

Los Pequeños Pepper

Publication of Los Pequeños de Cristo

May 2008



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Stephanie Block-editor, Carol Suhr-copy editor
Correspondence to *The Pequeños Pepper* may be addressed to:
325 Ellen St. NW
Los Lunas, NM 87031
Phone: 505-866-0977 or email: www.lospequeños.org
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We are an Archdiocesan wide Catholic lay organization committed to a charitable defense of the Catholic Faith by means of education, communication, and prayer. We are devoted to the Roman Catholic Magisterium, the Holy Father, and to the bishops and clergy in union with him. Our members believe what the Church believes and we promote what the Church teaches. To this end, we believe that no individual, whether cleric or lay person, has the right to alter the substance of the gospel message or moral truths which have been inerrantly and infallibly held by the Catholic Church since Her founding.

Religion and the Common Good

By Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.

Sooner or later, every teacher hears the same old joke about the philosophy student and his dad.

The dad asks, “Son, what are you going to do with that goofy degree?” And the son says, “I’m going to open a philosophy shop and make big money selling ideas.” I smile every time I hear it, because nobody yet has figured out how to get rich off the Sartre or Kierkegaard or Friedrich Nietzsche franchise. Or that’s what I thought until a couple of weeks ago, when a friend of mine came back from a local bookstore with a bag full of Nietzsche’s *Will to Power Bars*.

You’ll remember that Nietzsche first claimed that God was dead. Then he went insane. Then he argued that he was God himself. Now he has his own candy bar. In fact, the wrapper not only claims to be filled with “chocolate goodness” but also to be “the official nutritional supplement of the superman.” Unfortunately, the wrapper also urges us to “think beyond good and evil,” so I’m not sure it’s telling the truth.

The company that makes these candy bars is the *Unemployed Philosophers Guild*. It was started by a couple of academics who couldn’t get a job. The guild also makes a Franz Kafka finger puppet and a “Here’s Looking at Euclid” T-shirt. It also makes the Karl Marx Little Thinker beanie doll and Impeachment mints, the anti-George Bush breath sweetener. In the words of the company’s founders: “It turned out that making smart, funny things proved to be almost as satisfying as probing eternal questions. . . . Although we still contemplate truth and justice, it is our enduring goal to fulfill the materialistic desires of the funny and sophisticated everywhere.”

I don’t know if Nietzsche himself would endorse these bars. Given his mental state at the end of his life, I’m not sure he’d care. But he did have a ruthless sense of humor. Nietzsche might enjoy the fact that he’s the kind of thinker young college men quote to impress young college women. He has some of the same rebel appeal that Milton gave to Lucifer and Goethe gave to Mephistopheles. He’s bold. He’s radical. And the fact that he also went mad adds just the right touch of drama. In other words, he makes a great cultural icon for Americans to eat as a candy bar, because most Americans will never read a word of what he actually said.

The trouble is, once upon a time, some people in Germany did read him. And they did take him seriously. And they acted on what he said. Ideas have consequences. When Nietzsche asks us on the back of a Will to Power candy bar, “Is man merely a mistake of God’s, or God merely a mistake of man?,” we Americans can swallow our chocolate along with our Starbucks and grin at the irony from the comfort of 2007. Sixty years ago, no one would have gotten the joke. There was nothing funny about the Holocaust.

In other words, ideas have consequences—which brings me to today’s topic. When Cardinal Rigali first invited me to come to Philadelphia to talk about religion and the common good, I accepted for two simple reasons. First, I’m tired of the Church and her people being told to be quiet on public issues that urgently concern us. And second, I’m tired of Christians themselves being silent because of some misguided sense of good manners. Self-censorship is an even bigger failure than allowing ourselves to be bullied by outsiders.

Only one question really matters. Does God exist or not? If he does, that has implications for every aspect of our personal and public behavior: all of our actions, all of our choices, all of our decisions. If God exists, denying him in our public life—whether we do it explicitly like Nietzsche or implicitly by our silence—cannot serve the common good, because it amounts to worshiping the unreal in the place of the real.

Religious believers built this country. Christians played a leading role in that work. This is a fact, not an opinion. Our entire framework of human rights is based on a religious understanding of the dignity of the human person as a child of his or her Creator. Nietzsche once said that “convictions are more dangerous enemies of truth than lies.”

In fact, the opposite is often true. Convictions can be the seeds of truth incarnated in a person’s individual will. The right kinds of convictions guide us forward. They give us meaning. *Not* acting on our convictions is cowardice. As Christians we need to live our convictions in the public square with charity and respect for others, but also firmly, with courage and without apology. Anything less is a form of theft from the moral witness we owe to the public discussion of issues. We can never serve the common good by betraying who we are as believers or compromising away what we hold to be true.

