

Los Pequeños Pepper

Publication of Los Pequeños de Cristo

October 2007



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*Cover: St Francis meets the
Sultan of Egypt. Codex No. 1266.*

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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.

NECESSITY OF FAITH IN MARRIAGE

By Fr. Rodriguez, Diocese of Las Cruces

Essential to an understanding of the sacrament of marriage, by which one man and one woman become one flesh, and of extreme and primary importance, is the recognition that marriage belongs to God. Marriage, which He created and gave to humanity as a gift, is both a human and a divine reality, with the divine reality always trumping the human element. Therefore, faith in God is essential to a good marriage, for the focus in marriage must be on God.

This awareness of what is of primary importance is missing among most people due to a lack of faith. When faith is lacking in either spouse, they won't know or be able to accept what marriage is, and serious problems will crop up in the relationship if the priority of the divine element is missing due to that lack of faith. Because of this lack of faith, too many Catholics nowadays either just live together or enter into a civil contract. While the government may say they are married, it means nothing, because the government did not create marriage. It is as senseless for the government to say it can give a marriage license as for the Church to claim to grant a driver's license, for neither would be operating in their sphere of influence. Yet many are content to contract such a civil union, because they have no understanding of the nature of marriage. Their main considerations are worldly pleasures and not, as should be, to get to heaven and bring new souls to know, love, and serve God. We can never fully capture the divine measure of marriage without faith, because faith opens our soul to God, to divine realities, to the recognition that if the eternal salvation/happiness of either or both spouses is in jeopardy because of sin, it is NOT a good marriage.

Marriages in today's world are seriously affected by the secularism and materialism that rule our culture. Too many belong more to the world than to God. More importance is given to the pronouncements of scientists and "experts" than to what our Faith teaches, and we accept their premises: that what is important is that which brings immediate pleasure, comfort and satisfaction. One example that exemplifies this is the unwillingness of most couples to have more than one or two children.

Our understanding of marriage is determined either by Faith or by the world and its values. The values of the world make it very hard for anyone to grow in faith, for the focus is on the enticements offered:

- TELEVISION, with its pernicious values, which not only corrupts viewers but also keeps couples from discussing serious matters, sharing ideas, and exploring differing opinions. TV does not help one to believe in the divine or to pray together but often corrupts God's gift of our sexuality.
- The INTERNET, which centers on secular and materialistic values, and keeps couples in a world apart from each other.
- CONSUMERISM, with the focus on acquiring more and more possessions - a better car, a bigger house, or a better job to have more money to spend.



- The ENTERTAINMENT WORLD, with its sports, games, movies, concerts, gossip TV shows.
- EXCESSIVE TIME spent on work or school.

Human beings become slaves to sin and to the world when they fall prey to such values instead of making sure that their souls are right with God.

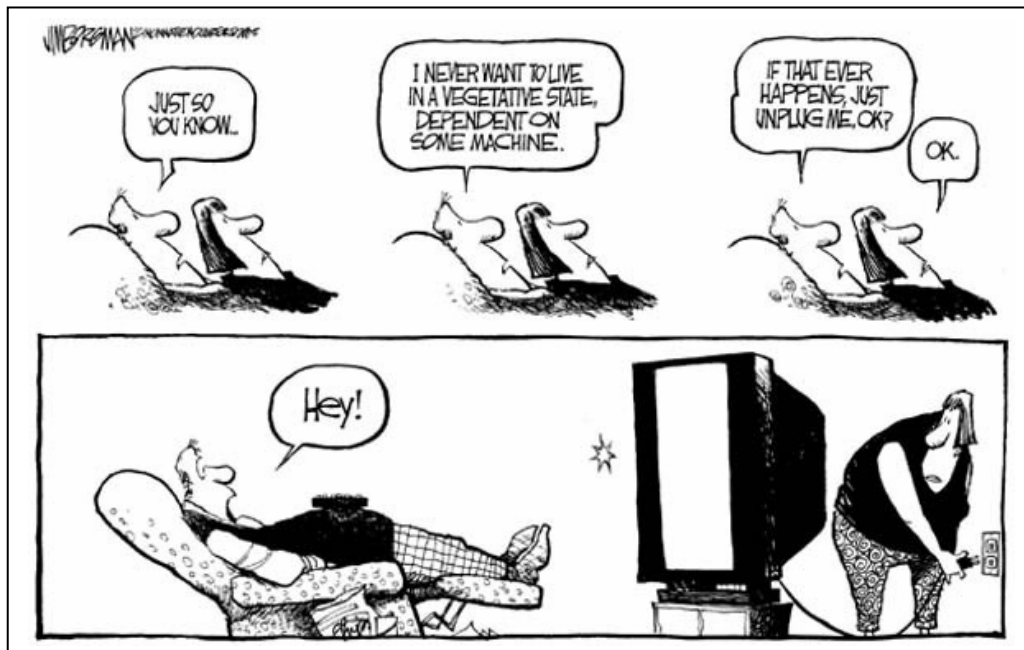
A good marriage requires both spouses to make an effort to grow in their Faith. A practical step to take to grow in Faith is to review the way you spend your time. How much of your time is given to going to Mass and to Confession? How much of your time is spent praying and reading the Scriptures? How much of your time is spent before the Blessed Sacrament or in studying the Faith? Time spent in these activities will strengthen our Faith and help us recognize the realities that most people find hard to accept because they are too caught up, too involved, in worldly attitudes and values. They have lost the sense of spiritual realities...

