

Los Pequeños Pepper

Publication of Los Pequeños de Cristo

July 2004

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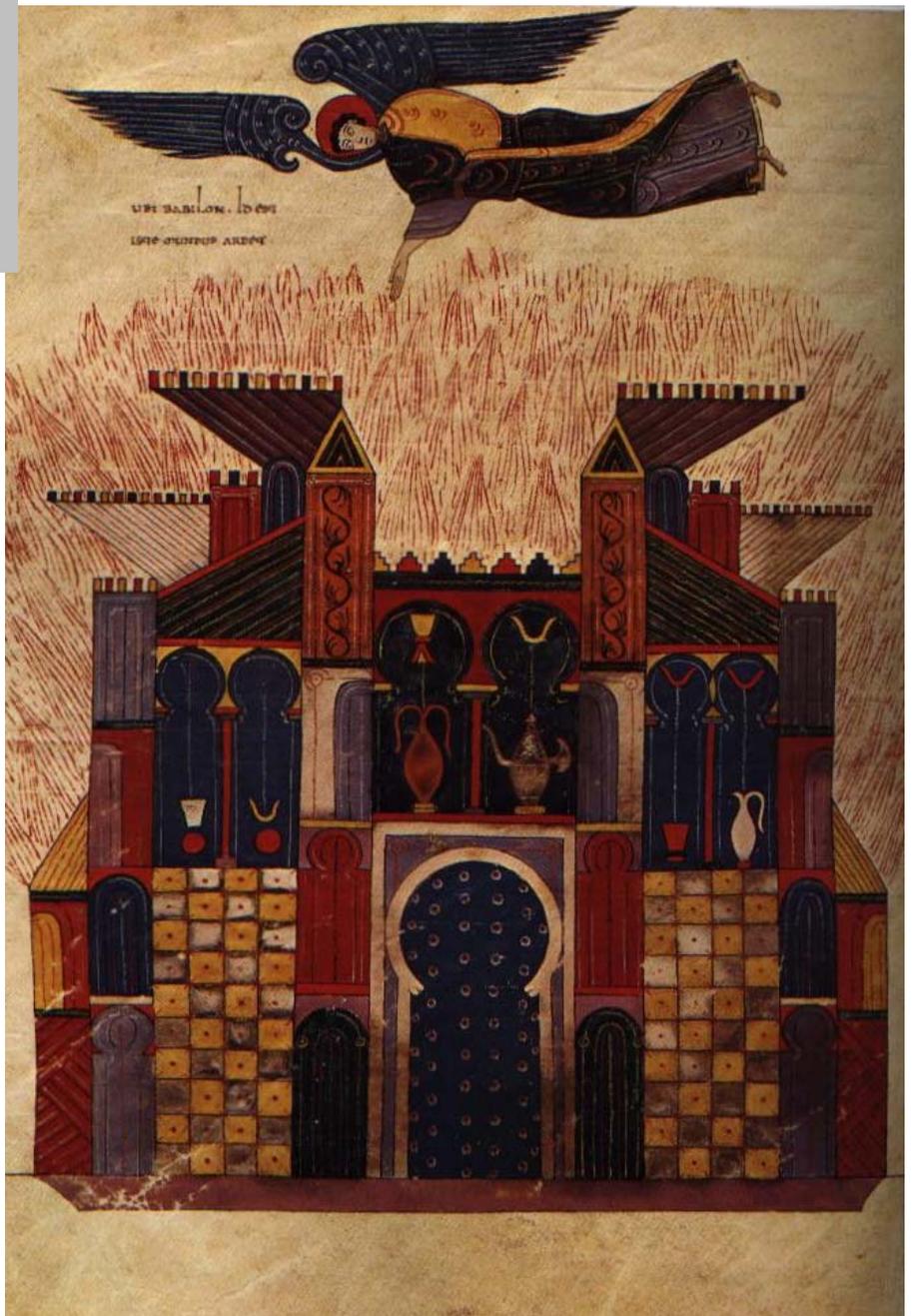
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*Cover: Destruction of Babylon,
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Stephanie Block-editor, Carol Suhr-copy editor
Correspondence to *The Pequeños Pepper* may be addressed to:
325 Ellen St. NW
Los Lunas, NM 87031
or phone: 505 866 0977 or www.lospequeños.org
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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.

Summertime...And the Reading Is Easy

By Stephanie Block

I'm sitting on the porch, iced tea in hand, lulled by soft insect humming coming from somewhere among the roses. There's an intriguing stack of books at my elbow. What could be more delightful?

Rev. Thomas M. Kocik, *The Reform of the Reform? A Liturgical Debate: Reform or Return* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003), 273 pp.

Not everyone agrees that there's a liturgical problem in the Catholic Church. For those, however, concerned over the serious decline in Mass attendance in the past 40 years, over the loss of belief in basic Catholic dogmas – like the Real Presence – and the existence of some extraordinarily bizarre Church services around the country, the question isn't whether or not there's a problem. That seems almost too obvious for debate. For them, the question is how to fix the problem.

Some respond that nothing short of a return to the Tridentine Latin Mass will suffice.