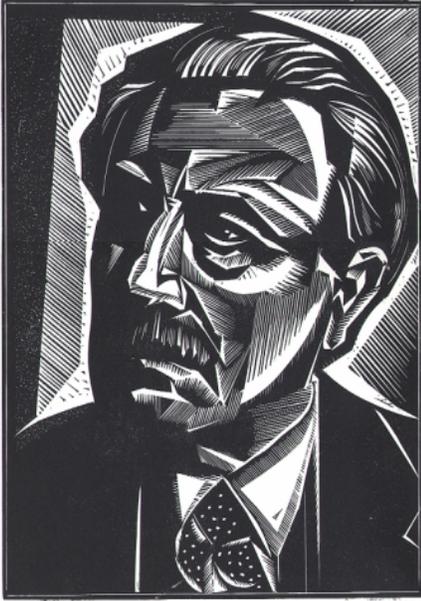
Unfortunately, I think the current American debate over religion and the public square has much deeper roots than the 2006 and 2004 elections, or John Kennedy’s 1960 election—or the Second Vatican Council, for that matter. A crisis of faith and action for Christians has been growing for many years in Western society. It’s taken longer to have an impact here in the United States because we’re younger as a nation than the countries in Europe, and we’ve escaped some of Europe’s wars and worst



social and religious struggles.

But Americans now face the same growing spiritual illness that J.R.R. Tolkien, G.K. Chesterton, Christopher Dawson, Romano Guardini, and C.S. Lewis all wrote about in the last century. It's a loss of hope and purpose that comes from the loss of an interior life and a living faith. It's a loss that we can only make bearable by creating a culture of material comfort that feeds—and feeds off of—personal selfishness.

No one understood this better than Georges Bernanos. Most of us remember Bernanos for his novels, especially *The Diary of a Country Priest* and *Under Satan's Sun*. Some of us may remember that he was one of the major European Catholic writers to reject the Franco uprising in Spain. He spent the Second World War in South America out of disgust with European politics, both right and left. He didn't have a sentimental bone in his body. He criticized Catholic politicians, Church leaders, and average Catholics in the pew with the same and sometimes very funny relish. But he loved the Church, and he believed in Jesus Christ. And exactly sixty years ago, in 1946 and 1947, he gave a final series of lectures that predicted where our civilization would end up today with complete clarity. Regnery published the lectures in English in 1955 as *The Last Essays of Georges Bernanos*. I hope you'll read them for yourselves. They're outstanding. Bernanos had an unblinkered vision of the "signs of the times." Remember that, just after the Second World War, France experienced a Catholic revival. Recovering from a global conflict and the Holocaust, the world in general and France in particular seemed to turn back—briefly—to essentials. It was during that hopeful season that the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council gave us *Guadium et Spes*.



Georges Bernanos

But Bernanos always saw the problems beneath the veneer. He wasn't fooled by the apparent revival of Catholic France. And so his work is a great corrective to the myth that our moral confusion started in the 1960s. As Bernanos makes clear, our problems began with the machine age—the industrial revolution—but not simply because of machines. They were the fruit of a "de-spiritualization" that had been going on for some time.

Bernanos argues that the optimism of the modern West is a kind of whistling past the graveyard. The Christian virtue of hope, he reminds us, is a hard and strong thing that disciplines and "perfects" human appetites. It has nothing to do with mere optimism. Real Christian hope comes into play as the obstacles to human happiness seem to grow higher.

Bernanos takes it upon himself to show us just how high the obstacles to real human freedom have become, even in liberal democracies. He argues that our modern optimism is a veneer over a despair bred by our greed and materialism. We try to fool ourselves that everything will turn out for the best, despite all the evidence to the contrary—crime, terrorism, disease, poverty—and we even concoct a myth of inevitable progress to shore up our optimism. American optimism in particular—Bernanos refers to the United States bitterly as "the Rome, the Mecca, the holiest sanctuary of this civilization"—is really only the eager restlessness of unsatisfied appetites.

Two themes dominate these last essays by Bernanos. The first is man's eagerness to abolish, forget, or rewrite his own history in favor of determinisms like liberal capitalism, which makes society nothing more than a market system, and Marxism. For Bernanos, the attack on human memory and history is a primary mark of the Antichrist.

As Bernanos explains it, big ideological systems "mechanize" history with high-sounding language like progress and dialectics. But in doing so, they wipe out the importance of both the past—which they describe as primitive, unenlightened, or counterevolutionary—and the present, which is not yet the paradise of tomorrow. The future is where salvation is to be found for every ideology that tries to eliminate God, whether it's explicitly atheistic or pays lip service to religious values. Of course, this future never arrives, because progress never stops and the dialectic never ends.

Christianity and Judaism see life very differently. For both of them, history is a place of human decision. At every moment of our lives, we're asked to choose for good or for evil. Therefore, time has weight. It has meaning. The present is vitally important as the instant that will never come again; the moment where we are not determined by outside forces but self-determined by our free will. Our past actions make us who we are today. But each "today" also offers us another chance to change our developing history. The future is the fruit of our past and present choices, but it's always unknown, because each successive moment presents us with a new possibility.

Time and freedom are the raw material of life because time is the realm of *human choice*. Bernanos reminds us that the Antichrist wants us to think that freedom really doesn't exist, because when we fail to choose, when we slide through life, we in effect choose for him. Time is the Devil's enemy. He lives neither in the eternity of God nor in the realm of man. Satan has made his choice against God and he is forever fixed in that choice. But as long as man lives in time, which is the realm of change, man may still choose in favor of God. And, of course, God is always offering the help of his grace to do just that. If the Devil can sell us the idea that history is a single, determined mechanism; if humanity's freedom of will can be forgotten or denied; then man will drift, and the Antichrist will win.