- ...concerning God and the devil. Both are real. God gives us the gift of marriage; the devil distorts it.
- ...concerning grace and sin. Grace helps us to live life well. Sin is opposed to grace and will cause ruin.
- ...concerning heaven and hell. Couples will walk through life heading either to heaven or to hell; spouses will either work with grace to walk towards heaven, or reject it and become enslaved to sin.

Faith will help the focus in marriage to be on *God, Jesus, and His Church*. Both spouses have to be in accord. If there are major differences in belief in these, there will be major problems in the marriage, eventually.

Couples must take Jesus as their example to understand what marriage is. Jesus gave His life for His bride, the Church, His Mystical Body. Couples have to be absolutely faithful to the teachings of His Church in order to live His gift of marriage, for She speaks with the voice of Jesus. v

This is a redaction of the first of six talks on marriage given by Fr. Rodriquez. The full text may be read at www.lospequenos.org.



TRICK OR TREAT

Uncertainty Principles Are Hell

By Marie P. Loehr

*We've reached the place I told you to expect
Where thou shouldst see the miserable race
Those who have lost the good of intellect.*

- Dante, *Commedia*, "Inferno," Canto III, ll. 16-19

Halloween might not be the best time to meet Dante at Stellabuca's on the main piazza in Florence but there he was, raising his latte, both of us dressed in boots, jeans, leather jackets, and gloves against the damp chill. Rain spattered the cobbles. An occasional shriek -revelers - echoed down the side streets. A large raven swooped, cawing raucously, over my head and I ducked, tripping into the chair under the awning of the café.

"Ciao, bella." Dante eyed my clothes and approved the crucifix around my neck. "Blessed?" He inspected it. "Good, dressed for the streets, and for hell." He passed his drink to me. "Finish. You'll be glad of it."

As he stood, a kitten apparently leaped onto the table.

"Sprrt!," it said. I looked at Dante. "Schrödinger's kitten," he said.

"Pixel? A perfect Halloween cat! But...he's white."

Pixel promptly turned black, fur on end. Fireworks sparked off his tail. Dante grinned.

"You've read Heinlein's *The Cat Who Walks through Walls*."

"Long ago!" I held my hand out. Pixel licked it, purring.

"Pixel loves fish. He's looking forward to Troutperson. We're going to re-visit the vestibule of hell. This might become the Harrying of Hell; Pixel plays with his food."

Halfway across the piazza the revelers, fully masked, and cavorting, blocked our path. As we circled them, a tall man in centurion's armor, fell in step with us. Armor and... wings?

"Well met, Messier Dante," said Raphael, with a bow to me. His helmet was upside down in the crook of one arm. Pixel popped into it and curled up, eyes peeking over the rim. "Sprt, mew!"

We tripped down low steps into darkness, and - we were back in the underworld. Dante gripped my arm on one side, Raphael my elbow on the other. We jogged down a leaf-strewn corridor, rounded a curve. I threw my hands up to block the glare.

Below us, framed in an immense open bay, was a cavern. The river Phlogiston divided the immense cavity, roaring through it. A gap opened in a far wall. The fiery river poured over a cliff with volcanic fury. Blackened souls, hooked or gaffed by bat-winged imps, flopped and twitched in the river's flames.