Others argue that Vatican II presented legitimate liturgical concerns that were largely ignored in the euphoria of change that succeeded the Council. Therefore, what the Church now needs is a “reform of the reform,” a sober reconsideration of Vatican II's liturgical documents, which never suggested, let alone mandated, the rejection of liturgical tradition.

Fr. Thomas Kocik's book looks at both positions. For those who enjoy a rich, detailed examination of this emotional topic, there's a delicious, intelligent debate between the two camps, represented by a fictitious back-to-the-Tridentine “traditionalist” and a fictitious back-to-the-future “reformist.” They minutely examine the missals of 1962 and 1970, slash away at one another's rhetorical excesses, look at the fascinating history of the Mass, and introduce the reader to the salient arguments of various liturgical authorities.

An interesting question is raised. “Would [a hypothetical time traveler from 1862] be able to recognize and feel at home with the contemporary rite of the Mass?” asks the traditionalist, anticipating the answer to be “no.”

“I believe he *would*,” responds the reformist, “provided that the celebration were performed exactly as proscribed in the Roman Missal....take away the abuses and employ all the traditional options and our hypothetical time traveler would feel at home with the reformed liturgy.” (p. 77, 80)

Well, there's the rub. Where, oh where, is one to find a celebration today as proscribed in the Roman Missal, employing all the traditional options? Rare is the bishop who would permit such a thing. All aspects of traditional practice, though perfectly licit under the current Roman Missal, are in fact locally suppressed – use of Latin, singing of Gregorian chants, wearing the cassock, facing *ad orientem*, to name a few.

Kocik has no facile solutions. Nothing less than both obedience to *Ecclesia Dei*'s call for “wide and generous application of the directives” for use of the 1962 Missal (p. 89) and the simultaneous compliance with Vatican II's liturgical reforms can begin to address the manifold concerns of both parties. “When I asked Father James McLucas (editor of *The Latin Mass Magazine*) his opinion of the ‘reform of the reform’,” Kocik writes, “he replied that the old and new rites should exist side by side, thereby providing traditional Catholics with a sure refuge in the old liturgy while reformists work on the new.” (p. 103) That just about sums it up for the author.



Now, for those who don't have a clue and think current liturgical practice is just grand, who can't understand why the Vatican keeps issuing *mandati* on the liturgy (which the bishops are ignoring anyway) to correct abuses ("What abuses?"), and who have decided that anyone concerned about Vatican directives concerning such matters is a right-wing crackpot, you will probably find this a tedious book.

Fred Martinez, *The Hidden Axis of Evil: The Clintons, Sex Abuse, and the Aborting of America* (First Books, 2004), 135 pp.

Fred Martinez is a New Mexican transplanted to California, where he produced and hosted the Catholic television program *Latino Love*. He is a veteran pro-life activist, the religion editor for the *Conservative Monitor*, and a writer for the *San Francisco Faith*.

Don't judge the book by its cover. *The Hidden Axis of Evil* sounds, from its subtitle, like yet another conspiracy theory blaming the Clintons for everything from increased sunspot activity to soured milk. Bad title.

But it's actually a neat little pro-life book. Martinez' opening thesis is that approximately 40% of the US population is experiencing some form or other of post-abortion syndrome. This is evidenced in certain genres of horror flick, the sick game of "baby soccer" (played with a baby doll) popular on some college campuses, and the rise of particularly violent crimes by women. We're a guilt-ridden society.

Martinez goes on to describe the societal problems pro-life advocates face. Each is daunting. A fraudulent "culture" of psychoanalysis that spawns more problems than it relieves, an educational system hell-bent on striping students of any confidence in objective truth, a media that is deeply biased against Catholicism, and millions of Catholics (including some among the Church hierarchy) who have been robbed of the Faith are among the challenges facing pro-lifers. Particularly nasty is the description of "cognitive redefinition," in which massive public peer pressure is generated to accept new concepts (the current blitz about homosexual issues in the *Albuquerque Journal* comes to mind). Woven between the naming of these obvious problems, Martinez the reporter provides one chilling anecdote after another to prove the point. We live in a rapidly declining country.

Hidden Axis of Evil doesn't offer any easy solutions. Suing abortionists, educating women to the health risks of abortion, keeping up uncompromising political pressure, limiting abortion access, home "visitations" to evangelize the pro-life message are among strategies Martinez encourages, but they boil down to the individual decision for life. "[O]ur society doesn't have this choice. Only each individual can make this choice. Our society needs you to be one of the millions of heroes who will bring us back to responsibility, truth, love, and God." (p. 115)

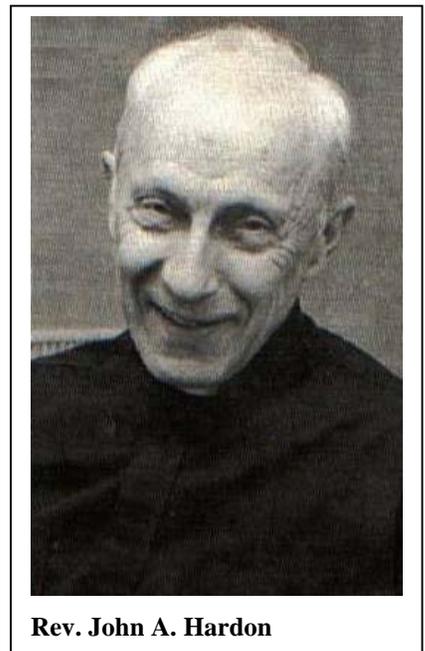
Rev. John A. Hardon, S.J., *Catechism on Homosexuality, Eternal Life* (Bardstown: Eternal Life, 2003), 56 pp.

