

Los Pequeños Pepper

Newsletter of Los Pequeños de Cristo
June 2010 Volume 12, Number 6

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Newsletter of Los Pequeños de Cristo
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The Pequeños Pepper is published monthly

We are an Archdiocesan-wide Catholic lay organization committed to a charitable defense of the Catholic Faith by means of education, communication, and prayer. We are devoted to the Roman Catholic Magisterium, the Holy Father, and to the bishops and clergy in union with him. Our members believe what the Church believes and we promote what the Church teaches. To this end, we believe that no individual, whether cleric or lay person, has the right to alter the substance of the gospel message or moral truths which have been inerrantly and infallibly held by the Catholic Church since Her founding.

This spring, El Paso proposed extending same sex partner benefits to city employees. To address this situation, Fr. Michael Rodriguez, a priest of the Diocese of El Paso, wrote an opinion piece in the El Paso Times:

Church Opposes Redefinition of Morality

By Rev. Michael Rodriguez
Published March 21, 2010

It behooves me to emphasize the following truths to all the Catholic faithful of our diocese: Every single Catholic has the absolute duty to oppose the murder of unborn babies; every single Catholic has the absolute duty to oppose any government attempt to legalize homosexual unions.

The Holy Catholic Church has the power, given to her by Jesus Christ himself, to teach infallibly in the areas of faith and morals. Basing herself on sacred tradition and sacred Scripture, and in virtue of what is called her universal, ordinary Magisterium, the Church teaches infallibly that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered, a grave depravity, and mortally sinful.

This is an absolute truth — revealed by God — which all Catholics must accept and believe, period. If you don't accept this Church teaching, then you are, by definition, no longer in communion with the Catholic Church.

Rome has already spoken on this matter. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith stated, "all Catholics are obliged to oppose the legal recognition of homosexual unions," and "the Church teaches that respect for homosexual persons cannot lead in any way to approval of homosexual behavior or to the legal recognition of homosexual unions."

I know firsthand that this is not a popular teaching. Believe me, as a pastor of souls, I'm in the "trenches" on a daily basis. I too, have people who are dear to me, with strong homosexual inclinations.

Nevertheless, we must always strive to love God and to trust in him: We must be obedient to his commandments whatever the cost. This is what it means to be a true Catholic.

If God establishes a commandment, it's because he loves us and wants us to get to heaven. The Catholic Church seeks, first and foremost, the salvation of our souls — we must trust in her teachings above all else, and live by them.

If you are homosexual and are valiantly struggling to be true to our Savior Jesus Christ and his Church, take courage! Keep up the fight against the devil, the world, and the flesh, and entrust yourself to the maternal protection of the Mother of God! Know that you are in my prayers.

The action taken by City Council is gravely harmful to the common good of our city and contrary to a proper understanding of justice. As Roman Catholics, we are obligated to undo the wrong that they have committed.

This is certainly a "religious issue" because people are trying to redefine marriage and morality.

The trite and superficial arguments which are being set forth in support of homosexual activity are seriously flawed. Not one person has addressed the moral issue of right vs. wrong, which forms the necessary rational foundation for notions like "justice" and "compassion."

For example, this foundation is the reason that we oppose pedophilia. It's not that the perpetrator is not "equal," nor do we consider this "discrimination," because our "rational" sense of right and wrong "trumps" everything else.

Moreover, homosexual supporters are ignoring the necessary distinction between the person and his actions; and none of them have acknowledged that the preponderance of the scientific evidence is firmly against genetic causes for homosexuality.

My friends, who's forcing beliefs upon whom here?

We're not the ones using deceptive lingo, e.g., "partners in a committed relationship," to "force" a redefinition of marriage upon society. We're not the ones "forcing" taxpayers to support a skewed notion of "equality."

In closing, I welcome anyone, especially religious and political leaders, to a public debate on this issue.

Another priest from the Diocese of El Paso wrote a rebuttal that appeared on April 18, 2010. Titled "Catholic church must keep arms open to all," it begins, "For the benefit of all people of good will regardless of faith, race or orientation, I write to offer a broader pastoral, scriptural and ecclesial perspective compared to that offered by Rev. Michael Rodriguez..." To this, Father Rodriguez penned a second article (published May 2, 2010):

Catholics Must Show True Faith

By the Rev. Michael Rodriguez

My purpose in writing is to present the unadulterated teachings of the Holy Catholic Church. Why? Because only fidelity to Jesus Christ and His beloved Church will bring happiness and salvation to our poor souls.

Everything I wrote in the first part of my March 21 column is Catholic Church teaching, pure and simple. On the other hand, Rev. Roden-Lucero's criticisms are neither valid nor accurate. Let's begin.

(1) The Catholic Church does indeed teach infallibly that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered, a grave depravity, and mortally sinful. There are two manners in which the Church's Magisterium exercises the charism of infallibility: extraordinary and ordinary.

The former is exercised either by the pope alone (*ex cathedra*) or in union with all of the world's bishops gathered at a general council; the latter is defined as "when the bishops in their dioceses, in unity with the pope, unanimously promulgate the same teachings on faith and morals."

The Church's constant teaching on the evil of homosexual acts is a perfect example of the infallibility exercised by the universal ordinary Magisterium. The infallibility of this constant church teaching cannot be disputed. It is absolutely binding on all Catholics, period.

The case of Galileo and slavery are irrelevant, as the church never exercised her power of infallibility in either instance.