In the foreground fell a blizzard of ashes. Dante pointed to a bonfire at the river's edge. It burned in honor of the Celtic festival of Samhain, pagan precursor of Halloween. An army of liturgists and translators in scorched surplices or ink-stained smocks heaped books - Latin-English missals, Bibles from every era, hymnals, prayer books, print-outs - around the fire. Industrious imps pitched them into the flames. At the center of this demolition, Troutperson bounced on his tailfins, foaming at the mouth, waving his ventral fins. His dorsal spread like a sail in the sunset. He positively burbled: "The attempt for an accurate translation of the Latin Mass text is doomed."

Dante translated: "We don't need no stinkin' new translations here. No elite translations, only street transliterations..."

A bloated monsignor, by the trim on his rags, pranced into view, waving a samizdat version of the new translation, sizzling around the edges, obviously hot off the presses. "This will clog the Mass and confuse the simple folk. What's wrong with common denominator English? Praise argot and jargon!"



Botticelli's Dante

He and the Troutperson embraced as best they could, given their handicaps.

“That’s Msgr. Onion,” Dante grimaced. “He started off so well, promoted a properly reverent *Novus Ordo* in the vernacular. Now...”

Raphael leaned into the bay. “There goes Pixel. Snack time!”

Pixel stalked over the clinkers below, a floating, stealth kitten.

“Is this Limbo or the Vestibule you visited with Virgil?” I asked.

“It is the Vestibule. Troutperson is no longer in the Limbo of the Theologians. He’s up to his neck in Revelation’s ‘lukewarm vomit.’ This is the place of dithering souls who can’t make a choice, or make well-intentioned wrong choices, or speak out of both sides of their mouths, running hither and yon after the latest trend or fad or guru or...” He shrugged. “These are the souls who have lost the good of intellect, as Virgil said.”

Pixel pounced. There was a shriek! Troutperson wobbled and Pixel ripped a huge morsel from his exposed flank.

Schrödinger’s Kitten vanished. Troutperson overbalanced, clutched at Onion, and both fell into the fire. The stench of grilled, but spoiled, fish and roast onion wafted up to us. Pixel popped into our corridor, spitting vexation, morsel vomited forth.

“Was it rotten?” asked Raphael solicitously.

“Sprrrrrrrt mriissh!” Pixel growled, cleaning his whiskers and paws at quantum speed.

My guides whisked me around another curve, to a smaller cave. Here we espied a Big Bird, his creaturehood declaimed in twitterings, waving his wings about - a book proclaiming the sacraments in pinion. Although his feathers were very yellow, he was garbed in a bishop’s cassock and a scarlet sash. A large, empty cross hung around his neck.

“It’s Bishop Whirlybird,” Dante whispered. “A classic case of weathervane. His book is adequate on the one hand. On the other, he claims to be pro-life, but refuses to discipline Catholic politicians who support abortion.”

At that, a throng of naked souls, politicians by the chains of photo ops, ill-gotten gains, portmanteau bills, video bytes and waffles weighing them down, raced through, shrieking and gesticulating behind them. Whirlybird fell on his knees before them, then hastily dug a small hole. Behind the political flock rushed a horde of disfigured, dismembered souls, bleeding, scalded, missing parts. All brandished some form of weapon - scalpel, syringe, vacuum, scissors - as they swarmed after the politicians.

Straight out of Bosch or Daumier! The miserable babies discovered a hapless Whirlybird, head plunged into hole, on ostrich principle. The pro-abortion pols were mobile. Whirlybird was not. The tiny souls swarmed him. As feathers flew, I was transported to a third bay.

This cavern was the other bank of Phlogiston. High-ranking ecclesiastics stood like tenpins on the edge of the abyss. Some wore clericals; some wore civvies. All wore watered-silk crimson capes. Some had no faces; some had two faces; some had nothing but a forked tongue where their faces should have been. Their problem was no translation, but any use of Latin itself, despite papal edict.

Like those who couldn’t attend the Wedding Feast, they spoke over one another, in wild cacophony. “No one wants Latin;” “No one remembers how to say the ‘old’ Mass;” “We can’t upset the people by disrupting 40 years of custom;” “We need to learn the languages of our immigrants!” “We have a Latin Mass, but it’s miserably attended.”