Incidentally, if he were alive today, Bernanos might throw an interesting light on the language of the abortion debate. When we examine "pro-choice" vocabulary, it really isn't about choice at all. Instead, it's phrased in terms of "what choice did I have?" "I couldn't choose *not* to have sex." "I couldn't choose *not* to kill the child." "You have no right to expect more from

me; I *had* to have an abortion, and so I had a right to do it.” In the abortion debate, pro-choice means agreeing to the fiction that nobody really had a choice. As for the Devil, rapid technological change very much serves his purposes in any bioethical debate by helping us believe that only the future matters and that there isn’t time to consider fundamental questions.

Just a hundred years ago, our material lives were not all that different from what they had been a thousand years before. Men walked and rode and tilled and sold. Suddenly, things have changed more in a hundred years than they had in the previous five thousand. And we expect things to be different tomorrow from what they are today. What Bernanos says in his essays about the atomic bomb, we could say today about the technological tsunami that engulfs and submerges our lives. To a consumer culture that says we’re essentially animals and smart monkeys incapable of restraint, technology has now given the most dangerous machines. Can they have come from God? Bernanos doesn’t seem to think so.

One of my favorite passages from Frank Sheed is this:

It’s incredible how long science has succeeded in keeping men’s minds off their fundamental unhappiness and its own very limited power to remedy their fundamental unhappiness. One marvel follows another—electric light, phonograph, motor car, telephone, radio, airplane, television. It’s a curious list, and very pathetic. The soul of man is crying for hope of purpose or meaning; and the scientist says, “Here is a telephone” or “Look, television!”—exactly as one tries to distract a baby crying for its mother by offering it sugar-sticks and making funny faces.

The tidal wave of our toys, from iPods to the Internet, is equally effective in getting us to ignore history and ignore our own emptiness. The struggle for real human freedom depends upon the struggle for human history. Unlike the ideologies that deny the importance of the past and the present and focus on the illusions of a perfect future, Christianity sees the most important moments of the human story to be the past event of the Incarnation and the present moment of my individual opportunity to love.

The Christian faith is grounded in what God *has done*. Our love is what we choose to *do now*, and our hope is founded in God’s past acts of love and our present ones. Without history, there is no Christianity. So the fundamental question, for Bernanos, is “whether history is the story of mankind or merely of technology.” Modern man must be convinced again that he is free, that he can really choose in this moment of time between very different paths to very different futures. In the act of choosing, we regain history as our own.

But part of the reasoning needed to convince man of his freedom must include reaffirming *sacred* history. And that must include remembering and retelling the fundamental choices made by Adam and Eve and Mary and Jesus and all the intermediate choices for or against God in that history. In hearing our faith narrated, it becomes recognizable as a history of choice, leading us to the present moment of choice, right here and right now. So the first requirement in regaining human freedom is to regain human history, to tell the human story as a chronicle of free will.

For Bernanos, the act of remembering the love of God and the history of our salvation begins the only kind of revolution that matters. In the words of Bernanos, “It is a question of starting tomorrow, or even today, a revolution of liberty which will essentially also be an explosion of spiritual forces in the world, comparable to the one that occurred 2,000 years ago—in fact, the same.”

That revolution, the same revolution that “occurred 2,000 years ago,” is already underway in every believer who confesses passionately and unapologetically—in his private life and in her public witness—that Jesus Christ is Lord, the Son of God, the messiah of Israel, and the only savior of the world. Every other lens we use for understanding the human story, whether we choose economics or gender or Darwin or race or something else, will ultimately lie to us about who we are. And, of course, we also lie to ourselves.

In her short story “Greenleaf,” Flannery O’Connor once wrote about a widow called Mrs. May who owned a large dairy farm and who thought faith should be a very private matter. O’Connor described her this way: “Mrs. May winced. She thought the word, Jesus, should be kept inside the church building like other words inside the bedroom. She was a good Christian woman with a large respect for religion, though she did not, of course, believe any of it was true.”

If Mrs. May sounds familiar from daily life, she should. The deepest tragedy of our age is how many of our own people who *claim* to believe in Jesus Christ, really don’t prove it in the way they live their lives—and don’t like the inconvenience of being *asked* to prove it.

The “common good” is more than a political slogan. It’s more than what most people think they want right now. It’s not a matter of popular consensus or majority opinion. It can’t be reduced to economic justice or social equality or better laws or civil rights, although all these things are vitally important to a healthy society.

The common good is what best serves human happiness in the light of what is real and true. That’s the heart of the matter: *What is real and true?* If God exists, then the more man flees from God, the less true and real man becomes. If God exists, then a society that refuses to acknowledge or publicly talk about God is suffering from a peculiar kind of insanity.

What can the “common good” mean in the context of Nietzsche’s superman or Marx or Freud or Darwin? These men became the architects of our age. But they were also just the latest expressions of a much deeper and more familiar temptation to human pride. We want to be gods, but we’re not. When we try to be, we diminish ourselves.

That’s our dilemma. That’s the punishment we create for ourselves. There’s a terrible humor in a man who claims that God



Frank Sheed



**Charles J. Chaput,
O.F.M. Cap.,
Archbishop of Denver.**

is dead, then starts believing he's Dionysius or Jesus Christ, and then ends up on a candy bar made by out-of-work philosophers for middle-class consumers who just want some "chocolaty goodness."