TFP Committee on American Issues, *Defending a Higher Law: Why We Must Resist Same-Sex "Marriage" and the Homosexual Movement*, (Spring Grove: The American Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property, 2004), 211 pp.

With Catholics incredulous that Cardinal George would deny communion to members of the aggressively pro-homosexual Rainbow Sash Movement, the time is over-ripe for some solid catechesis on the issue.

Enter Fr. John Hardon's excellent little volume, *Catechism on Homosexuality*. Seventy-two questions on the subject are given frank, reliable responses. Here's number 50: What are some of the causes for confusion about the sinfulness of homosexuality?

The simple answer is: "Among the reasons for this confusion is an unjustified



Rev. John A. Hardon

explanation of Sacred Scripture, which claims that the Bible has nothing to say on the subject of homosexuality. Another reason is the claim that the Church somehow tacitly approves homosexuality. Still another reason is that moral prohibitions are so culture-bound that they are no longer applicable to contemporary life. All of these views are gravely erroneous and demand special attention.”

For a more in-depth study, there's TFP's *Defending a Higher Law*. This little volume first gives an historical account of the homosexual movement, including some of its "tactics" to gain wider acceptance. It then refutes the movement's primary arguments, providing the detailed facts one needs in any discussion of the subject. What does the Bible say about homosexuality? Chapters 15 and 16 refute revisionist scholars who try to persuade Christians that the fall of Sodom concerned its inhospitableness. Does the Church tacitly approve homosexuality? Chapters 18-21 clarify the matter beyond a shadow of doubt. Does the natural law still apply in the 21st century? Read chapter 11 for an eye opener.

And when you've finished reading the book, sit down and write Cardinal George a letter of appreciation. *God bless him!* ✱

Stop the Sacrilege
A National Campaign ©

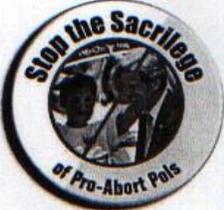
U can't B both Catholic and pro-choice

It's as simple as that. And yet many Catholic legislators and elected officials are claiming to be Christian Catholics and voting to continue the killing of innocent unborn human life. When these politicians show up at Sunday Mass and receive Holy Communion, many people are mystified, some are angry, and some feel, "Hey, it's O. K."

Well, it's not O. K. and it does a lot of harm. For 31 years we have been trying to get the pro-life message out. Abortion kills a baby and harms a mother. Women deserve better; babies deserve life. Now we have a presidential candidate, a Catholic, who tries to skirt the issue hiding behind those tattered, specious arguments: "I'm personally opposed but..." "America believes in separation of Church and state..." and "The Church can't tell a legislator what to do..."

Murder is murder. The fifth commandment says, "Thou shall not murder." If you are personally opposed to murder, you can't be politically for it. Not opposing the murder of the innocent has nothing to do with the separation of Church and state; it has to do with the separation of the soul from God, and it's God, specifically who is telling all of us we can't condone or comit murder.

Some of our bishops and Cardinals have let us down; others are standing up boldly to teach and to lead. It is time for Catholics to button down to business and go public with the truth. We need to start the conversation in our social gatherings and in the marketplace and we have the way to do just that! Incidentally, this isn't just a "Catholic" issue. Any Christian or Jewish person who honors their faith can't be either Christian or Jewish and remain pro-choice. We are wonderfully and fearfully made, in His image. You can join the campaign by buying and wearing one of our *Stop the Sacrilege* buttons.





BUY A STOP THE SACRILEGE BUTTON AND WEAR IT...Everywhere!

Better yet: BUY A BUTTON FOR CARDINAL McCARRICK...and mail it to him!

Better still: BUY A BUTTON FOR THE CARDINAL, BISHOP GREGORY, (president of the USCCB), YOUR BISHOP, YOUR PRIEST, and ANYBODY ELSE YOU CAN THINK OF! (Info pages to enclose in your letters to friends or officials may be downloaded from internet site).

Prices: Altar boy in Ashes or The Kerry Women (1 ¾" - all prices include s/h)

Single button -	\$3.50/each
3 or more -	3.00/each
11 or more -	2.00/each

Upon receipt of personal check, buttons will be mailed to you at specified address. Number of buttons to purchase subject to availability and limits. Make checks payable to The Catholic Advocate, 9378 Arlington Expw PMB 346, Jacksonville, FL 32225. May purchase on line through Pay Pal at www.missionsun.net/hope.htm

Please copy and send this page to friends and publicize thorough your email address lists. Thank you.

DELILAH DILEMMA

Women and Priesthood, Part I

By Marie P. Loehr © 2004

*Have I been so long a time with you, and you have not known me?
Philip, he who sees me sees also the Father.*

--John 14:9

Why do religious feminists continue to agitate for the ordination of women? Why does the Church remain adamant that there are no such things as women "priests"?