“Who ARE these feeble fry?” I asked, “and why are they lined up like bowling pins?”

“You’ll see,” Danted assured me. “These are the Petardini, Cardinal Petard’s Protégés, who rode to power on his cope tails. And here’s the Petard himself...”

A black soul, blustering in full cardinal’s regalia, leaped into the cave, brandishing not a crozier, but a pitchfork, dragging his little cannon behind him. It was loaded with iron ball, powder in the firing pan, and sporting a short fuse. Petard stopped ten feet in front of his “boys,” and lined the cannon up, aimed at the point of the tenpin triangle. Their speech had gone from rationalization to self-justification to nonsense.

Petard whipped a Lucifer match out of his ear. He struck it against the cannon. It flared blue, then red. He touched it to the fuse. BOOM!

My ears rang! The bishops went down like tenpins, the cannonball zooming straight through the middle row. STRIKE! They collapsed in a gibbering heap. Petard--black as pitch, red robes flying, rushed forward, pitchfork at the ready. Into the chasm each heap of quivering silk went. As they fell, they each grabbed the corners of their capes and looked for all the world like hang gliders soaring. Then the heat from the river set their robes to smoldering; one long windsurf later they vanished into liquid



**Sending the faithful down
River Nepenthe**

flame. Petard screeched and wheeled on us.

Raphael uncloaked. "Quick, dawn is almost here. Maria must be well away before then!" We flew down the corridor. Those yellow asteriated tiles lit the way. Ahead I could see the rectangle of the open door, stars...A yard from the stairs, a shadow slid out of a side corridor and blocked our path. Tall, sinewy, hung with pelts, crowned with horns...

"Sir Dante, we meet again." He bared his teeth. His smile flashed daggers. Raphael had vanished again, but I could feel him at my side. Dante shifted so he could shield me.

"Cernunnos of Annwn." Dante glanced down the side tunnel. Hellhounds filled it, slaving, snarling, cadaverous, and ears hanging red down their leprous heads, like dripping blood. "You've been hunting." An understatement - the smell of blood and death was overpowering.

"Aye. It's the night for it, is it not? My queen wants a word with you, Alighieri."

A rustle behind me, swamp fog, claw rasp, beak clatter, softly. I buried my face in Dante's back. His left hand was in his pocket, working the cork out of a vial of holy water he'd placed there, just in case.

The Morrigan, also called medusa, melusine, lamia, lilitu, Queen of demons and Celtic battle goddess, the Raven, and ravening death, stretched her skeletal fingers toward my neck.

"What a *tasty morssel* you bring, Poet." It was an epithet. "And where *iss* that annoying cyber-cat you've loosed among my rats?!" The carrion reek that rolled off her feathers gagged me. Before I could faint and fall, the monstrosity in our adoration chapel blazed splendor and filled my mind, the Real Presence flaming out "like shining from shook foil," as another poet says.

The demon jerked her hand away, as if I were radioactive, and shrank back. In an eye blink, Pixel materialized, puma now, wrapped round the Horned Man. He ripped off the wraith's face and, twisting its head around with one paw, snapped Cernunnos' neck. The spook collapsed, a puppet without strings, and Pixel was on the hounds in less than a blink. They turned tail and bolted down the hall, fleeing his ravages. Raphael grabbed me and leaped for the exit. Dante whirled and pitched his vial of holy water into the Raven's face. A wail, a sigh, and then she moulted, melting to the tiles in molting feathers and grave dust.

We dashed into the piazza. A gate clanged behind us, bolts slamming home. As we paused on the porch of the cathedral, a man with the natural tonsure of baldness looked up from his Blackberry. "Did someone throw a bishop on the barbie? I can smell charred flesh all the way over here."

Dante bowed. "Brother writer, Pixel has the honors."

Paul of Tarsus grinned from ear to ear. "That little quantum pixilation knows how to keep the vermin in their place!"

"He did good work today," said Raphael. "Troutperson and the Onion both fell, clutching one another, into the flames."

Paul wasted no sympathy. "Another fine illustration of the blind leading the blind..."

"Of course," reminisced Dante, "grilled trout and roast onions do go so well together..."

Once in the church for All Saints' Mass, Raphael exclaimed and rushed, transparent, into the sanctuary. He reached into the tabernacle, and retrieved a minuscule and protesting Pixel. In the front pew, Paul whispered in my right ear that as Pixel was born in a box, he loves boxes, and the tabernacle is his favorite.