(2) Does the Catholic Church teach any moral absolutes? Of course! Among such absolutes are those forbidding abortion, adultery, theft, fornication, homosexual acts, contraception, and oppression of the poor. St. Thomas Aquinas, the greatest doctor of the Church, explains how and why the Ten Commandments qualify as moral absolutes.

(3) In moral theology, the supreme absolute is God's law, not the individual conscience. The Second Vatican Council teaches, "The highest norm of human life is the divine law itself— eternal, objective and universal ..." One's conscience is never the author of truth; rather, the individual's conscience must be formed according to God's commandments and the teachings of the Church.

(4) The action of City Council is not "simply to provide a benefit that the Church itself declares to be a human right." No! Society extends health-care benefits to one's spouse because the two are married. Should a city employee's siblings and friends receive such benefits? On what grounds should a "domestic partner" receive the benefits to which only a spouse is entitled?

My friends, the real issue is the existence of sinister forces in our society which are using the ruse of "health care" to promote the legalization of homosexual unions. Thus, all Catholics have the moral obligation to undo the wrong perpetrated by City Council. A city that condones the blatant violation of God's love as expressed in his holy law is clearly harming the common good.

Let us strive to love and respect one another by adhering faithfully to all that the good Lord commands. Every single one of us— whether heterosexual or homosexual— is called to holiness.

We must pray for each other. Please pray for your priests so that we may be holy men of God, devoted, chaste, and pure.

To those Catholics who remain obstinate in either their dissent of Church teaching or homosexual sins, I promise to pray for your conversion, because nothing less than your eternal salvation is at stake.

However, I cannot allow you to step all over our precious faith with impunity, and scandalize faithful Catholics. No, not on my watch. You will be denied Holy Communion. Obviously, this measure is taken out of paternal solicitude for your conversion. ☩

Fr. Michael Rodriguez is the parish priest at San Juan Bautista Catholic Church, Diocese of El Paso, Texas.

The Pill's Deadly Affair with HIV/AIDS

By Joan Claire Robinson

The world's deadliest killer, HIV/AIDS, and the Birth Control Pill have been carrying on a secret and deadly "love affair" for decades. While women swallowed their "freedom" with the morning orange juice, studies that should have made global headlines yellowed in medical journals, unknown to the general public. Only doctors learned about the pills deadly affair with HIV/AIDS, and they were too busy writing prescriptions for hormonal contraceptives to talk.

More than 50 medical studies, to date, have investigated the association of hormonal contraceptive use and HIV/AIDS infection. The studies show that hormonal contraceptives—the oral pill and Depo-Provera—increase almost all known risk factors for HIV, from upping a woman's risk of infection, to increasing the replication of the HIV virus, to speeding the debilitating and deadly progression of the disease.¹

A medical trial published in the journal AIDS in 2009—monitoring HIV progression by the need for antiretroviral drugs (ART)—saw "the risk of becoming eligible for ART was almost 70% higher in women taking the pills and more than 50% higher in women using DMPA [Depo-Provera] than in women using IUDs."²

Studies aside, it is well known that HIV/AIDS strikes more women than men. Some would argue that this is a result of the desire of men for young—and presumably uninfected, sexual partners. Few are willing to discuss a more obvious explanation, namely, that the Pill and Injectables render women particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS.

How serious is the problem? Oral contraceptives and Depo-Provera are among the world's most popular and prevalent contraceptive methods. According to one study, "More than 100 million women worldwide use hormonal contraception."³ In America, hormonal contraceptive rates are over 52% in unmarried women—those at greatest risk of HIV/AIDS. Moreover, in the interest of lowering the birth rate, the UNFPA and USAID continue unloading boatloads of hormonal contraceptives on Africa, Haiti and other AIDS-ravaged developing nations.

The best meta-analysis done to date, done by Dr. Chia Wang and her colleagues, surveyed the consensus results of the 28 best published studies since 1985. They found that the "significant association between oral contraceptive use and HIV-1 seroprevalence or seroincidence ... increased as study quality increased." In fact, "Of the best studies, 6 of 8 detected an increased risk of HIV infection associated with OC [oral contraceptive] use."⁴

On the National Scale

Moreover, Wang's results showed even more of a Pill/HIV link when they limited studies to those conducted on African populations. This is significant for two reasons:

First, sub-Saharan Africa is home to the world's earliest and largest heterosexual HIV/AIDS epidemic, which to date has infected an estimated 22.4 million⁵ people. This is two-thirds of the total number of infections worldwide.

Second, sub-Saharan Africa has endured decades of contraception-focused population control programs and countless hormonal-contraceptive trials. "Among the six countries hardest hit by the HIV/AIDS epidemic ... two in three users in the six countries rely on the OC (oral contraceptives) or injectables,"⁶ said Iqbal Shah of the World Health Organization.

Likewise, Thailand, praised for a contraceptive prevalence of 79.2% in 2000 and upwards of 70% today, is a land where, "More than one-in-100 adults in this country of 65 million people is infected with HIV."⁷ Among Thai women, "Oral contraception is the most popular method."⁸

On the other hand, Japan's HIV rate is, at 0.01%, one of the lowest in the world.¹⁰ In this context, it is important to note that the birth control pill was illegal in Japan until 1999, and even today only 1% of Japanese women use oral contraception. Similarly, the predominantly Catholic Philippines, with a longstanding popular resistance to contraception, boasts an HIV "prevalence rate of only 0.02%."¹¹

Hormonal Changes Heighten HIV Risk

The studies that demonstrate a connection between hormonal contraceptives and HIV/AIDS infection postulate a number of mechanisms at work.

