

Los Pequeños Pepper

Publication of Los Pequeños de Cristo

March 2011

Evolutionary Christianity

*Father Richard Rohr joins
“conversations at the leading edge of
faith.”*

Page 4

No Balm in Gilead

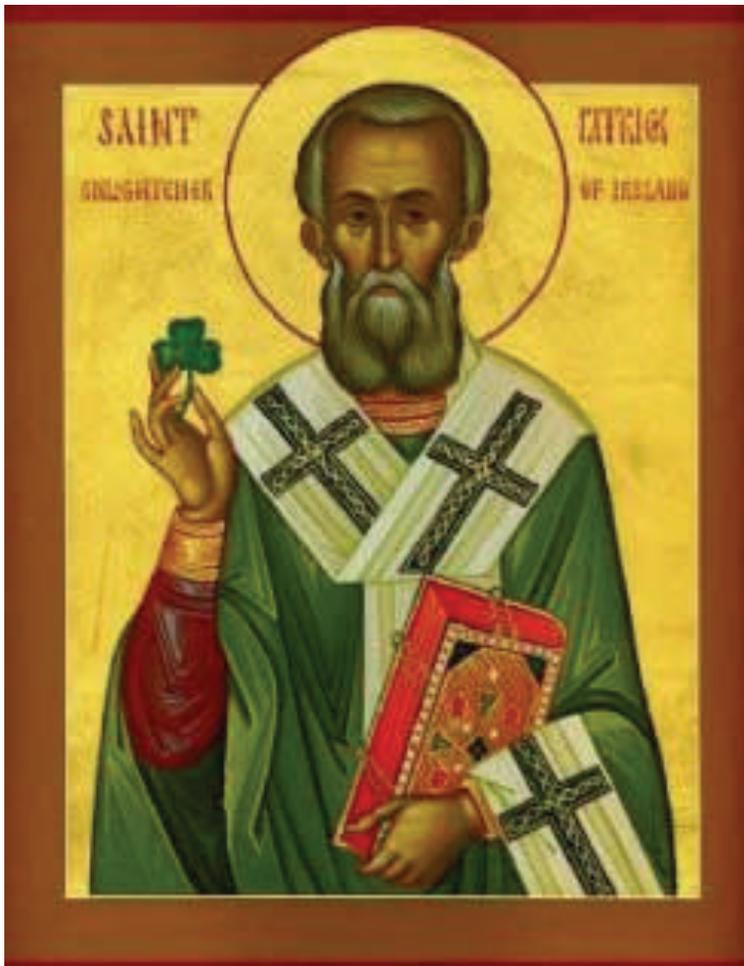
*Did you think “social justice” meant
“socialism?”*

Page 8

Florida Bishop Victor Galeone Warns against the *American Catholic Council*

*Call to Action by any other name is
still NOT Catholic.*

Page 12





*Cover: Icon of St. Patrick, feast day
March 17*

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Evolutionary Christianity

Father Richard Rohr joins “conversations at the leading edge of faith.”

By Stephanie Block

Page 4

No Balm in Gilead

Did you think “social justice” meant “socialism?”

By Jon Merrill

Page 8

Nuptiality: The Not-So-Underground Stream

Part 1 in a series about the Theology of the Body.

By Marie P. Loehr

Page 10

Florida Bishop Victor Galeone Warns against the American Catholic Council

Statement of Bishop Galeone Regarding the *American Catholic Council's* “North Florida Listening Assembly” (Feb. 19, 2011)

Page 12

Does Canadian Health Care Foreshadow US?

Page 14

Bishop-Hero from the Diocese of Venice in Florida

Page 13

All Washed Up

By Fr Finigan

Page 15

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

Evolutionary Christianity

Father Richard Rohr joins “conversations at the leading edge of faith.”

By Stephanie Block

My friend says it’s “more than a Teilhard fan club. It looks to me like the armies massing for the Last Battle.”

That’s a bit dramatic. She’s been perusing the Evolutionary Christianity (evolutionarychristianity.com), a website established to make a tele-seminar series on the topic available. “Join thirty-eight of today’s most inspiring Christian leaders and esteemed scientists,” it explains on the home page, “for a groundbreaking dialogue on how an evolutionary worldview can enrich your life, deepen your faith, and bless our world.”

To access the tele-seminar series, one must register – an act which includes a free subscription to the Evolving Wisdom e-newsletter – at the website. The series has two parts. The first part took place during the Advent-Christmas season (December 4-January 6, 2010-11). The folks “on the cutting edge of science and religion” gave talks that were streamed by phone and computer and are now available on the Internet.

The second part of the series consisted of seven “live, interactive panel discussions featuring these inspiring thought leaders,” which also can be downloaded from the website. These broadcasts were – and to some extent remain, as they also can be downloaded at any time – interactive, allowing listeners to make comments on the Evolutionary Christianity blog (evolutionarychristianity.com/blog) or its Facebook page.