Humility is the beginning of sanity. We can't love anyone else until we can see past ourselves. And man can't even be man without God. The humility to recognize who we are as creatures, who God is as our Father, what God asks from each of us, and the reality of God's love for other human persons as well as ourselves—this is the necessary foundation that religion brings to every discussion of free will, justice, and truth, and to every conversation about "the common good." Sirach and the Psalms and the Gospel of Luke and the Letter of James—these Scriptures move the human heart *not* because they're beautiful writings. They're beautiful writings because they spring from what we know in our hearts to be true.

Bernanos once said that "the world will be saved only by free men. We must make a world for free men." He also said that prudence—or rather, the kind of caution and fear that too often pose as prudence—is the one piece of advice he never followed. "When trouble is looking for you," he said, "it's primarily a question of facing it, since it would be still more dangerous to turn your back on it. In that case, prudence is only the alibi of the cowardly."

We most truly serve the common good by having the courage to be disciples of Jesus Christ. God gave us a free will, but we need to use it. Discipleship has a cost. Jesus never said that we didn't need a spine. The world doesn't need affirmation. It needs *conversion*. It doesn't need the approval of Christians. It needs their *witness*. And that work needs to begin with us. Bernanos said that the "scandal of Creation [isn't] suffering but freedom." He said that "moralists like to regard sanctity as a luxury; actually it is a necessity." He also said that "one may believe that this isn't the era of the saints; that the era of the saints has passed. [But] it is *always* the era of the saints."

The only thing that matters is to be a saint. At least we can try. And if we do, God will take care of the rest. /

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"Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."
(Zech. 4:6b)

Alinsky and the 2008 Elections

By Stephanie Block

By this point, most people are aware that **Hillary Clinton**, a contender for the Democrat Party's nomination as a candidate in the 2008 presidential elections, wrote an analysis of Saul Alinsky's organizational theories for her college thesis. She had met Alinsky through a church group and remained in touch with him until his death in 1972.

Alinsky was an interesting acquaintance for an ambitious politician. He founded the *Industrial Areas Foundation* in 1940 and authored two books on organizing, *Reveille for Radicals* and *Rules for Radicals*—the latter written as a poor man's Machiavelli. In these works, he observed that the worldly mechanisms for power come from money and large numbers of organized people. Therefore, Alinsky taught his "people's organizations," in their quest for power, to seek money and numbers.

Opponents were not to be treated "as persons but as symbols representing ideas...inimical to the welfare of the people." Who determined the "welfare of the people?" The organizer, of course.

The Marxist notion of class conflict predicated his worldview. In politics, the "end justifies almost any means" and "all effective actions require the passport of morality". Along the same lines, Alinsky says that "the ethics of means and ends is that you do what you can with what you have and clothe it with moral garments....Moral rationalization is indispensable at all times of action whether to justify the selection or the use of ends or means." Don't flaunt your revolutionary ambitions, Alinsky taught his organizers – infiltrate. Look like the enemy. Talk like him. Get into his institutions and change them from within.

This is not the stuff of "good guys."

In fact, it is so exactly *not* good that when Machiavelli produced a similar set of practical principles for his prince, the Church promptly put his book on The Index. The fact that one can get his way unscrupulously – that unscrupulous means work – doesn't make it *good*.

Nor does the "preferential option for the poor" mean a separate moral code for the poor. Clinton's attraction to Alinskyian organizing is problematic.

Mrs. Clinton, however, wasn't the only Alinskyite seeking the Democrat Party presidential nomination. **Senator Barack Obama** was trained by Alinsky's *Industrial Areas Foundation*, taught workshops on the Alinsky method, and spent four years as a community organizer in Chicago. Later, he worked with ACORN and its offshoot Project Vote, which are branches of the Alinskyian network.

These two aspiring candidates, regardless of which party acquires the White House plum in November, are important for Catholics to consider. They both uphold abortion "rights" and special legal "rights" for homosexual behavior. They both support Planned Parenthood. And both have been trained by an organized, ideologically motivated network that gets a great deal of its *power* – that's right: money and people – from the Catholic Church.

Surely not, you gasp. The Catholic Church decries abortion as the greatest assault against human life yet known to mankind. The Catholic Church insists—against great social pressure to be silent — that homosexual behavior is "disordered."

Yet here is the Catholic Church filtering millions of dollars into the Alinskyian networks through its annual *Catholic Campaign for Human Development* and through its congregational support of various network affiliates. Therefore, here is the Catholic Church, supporting Alinskyian political activism.

So, whether or not an Alinskyite ends up as the next president – though it's possible one will – the Alinskyian cancer will continue to be fed by the very body most diametrically opposed to it. Alinsky would have been immensely gratified. /



Whether Senator Hillary Clinton (above) or Senator Barack Obama (below) wins - or neither - Alinskyian politics wins...thanks to its friends in the Catholic Church.

Adoration, Reparation, Spiritual Motherhood for Priests

Promulgated by the Congregation for the Clergy

“The vocation to be a spiritual mother for priests is hardly unknown, barely understood and consequently, rarely lived too little although fundamental and vitally important. It is a vocation that is often hidden, not apparent to the human eye, but intended to transmit spiritual life.”