First, let's review the basics. The Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), is carried in warm blood or sexual fluids. It infects through fragile, inflamed, bleeding or needle-pricked tissue, attacks specific T-cells in the immune system, and causes the incurable, debilitating condition known as AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome).

Hormonal contraceptives increase almost all known risk factors for HIV infection.

Studies have found that hormonal contraceptives “alter the microenvironment of the female”¹² and boost the cell count of those specific cells that HIV uses to infect and proliferate (HIV co-receptor CCR5 in cervical CD4+ T lymphocytes).

What is more, a progesterone side effect known to American women as “breakthrough bleeding,” is caused when hormonal contraceptives excessively thicken the uterine lining. The large, bleeding surface of the uterus creates an ideal site for HIV infection.

Progesterone also has an immunosuppressant effect, which means that women using hormonal contraceptives have less in the way of natural defenses against HIV and other STDs, such as chlamydial infection or genital herpes (HSV-2).^{13 14} In one study, “HSV-2 infection itself more than tripled the risk of HIV infection.”¹⁵

In the vagina, increased blood and the independent hormonal effects of the Pill eliminate the natural pH acid protection against infection. What is more, a famous study of rhesus macaques found that hormonal contraceptives thin the vaginal walls and markedly increase SIV infection (the monkey equivalent of HIV).¹⁶ Vaginal dryness, another side effect of hormonal contraceptives, is not only painful but also makes one prone to tears and abrasions—fertile sites for infection.

One study points out, “On a cellular level, hormonal contraceptives have been associated with cervical and vaginal inflammation.”¹⁷

Further, hormonal birth control causes the fragile cervical tissue to grow beyond its natural bounds and replace what would normally be thick, protective membrane. This “cervical ectopy” is dangerous because the cervix's thin surface is the main site of HIV infection.¹⁸

Given all these different ways that hormonal contraception promotes HIV/AIDS infection, it is not at all surprising that several studies show women on the pill, Depo-Provera, etc., are more likely to be infected with not just one, but several variants or strains of HIV. This “in turn leads to higher levels of viral replication and more rapid HIV-1 disease progression.”^{19 20 21}

Women on hormonal contraceptives are not only more likely to contract HIV/AIDS, they are also more likely to pass it along to their sexual partners. The three studies which focused on “the impact of hormonal contraception on cervical shedding of the cell-associated virus”²² all found that HIV-positive women on hormonal contraceptives are far more likely to shed HIV in their body fluids. High-dose pill users were over 12 times more likely to shed the HIV virus than women not using contraception, low-dose users were almost 4 times more likely, and Depo-Provera users were 3 times more likely.²³

The Pill Pushers Push Back

Some dismiss out of hand the impressive body of scientific research demonstrating a Pill/HIV link. They quote from the handful of studies and highly selective trials which claim to find “no increase in HIV risk among users of oral contraceptives and Depo-Provera.”²⁴

The problem with many of these studies, such as Mati et al. 1995, Kapiga et al. 1998, and Sinei et al. 1996 is that they were conducted with and through “family planning clinics.” Since the chief business of these clinics is the promotion, sale, and distribution of contraceptives, the possibility of bias is undeniable. Who would trust Marlboro to monitor a study on the link between cigarettes and cancer?

Moreover, the handful of studies that deny a link between hormonal contraception and increased risk of contracting HIV are dwarfed by the more than 50 studies that have not only found such a link, but convincingly explained precisely what it is about such contraception that contributes to the spread of the disease.

Yet population control groups continue to lobby for more contraception, not less. Take Dr. Willard Cates, president of the Institute for Family Health of Family Health International (FHI), one of the major purveyors of hormonal contraception to the developing world. Wrote Cates to the Journal of American Medical Association, “Preventing unintended pregnancies among HIV-infected women who do not currently wish to become pregnant is an important and cost effective way of preventing new HIV infections of infants. ... More must be done to ensure access to safe and effective contraception for HIV-infected women.”²⁵

Obviously, FHI's concern here is less to prevent the infection of preborn infants, than to continue to contracept as many women as possible with your tax dollars and mine. What the organization refuses to admit, however, is that by doing so it is arguably contributing to the spread of the HIV virus.

How many lives are being lost because we continue to ship boatloads of hormonal contraceptives to a continent and to countries laboring under an HIV/AIDS pandemic? Isn't it time that we stopped? ↵

See the full report in the upcoming May/June Issue of the PRI Review.

Endnotes

¹ Baeten et al. 2003, "Hormonal Influences on HIV Disease and Co-Morbidities." J Acquir Immune Def Syndr. 2005, Vol 38, Suppl 1: S19

² <http://www.iasociety.org/Article.aspx?elementId=11977>; Stringer et al, AIDS. 2009, 23:1377-1382

³ Baeten et al. 2003 J Acquir Immune Def Syndr, 2005, S18

⁴ Wang et al., 1999, JAIDS

⁵ <http://www.avert.org/hiv-aids-africa.htm>

⁶ Shah, I. 2003, J Acquir Immune Def Syndr, 2005

⁷ <http://www.avert.org/thailand-aids-hiv.htm>

⁸ <http://www.prb.org/Countries/Thailand.aspx>

⁹ http://www.searo.who.int/LinkFiles/Family_Planning_Fact_Sheets_thailand.pdf

¹⁰ http://apps.who.int/globalatlas/predefinedReports/EFS2006/EFS_PDFs/EFS2006_JP.pdf. (Homosexual men account for just over half of Japan's domestic HIV cases.)