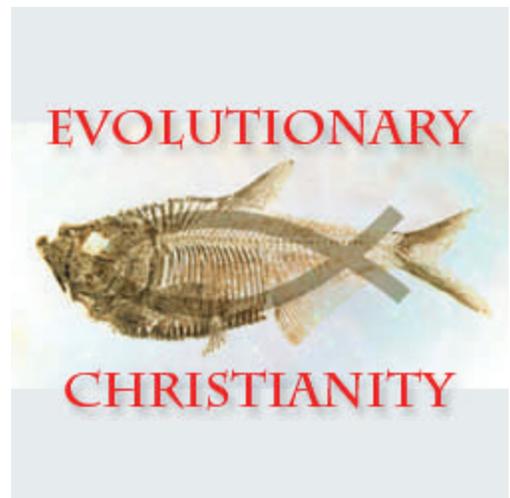
The goal of the talks and discussions is to present a path between what its participants call “science-rejecting creationism and faith-rejecting atheism.” They find “no conflict between faith and reason, heart and head, Jesus and Darwin. For us, religious faith and spiritual practice can be strengthened and deepened by what God/Reality is revealing through science.”

The explanation continues: “Evolutionary Christianity points to those who value evidence, in a very real sense, as ‘divine communication.’ Whatever our [i.e., referring to those committed to the ideas of Evolutionary Christianity] fascinating and at times infuriating differences, we all have deep-time eyes and a global heart—that is, we are all enriched by the evolutionary history of the universe and we are all committed to a just and healthy future for humanity and the larger body of life.”

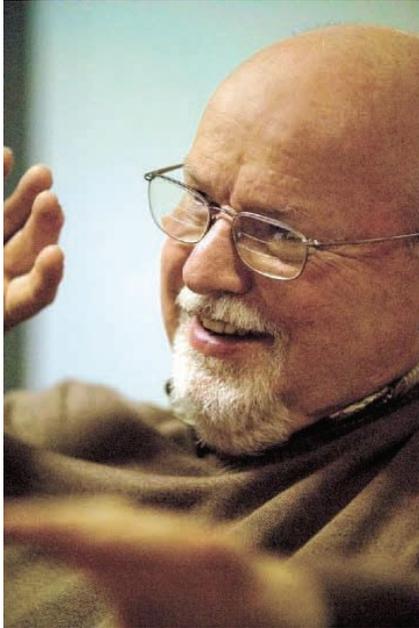
The differences among the thirty-eight leaders participating in the Evolutionary Christianity tele-series are important to the group. One section of the website divides them into categories that include two Nobel Laureate scientists, two Templeton prize-winners, and a soup of thinkers speaking about process theology, the “emerging” church, eco-theology, progressive and integral Christianity, and evolutionary Christian mysticism. Four of the thirty-eight identify themselves as Evangelicals and six as Roman Catholics. The labels aren’t particularly useful, as one might reasonably argue that all participants embrace the “inclusive” philosophy of Evolutionary Christianity and are therefore coming from a similar perspective.

The better known in the group are Matthew Fox, a Roman Catholic priest who switched to Episcopalianism in the early 1990s after being expelled from the Dominican order for teaching his own ideas – among them Creation Spirituality; Sr. Joan Chittister, a Benedictine religious who has participated in the dissenting movement Call to Action and is an advocate of women’s ordination; John Shelby Spong, Episcopal bishop emeritus who has called for a new Reformation to reformulate basic Christian doctrine “[s]ince God can no longer be conceived in theistic terms...;”⁽¹⁾ and Father Richard Rohr, a Franciscan who, over the years, has promoted a host of programs that challenge his Catholic profession.

Father Rohr is not so much an originator of these programs – among them the Enneagram and male spirituality – as a brilliant popularizer of them, able to articulate their complexities and make them available to wide audiences. Therefore, as an introduction to some of the ideas espoused by the proponents of Evolutionary Christianity— at least as they will be sold into Catholic circles—it is profitable to take a closer look at Father Rohr’s interview with Michael Dowd, the evangelical minister who conceived the Evolutionary Christianity project.⁽²⁾



Dueling Dualism: Father Rohr begins the interview with a bit of personal background, explaining that the mission of his Albuquerque-based *Center for Action and Contemplation* (CAC) is to help people on both the right and left to transcend the dualistic thinking that divides the world into "bad guys" and "good guys." The contemplative mind, he argues, rejects that dualistic thought.



Father Richard Rohr

Again and again, I saw the tremendous social needs of our time and our world. And yet, to be perfectly honest, I often was disappointed in some of the responses, which I would now call "dualistic thinking" . . . "either/or thinking" . . . "all or nothing thinking." I found dualistic thinking to be as much on the left as it was on the right. Different vocabulary, but such thinking still split the universe into the good guys and the bad guy — totally right or totally wrong.⁽³⁾

Dowd interjects that the contemplative mind is "non-dogmatic." Father doesn't correct that description but develops the idea that the spirituality of youth, whether in individuals or institutions, is engaged in creating a self-identity — a container. The spirituality of age is more concerned about what's in the container, such as patience, inclusion, and the forgiveness of reality for not being perfect.⁽⁴⁾ God, Rohr says, is comfortable with a diversity that follows different sets of rules. That's creative and is the sort of thinking that allows one to be compassionate and forgiving.

What makes this line of discussion particularly difficult is that the term dualism has been used in several different ways. As a philosophical or theological worldview that sees the universe locked in an eternal struggle between the equal powers of good and evil, dualism is clearly an unchristian perspective and has been dogmatically rejected by the Church as heresy.