Because this booklet is particularly beautiful in its original presentation, it is best read in the original publication PDF file presented by the Congregation for the Clergy: www.catholicculture.org/library/specialitems/adoration_for_priests.pdf

The Congregation for the Clergy, acknowledging “the place occupied and the role served by the Most Blessed Virgin Mary in Salvation history” entrusts “all Priests to Mary, the Mother of the High and Eternal Priest, bringing about in the Church a moment of prayer, placing 24-hour continuous Eucharistic adoration at the center, so that a prayer of adoration, thanksgiving, praise, petition, and reparation will be raised to God, incessantly and from every corner of the earth, with the primary intention of awakening a sufficient number of holy vocations to the priestly state and, at the same time, spiritually uniting with a certain spiritual maternity—at the level of the Mystical Body—all those who have already been called to ministerial priesthood and are ontologically formed to the one High and Eternal Priest.”

The Congregation asks diocesan bishops to take an active role in promoting Eucharistic adoration for this intention. It writes:

The vocation to be a spiritual mother for priests is hardly unknown, barely understood and consequently, rarely lived too little although fundamental and vitally important. It is a vocation that is often hidden, not apparent to the human eye, but intended to transmit spiritual life. Pope John Paul II, convinced of this, founded a cloistered convent in the Vatican where nuns would pray for his intentions as Supreme Pontiff.

The 40-page booklet includes wonderful stories of spiritual mothers: St. Monica, Eliza Vaughan, Blessed Maria Deluil Martiny, Servant of God Louise Margaret Claret de la Touche, Blessed Alessandrina da Costa, Servant of God Consolata Betrone, Berthe Petit, Venerable Conchita of Mexico, Anna Strang, St. Therese of Lisieux, and the Italian mothers of Lu Monferro. It also contains the testimony of several eminent priests on the role spiritual mothers played in their vocations.

“Let us live for souls, let us be apostles, let us save especially the souls of priests....Let us pray, let us suffer for them, and, on the last day, Jesus will be grateful.” - St. Therese of Lisieux /

Covenant: Mountain

By Marie P. Loehr

Yahweh, who has the right to enter your tent, or to live on your holy mountain?

*The man whose way of life is blameless, who always does what is right,
Who speaks the truth from his heart, whose tongue is not used for slander,
Who does no wrong to his fellow...honors those who fear Yahweh...*

-Ps. 15:1-4

Joseph, as a devout Jew, might very well understand that Mary, pregnant with Emmanuel, God with us, as the flaming thorn bush that reveals YHWH to Moses, a living embodiment of that thorn bush that burns with the presence of God [cf. Orthodox "Theotokos of the Burning Bush"] Did he also understand her as the living embodiment of the living Ark of the Covenant, containing in her womb the living Word?

As a descendent of David, however modern scholars might think this lineage attenuated by Joseph's time, he would surely remember the history of the Ark: its theft as the spoils of war by the Philistines, its return from a Philistia scourged by plague until it's returned to Israel, to David - its temporary resting place, its journey and its danger to unwary mortal men, until it rested in David's citadel in Jerusalem.

In the Tabernacle Tent of Moses in Sinai, the Ark - built carefully according to the Lord's own instructions - rested in that section of the interior veiled from all else, the Holy of Holies. After careful ritual purification, the priest entered this sanctum with trepidation, to deliver the offering of atonement for his people and their sins. There he also waited to receive the commands of the Lord. The Ark and its golden seat, flanked by a cherubim on either side was the resting place of the invisible God, in the Shekinah - pillar of cloud and fire - which was the sign of his presence, leading the Chosen People through Sinai.

It is glory to those who shelter and care for the Ark in humility and purity. It is also dangerous. The Philistines were visited with plague until they sent the captured Ark back to David. In the procession leading it to Jerusalem, it started to tip off the oxcart. The man who touched it to prevent its falling dropped dead on the spot. But David brings it into his citadel in Jerusalem, singing and dancing before it, rejoicing - not unlike a bridegroom bringing his beloved into his house, among his own people. We find this story in *1 Samuel 6*.

It is instructive. If we don't know this Old Testament background and history, we cannot understand this crucial foundation of the New Testament, Joseph's attitude to Mary, or his true humility and purity.

These images must surely have passed through Joseph's mind. His house will now become the Holy of Holies, the high place of Horeb. Who on earth is worthy to shelter the Ark and the *shekinah*.

In *1 Samuel* here is also a section where David seeks to build a house, a



Theotokos of the Burning Bush



St. Joseph, the Carpenter,
1640s, by Georges de la Tour

temple to honor the Lord, rather than offering Adonai no more than a nomad's tent. The Chosen People are no longer pilgrims en route to the Promised Land, or struggling to hold it against pagan tribes. It is time to build a fixed abode for God, or so David wishes. [NB: it is worth meditating on the relationship of David's conversation with YHWH in this respect, and comparing it with *Perelandra* by C.S. Lewis, and its prohibition against the Fixed Lands for the Perelandran Adam and Eve, until the time is ripe.]