¹¹ <http://www.wpro.who.int/countries/2009/phl/>

¹² Prakash et al. 2004; Prakash et al. 2002; Furth et al., 1990

¹³ Baeten et al. 2001; Cottingham et al. 1992; Avonts et al. 1990; Louv et al. 1989

¹⁴ Hunt et al. 1998; Zang et al. 2002; Gillgrass et al; 2003

¹⁵ <http://www.iasociety.org/Article.aspx?elementId=10470>; Baeten et al. 2007

¹⁶ Marx et al. 1996; Abel et al. 2004; Veazey et al. 2005

¹⁷ Baeten et al. 2001; Ghanem et al. 2005

¹⁸ Baeten et al. 2007; Critchlow et al. 1995; Louv et al. 1989; Plourde et al. 1994

¹⁹ Baeten et al. 2003; Poss et al. 1995; Long et al. 2000

²⁰ Furth et al. 1990

²¹ Baeten et al. 2007, Clinical and Infectious Diseases, 360-361

²² Stringer et al. 2008

²³ Wang et al. 2004; Mostad et al. 1997; Clemetson et al. 1993

²⁴ Mauck, C. 2005, S11; Studies noted: Mati et al. 1995; Kapiga et al. 1998

²⁵ JAMA. 2006; 296:2802

Joan Claire Robinson is Assistant Editor at the Population Research Institute (PRI). This article is a reprint of PRI's Weekly Briefing, 4-20-10.

Fifty Years after the Pill

By Marie Therese Hall

Time Magazine recently (May 3, 2010) celebrated the Pill's 50th anniversary in a lead article titled, "Love, Sex, Freedom and the Paradox of the Pill." The article had an editorial view, as one might expect, but thankfully, concluded: "Science alone will not resolve questions that reach this deep into our relations with one another."

Originally, I intended to send a letter to the editor, fleshing out the article. It appears *Time* doesn't publish letters to the editor, however, so I have chosen this venue instead, offering, one woman's observations and anecdotes from a life that has observed the women's revolution for fifty years and hopes young women today have learned something about the unintended consequences of our "liberation."

As a young woman, I was instinctively smart enough to recognize contraception as a fraud. It seemed to invalidate the authenticity of giving of oneself to the marital embrace. Unfortunately, my pure ideal to "wait until marriage", wasn't realized. I became pregnant the first time I had intercourse. My boyfriend, 26 years old, had already bought into the notion that women could be recycled for sex and wanted me to have an abortion. Instead, I gave birth to the child, whom my parents coerced me to place for adoption. Painful as the loss of the son I'd just given birth to was, I was at least rid of a man who was apparently not worthy of my love. The Pill, which promised freedom, didn't simply permit women to behave more irresponsibly than men, it encouraged men to treat women less as ladies and more as prostitutes.

A couple years later, my girlfriend, responsible for introducing me to my husband of now over forty years, died of a blood clot in her lung as a result of the Pill. I haven't researched the number of deaths attributed to the Pill, but her death mattered to her parents, to be sure.

During my child bearing years, I saw more and more married women working outside the home. I am all for women working, but these women weren't working because they wanted to, but because they felt they had to. The Pill left them defenseless against husbands who determined they had a perfect method for preventing more children, and the wife should "pull her weight" in order to purchase fancier homes, cars, or boats. Most of these women felt torn, not to mention exhausted, as they left their children in daycare and/or delegated them to latchkey status. As a child, I only knew one person who was being raised in a single parent family. Now, I saw more and more women who were divorced and/or had never married the father of their child.

The worst effects of the Pill were becoming more apparent. The notion that one could determine how many children to have, and the spacing thereof, evolved into the idea that if or when contraception failed, one should abort the unintended life. Over thirty years ago, I opened a pregnancy aide service in Washington State and helped over 17 different communities to open a Birthright as well. The next 15 plus years exposed me to hundreds of women who were dealing with the fact that they were being used, not just as a convenient sexual RV, but as financial support in a relationship that used and abused, but did not cherish them as women and mothers. Planned Parenthood's philosophy of eugenics permeates our society and they also felt pressure against having children who would "burden our environment and economy."

Use of the Pill, early sexual activity, often with many partners, along with abortion, has other unintended consequences. Chlamydia and other forms of infertility have escalated, with truly heartbreaking results for women, who after muddling through, eventually marry and want to have children. When last I checked, infertility affected 10% of married couples. It may be higher now.

Recently, I heard President Obama touting the strides women have made because we now have a workforce comprised 51% of women! He considers this an achievement! I view this as total culture collapse. The divorce rate is astronomical. Murder, rape, and neglect of women and children hasn't declined. Our most precious resource, our children, suffer all manner of emotional distress, educational non-excellence, delinquency, drug and substance abuse, and add to a growing prison population. Recently, two of my acquaintances lost teenagers in tragic accidents. For women to bring home a paycheck at the expense of abandoning their unique talent and inborn motivation to raise the next generation of children is a net loss of monumental proportion.