Religious feminists base their attacks against Tradition and the Magisterium on a false understanding of God and man. They point to the Mass, priesthood, Eucharist as purely spiritual entities with no reference to incarnate being. They misunderstand the essence of the priesthood entirely. Their confusion reveals an attitude common to modern man: the fallacy that there is only an accidental, peripheral relationship between spirit and flesh.

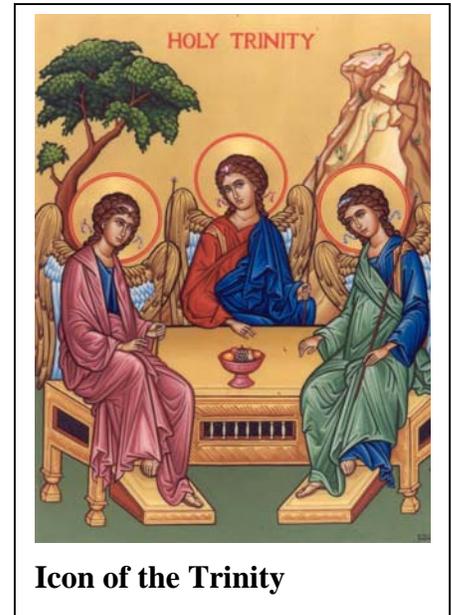
This is an aspect of ancient gnosis in New Age pursuit of unfettered spirit. This gnosis, direct knowledge of spirit without bodily, human or ecclesiastical intermediaries, goes back to Lucifer himself, the Original Gnostic. Lucifer seeks the divorce of spirit from flesh, out of envy for God's gift to incarnate being: participation in His creation of new life. Adam and Eve take his bait, and eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. God has told them if they eat of this fruit, they will die. Lucifer tells them they will be "as gods," *i.e.*, angels, whose knowledge of reality is through direct apprehension or empathic intuition--unmediated by senses, deductive reason, or any constraints of incarnate human being. Lucifer implies that Adam and Eve will shed the constraints of **body**, and thus know reality as angels and God do.

Original Sin does indeed separate soul from body. But for incarnate humans, this separation means--as God stated in fact--death. Death casts a long shadow, and sin causes division between man and God, man and Creation, man and woman, man and his own integrity of being. This subtle separation or division, between body and the spirit that in-forms it, darkens the mind and weakens the will. This separation can only end in death, the very visible separation of soul from body, and the body's collapse into decay and the amorphous dust from whence it came. Humans are not meant to live as pure spirits. Neither are priesthood or Eucharist or Mass--the purpose and primary function of Orders -- purely spiritual. They are implicitly and explicitly centered on **BODY**, a whole Person, the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, Son of the Father in the Trinity, son of Mary in humanity. Holy Orders and the Mass are constrained by the exigencies of incarnation and Incarnation.

It is true that there are many areas in the workaday world where men and women do share similar abilities and capabilities. Certainly men and women both share the universal psychophysical properties of human flesh and its potential. They both participate in the universal life of the spirit with all its mystical, intellectual, creative capacity for growth and expression.

Nevertheless, in certain basic forms and functions, they differ. Moreover, their differentiation springs, not from the accidents of biology unrelated to spirit, but from the very will of God who IS spirit. Human differences spring from the nature of God Himself in relation to Himself and to us.

The Trinity itself is "distinction in persons, oneness in being, equality in majesty," as the Tridentine Preface to the Mass declares so exactly. This



Icon of the Trinity

distinction, oneness, and equality are revealed in Adam, the human being, as well. "God created man in his image. In the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them." (Gen. 1:27)

Not only intellect and will reveal our image and likeness to God. Our very sexuality and its capacity to participate in God's creation of new life reveal God to us, in His Unity and in His Trinity. We are icons of that Union and Trinity. Christ calls all of us to live this Trinitarian life. We are called to live God's own outpouring of self to fructify Creation. We are called to know, love, and serve God through one another. He calls all of us to the constant continuous consecration of *every atom* and *every instant* of our personal, private AND public being. We are to "restore all things in Christ." We are to renew and re-generate all things in Him. We are to live His "this is my body, given up for you" on both a mystical and material level of reality.

This living consecration in our own flesh, in our daily life, is our real, active, effective participation in the priesthood of Christ. We share **that** priesthood through Baptism and Eucharist. Thus we already possess in ourselves the fullness of our eschatological priesthood whether we are conscious of it, or exercise its power.

The fullness of priesthood is not temporal Orders or ordination or liturgical and sacramental ministry in its formal, official works. The fullness of priesthood is to live Christ, to BE Christ, to decrease so that He may increase, to identify our individual lives in practice and action with His--on earth as in heaven--so totally that HIS consecration of all Creation in Himself works through us, in season and out of season.



This subtle separation or division, between body and the spirit that in-forms it, darkens the mind and weakens the will. This separation can only end in death...