However, not every discussion of contrasting positions comes from a dualistic perspective. To call one line of reasoning "true" or "real" and another line of reasoning "false" or "not real" isn't dualism — it's descriptive. Father Rohr and the Evolutionary Christians use such contrasting descriptions themselves. They identify certain ideas as "more evolved" or "spiritually more mature" (such as acceptance of multiple spiritual paths) and others as "less evolved" or "spiritually immature" (such as Christian dogmas). Either they are right or they are wrong but they are engaging in the same intellectual act that Christians engage in when *they* establish dogmas.

If Father Rohr's point were simply that the one who believes a falsehood isn't therefore necessarily a "bad guy," he'd be correct. People are far more complex than that — thank goodness — and the true Christian struggles to love the sinner while hating the sin.

Changeless Change: Dowd asks Father Rohr, "How has an evolutionary understanding of reality, an evidential understanding of reality, made a difference in your own faith walk?" Father answers:

It's become almost foundational. If what's happening is evolving, then of course you've never got it. So an evolutionary understanding keeps you with a beginner's mind. It keeps you with that kind of humility — an expectation of an open horizon. I think the bane of religion, and not just Christianity, has been a closing down of such openness way too early, because of the assumption that 'I understand; I know.' And I think this is the arrogance that so many people have come to resent in religious people.

The “evolutionary understanding” of reality, which Dowd defines as science-based understanding, may believe that what has been revealed by God about Himself may evolve to “reveal” something quite different – say, that the personal One, Creator God of yesterday is today revealed to be the universe itself - is as much an “I understand; I know” position as any other. Knowing certain truths, however, doesn’t mean one has exhausted their meaning nor does rejecting what little one *can* know guarantee freedom from arrogance.

Incarnation: The topic of incarnation (materialized deity) affords some of Evolutionary Christianity’s greatest departure from traditional Christian thought. The incarnation, Father Rohr says, is the big trump card of Christianity:

The mystery of the Enfleshment of Spirit began 14.5 billion years ago, approximately. That’s the real birth of Christ. When I say that to Christians, they’re shocked. So I point them to the prologue to John’s gospel and to the hymn in the beginning of Colossians, the hymn in the beginning of Ephesians, the first chapter of the first letter of John. These passages all say, without any equivocation, that Christ existed from all eternity.

Of course the one doesn’t follow the other. To say that Christ existed from all eternity isn’t to say that he was *enfleshed* from all eternity. Nothing in the scripture passages mentioned, or in any other scripture passages for that matter, suggests that he was – quite the contrary, scripture is clear that he existed *before* creation. (Col 1: 15-20).

Father Rohr continues that the material world is the “hiding place,” the “revelation place,” of God.

So to get to your notion of deep time, you’re right on. Deep time is not just taking my moment as if it’s the reference point — the be-all and end-all. Rather, I must look to how I fit in to past and future. How am I connected to this universal history, this geological history, this history of civilization? How do I situate myself inside of all of that history? This seems to me to be the real appreciation for incarnation. Incarnation is planted inside the very nature of the world that God created and through which God is revealing God’s self in every creature. Every creature is a word of God.



Michael Dowd

St. Bonaventure was a philosopher. He took the experience of Francis and made an entire philosophical system out of it, in which he made the point that every step of creation and every piece of creation is another word of God. Each is another footprint, another fingerprint, another revelation of the mystery. So the whole distinction between sacred and profane just doesn’t work anymore. It’s not helpful. It’s not true. There is only one universe. It’s all sacred, and it’s all revealing the divine.

The confusion of God with His creation as expressed by Father Rohr, has been addressed by the Vatican document on the New Age, *Jesus Christ the Bearer of the Water of Life*: “For New Age the Cosmic Christ is seen as a pattern which can be repeated in many people, places and times; it is the bearer of an enormous paradigm shift; it is ultimately a potential within us. According to Christian belief, Jesus Christ is not a pattern, but a divine person whose human-divine figure reveals the mystery of the Father’s love for every person throughout history (Jn 3:16); he lives in us because he shares his life with us, but it is neither imposed nor automatic. All men and women are invited to share his life, to live “in Christ”.⁽⁵⁾

Later in the Vatican document, some brief formulations about New Age thought are detailed, including the idea that the “new consciousness” – sounding rather like the “evolutionary understanding” above – “demonstrates itself in an instinctive understanding of the sacredness and, in particular, the interconnectedness of all existence. This new consciousness and this new understanding of the dynamic interdependence of all life mean that we are currently in the process of evolving a completely new planetary culture.”⁽⁶⁾ At one point in the interview, Dowd says that *his* dualism collapsed when he realized the universe had started to become conscious of itself. Rohr responds that when one isn’t operating on the mystical level, all one is left with is a low-level morality.

The Inclusiveness of Evolutionary Christianity: Dowd asks Father Rohr how Christianity relates to other faiths in light of evolution. Rohr calls for a “vocabulary” for the “relational truth of the universe.”

If God is Trinity, then God himself, herself, itself is relationship. This is my foundation — that God is not a noun. God is a verb. God is an eternal circle dance. The Cappadocian Fathers in the third and fourth century said this — that God is a circle dance. Once that becomes your template for the very shape of the divine, and therefore the very shape of creation, then there’s nothing that can be understood outside of relationship.