The Pill deserves a big "thumbs down," especially when knowledge of a woman's fertility, and the philosophy of Natural Family Planning, can be used in a manner which respects the dignity of men and women created in the image of God. ❧

Bishop Robert Grosseteste

Revelations of Light

By Marie P. Loehr

Let there be light! [Gen 1]

Modern man, if he thinks about it at all, associates the first scientific study of optics and light with Sir Isaac Newton and the Enlightenment. But the study of optics is ancient. The first eyeglasses appeared in the Middle Ages. The first true telescopes and microscopes appeared towards the end of the Renaissance. The early Middle Ages, 12th and 13th centuries, in their discovery of nature as worthy of study in itself, also newly discovered light as an object of study. They discussed and wrote about what has more recently been called “the metaphysics of light.”

This was a logical development from any Catholic study of Genesis and its resounding opening of “let there be light.” Augustine discusses this in his great work on Genesis, always raising more questions than can be answered, in fine scientific fashion. If God is light, to study light in both material and spiritual terms, is essential to learning about God. God calls us to this study in order that we may come to know him, love him, and serve him more and more deeply and truly.

Robert Grosseteste [1175-1253] apparently studied at Hereford in England in the 1190s. The first serious historian of Britain, Giraldus Cambrensis, gave him a recommendation to the Bishop of Hereford. Grosseteste entered the bishop’s household, and had achieved the title of “master” by 1192. He was ordained a priest at some point after 1225. In 1235 he was consecrated Bishop of Lincoln. Throughout his adult life, he was a dedicated scholar, and a prolific writer.

He was fascinated with light, its nature and effects, as coming forth from God certainly, but in its own right, as well. This fascination with light was not original with him, but a current of thought that was in fact ancient. It included the idea that the physical universe is made up of light. Furthermore, all space, time, stars, living and non-livings, ALL—visible and invisible—are simply different forms that are taken by this single fundamental energy.

From 1220-1235, Grosseteste wrote a number of scientific works. He is considered by some to be the father of modern scientific method. He certainly was an empirical scientist, who observed carefully, and drew his conclusions from that observation, and testing, whenever possible. We may even consider him one of the earliest practitioners of what Albert Einstein called “thought experiments.” Writer James McEvoy considers Grosseteste’s work on light to be distinctly original, seminal, the product of a powerful mind.

In his *The Treatise on Light*, or *De Luce*, Grosseteste anticipates modern discoveries and understandings of light, including the Big Bang theory of Father Georges LeMaitre in the 20th century. Grosseteste and Einstein would almost certainly have come to a fruitful meeting of minds. Einstein’s understanding of the relationship between matter and energy, their transitions from one to the other, and back again, recalls the Hebrew word, *hevod* or *kabod*, and its understanding of God’s glory. Glory in Hebrew means both weight and light. It is not too great a leap to see the weight of glory as Einstein’s “mass,” and the light of glory as his “energy.”

This also intimates the nature of Creation as God’s work, and his work as the revelation of his glory.

Grosseteste intuits and defines this in his examination of light. His treatise on light is significant, says scholar Clare C. Riedl, in the introduction to *De Luce* in Marquette University’s “Medieval Philosophical Texts in Translation” as:

1] . . . affording an introduction to one of the comparatively unknown greats of the Middle Ages, an influential thinker, and man of science . . .

2] . . . an example of the philosophic-scientific synthesis which characterized the Oxford School,

3] an important source of the ‘light metaphysics’ of the Middle Ages, and

4] for the medieval conceptions relative to cosmology and astronomy contained in it.

James McEvoy notes in *Robert Grosseteste*, part of the “Great Medieval Thinkers” series from Oxford University Press, that in *De Luce* light is described as the first corporeal form. Again, McEvoy notes:

...Grosseteste’s account of absolute cosmic origins from a non-dimensional point of infinitely compressed energy makes the contemporary reader think quite spontaneously of the Big Bang theory of the universe’s beginnings.

Grosseteste himself says in the first paragraph of his treatise on light that we can consider light the very first form of corporeity because “light of its very nature diffuses itself in every direction in such a way that a point of light will produce instantaneously a sphere of light of any size whatsoever, unless an opaque object stands in the way.”

He goes on to discuss the extension of matter in three dimensions, and its relationship to light.

“Furthermore, the first corporeal form is, in the opinion of the philosophers, more exalted and of a nobler and more excellent essence than all the forms that come after it. It bears, also, a closer resemblance to the forms that exist apart from matter. . . . namely, the intelligences.” By intelligences, Grosseteste means the angelic beings, discarnate spiritual beings. He concludes this paragraph by saying that “Light, therefore, is the first corporeal form.”

We might note, as an aside, that angelic or discarnate spiritual beings, as seen by many different peoples and religions, always appear as beings of light. Indo-European root languages bear witness to this. Both spiritual and intellectual revelation is described in terms of light, illumination.

Popular astronomer Carl Sagan, a professed atheist, was fond of saying we are all made of star stuff. We may argue over what he meant by that—the heavy elements spewed forth from a star gone super nova, certainly. But spectrography has discovered that the chemical components of stars have specific color signatures. The chemistry of our universe is not one thing in the Andromeda Galaxy, and another in our Milky Way. It is consistent across the universe, so far as we can test.