In the chapters following *1 Samuel 6*, in essence YHWH reminds David of his personal presence and wanderings with his Chosen People. Christ will remind us in the gospels, yet again: "the foxes have dens, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." This is by choice. "God with us" goes where we go. He does not wait for us to follow him. He comes to us even in our sin and wandering the wastelands.

If the Israelites could say "my father was a wandering Aramean," so could Christ. YHWH is so firmly attached to his people by love and will and covenant, he is a wanderer in the wastelands, seeking us in the desert of sin. We're reminded of this again, when Christ speaks of the Spirit blowing where it will, and his own coming to bring wildfire, with his impatience that it be kindled. This ancient theme is lived in Christ's life from beginning to end. Joseph and Mary experience it from the first.

Mary's first recorded act after the Annunciation is to pick up and journey to her cousin Elizabeth, a journey from Galilee to Judea, through mountain and desert. The next journey for Mary, Joseph and the Child in her womb will be to Bethlehem at the mandate of the Roman Emperor. They will flee Bethlehem for Egypt to escape King Herod's murderous intent. Once back in Galilee there will be seasonal pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the great festivals. As Jesus grows in wisdom, age and grace, learning the tekton's trade [carpentry] from Joseph, they will travel to where the work is - around Galilee, to Sepphoris and Tiberius and Capharnaum. Jesus is intimately acquainted with travel, journey through hardship and hostility, from conception to death.

When Joseph takes Mary into his home, surely it is as David dancing before the Ark, bringing it into the citadel at Jerusalem. His trust is entirely in God and his angelic messenger, remembering the history of his people and his own forebears. Surely his awe and abasement are released into joy and thanksgiving.

Like the centurion, Joseph surely says, Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof. This is the basis for his concern and his initial decision to divorce his betrothed wife quietly, since God has singled her out for his own purposes. Joseph cannot see himself worthy that Mary should enter under *his* roof, so graced is she, as living shekinah of the Presence. Still less is he worthy that the Savior sheltered in the ark of her womb should be given into his charge. Even her cousin, Elizabeth, greets Mary with "who am I that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" This too suggests to us what Joseph felt and experienced in his spirit, mind, and heart.

But the Lord speaks through his angel, and Joseph is indeed healed of all doubt and uncertainty and false unworthiness. He rises up and brings Mary into his home immediately with the honor due such a bride, without undue ostentation, with all due reverence and awe. He will follow where the Shekinah leads him. It will take him all the way to the ultimate Promised Land, first of which is his house in Nazareth, finally to Paradise unbarred, to the fullness of his charge to be guardian of Christ's Church. This is doubly fitting, since Mary also embodies the Church. In Joseph's role as guardian of the Church, he protects and provides for it as he did so well for Mary, and her divine Son. /

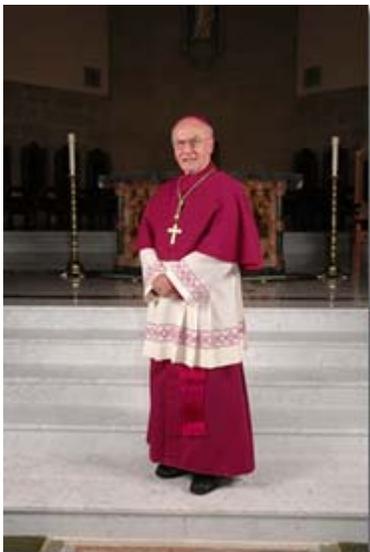
Around the World

Excommunication For Those Who Use Or Distribute Morning-after Pill Brazilian Archbishop Jose Cardoso Sobrinho condemned a plan by Recife city officials to distribute the morning-after pill during the upcoming Carnival festival and has warned that those who use the pill are subject to excommunication. "This policy is wicked and immoral, and in this case, both those who use it and those who incite its use are committing a crime punishable by excommunication," Archbishop Cardoso said. The Archbishop also noted that distribution of the abortifacient pill "is aberrant and illegal," since abortion is illegal in Brazil.

In related news, a Michigan pharmacist, Brian Bundy, was fired by Target for refusing to dispense the morning after pill. Bundy is now suing Target, claiming the retail giant knew of his religious beliefs when he was hired but forced him to choose between his faith and his job.

Scotland Catholic Bishop Warns of "Huge and Well Orchestrated Conspiracy" by Homosexual Activists

The Catholic bishop of Motherwell, Scotland—Bishop Joseph Devine—has called the successes of the homosexual political movement in recent years the result of a "huge and well-orchestrated conspiracy." He said that homosexual activists have found success by equating themselves with holocaust survivors and victims of racial violence to entirely reshape public opinion and government policies. The homosexual movement has succeeded in creating for itself the image of a subclass equivalent to a "race", "as if to create for themselves the image of a group of people under per-



His Excellency Joseph Devine, Bishop of Motherwell, Scotland

secution".

The bishop responded to criticisms, saying he stood by his remarks. "It is all about a lifestyle alien to the Christian tradition. There is a giant conspiracy against Christian values, an agenda here." In 2006, he blasted the Scottish Parliament for allowing homosexual partners to adopt children, calling it "yet another violation of family life".