The core of all our activity as clergy, religious OR laity, must be the core of the Mass: "This is My Body, given up for you." This should also be our daily prayer and offering. The quickening of our body-spirit mesh through Eucharistic union with Christ germinates and proliferates into all the ministries we are ALL called to live twenty-four hours a day (even sleep, even dreams submitted to that consecration and offering). No one can limit us in the exercise of that baptismal priesthood and ministry, just as no one can imagine its infinite fruition in Christ.

Women are not barred from priesthood in the Baptismal sense of our common priesthood in Christ. BUT, they cannot be ordained to *temporally* consecrating, consecrated priesthood in its liturgical expression. Their proper sanctuary must be every area where they live and work. The narrow confines of the church sanctuary will always be off-limits to women in the Catholic Church not through any inequality or unworthiness or inferiority in woman as woman. ✠

Part II, which will appear in the August Pepper, discusses why the liturgical priesthood is masculine in essence and function.



ALL THINGS LITURGICAL...

TO KNEEL OR NOT TO KNEEL

By Hippolytus*

When should we kneel at Mass? This is essentially the question facing any devout Catholic in the United States. Such, of course is not the situation facing European Catholics whose bishops have better things to do than enact norms contrary to the centuries old tradition of the Roman Rite.

Sacred Scripture adds to the dilemma. Matthew's Gospel particularly loves the word *proskuneo*, which means to "fall upon the knees as an expression of profound reverence." We find it used no less than eight times in Matthew's Gospel alone (Mt. 2:11, 8:12, 9:18, 14:33, 15:25, 18:26, 28:9, 28:17). Every instance has one or more persons encountering Christ and "worshiping" Him by falling down on their knees. The other Gospels use this word in the same context as well (Mk. 5:6, 16:19, Lk. 24:52, Jn. 9:38).

Recently, there have been many complaints sent to Rome about priests in this country who refuse to administer Holy Communion to the faithful who wish to kneel when they receive Communion. Rome has responded, in no uncertain terms, that Holy Communion is not to be denied to such. The *GIRM 2003* states, "Communicants should not be denied Holy Communion because they kneel" (#160). In Rome's recent document on liturgical abuse, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, this very same problem is addressed yet again. "In distributing Holy Communion it is to be remembered that sacred ministers may not deny the sacraments to those who seek them in a reasonable manner, are rightly disposed, and are not prohibited by law from receiving them. <res://F:\Program Files\America Online 9.0b/resource.dll/My Documents%221..> Therefore, it is not licit to deny Holy Communion to any of Christ's faithful solely on the grounds, for example, that the person wishes to receive the Eucharist kneeling or standing (#91)."

What is a devout Catholic to do? This is the question. On one hand the bishops in the US have been given permission to establish that the norm for receiving Holy Communion is standing. On the other hand, it is Almighty God that one is receiving.

On one hand, the US bishops have stated that standing is a *norm*, not a law. On the other hand, the universal *norm* for receiving communion is on the tongue, and most in this country do not follow that *norm*! Dioceses in this country have received an "indult," (special permission) to receive on the hand. Yet, no one seems to get upset that most do not follow the universal *norm*.

The kneeling issue, however, is being treated differently. Though in the US, standing is *now* the *norm*, Rome has stated that kneeling is still an option that should be honored. But priests are acting contrary to Canon Law by refusing Holy Communion to those who wish to kneel. Canon #912 states, "Any baptized person who is not forbidden by law may and must be admitted to Holy Communion." Obviously, if Rome thought kneeling contrary to Canon Law, she would have never reprimanded this scandalous action of refusing communion to those for whom God's Word is just that, the Word of God.

"To kneel or not to kneel" that indeed is the question. Whether to be obedient to the desire of US bishops or to obey the dictates of common liturgical sense. If we really believed that it was God whom we were receiving in Holy Communion, falling prostrate on the floor would be the logical thing to do. Baring that, kneeling better expresses Catholic belief in the Real Presence. If any one is "called" to kneel, St. Peter said it best, "We must obey God rather than men." ✠

* *Hippolytus was a Roman martyr of the early 3rd century. He was an extraordinarily learned man and reputed to have been torn apart by horses for refusing to renounce the faith.*

A Mind in the Gutter

And other accusations from the Pius defense team

By Stephanie Block

“The cafeteria metaphor [in the term ‘Cafeteria Catholic’] refers to picking and choosing which Catholic teachings will govern the values individual Catholics and even individual Church leaders choose to live by. In my twelve years here [at Pius X High School], human sexuality has been THE focus of the controversy, seemingly the only Catholic value of concern. Other topics, like the failure to be good stewards of the planet, disregard for the poor and marginalized, nuclear war, and the like have been completely ignored by our critics.”

So writes Dr. Mary McLeod, the outgoing principal of Pius X High School, in the June 2004 issue of *Parent Link*, a newsletter of the school.

She doesn’t get it. The *Pepper Special* on Pius that came out last winter (available at www.lospequenos.org), exploring some of the problems to be found at the high school, had very little to do with sex, *per se*. The opening section of the dossier, concerning the forthcoming McDermott lawsuit against the school, describes serious – possibly life threatening – counseling malpractice that not only went uncorrected but was supported by the school’s administration. The fact that this was caused by a deliberate and persistent misrepresentation of Church teaching about homosexuality is not a *sexual* issue but a faith issue, typical of the very cafeteria Catholicism McLeod decries. It’s also a legal issue, by the way.