The heavy elements created in the crucible of a dying star’s blast furnace are manufactured in the star, and blown out to seed the universe, as the star dies. But this process all began in that single original primordial point of light. Surely that’s what Einstein’s understanding that energy contracts to mass, and mass explodes into energy indicates. Our own bodies are made up of interacting protons, neutrons, electrons, atoms, and their energy fields. We are in fact not-so-empty space seething with energy transactions and transformations twenty-four hours a day.

We are “star stuff” in more ways than Sagan may have meant.

Grosseteste would have had no problem with the idea of “star stuff” whether we take that as pure energy, or as heavy elements seeding the universe. Star stuff is first and foremost light, and matter develops from the diffusion and/or coalescence of that light, whether we speak of pure energy or the heavy elements, traceable in the periodic table, flung across the universe by the unimaginable force of super novae.

McEvoy remarks:

Out of nothing preexisting, that is, not time or space or any material, God created a single point from which the entire physical order was to derive by way of extension or expansion. That first, dimensionless point was light; it was one and simple, containing matter implicitly within its light-form. Light, of course, expands by self-propagation. In its expansion that primordial light created space and extended the matter that it precontained into the three dimensions of a vast sphere.

Grosseteste states that this can be understood only on the mathematical model of infinity. This too has a modern ring to it. Consider the intricate equations that make sense of both physics and astronomy, and define the operations of the universe.

Modern science has taken its time, developing increasingly sophisticated and subtle tools for measuring and testing and expanding its knowledge of astrophysics and material cosmology. In doing so, it is finally catching up with Grosseteste: his intellectual and empirical theories and explorations of the origins of the universe with all its implications.

In the Extreme Issue of *Discover* for Winter 2010 an article titled “Sticky Stuff” by Robert Kunzig discusses the latest discoveries about what many would consider the most basic foundation of matter, quarks.

Quarks are almost infinitesimal sub-particles contained in atoms. Every atom is a nucleus orbited by electrons. Each nucleus is made up of protons and neutrons. But what are protons and neutrons made of? What Kunzig calls the “unsettling truth” is that this “stuff” is made up of almost. . . **nothing!** Grosseteste might nod his head in approval.

Since 1973 physicists have been exploring that stuff, that “almost nothing.” What they have found, once the proton is broken into its constituent parts, is that protons— and neutrons— contain a trinity of quarks—quarks come in threes. Those quarks, and thus the proton or neutron itself, are held together by “gluons.” Literally, a sub-particle “glue!” Given the nature of atoms, particles and sub-particles, as packets of energy, *ie*, quanta, leaping in and out of visible existence, very stable and very dynamic at the same time, we begin to intuit something of the nature of star stuff, or Grosseteste’s light. He himself would be delighted with the discoveries of modern astrophysics and particle physics.

“All is flux and crackling energy inside a proton,” says Kunzig in his article. “It is like an unending lightning storm in a bottle.” A simpler way to think of it at first might be in terms of a 4th of July sparkler. Light the tip, and as long as the combustible material lasts, all is dynamic energy, sparks thrown off, crackling, dancing, appearing and disappearing, confined to a wire held right in our hand.

Granted, this is a much simplified description of a complex, even mind-blowing, reality. It sounds a bit like magic or enchantment, or imagination run amok.

This takes us back to both Einstein and Grosseteste. As Einstein discovered, energy can be converted into mass, and mass into energy. Glory IS weight and light. In turn, we discover that empty space is not in fact so empty. “What we call a vacuum is actually seething with all kinds of energy fields, and the energy is constantly manifesting itself as ‘virtual’ particles that pop into existence and then disappear again in something less than a trillionth of a nanosecond,” exclaims Kunzig, that modern Robert.

All reality is in fact the constant interplay of mass and energy transactions, expansions and contractions. Modern science can go more deeply into worlds, sub-atomic worlds where no man had gone before. But Grosseteste grasped the fullness of these truths in principle and its original simplicity in the 13th century. The 20th and 21st centuries have only caught up with him, and expanded his insight into its full intrinsic detail and operation.

The presence of Los Alamos and Sandia Labs, and their research, should give deeper meaning to the old title for New Mexico, *La Tierra Encantada*. But this is truth deeper than mere incantation and magic.

The more deeply science penetrates the secrets of the material universe, the more deeply we become aware of the order and nature of God. All of this discovery and development can be found in its kernel in the work of medieval thinkers like Grosseteste.

He was considered a saint in his own time. He was present as part of the ecclesiastical nobility and witness at the signing of the *Magna Carta* in Britain. He was a Father at the Council of Lyons. He was a man who set the foundations of Oxford University soundly in both Catholic theology and the natural philosophy growing out of Catholic understanding of order and intelligibility in God first, and in his Creation as his reflection and gift. This understanding produced an emphasis on order, observation, experiment, verification insofar as possible—and fruitful scholarly discussion and debate.

Grosseteste is one of the outstanding examples of medieval intellectual and scholarly achievement, a sign for our times. He is witness and proof of the Church’s strong support for true science and true scientific discovery. He is witness and proof that all this exploration and discovery springs from our being made in “the image and likeness of God.” Further, in our scientific exploration and discovery, we not only reveal our image and likeness to God, but we reveal his glory made manifest in his Church, his Creation, and in mankind itself—in the redemption and rising of Christ, the fullness of the image of God, through whom and for whom all Creation was made. ✎

Ask Again...and Again

By Alan Peter

There is a book entitled *Eucharistic Miracles*, by Joan Carroll Cruz, which describes the periodic and regular occurrences throughout history when Our Lord manifests His Real Presence in the Eucharist to our *senses*. This is not the stuff of legends, such as Saint George slaying the dragon. The feast of Corpus Christi comes to us after Pope Urban IV attested to the miracle of Orvieto, Italy in 1263, when blood seeped from a consecrated Host during Mass. The miraculous Host of Amsterdam was recorded in the city's official documents in 1345 by the civil magistrate and the city council. Until the Spanish Civil War in 1936, Alcalá de Henares venerated 24 consecrated Hosts that had been preserved incorrupt and unspoiled since 1597.