In that relationship, then, Rohr argues, one is not believing things or judging things but simply participating with “the mystery” and honoring the divine expression in all people, because humanity’s survival depends on not excluding one another with sectarian “truths.” The new, emergent, participatory religion is entirely inclusive, rejecting a Jesus who is the exclusive son of God for an inclusive son of God. Rohr quotes Thomas Merton as saying that if this is the sacred dance, it’s always the general dance and if you’re not in the general dance you’re not in it. If you’re compassionate only for your own self, or your own group, you’re not compassionate.

Compassion can’t be just for my group or my political party or my baseball team or my religion. That’s the very thing Jesus was critiquing in his own Jewish brothers and sisters. So I say, “Why was Jesus inclusive in his lifetime, and then afterwards we created an exclusive religion in his honor?” It doesn’t make a bit of sense.

Even “truth” must be inclusive, it seems, encompassing contraries and contradictions. Dowd remarks that one can’t expect everyone to have all the truth but everyone has something useful to offer, even atheists who help others to evolve their own religious expression. Father Rohr develops that thought, adding that religious people can’t build on their superiority but must build on commonality of humanity.

There are billions of us on this planet. If we can’t start honoring the divine presence in all people, all religions, and all things, I don’t know what hope there is for the world.

This is where the comment that Evolutionary Christianity is “more than a Teilhard fan club” originates. As indebted as Father Rohr and his cohorts may be to the thought of Teilhard de Chardin, its roots go much deeper.

Rather than being an *evolutionary* step in religious thought, if one considers evolutionary steps to be progressive, positive developments, Evolutionary Christianity is constructed from quite ancient ideas, such as incarnated by the Hindu greeting “Namaste,” the divine in me greets the divine in you.

Not that this fact would bother an Evolutionary Christian. ☞



Image take from the Evolutionary Christian website, linked to the Green Mt. Monastery

Notes

- (1) Bishop John S. Spong, “A Call for a New Reformation,” www.dioceseofnewark.org/vox20598.html (7-19-04), Thesis 2.
- (2) Joan Chittister, “Evolution conference invites us all to a ‘new beginning’,” *National Catholic Reporter* blog, 1-10-11.
- (3) All quotes of Father Rohr’s talk are taken from Michael Dowd, commenting after the interview on the Evolutionary Christianity blog.
- (4) Father Rohr says this idea has been developed in his latest book: *Falling Upward: The Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* (Jossey-Bass, 2011).
- (5) Pontifical Council for Culture; Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, “Jesus Christ the Bearer of the Water of Life: A Christian reflection on the “New Age,” 2003 (3.3).
- (6) *Ibid.*, 7.1

No Balm in Gilead

By Jon Merrill

A recently-published essay on Catholic “social justice” – “The Origins of Social Justice: Taparelli d’Azeglio,” by Thomas Patrick Burke (president of Wynnewood Institute), *Modern Age*, spring 2010 – provokes some thoughts on the ironic shape-changing of words and catchphrases...and on “government charity.”

Not exactly a household name, Taparelli, but, according to the author:

Taparelli has a good claim to being the father of Catholic social teaching. One of his students was the Jesuit Matteo Liberatore, who wrote the first draft of Pope Leo XIII’s 1891 encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, the first papal statement on “the social question.” Leo himself...had been a student of Taparelli’s...and seems to have been influenced by him. Pius XI used to recommend the study of Taparelli’s works in conversations with his friends and colleagues.



Father Luigi Taparelli d’Azeglio

What’s more, he can lay claim to being the “inventor” of “social justice”...though definitely not in the sense usually associated with that term today, which is the point of Burke’s article: “‘Social justice’...was first used, to our knowledge, by the Jesuit philosopher, Luigi Taparelli d’Azeglio in 1843...”

Taparelli was a “conservative,” the author says, and he used “social justice” in a “conservative,” and non-economic sense:

Since the Second World War, however, ‘social justice’ has come to mean something very different. The *socialist* conception of it won out over its rivals and gained solitary possession of the field. ... It is one of the ironies of history that the quintessentially ‘liberal’ [in American usage] idea of ‘social justice’ should have been originated by an ardent conservative. [all emphases mine]

Summarizing what Taparelli intended by the term, the author writes:

From this brief account certain important things should be clear about Taparelli’s conception of social justice. Unlike the conception of social justice generally accepted in our society at the present time, which is *socialist*, and difficult, if not impossible, to harmonize with our ordinary conception of justice, Taparelli’s conception (1) is simply the ordinary and traditional conception of justice applied in a new area, namely the constitutional arrangements of society...(3) constitutes a defense of societal *inequality*, and (4) is conservative.” “Taparelli never used the term ‘social justice’ with reference to economic questions. Social justice for him is the constitutional justice of a society, the justice that defends right order in the constitutional arrangements of the society.” “Taparelli’s conception of social justice has been forgotten. But it, and indeed his entire political philosophy, is a serious contribution to conservative thought that ought to be better known than it is.