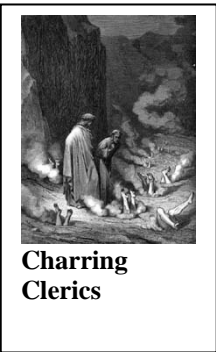
Dante sighed into my left ear. "Pixel has a supernatural affinity for the Man Who Walks through Walls." The quantum kitten winked out of sight and Raphael winked after him. I put my head in my hands. It had been a long night. Far more trick than treat...

I woke to squawks and scuffles overhead. "Sprrrr! Mrssst!" Fluttering wings, scabbling, and feathers drifting through a vent above me, landing on my missal. I was in my own church. It had a dovecote on the roof. I eyed the feathers. Was there a cat among the pigeons? I thought I knew where Pixel might be hanging out now.

Our own *bone pastor* raised the consecrated Host for adoration and I rejoiced. There can't be too many languages to sing glory to God. No uncertainty there! No matter what language or what valid rite to celebrate it, the Mass is always a sacrament AND a sacrifice. There is no uncertainty about that, either. That the substance of bread and wine becomes the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of the Son of God, Word-made-flesh, Man who walks through walls, is *absolutely* certain! Even a quantum kitten understands that. Amen. Alleluia!

Disclaimer: LimboTours cannot be held responsible for the opinions and remarks expressed by any person in this overview of the underworld. Any likeness to any actual person is uncertain, mostly unintentional, hardly virtual, and utterly fantastic. The opinions expressed are each infernal or heavenly character's own, and must be sifted with caution and a grain of salt. The Devil, we have on good Authority, is notoriously the "father of lies." Accordingly, LimboTours wishes to stay on the side of the angels, whenever possible.

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Charring Clerics

Summorum Pontificum



Wake Up and Smell the Incense *14 September 2007*

In a new *motu proprio*, Pope Benedict XVI has permitted free celebration of the Latin Rite according to the 1962 missal. His decree has generated a spectrum of reactions from bishops around the world.

Archbishop José Horacio Gomez of San Antonio issued a press statement in which he speculates the letter “will open up great possibilities for reconciliation and unity with those who have shown great devotion to the Roman liturgy prior to the reform of 1970.”

“People will be able to more clearly see the growth and progress we have realized since Vatican II, while at the same time preserving the rich heritage and legacy of the Church,” was the observation of Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, archbishop of Westminster.

Some, however, took the news hard. Monsignor Luca Brandolini, Bishop of Sora-Aquino-Pontecorvo and a disciple of archbishop Annibale Bugnini, father of Vatican II’s liturgical reform, wept: “This day is for me a day of grief. I have a lump in my throat and I do not manage to hold back my tears. But, I will obey the Holy Father, because I am a bishop and because I care for him. However, I cannot hide my sadness for the putting aside of one of the most important reforms of the Second Vatican Council...I am living the saddest day of my life as a priest, as a bishop, and as a man.”

Cardinal Castrillón Hoyos, president of the *Pontifical Commission Ecclesia Dei* - which will oversee the implementation of the *motu proprio* - sees no such dramatic rejection: “There is nothing in the *motu proprio* or in the papal letter which signals a minimal deviation from the Council. It may be appropriate to recall that Vatican II did not forbid the ancient Mass, which was celebrated by the Conciliar Fathers during sessions. No rejection, no offense.”

Meanwhile, closer to home, Archbishop Michael Sheehan was interviewed by the *Albuquerque Journal* (“Latin Mass Not Popular in Diocese,” July 30) and reported as saying that the Pope’s directive would have little impact on the Archdiocese of Santa Fe.

“I don’t see it as huge thing here in New Mexico, because people are pretty well settled with Mass in English and like Mass in English,” Sheehan said during his local Wednesday radio program, “The Archbishop’s Hour.”

He also was reported to have said that the diocese has very few priests who know Latin and that those few who know it well enough “don’t have the knees to make the 18 genuflections.... I think there would be maybe one or two priests who might want to study Latin [to conduct the Masses], but I think most of the

priests feel like they already have more than they can handle and if they need another language— Spanish is more important than Latin as far as (meeting the) spiritual needs of more people.”