The last documented Eucharistic miracle occurred during a Latin Mass in 1970, at Stich, Bavaria, when blood appeared on the corporal after the Consecration. We know it was blood, because to quote from Sister Marta Brunner's letter to the priest: *I have complied with your strict order, merely asking the experts whether these were wine stains, blood stains, or another substance. The results of the four analyses indicated that the stains were caused by human blood. In addition to this, the director of the clinical laboratory said that in his considered judgment the blood was most certainly that of a man in agony.*

No Eucharistic miracles have occurred *during* Mass since then.

Like the father of the possessed boy in Saint Mark's gospel, we all struggle and plead "I do believe; help my unbelief" [Mark 9:23]. Although Our Lord said "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed" [John 20:29], He understands that sometimes we need something concrete. And in His infinite love, He provides for us.

Ours is the Marian age. With increasing frequency, Our Blessed Mother has appeared to call us back to her Son and *right living*. For any apparition to be approved and therefore worthy of belief, the local bishop must investigate. We have all read about the fantastic Miracle of the Sun at Fatima, Portugal in 1917. It was widely reported in the secular newspapers of the day, and many atheist/agnostic newspaper reporters converted to Catholicism because of what they saw. The Catholic Church examined the events, and only after careful investigation was Fatima approved - in 1930.

In 1973, Our Lady appeared to Sister Agnes Katsuko Sasagawa at a convent in Akita, Japan. On October 13, Mary said "The work of the devil will infiltrate even into the Church in such a way that one will see cardinals opposing cardinals, bishops against bishops. The priests who venerate me will be scorned and opposed by their confreres ... churches and altars sacked ..." This apparition was carefully studied, and Most Reverend John Shojiro Ito, Bishop of Niigata, approved it in 1984.

In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI issued a *motu proprio* (in his own hand) entitled *Summorum Pontificum*. The Pope established a new procedure for Catholics everywhere to request the Tridentine Latin Mass (now called the *Extraordinary Form*) directly from their local Pastor. The accompanying letter states: "Article 5 § 1. In parishes, where there is a stable group of faithful who adhere to the earlier liturgical tradition, the pastor should willingly accept their requests to celebrate the Mass according to the rite of the Roman Missal published in 1962." The Pope repeated something long known by Catholics, but effectively denied by the Church hierarchy - the Latin Mass was never abolished. "I would like to draw attention to the fact that this Missal [missal for the Latin Mass] was never juridically abrogated and, consequently, in principle, was always permitted." It is no longer necessary for the local bishop to "approve" a Latin Mass.

Ask your parents, or grandparents, what it was like in the *old days*. How did young women and young men dress for Mass? In jeans and T-shirts? Did people chew gum at Mass until they received Communion? Would you see people texting on their cell phone? Assuming they had cell phones 50 years ago, of course. Did they have *liturgical dancers* back in those days? Or drums, electric guitars, tambourines, flutes, and trumpets in the *choir loft*? Was the choir always *front 'n center*, next to the Altar?

Then ask your parents how Catholics lived in the *old days*. Were there many divorces? *Unplanned* pregnancies that resulted in abortions? Lots of domestic abuse? Kids who couldn't perform simple reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic? Children who "acted out" and talked back to their parents? How was *life lived*?

Lex orandi, lex credendi - as we pray, so we come to believe. Folks trained in classical logic will claim no case can be made connecting the "New" Mass to a breakdown in society, nor proving the "Old" Mass protected the family and civil order. I'm reminded of that story when a lady walked in and discovered her husband in the arms of another woman. "Honey, who you gonna believe, me or your lying eyes?"

If you believe your eyes and ears, and your Catholic gut, request your Pastor begin offering the Latin Mass. Today. During the *Year for Priests* commemorating the Curé d'Ars, promulgated by the Pope on June 19, 2009. If your Pastor says "no," then follow the guidance of Pope Benedict in Article 7 of his *motu proprio*, "If a group of lay faithful, as mentioned in article 5 § 1, has not obtained satisfaction to their requests from the pastor, they should inform the diocesan bishop. The bishop is strongly requested to satisfy their wishes." Ask, and ask again. Remember the widow in Saint Luke's gospel, who gained justice against her adversary, for as the judge said: I will do her justice, lest by her continual coming she finally wear me out [Luke 18:5].