The dossier section on theology deals almost exclusively with social justice issues, and the failure of particular teachers to present the Church’s position. As the dossier demonstrates, not only was a politicized substitute for Catholicism offered to students, but that substitution involved undermining doctrine in a *number* of areas, such as the authority of the Church, the authenticity of the supernatural, and the divinity of Jesus. Rather than teaching students to “be good stewards of the planet,” they were encouraged to read, for example, the ridiculous thought of Thomas Berry, who has created a new, supposedly more environmentally sensitive, creation story. The objection parents raised was not that students were encouraged to be environmentally conscious, but that environmental consciousness was achieved at the expense of the truth.

The closing section of the dossier concerned the administration’s treatment of parents who brought forward complaints. Parents felt (and had objective evidence) that the administration was inaccessible and unresponsive – sometimes dismissive of concerns and sometimes hostile.

These three sections account for over half the dossier.

But what of parent complaints that their children were being shown overly sexualized materials or sexual materials with an “agenda” that contradicted Church teaching? Are these complaints about “sex” or are they about authority? Who decides what children are to be taught – Mother Church and the parents who agree with Her, or professional educators who think they know better than the parents? Ironically, the same people who excoriate the Church for its lack of democratic input from *them* are viciously autocratic about their own positions. The primary point isn’t sex – or social justice – but truth.

Cafeteria Catholics are the people who pick and choose some Church teachings to support and some to reject. If the shoe fits, maybe it’s yours. ✱



St. Pius X High School

Around the Archdiocese

Fr. Jim Wolff, pastoral assistant of Santa Maria de La Paz in Santa Fe, gave an interview to *The New Mexican* [June 6, 2004], in honor of his 50th year as a priest.

In the 70s, Fr. Wolff reveals, he studied Jungian psychology and “found” that it “helped shed light on the scriptures.” In addition to establishing a private psychotherapy practice in Santa Fe, he founded the Pastoral Counseling Center of Northern New Mexico – both presumably employing Jungian ideas.

The article makes a point of Fr. Wolff’s “progressive” positions, specifically his support for “ordained” women, “gay” and married clergy, and “freedom of conscience” when it comes to abortion.

Just in case anyone is planning a round of Jungian therapy, *The Hidden Axis of Evil* (see *Pepper*, p. 5) has a fascinating section about Jung: “Jung’s autobiography is full of insane or occult experiences. He was continually hearing voices. In his autobiography he said his home ‘was crammed full of spirits. They were packed right up deep to the door, and the air was so thick it was scarcely possible to breathe.’ (*Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, pages 215-216, Fontana, London, 1993.)”

Redemptionis Sacramentum on hold: The Vatican’s closing words on the recent document *Redemptionis Sacramentum* are very clear: “This Instruction, prepared by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments **by mandate of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II** in collaboration with the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, **was approved by the same Pontiff on the Solemnity of St. Joseph, 19 March 2004, and he ordered it to be published and to be observed immediately by all concerned.**” [emphasis added]

Nevertheless, **Archbishop Michael Sheehan** has issued a letter to all pastors and parish life coordinators (May 21, 2004) saying that until the US bishops have had an opportunity to discuss the new norms and to consult liturgical experts, the instruction will not be implemented in the Archdiocese.

CTA at Santa Maria de la Paz: The Archdiocesan newspaper, *People of God*, carried an article in its June-July 2004 issue announcing **Bishop Thomas Gumbleton’s** planned visit to New Mexico in August. Call to Action’s **Pax Christi** will be hosting a potluck dinner and talk by Gumbleton at Santa Maria de la Paz. The following day, Pax Christi will hold a prayer demonstration at Los Alamos.

Bishop Gumbleton is one of the last (if not *the* last) bishops retaining open affiliation with the dissident organization Call to Action, which advocates for abortion, contraception, homosexuality, socialism and radical pacifism (unless you’re a Sandinista).

Alternative spirituality: For those bored with Catholic spirituality, Mary Ann Kundtz, MS, is a Centering Prayer facilitator, an Oblate of St. Benedict, and a leader in Christian, **Hindu, and Buddhist meditation** “traditions.” Mid July, you can catch Mary Ann at the Santa Fe Spirituality Institute. Or you can study **Tai-Chi** in Albuquerque at the Spiritual Renewal Center. This information is brought to you compliments of the *People of God*, June-July 2004 issue.



A Bench of Bishops

Maybe he was misquoted: The University of New Mexico’s *Daily Lobo* (3-29-04) reported on a panel called, “Religion, Civil Liberties and the Politics of Gay Marriage” that included **Fr. Robert Keller** from the Aquinas Newman Center.

If student reporter Libby Kelly got the story straight, Fr. Keller’s church is a schizophrenic place. “Keller said in the realm of Roman Catholicism, gay marriage would be a moot point, just as divorce is. He said the church isn’t innately against homosexuality, though.”

So far, so good. Then he was asked if there aren’t gay Catholics. Father answered: “Yes. Are there gay Catholics in good standing with the church? Yes, of course. So I think the church would be willing to support civil unions.”

Huh?