What specifically tickled me – as I go about making the argument that organized Catholic charities must reject government funding – is that *the very originator of the term “social justice”* – which has now come to imply total governmental control of all “charitable” and welfare activities – *himself opposed “government charity.”*

In Taparelli’s vision of a just, non-coercive “Catholic economy,” writes Burke:

...the poor will find themselves *free to lift themselves up* to wealth. *Taparelli does not place care for the poor among the duties of government, but of individuals. It is the duty of those who have the goods of this world to care for those who lack them*, and this should be reflected in the theoretical account of how an economy works successfully: “If economic science...wants to show us how, through the power of self-interest, wealth distributes itself between the proprietor, the capitalist, the worker, and the tax collector, it ought also to show us that *where Catholic*

charity reigns, the shares of the capitalist and the proprietor return to a large extent into the hands of the worker as a balm, leveling through generosity the inequalities of fortune.”

But Catholic charity no longer reigns. And I would assert that the large, mainstream Catholic “humanitarian” organizations have facilitated and encouraged its dethronement by themselves becoming mere agents of social (ist)-justice welfare states which are mechanistically and impersonally calculating, colossally wasteful, and ineffectual to boot. Organized “Catholic” charities have opted for a system of forced redistribution – ultimately heartless as well as mindless – over a “leveling through [genuinely charitable] generosity.” In so doing they have inured the Catholic people to the idea that charity itself – that is, voluntary charitable generosity – is something slightly disreputable, demeaning to both giver and receiver, and, after all, really unnecessary in a world where everyone’s basic material, if not spiritual, needs are being met by the social-justice welfare state. (See *Deus Caritas Est*, on the secularization of those “Catholic” agencies, and on the everlasting need for charity.) As a result...the balm is gone. Those legacy Catholic “charities” don’t make it anymore. They don’t even know how to make it.



We need some replacement, authentic Catholic charities which will be balmy, maybe, in both senses of the word. (“We preach Christ crucified through nongovernmental, voluntary *caritas*: Unto the Jews, and the diocesan justice-and-peace committees a stumbling block; unto the Gentiles and the USCCB, a balminess.” 1 Corinthians 1:23) ☞

Jon Merrill has worked more than 20 years as a program manager for international ‘relief and development’ and refugee-assistance organizations. He is promoting Militia Caritatis Dei, an initiative to establish an orthodox and traditional, international Catholic charity focused on supporting authentic Catholic education and that—out of prudence and principle—is truly NON-governmental, i.e., that accepts NO government funding.

Correction: The artist featured in last month’s Pepper, who painted Christ the Revolutionary, is David Silvah of Baja Mexico. Apologies for the typo.

“Charity is injurious unless it helps the recipient to become independent of it.”

—John D. Rockefeller



“We can’t buy the entire concept, Mr. Hood; but that part about taking from the rich has potential.”

Nuptiality: The Not-So-Underground Stream

By Marie P. Loehr

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. —*The Song of Solomon* 1:1

John Paul II's weekly audiences on the nuptiality of the body presented an explication of the sacramentality of the body: its relationship to our being made "in the image and likeness of God," and the implications of that for our understanding of marriage and priesthood. Ever since, commentators have been either scandalized or delighted. There does not seem to be any middle ground.

The liberal and/or modernist faction is scandalized at John Paul's association of the sexual and the spiritual, whether implicit or explicit. This faction claims to be liberated where attitudes to sex were concerned. These are the people who gave us "situation ethics" - a false reading of Catholic morality criticized by Benedict XVI's address to the Rota this January. At the same time, these are the translators whose prudery, despite their claims to sexual liberation, gave us "fasten your belts around your waists," their pantywaist translation of "gird up your loins."

Liberals/modernists also could not deal with the Feast of the Circumcision and so re-named it the Feast of the Mother of God, although they are not notably devoted to Our Lady, *per se*. [We may wonder if the Mother of God was mollified, under the circumstances.]

Having long dissociated the sexual and the spiritual, body and spirit, liberals/modernists have a serious problem with the Theology of the Body.

Of course for schismatic traditionalists, anything from the mouth or hand of John Paul II is anathema. They do not regard him as a legitimate pope in the Petrine line.

Oddly enough, traditionalists loyal to Rome have trouble with the Theology of the Body as well. They too want to keep sexual and spiritual in separate, even airtight compartments. They do not espouse situation ethics or sexual liberation in terms of traditional Catholic teaching on sexual morality. For them, the issue becomes a matter of violating what is fitting and proper.

In all this lie the roots of heresy. Heresy begins when someone takes one small part of Church teaching and distorts the teaching in itself or inflates it to be the whole teaching instead of a part. When we scratch a heresy, no matter what its chameleon appearance, we will find Gnosticism under the surface—either as contempt for material Creation and incarnation, or as a pharisaical reverence for God's purity, carrying holier-than-thou to new heights.

None of these attitudes are Catholic. They are Gnostic, claiming secret or superior knowledge and purity. Lucifer's original Gnosticism infects conservatives/traditionalists as much as it does liberals/modernists, however it masquerades as freedom for the liberal point of view, or reverence for the conservative.

John Paul cuts through all this pseudo-pious contempt for body and false hyper-reverence for spirit. He refutes the recoil from the sexual as God made it, and the overemphasis on the purely spiritual. Both these un-Catholic attitudes, however subliminal, have damaged our understanding of man, woman, and marriage in Christ. This distorted understanding, or lack of understanding, has affected our view of priesthood as well.