Saint John Vianney offered the Latin Mass. Recall what happened at Ars to the souls who lived there. Quoting Pope Benedict, who himself quotes the Curé d'Ars:

This way of educating the faithful to the Eucharistic presence and to communion proved most effective when they saw him celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Those present said that "it was not possible to find a finer example of worship... He gazed upon the Host with immense love." "All good works, taken together, do not equal the sacrifice of the Mass" - he would say - "since they are human works, while the Holy Mass is the work of God." He was convinced that the fervour of a priest's life depended entirely upon the Mass: "The reason why a priest is lax is that he does not pay attention to the Mass! My God, how we ought to pity a priest who celebrates as if he were engaged in something routine!" He was accosted, when celebrating, also to offer his own life in sacrifice: "What a good thing it is for a priest each morning to offer himself to God in sacrifice!" ❧

Boyd Making ABQ New Late-Term Abortion Capital

By Cheryl Sullenger

Texas abortionist Curtis Boyd, who admits he committed illegal abortions prior to *Roe v. Wade*, has positioned himself to replace slain abortionist George Tiller as the "go to" man for the most controversial - and most profitable - of abortions, those done in the late-terms of pregnancy on viable babies who are able to survive outside the womb.

"Boyd has the personality hallmarks of most late-term abortionists with whom we are familiar. He is arrogant and believes he is above the law, as evidenced by his own confessions to illegal abortions prior to 1973. He's an ideologue who will do abortions no matter what the law says or who gets hurt in the process. He admits he knows he's killing, but doesn't care. Abortion is his identity. In these ways, he is very much like Tiller," said Operation Rescue President Troy Newman.

For years, Boyd has operated two abortion clinics, one in Dallas, Texas, and the other in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Around January, 2009, Boyd moved into a new, larger facility in Albuquerque, one that could handle the particular needs of a late-term abortion facility. During this time, Tiller was in court defending against criminal charges involving 19 counts of illegal late-term abortions. A well-publicized hearing that month failed to dismiss the charges and Tiller was ordered to stand trial in March of that year.

Between the January hearing and the trial in March, 2009, actions were taken to disband Tiller's political action committee, ProKanDo, once considered the largest and most influential in the state. Its founding director, Julie Burkhart, who also served as Tiller's media spokesperson, left for a new position in another state the following month. Tiller depended on his PAC to buffer him from abortion laws that would have limited or halted his profitable late-term abortion business, where he was charging between \$5,000 and \$20,000 for each procedure. The disbanding of ProKanDo was a strong indication that Tiller was considering bringing his abortion business to an end.

"We believed that Tiller was making provisions to close his abortion practice in the event he was convicted of the crimes," said Newman. "Even though Tiller was acquitted on the criminal counts, he still faced license revocation based on 11 counts filed against him by the Kansas State Board of Healing Arts based on our complaint. If Tiller had lived, it is very likely that he would have had his license revoked or he could have retired from practice to avoid discipline. In any case, that would have been the end of Tiller's late-term abortion business."

It is possible that Boyd, who was friends with Tiller, was considering making a move into the extremely lucrative late-term abortion business months before Tiller's death, possibly as a prearranged back-up plan in the event Tiller's legal woes prevailed. In any case, Boyd had positioned himself as Tiller's replacement.

But someone forgot to tell LeRoy Carhart.

After Tiller's murder on May 31, 2009, LeRoy Carhart, one of Tiller's former employees, made an unsuccessful play to keep Tiller's abortion clinic open. The Tiller family instead closed the clinic for good. Carhart then promised to open his own late-term abortion mill in Kansas as a replacement for Tiller's clinic. Operation Rescue mounted successful opposition that blocked Carhart's move.

OR worked with Nebraska pro-life groups to launch efforts to expose and stop Carhart's back-up plan to begin late-term abortions in Bellevue. This resulted in two important events. Former Carhart employees submitted sworn affidavits to the Attorney General's office and the Department of Health describing illegal activity they witnessed while in Carhart's employment. Both offices opened investigations that are ongoing.

Secondly, it prompted the Nebraska Legislature to pass the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act, which bans abortions after 20 weeks gestation in that state. Scheduled to go into effect in October, this law would end Carhart's hopes of crowning himself as the new king of post-viability abortions.

While Carhart was futilely attempting to assert himself as Tiller's heir apparent in the late summer of 2009, Boyd was working quietly behind the scenes to secure Tiller's profitable late-term abortion network.

In September, 2009, two of Tiller's former abortionists, Shelley Sella and Susan Robinson, applied for medical licenses in New Mexico for the purpose of working at Boyd's Southwestern Women's Options.

"It just seems like everything Carhart touches turns to dust. It is interesting that he was left out of Boyd's new late-term abortion enterprise. To hire on with Boyd and the other two former Tiller abortionists seemed like the likely scenario for him, but we got the impression from our experiences in Wichita that nobody liked Carhart. Clinic workers had told us he was lazy and unpleasant. Couple that with his mounting legal problems, and it is easy to conclude that Carhart was not a desirable business partner or associate. Maybe that is why he got left behind," said Newman.

During this time, Boyd was also reopening an abortion clinic in Dallas, Southwestern Women's Surgical Center, which would offer abortions to 24 weeks, the legal limit in Texas. However, with the death of Tiller, Boyd wanted to move into doing even more controversial abortions on viable babies - some just weeks or days before birth. Those could not be done in the more conservative state of Texas.

"New Mexico is still very much the wild west as far as abortion laws are concerned. Right now, anything goes," said Newman.

Abortion laws are virtually nonexistent in New Mexico, Boyd's second home.

Albuquerque is considered a liberal bastion in a very blue state run by a pro-abortion governor and legislature. He would have political protection there without the encumbrances of regulations or limits on late-term abortions. Pro-life protesters were focused on other abortion clinics in town and rarely visited his clinic. It was the perfect location to expand his abortion business. ☞