The Pope made it clear that removal of nutrition and hydration from patients in a vegetative state who are not otherwise dying is “gravely immoral”. In Catholic language that means it is unambiguously forbidden.

US Catholic Leaders Ignore Explicit Papal Directive on Nutrition and Hydration

Will “Study” Life and Death Issue for a Year

TAMPA BAY, May 3, 2004 (LifeSiteNews.com) - Last month Pope John Paul II stated unequivocally that a person who is ill always has the right to food and water, even if it must be administered to him through a feeding tube. The Pope made it clear that removal of nutrition and hydration from patients in a vegetative state who are not otherwise dying is “gravely immoral”. In Catholic language that means it is unambiguously forbidden.

The reaction of some prominent Catholic ethicists has been a reflection of the divide in medical ethics between the teaching of the Church and modern bioethics. Father John Paris, bioethics professor at Boston College, in an incredibly blunt statement of defiance, said the pope’s remarks will have little impact. “I think the best thing to do is ignore it, and it will go away,” Paris said. “It’s not an authoritative teaching statement.”

Father John Strynkowski, executive director of the secretariat for doctrine and pastoral practices of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, said that the USCCB office will “study” the pope’s statement, but until they have finished, no changes in practice will likely be made in Catholic hospitals. His comments would seem to indicate that if the Pope’s instruction were to be taken at face value, changes to policy would need to be made. “What’s involved is a process of study and reflection, looking at the pope’s statement in the light of previous statements,” Strynkowski said. “Theologians will have to study that whole chain of documents.” The process, he said, may take as much as a year.

The refusal to obey clear instructions from high authority in the Catholic hierarchy on key issues is not new to the Church in North America. Strynkowski’s comments follow closely on the heels of the latest denial of official Vatican directives by Theodore Cardinal McCarrick. In response to high level directives on refusing pro-abortion politicians communion, McCarrick gave an almost identical comment to Fr. Paris’ in an interview, “I don’t think it was his eminence’s (Arinze’s) official opinion... this was not something that he reported as an official or even a personal statement.” ✱

Ecumenical Group Denies Phoenix Bishop his Teaching Authority

Catholic teaching about homosexuality causes protest

Last year, nine priests in the Diocese of Phoenix signed the "Phoenix Declaration" that stated: "Homosexuality is not a sickness, not a choice, and not a sin."

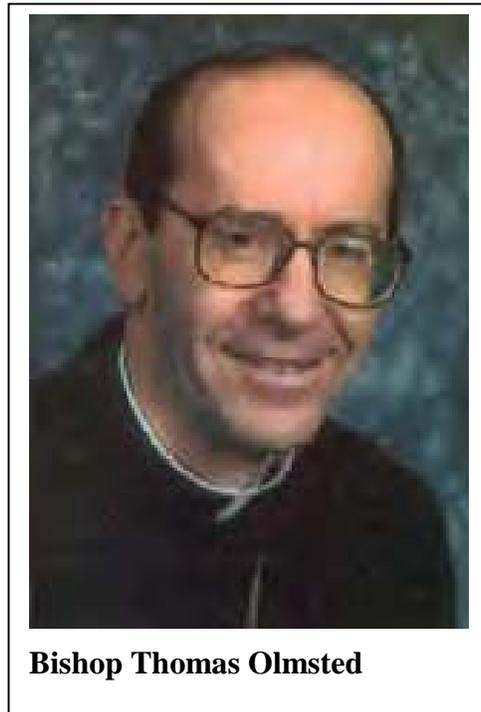
Bishop Thomas Olmsted, the diocese's new bishop, has insisted that the priests remove their names from the declaration, under penalty of suspension if they refuse. He writes in an open letter to the priests that, "there is a not so subtle implication (in the declaration) that authentic Church teaching fosters intolerance and even violence towards homosexual persons, thus undermining the credibility of the Church in her teaching and her pastoral ministry."

Rev. Andre Boulanger has refused to recant and is presently suspended from all ministerial duties. An ecumenical, pro-homosexual group, "No Longer Silent: Clergy for Justice," has come to his defense. In its "Phoenix Declaration," the group writes: "Political and religious rhetoric has monopolized the public perception of the stance of Christian persons on this issue. This stance continues to cripple the spirit of innocent people." The Declaration calls on supporters, "to work for and promote the dignity of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons and their inclusion in our socio-political, cultural and economic life."

One member of the Clergy for Justice group, Rev. Proctor-Murphy, claims that the half-dozen or so Bible verses condemning homosexuality are "outdated and archaic," noting that, "at one time, the Bible was used to justify slavery and the subjugation of women."

"The Catholic Church is correct in advocating monogamy, Proctor-Murphy said, but "The Church has failed to give homosexuals an option in expressing their sexuality monogamously." He defends the group's support for Rev. Boulanger by saying: "Silence in the face of evil is complicity with evil, and the silence here is deafening."

Olmsted has asked his priests "to look for appropriate ways to offer support to homosexual persons," but adds that it must be "a support...prompted by both love and truth." Priests are to "accept them (homosexuals) as brothers and sisters in Christ," but can "not condone homosexual activity or fail to teach clearly that it, along with all sexual activity outside of marriage, is seriously wrong." ❄



Bishop Thomas Olmsted

One “Little” Parish Priest

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“I was amazed to think that here I was, one little priest with a country parish in the middle of rural Louisiana, and we were able to turn around this vote. Think if we had more people in the Church being proactive on life issues.”