Even in the late 1950s and early 1960s Pius XII and Dietrich von Hildebrand spoke of the need to eliminate such distortions from Catholic teaching on marriage, love and sexuality.

Pius XII called Dietrich von Hildebrand "a twentieth century doctor of the Church." Neither Pius himself nor von Hildebrand are lightweights when it comes to theology and philosophy. They provide substantive statements that pre-date, and support, John Paul II in his later work.

In his book *Man and Woman* von Hildebrand observes that many well-intentioned Christian commentators detach spousal love and its ecstatic character from the fullness of marital union on all its levels. He notes that some have claimed this is nothing but "disguised sex instinct." Worse, he says, "It is possible to approach the sphere of sex in man as a mere subdivision of the realm of instincts and biological urges, as if it had *no intrinsic relation to the spiritual sphere* . . ." [Italics mine]

This work was published in 1966, and its pre-publication meditation and development pre-dates John Paul II's



Theology of the Body by as much as two decades. It is preceded by von Hildebrand's own lifetime of thought and in-depth reflection on these issues.

Pius XII himself says in *The Pope Speaks*, p. 27:

The conjugal act, in its natural structure, is a personal action, a simultaneous and immediate co-operation of the husband and wife, which, owing to the very nature of the agents and the propriety of the act, is the expression of the reciprocal gift which, according to the word of Scripture, effects the union "in one flesh."

This could have come straight from John Paul II himself, although it was first published in 1940, then published again in 1957. This emphasizes the continuity of John Paul's thought and teaching with that of a pope so revered by traditionalist Catholics.

Yet John Paul II is frequently criticized by neo-Thomists as dangerously innovative, even offensive, in his treatment of the sacramentality of the body. He reminds us that God intended man to be a full union of body and spirit. As in *Familiaris Consortio*, he speaks of the marriage of man and woman as a sign of the union of body and spirit in each human being, God's fully intended plan and order of Creation.

He presents the body's signification as an outward sign of an inward grace in its own right, as intended by God. His teaching simply expands the deeply valid insights of his predecessor on marriage and its implications.

Pius XII also spoke of restoring the fullness of love and its role—spiritual and sexual—to the legalistic aspects of marriage, as it had been taught for so long by individuals in the Church.

Von Hildebrand goes to the heart of the matter when he says:

We must, finally, free ourselves from seeing in the bodily union something evil, for whose actualization in marriage one must desperately try to find a reason which can explain why this evil may be tolerated in marriage. We must learn to see that the bodily union, destined to be the fulfillment of spousal love and an ultimate mutual self-donation, is as such something noble and a great mystery, a sacred land which we should approach with deep reverence and never without a specific sanction of God. [*Man and Woman*, p. 54]

So how is John Paul's fulfillment of Pius XII's desire, and von Hildebrand's statement a dangerous innovation? How is this a departure from mainstream Catholic teaching? How is it disrespect for God's purity and holiness, given the weight of long-established traditions of nuptiality in fathers, doctors, mystics and magisterium?

Shall we believe the putative "defenders of the faith" and their claims? Or should we look to long-established Church belief and understanding, beyond individual commentators and teachers who have not the breadth and depth of the Church at its core?

We must first consider the cornerstones of John Paul's teaching.

What are his sources?

Some commentators blame Hans Urs von Balthasar for what they regard as dangerous doctrinal novelty, which is to say, unwarranted innovation that owes nothing to mainstream Tradition. We do not have to advert to Balthasar or renegade sources of any sort to discover the foundation for the Theology of the Body.

Scripture is the primary, pre-eminent source for John Paul's examination of the relation between human incarnation, its body/spirit mesh—including its sexuality, and its relation to God. After that, there is plenty of material in the patristic writings and in the writings of the great mystics throughout Church history, including Thomas Aquinas.

But perhaps the most vital, and overlooked, source for this nuptial theology is the Trinity itself. ☩



Philosopher Dietrich von Hildebrand

[To be continued]

Florida Bishop Victor Galeone Warns against the *American Catholic Council*

Statement of Bishop Galeone Regarding the *American Catholic Council's* "North Florida Listening Assembly" (Feb. 19, 2011)

It has come to my attention that an organization called the *American Catholic Council* (ACC) will be holding what they describe as the "North Florida Listening Assembly" in Jacksonville on Saturday, Feb. 19, 2011. Self-described as "seeking to reclaim the promise of the Holy Spirit manifested in Vatican II," this assembly is billed as "a day of reflection and stimulating dialogue" – all in preparation for a national gathering to be held in Detroit in June of 2011. I want to clearly and unequivocally advise all Catholics that this North Florida Listening Assembly is not conducted under the auspices of the Diocese of St. Augustine, nor is it sanctioned, approved or endorsed by the diocese or any other entity of the Roman Catholic Church.