Around the Nation

Archbishop Raymond Burke declares 3 Roman Catholic Womenpriests Excommunicated This past March, Raymond Burke, Archbishop of St. Louis, declared two Roman Catholic women who live in the St. Louis archdiocese and another in Germany excommunicated. The St. Louis area women, Rose Marie Hudson and Elsie Hainz McGrath, were ordained as priests by an organization called Roman Catholic Womenpriests in November. Their ordinations were not recognized by the Church, which can not ordain women.



Rose Marie Hudson

In a "Declaration of Excommunication" letter, Archbishop Burke accused the women of schism, "the refusal of submission to the Roman Pontiff or of communion with the members of the Church subject to him." He also declared the woman who led Hudson's and McGrath's ordinations, Patricia Fresen, a former Dominican nun from South Africa, excommunicated. Fresen, who lives in Germany, identifies herself as a "bishop".

In 2002, when Womenpriests was founded in Germany, seven women attempted ordination aboard a boat on the Danube River. All those women, dubbed the Danube Seven, were ex-



Elsie Hainz McGrath

communicated.

There are 53 "ordained" members of the organization in North America.

Excommunication is a grave penalty that "excludes the offender from taking part in the Eucharist or other sacraments and from the exercise of any ecclesiastical office, ministry, or function."



His Excellency Raymond Burke, Archbishop of St. Louis

The Problems of Medjugorje

By Dr. Tim Brady

Particularly evident in those rare venues in transition, or at least partially in transition, from faux-Catholicism to the Faith of All Time (Catholicism) are those people of very good will who have been misled by certain very significant deceptions.

I think we must expect these topics to arise over and over and we must be patient, but we must not hesitate to point out the truth, for the benefit of those deceived (an act of charity), but, even more importantly, to stop the spread of these very damaging deceptions within the Church itself. Germane to this, the topic of Medjugorje has again surfaced at our parish. Last week, during one of his catechism classes, Father repeated and explained the infallible Catholic dogma "*Extra-Ecclesiam Nulla Salus* (There is no salvation outside the Church)."

I was sitting in the very back and the wife of a very nice young couple very politely challenged Father on this dogma of the Faith. It was one of those situations where, although looking at the back of her head, I could tell that her face evinced her lack of conviction after Father's explanation.

The class soon ended and she came straight to me (I do not know why, because I remain very silent in that class) and said, "What about what Mary said at Medjugorje?"

"What is that?" I asked.

"That one religion is as good as another," she answered.

I did not have a lot of time, nor, I suppose, was I disposed at that moment to some sort of long explanation, so I opted to cut to the chase. "Medjugorje is a hoax," I replied, not expounding on the fact that a hoax is the most benign thing Medjugorje can be.

Well, that led to the predictable type of interchanges such as "What about the fact that Pope John Paul II said Medjugorje was good", and the like. I really (untypically) kept it brief. I was asked to produce on the spot the documents from the ordinaries of the Diocese of Mostar condemning the apparitions. I did not have them, but I brought them to the next meeting.

So let's back up. Let's ask ourselves, "What well-formed Catholic mind could not see immediately that any supposed apparition that claimed that all religions are just as pleasing to God as the Catholic religion could not possibly be Our Blessed Mother?" I mean, the discussion ends before it begins.

Now we are left with two possibilities:

1. There are no apparitions whatsoever. The whole thing is a hoax and a type of mass hysteria, if of the seemingly pious type, or...
2. Something is appearing and impersonating Our Blessed Mother. This is, at least to me, the more sobering option.

In either event, I believe we need to take the whole phenomenon very seriously. I am not a student of Medjugorje nor do I really wish to be. I am frying other fish. But it did later come up in conversation and the reasonable question was asked, "Well, did whatever is supposed to be appearing at Medjugorje really say that?"

Excellent question. I *assumed* that it had been said because I have heard it more times than I can count from Medjugorje devotees. But that is intellectually lazy so I did a quick search on the internet for that supposed "teaching" of whatever this is at Medjugorje.

I came up with a lot of hits, but the following one, I think, expresses all of this much better than I am currently doing: <http://www.unitypublishing.com/Apparitions/Medjugorjecraig.html>.



Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church

[Excerpts from Craig Questions Medjugorje...]

Below are the problematic statements...written in books by those who believe and support the apparitions at Medjugorje:

Question to Vicka: “There are millions of people on earth who are not Christian - what does the Blessed Mother want of them?”

Vicka: “To pray. All people on earth are born with knowledge of God in their hearts. Everyone has his own way to pray. The Blessed Mother is the mother of all people on earth. She has a mother’s love for them all, and her messages, which are from God, are for everyone.

Question: “Then it doesn’t matter what name or person they call God?”

Vicka: There is only one God. It is man who makes divisions.”

(Page 51, *Queen of the Cosmos* by Connell)

Question to Vicka: “Is the Blessed Mother calling all people on earth to be Catholic?”

Vicka: “No! The Blessed Mother says all religions are dear to her and her Son. She says it is we on earth who have made division.”