A meeting in Louisiana between a Catholic state senator and a parish priest resulted in the lawmaker changing his position in time to cast a crucial vote against “therapeutic” cloning, the creation of cloned human beings to be used and destroyed in medical research. The lawmakers’ openness to guidance stands in stark contrast to a number of prominent Catholic politicians who advocate policies on human cloning, abortion and stem-cell research that deviate from the Church’s fundamental teaching on the duty to protect innocent human life, and yet still claim to be in full communion with the Church.

On May 17, the Louisiana Senate considered a bill that would have banned some types of cloning, but not therapeutic cloning. When an amendment to the bill was offered that would have also banned therapeutic cloning, Craig Romero, a Republican representing the 22nd state senatorial district, voted against it.

Father Bryce Sibley, who is pastor of St. Joseph Parish, a church located in Romero’s district, learned of Romero’s vote and took immediate action. He harnessed the political power of the Catholic laity, admonishing parishioners from the pulpit to inform Romero that they did not agree with his vote.

His parishioners took up the challenge, and after Romero’s office had received numerous calls of complaint, Romero decided to contact Father Sibley to discuss the matter. Father Sibley told Culture & Cosmos that Romero “was confused on what therapeutic cloning really did. He told me that a bunch of doctors were brought in who said allowing such cloning would save children’s lives and that he only wanted to help sick children.” Father Sibley said he explained to Romero that such research, even if it were successful, would amount to killing one life to save another. “The senator said ‘No one explained it to me. Now I understand.’” The meeting ended with Romero’s assurance that when the senate took up the question again he would oppose all forms of human cloning.

On May 25, when the senate considered another bill that banned all types of cloning, Romero voted for it. More importantly, when an amendment was offered that would have allowed for therapeutic cloning Romero, true to his word, voted against it. The amendment failed by a margin of only two votes, making Romero’s opposition essential. The legislation now awaits the signature of Gov. Kathleen Blanco, a Democrat who is also a Catholic, who has sent mixed signals regarding her position on the topic.

Father Sibley said his actions were a function of the teaching office entrusted to him by virtue of his ordination and his office as pastor. Addressing concerns about mixing Church and state, Father Sibley said, “Even though a priest is not to get directly involved in politics he has to be able to inform his people. We don’t oppose therapeutic cloning primarily because the Church says so. It’s natural law. I can explain it to anyone regardless of whether or not they believe in the Catholic Church.”

The most important lesson Father Sibley said he gained from the episode was how easily it was to advance the culture of life “I was amazed to think that here I was, one little priest with a country parish in the middle of rural Louisiana, and we were able to turn around this vote. Think if we had more people in the Church being proactive on life issues.” ✕

July Calendar

Friday, July 10, 2004:

LPC monthly meeting and retreat.
Call (505) 293-8006 for information.
All members welcome.

Pro-life Prayer Each Tuesday:

8:30 am – 9:30 a.m.
Join Fr. Pio O'Conner for prayer
Planned Parenthood Abortuary
701 San Mateo Blvd.

For other times, call (505) 286-1655

*A recent editorial in the Albuquerque Journal - West
complained that LPC was a bunch of "rich Catholics."
From their lips to God's ears!*

*Meanwhile, please consider a gift subscription of The
Pepper for your children, friends and relatives - still
only \$10 annually.*

Please consider more.

The Future of Catholic Education

Word of a letter dated May 4, 2004 from Saint Mary's Press (SMP), publisher of Catholic high school religion textbooks, has been making the rounds. In it, SMP explains that they have decided to suspend development of further textbooks in light of positions recently taken by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' (USCCB) Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism. The Committee has been trying to get some *substance* back into Catholic high school religion textbooks.

SMP complains that its "high school textbooks hold the Church's official canonical approbation" (the *imprimatur* and *nihil obstat*) but the USCCB Committee has additional standards, to which Saint Mary's Press is being required to conform. Doesn't that just bite!

SMP then says that its publications are designed to "inspire not indoctrinate, include, not separate, and affirm not condemn," and this is not good enough for the Committee. For example, the Committee objects to phraseology such as "the Church believes," "the Church teaches," etc., because the Committee feels that this language "weakens the objective force of the statement of the doctrine."

Saint Mary's Press textbooks are designed to speak, the letter argues, not only to those who are already firm believers, but also to those who are searching, or who are non-believers. These textbooks are unacceptable to the Committee, however, because the Committee feels (according to SMP) that "textbooks should be written with a presumption of belief among students, that the Catholic high school religion classroom is a place where 'faith speaks to faith.'"

The Press claims that it has been directed to "remove questions for student reflection, especially those questions that invite students to consider their lived experience in the light of faith, and questions that invite students to offer their personal opinion on some matter." They have also allegedly been directed to "remove references to typical teenage experiences out of a concern that such references could imply that experiences of this nature are condoned by the Church."

Hey, a Catholic textbook without a secular agenda!
What a cool idea! ✕