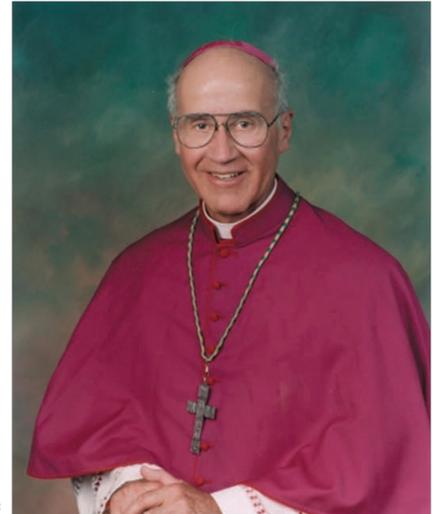
Although the stated purpose of the ACC is to "reclaim the promise of the Holy Spirit manifested in Vatican II," in fact, the goals proposed in their literature, as well as the organizations which make up the ACC, are largely in opposition to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council and the Holy Spirit, which inspired that Council.

I commend and embrace all true efforts at Church renewal, but the ACC's agenda is decidedly not such an effort. Many of the groups which have banded together in the ACC espouse positions which are clearly contrary to Catholic faith and morals, and which engender only alienation and estrangement from the Church.

Accordingly, the Diocese of St. Augustine cautions any Catholic against participating in this North Florida Listening Assembly, as well as the national assembly to be held in June in Detroit. Catholic parishes, schools, and institutions are not to host any meetings, gatherings, or "listening sessions" associated with either event or with the ACC.

Additionally, priests, deacons, and lay ministers are expected to avoid these events, and to strongly urge the faithful not to attend or support them or the ACC in any manner. I ask, rather, that we all pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit and shun efforts which threaten the unity of the Church for which Christ, himself, so fervently prayed.

Bishop Victor Galeone
Diocese of Saint Augustine



Bishop Victor Galeone, Diocese of St. Augustine, Florida

The American Catholic Council is the latest iteration of dissenting Catholics in the United States. The group is promoting an autochthonous – that is, "native" – American Catholic Church. Being American and therefore, presumably, holding democratic ideals as a cultural birthright, this new, American Catholic "church" would elect its bishops and write a constitution for itself "that carefully puts aside the Rome-based secretive, half-vast, culturally-conditioned legalisms codified in canon law in return for the kind of servant Church envisioned at Vatican II."

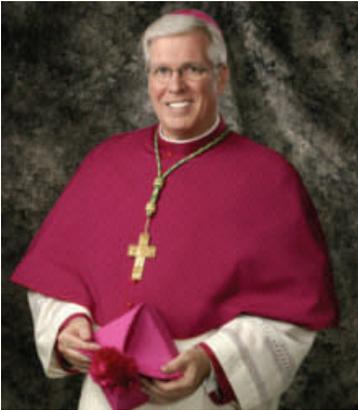
[www.takebackourchurch.org/node/3, Mar 25, 2009]

Other bishops have also issued advisories about ACC and its "listening sessions" around the country. Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron of the Archdiocese of Detroit writes: "Priests, deacons, and ecclesial lay ministers will want to avoid lending support to such a misguided effort. On behalf of the archdiocese, Archbishop Vigneron has asked the organizers to cancel their plans for this national gathering that distorts the true Spirit of Vatican II."

Bishop-Hero from the Diocese of Venice in Florida

In 2007, the Diocese of Venice, Florida got a new bishop, Frank Dewane. In three short years, he has radically changed a perfectly “open diocese” under Bishop John Nevins to one his detractors call “efficient, hyper-conservative, and very close to the Vatican where he travels quite frequently.”

The complaints include Bishop Dewane acting as though he owns the place. For example, he’s been dropping in *unannounced* at parish liturgies to check for liturgical propriety (*imagine* such a thing!) and bringing in new priests, many from abroad and outside the diocese (which is what happens when a diocese doesn’t foster vocations).



**Bishop Frank Dewane,
Diocese of Venice in Florida**

Then, he abolished the permanent diaconate program in the diocese and “accepted” resignation of many active deacons as of March 31, 2010—namely, those unable to accept the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM). He permits no female Extraordinary Eucharistic ministers, lectors, or acolytes at his own Masses. He has established a “Latin Mass” parish under the Fraternity of St. Peter and requires a parish in each region to offer at least one Latin Mass per Sunday.

All parish and diocesan ministers and employees are asked to sign an oath of loyalty and obedience to the bishop. Parish and diocesan employees may not attend speaker programs or meetings such as the *American Catholic Council* listening sessions, the VOTF speaker series, and CTA meetings (can you *believe* it?).

The chancery reviews material including paid advertising in the diocesan newspaper and excludes ads for dissenting groups such as VOTF. Dissident professors at the Rice School for Pastoral Ministry have been replaced, dissident books have been removed from the library, and its *Call to Action* librarian was dismissed.

The bishop closed the “ecumenical” House of Prayer operated by an order of religious women—because it wasn’t providing Catholic programs. He terminated flawed “support” ministries for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) oriented. He’s tightening up the financial accountability of the parishes (which is *really* making the old guard angry). ..and, heck, he even banned a YOGA class, for crying out loud!

How do we clone this man?

Parish and diocesan employees may not attend speaker programs or meetings such as the American Catholic Council listening sessions.

“[The] right to life and dignity of every person...are fundamental to the health of any society and should therefore, be carefully considered when voting for a particular candidate. After all, in voting we are making moral choices. As Catholics, we are called upon to respect and protect the rights of all, especially, the unborn child, the weakest and most vulnerable among us. At the same time, the family, the basic unit of society, must be safeguarded, promoted, and protected based on monogamous marriage between a man and a woman.”

