soon as possible—even, yes, in the womb . . .✠

JustFaith JustWrong

By Stephanie Block

One of the perennial topics among Catholics concerned about spiritual formation has been the toxic pollution spewed by the *JustFaith* program promulgated in dozens of dioceses around the US, including the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. Four of these meet on the Internet to discuss what they are discovering.

Jo Joyce from Oklahoma catches a news story about an assigned book in a New Hampshire high school “personal finance” class that is making waves for general profanity and specific anti-Christian diatribes. It’s called *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*, written by Barbara Ehrenreich. The article includes an excerpt from the book:

It would be nice if someone would read this sad-eyed crowd the Sermon on the Mount, accompanied by a rousing commentary on income inequality and the need for a hike in the minimum wage. But Jesus makes his appearance here only as a corpse; the living man, the wine-guzzling vagrant and precocious socialist, is never once mentioned, nor anything he ever had to say. Christ crucified rules, and it may be that the true business of modern Christianity is to crucify him again and again so that he can never get a word out of his mouth.

Reading this, Jo wonders aloud if this is one of the books on the *JustFaith* website. Having a curious turn of mind, Jo looks it up (www.justfaith.org/news/pdf/jf_voices-09q4.pdf) and writes, “I was right. This book is one recommended by *JustFaith*. Go to page three in their newsletter! Save it before they scrub it...”

Sure enough, the Fall 2009 newsletter of *JustFaith, Voices*, says “Small Changes...BIG DIFFERENCES; Be informed – Read.” At there it is: the first on the recommended *JustFaith* reading list for Fall 2009 - *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*, by Barbara Ehrenreich.

Janet Baker in Washington DC follows the link provided by Jo and reads the rest of the newsletter. “In the newsletter we see a link to ‘Institute for Women’s Policy Research.’ Go to it. Then follow ‘health and safety,’ then scroll down a little on that page to ‘reproductive health.’ There you’ll hear about ‘accessible birth control’ and ‘safe and legal abortion.’ ... Gee – if you scroll down to the bottom, “‘other resources’ include *Planned Parenthood*.”

Janet is referring to the section on page three headed, “Join Others Working on Women’s Economic Issues,” just below the recommended reading list. Sure enough, Catholics involved with the *JustFaith* program through their dioceses read the *JustFaith* newsletter and, looking to join others working on women’s economic issues,” will visit the *Institute for Women’s Policy Research* under the presumption that their work with the Institute is Church sanctioned.

The provided web address, www.iwpr.org, leads, just as Janet said it would, to the Institute’s homepage and a menu that includes a “health and safety” link. On the “Health and Safety” page of the *Institute for Women’s Policy Research* website there’s a “Reproductive Health” link to the following information:

Making Reproductive Health Services More Accessible

Former Research Fellow, Holly Mead, conducted a cost-benefit analysis of over-the-counter oral contraceptives titled, *Making Birth Control More Accessible to Women: A Cost-Benefit Analysis of Over-the-Counter Oral Contraceptives*.

In 2003 IWPR published a briefing paper summarizing the United States policy on abortion titled, *Policy Update on Safe and Legal Abortion 30 Years After Roe v. Wade*.

Links to other resources

The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation
Guttmacher Institute
Planned Parenthood
National Women's Law Center

Ann in Birmingham reads the above and complains that *JustFaith* has been in her diocese for the past five or so years. She pulls up the summer 2008 *Voices* (www.justfaith.org/news/pdf/jf_voices-08q3.pdf) and notices that

this issue recommends the highly partisan political group *Sojourners* on page three and on page four carries its founder, Jack Jezreel's comments, including:

What *JustFaith Ministries* does is provide opportunities for people to be changed by the Gospel (*JustFaith* and *JusticeWalking*), to **become active agents of social change** (*JustSkills* and *JustMatters*), and to come together and support each other as a faithful community (*Graduate Ministry* and *Mission-Based Communities*). We summarize this by saying that "*JustFaith* changes people. Those people change the world." You are one of those people. You're invited.

We notice that the newsletters point out that *JustFaith* is "in partnership" with *Call to Action* affiliate group *Pax Christi* – not surprising given Jezreel's own ties with the organization. *Call to Action* is a completely anti-Catholic coalition of groups and individuals determined to change the Church – never mind the world.

Another *JustFaith* "partner" is *Bread for the World*, whose founding president was *Call to Action*'s Bishop Thomas Gumbleton. *Bread for the World* doesn't feed hungry people. It lobbies American legislators and awards monetary grants to organizations such as CIDHAL, a Mexican liberation theology women's rights group that advocates for "reproductive rights."

And, of course, there's the *Catholic Campaign for Human Development* partner.

This just isn't right. ❧

Jo Joyce, Janet Baker, and Ann are members of the Catholic Media Coalition.

Poem by Pro-life Hero Joe Scheidler, on his 82nd Birthday (2009)

*I'm eighty-two! By George, it's true. But there wasn't much
that I could do...
I simply missed those lethal things that fit you out with
"angel's wings."*

*I tried to have my eye knocked out - with a birthday gift iron-
putter.
But Dr. Jimmy put it back. It looks just like the other.*

*A Roman Candle blew apart one Independence Day,
And left me with an ugly scar. It never went away.*

*I had a cancer, caught in time - the whole thing was a breeze.
What really made me mad as hell was losing both my knees!*

*I've eaten junk food by the ton, and should have died at twenty.
But I find junk food lots of fun, and felt I needed plenty.*

*My eyes are clear, my ears can hear - I'm steady on my feet.
I like to read, and walk and talk, but most of all to eat.*

*So mark my age, and call me old, since that's what people do.
But one thing I know you don't know: I'll live to eighty-two.*

Don't forget to give us your change of address information!

Around the United States

Pro-abortion attacks against pro-lifers are on the rise. The *Chicago Sun Times* reported a December 1, 2 am attack on the home of pro-life leaders Joseph and Ann Scheidler. Two front windows were broken by asphalt bricks, one wrapped with a note that read: “We are crazy feminist bi***es who will destroy your sexist ideas.”

The note had a P.S. “I’ve had an abortion and no laws could ever stop me. You can’t make Queen Anne’s Lace illegal, a*****.” (The seeds of the Queen Anne’s Lace contain terpenoids that appear to block crucial progesterone synthesis and make the uterus “slippery” so that a fertilized egg is unable to implant.)

Scheidler is the head of the Pro-Life Action League and told reporters that he’s experienced pro-abortion vandalism before. “We’ve had spraypaint all over the columns, spraypaint on the garage, and of course when we’re out on the streets ... we’ve had knives thrown at us, metal and eggs... I got a bucket of paint on me one time,” he said. “So we’re used to hatred.”

The article noted a recent increase in violence against peaceful pro-lifers. In September, 2009, activist Jim Pouillon was brutally murdered as he stood with a pro-life sign in front of a high school in Owosso, Michigan. The pro-life group Operation Rescue’s headquarters in Wichita, Kansas, has been repeatedly vandalized, and staff threatened in recent months. In Albuquerque, New Mexico, sidewalk counselors were threatened at gunpoint by a man. Police later discovered a cache of weapons in the man’s vehicle.

Asked what he would say to the vandal, Scheidler answered, “She’s forgiven because she must be in great pain. What is there about abortion that is so good, so necessary? ... you probably needed real help rather than aborting your baby.” ☞

Cards and letters can be sent to:

Joe and Ann Scheidler
Pro-Life Action League
6160 N. Cicero Ave.
Chicago, IL 60646