(Page 119, *The Visions of the Children*, Connell)

Interview with Mirjana by Father Tomislav Vlasic

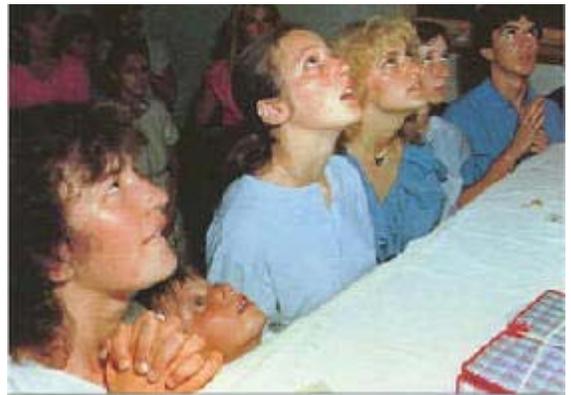
Mirjana: “The Madonna always stresses that there is but one God, and that people have enforced unnatural separation. One cannot truly believe, be a true Christian, if he does not respect other religions as well. You do not really believe in God if you make fun of other religions.”

Father: “What, then, is the role of Jesus Christ, if the Moslem religion is a good religion?”

Mirjana: “We did not discuss that.” (The role of our Lord Jesus Christ)

“She merely explained, and deplored, the lack of religious unity, ‘especially in the villages.’ She said that everybody’s religion should be respected, and of course one’s own.”

(Page 124, *The Apparitions of Our Lady at Medjugorje*, Kraljevic)



Six young visionaries in Medjugorje (early 1980s)

By comparison, Pope Pius IX condemned the following propositions as errors:

1. Man may, in the observance of any religion whatever, find the way of eternal salvation, and arrive at eternal salvation.”
2. Good hope at least is to be entertained of the eternal salvation of all those who are not at all in the true Church of Christ.
3. Every man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, guided by the light of reason, he shall consider true.”

The above errors are collectively know as indifferentism, meaning that it doesn’t matter which religion one adopts, since one can be saved, according to this error, outside the Catholic Church. (One can read more at the above website.)

It is not pleasant in these days to be a naysayer. There are today, however, a number of “sacred cows” that are perversions of the truth or denials of truth. Nonetheless, these sacred cows have gained, in some cases, what amounts to “celebrity” status amongst some members of the Church. As Holy Mother Church finds her way back to Catholic dogma someone is going to have to begin pointing these things out. Like so many parties in the 60s, there are going to be some hangovers after this one. Thank God we have the signposts of true Catholic dogma to guide us back to truth and reality as the euphoria wears off.

Turn on the lights. The party's over. /

A Call for Better “Pro-life” Movies

By Alan Peter

Why is the main-stream media celebrating the recent movie, *Juno*? And why is NARAL silent about the scene where Juno goes to a seedy abortion clinic intent on ending her pregnancy, talks to her high-school classmate who is picketing, and learns that her baby “has a beating heart ... and fingernails” - and then leaves. I would submit the reason is that the movie is *pro-choice*, and in our narcissistic society, even if the choice made (giving up the baby for adoption) seems “old fashioned,” the choice was made within the *correct* framework - my self-will.



Juno

Throughout the movie, unmarried sexual intercourse is presented as a given. Any moral component is not simply dismissed, but completely ignored. Those viewers who remember Our Lady’s words at Fatima - The sins which cause most souls to go to Hell are the sins of the flesh - will not hear them repeated in *Juno*. If a movie explored this reality, that would really be something to cheer about. Although the movie shows a semi-intact family (Juno’s father re-married after her mother ran off to Arizona), don’t look to them as teachers of any moral code to their daughter. Quite possibly the biggest offense Juno commits is when morning sickness compels her to vomit into her step-mother’s urn, an act Juno denies and blames on her younger step-sister. Does Juno’s pregnancy mean she is grounded, or loses her automobile privileges, or is required to come directly home after school? No, each person in the movie acts on their will, not God’s will. Even the future adoptive parents are a study in modern, suburban, self-absorption. Watching the decline of American society is interesting. Science teaches us on a daily basis about the incredible-ness of God’s creation. Funny, despite all our scientific knowledge, we still don’t know how gravity works. Yet our hubris remains mind-boggling. Because we have cell phones and automatic transmissions, we have concluded that man can create a Utopia on earth. Never mind the bloody wars of the 20th century, or the Soviet gulags, or the one-baby policy in China. If we wanted God in our public square and in our civil discussions, we would have invited Him. But quite clearly we don’t. We will live our lives “God free” and *pro-choice*. If occasionally our choices benefit society, hey, that’s great. But it’s not a requirement.

The hip teenagers living down the street probably saw *Juno*. That’s unfortunate, because it justified their *choice* to exercise their self-will, free of a correctly formed conscience; free of God. /

May Calendar

Los Pequeños Monthly Meeting
May 16, 2008
Call (505) 293-8006 for information.

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

Tuesdays at Noon
Mass at the Holy Innocents Chapel
Fr. Stephen Imbarrato
&
Thursdays at 9:30 AM
Fr. Millan Garcia
Holy Sacrifice of the Mass (1962 Missal)
For more information, call
(505) 266-4100

Helpers of God’s Precious Infants
1. Planned Parenthood Abortuary
701 San Mateo Blvd.
Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays: 8 AM – 11:30 AM
Wednesdays: 12 Noon – 3:00 PM
&
2. Medical Arts (801 Encino Place)
Saturdays: 8AM-11:30AM
For more information, call Phil Leahy:
(505) 440-3040



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Back issues of *The Pepper* 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.