—Bishop Frank Dewane

Does Canadian Health Care Foreshadow US?

As of mid February, one-year-old Joseph Maraachli of Windsor, Ontario has been sentenced to be removed from life support after the Ontario Superior Court rejected an appeal by the parents to bring their son home to die.

“Monday at 10 am they will kill my baby,” Moe Maraachli, Joseph’s father, told LifeSiteNews shortly after the ruling. “There’s no more humanity. There’s no more chance. I’ve tried everything for him. No more appeals, nothing.”

“I asked them: why not send him to Windsor and let him die at home?” he continued. “They said they will give him injection [to make the resulting suffocation more “peaceful”], but I don’t want to.”

“I ask God, and maybe he breathe,” he added.

The child was taken to Victoria Hospital in London, Ontario in October where he was diagnosed with a rare, progressive neurological disease that claimed Joseph’s sister eight years ago. Before her death, that baby spent her last six months at home, after receiving a tracheotomy— an incision in her airway to help breathing. Moe Maraachli wants his son to receive the same procedure so he can die at home, as well but the doctors refused, saying the procedure was “too risky.”

Superior Court Justice Helen Rady sided with the hospital, ruling that Joseph is in a permanent vegetative state with no brain stem reflex. She called it “a sad and difficult case,” according to the London Free Press, and ordered the hospital to allow the parents until Monday at 10 am “to afford the family adequate time to say their goodbyes.”

Alex Schadenberg, executive director of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, who has been communicating with the parents, emphasized that they aren’t pushing for extraordinary treatment, just asking to care for their dying child at home. “They’re arguing that the best way to do that is by doing a tracheotomy so

the child can somewhat breathe on his own and care for him while he’s dying,” he explained.

“I don’t get it. There’s nothing here that I get. It makes no sense,” he said. “What is in this for the hospital and the doctor? Why would they bother doing this?”

Schadenberg said the court appears to be saying that hospitals and doctors can make decisions for patients whether they like it or not. “It’s worse than the death panel concept that’s being debated in the US. It really is, it’s much worse,” he said. “They’re saying ‘we will decide’, they’re not even going to converse with you. ‘We have the weight of the Court, we have the financial bearing of a massive government institution to be able to force this on you. That has serious repercussions, because you simply cannot trust the moral authority of the health care institution or the doctors.’”

Moe Maraachli says he will fight for his son “until the last second of his life.”

“I think this is my job as a father,” he said.

“I don’t want to blame myself. If I accept my doctor’s right to let my baby pass away, I will say all my life, ‘I blame myself. I did nothing for my baby to let him die by violence.’”



Moe Maraachli with his son Joseph whose life support was removed in February against his parents' wishes.



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



All Washed Up

By Father Finigan,
author of *The Hermeneutic Of
Continuity* blog

I am heartily sick of the protest "I don't go to Mass because my parents *forced* me to go when I was young." OK Son, what else did your parents *force* you to do?

Your parents *forced* you to wash before you went out in the morning. Those cruel tyrants made sure that you cleaned your teeth before you went to bed. They dragged you kicking and screaming to school so that you could learn to read - and the teachers collaborated by *forcing* you to learn the alphabet and put the words together.

To top it all, after looking after your physical needs, they had the temerity to exercise their authority by looking after your spiritual needs and taking you to Mass on Sunday.

If they had neglected to see that you were clean, had suitable clothes, eat some sort of nourishing food, get some education and cross the road safely, they would have been visited by social services and given a care plan so that you could be healthy and safe.

And you are complaining because they took responsibility for your eternal life?

In this context, it is relevant to quote again the classic:

Ten reasons why I never wash

1. I was forced to as a child.
2. People who wash are hypocrites - they think they are cleaner than everybody else.
3. There are so many different kinds of soap, I can't decide which one is best.
4. I used to wash, but I got bored and stopped.
5. I wash only on special occasions, like Christmas and Easter.
6. None of my friends wash.
7. I'll start washing when I get older and dirtier.
8. I can't spare the time.
9. The bathroom is never warm enough in winter or cool enough in summer.
10. People who make soap are only after your

March Calendar

Los Pequeños Monthly Meeting
March 18, 2011
Call (505) 293-8006 for information.

Pro-life Prayer:

Planned Parenthood Abortuary
701 San Mateo Blvd.
Holy Innocents Chapel:
(505) 266-4100
Times: Daily 8 AM – 3 PM

Helpers of God's Precious Infants

Planned Parenthood Abortuary
701 San Mateo Blvd.
Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays: 8 AM – 11:30 AM
Wednesdays: 12 Noon – 3:00 PM
For more information, call Phil Leahy:
(505) 440-3040

Mass at the Holy Innocents Chapel

at noon
Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday
For more information, call
(505) 266-4100



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are archived at:**

www.lospequenos.org

Check out *Project Defending Life's* radio show, **Lifetalk**, which airs on 1050 AM KTBL every Saturday at 2:00 pm till 3:00 pm.

“We’ve had enough of exhortations to be silent! Cry out with a hundred thousand tongues. I see that the world has become rotten because of silence.”

~ St. Catherine of Siena

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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