Archbishop Sheehan said that of the diocese’s 300,000 Catholics, only 150 - at most - attend the diocese’s one Latin Mass. “That’s a pretty small percentage, but at the same time I wanted to make it available.”

Latin Mass lovers are quick to point out that one indult Latin Mass has served an area of 158,296 square kilometers – almost twice the size as the state of Minnesota. It was family-unfriendly, discouraging parish life, allowing no traditional catechesis, and denying any other sacramental possibilities. Parents who needed to prepare children for First Communion or First Confession were forced to register in the programs of a local parish, which often required Sunday attendance in its own community. Attending the Latin Mass under such conditions was downright heroic, if not impossible.

So, if there was really no New Mexico interest in the Latin Mass, why was there all this proactive publicity in the *Journal*? If there was REALLY no interest, why such cruelty over the years to suppress it? If there was REALLY no interest, why does the Pius X Society have a beautiful, well-attended, new church on the west side?

One young Catholic, born well after Vatican II’s liturgical changes, is optimistic that more liberal availability of the Latin Mass will demonstrate that there are indeed deep, unmet spiritual needs - 18 arthritic genuflections notwithstanding. He writes of his experience at the former indult Mass: “Instead of making the Mass cater to the level of the people, [the Rite celebrated according to the 1962 missal] raises the people to the level of the mystery that happens at every Holy Sacrifice.... [Y]ou can hear a pin drop at every moment of consecration that I have ever witnessed according to the old Mass. It’s interesting that it’s quieter at the Tomb of the Unknown, a secular shrine, than it is at many ‘ordinary’ Catholic Masses.” v



Priests Turn Their Backs on the People, Say Critics

I’m getting a little tired of all the criticisms in the press of *Summorum Pontificum* and the liberalization of the Latin Mass. I love most how critics never fail to mention that the “priest has his back to the people.” But they never seem to mention what the priest is facing.

So I’m thinking that since facing the people is of such importance for the priest I’m wondering if we should focus this important factor on other professions.

History Books: The General led his troops into the battle...with his back turned to his own people.

Science Books: The astronomer discovered the meteor while looking through his telescope... while he had his back turned to the people.

Sports: The Bowler bowled a perfect game...with his back turned to the people.

Flying Manual: The main responsibility of a pilot is to fly and land the plane and not crash into any mountains...while his back is turned towards the people.

Weddings: Matt and Christie swore fidelity to each other and repeated the marriage vows...with their backs turned towards the people.

This all seems a little silly, doesn’t it? Well so is this critique when it’s used on priests. What the priest is facing must be at least as important (it’s actually more) as what he’s turned away from.

So all you critics, stop talking about priests turning their backs and just go back to accusing us of trying to turn back the clock.

By Matthew Archbold

And just for the record: Vatican II never promulgated celebration of Mass facing the people. Rather, “praying toward the east is a tradition that goes back to the beginning. Moreover, it is a fundamental expression of the Christian synthesis of cosmos and history, of being rooted in the once-for-all events of salvation history while going out to meet the Lord who is to come again.” (Ratzinger, The Spirit of the Liturgy, p. 75)

Voices of Sophia

By Stephanie Block

There's a new addition to the New Mexico members of the *Faith in Public Life* coalition - right along with the Archdiocese of Santa Fe and the Diocese of Las Cruces Offices of Social Justice, and local chapters of *Call to Action*, and *Dignity*, and *Albuquerque Interfaith*...It's *Voices of Sophia*.

Voices of Sophia is an interesting addition to the progressive political network of New Mexico. It describes itself as "a national advocacy group working for the full inclusion and equality of women in the Presbyterian Church [USA]," working "toward transformation of the church into a discipleship of equal persons." This is less about equal "rights" for women - whom the Presbyterian Church for some time has ordained to ministerial positions - than about forcing private interpretation of Scripture (and its resultant "feminist, womanist, and *mujerista* theologies") on the denomination.

In October 2006, *Voices of Sophia* held a national meeting in New Mexico with the theme "Recovering What Is Lost." Craig Barnes, author of *In Search of the Lost Feminine*, was one speaker. Barnes believes the authors of Genesis *intentionally* set out to establish a patriarchy and the complete subordination of women." [See *Pepper*, this issue, "Spiritual Renewal Center," page 13]

One of the New Mexican Presbyterian women coordinating the event was Mary Ann Lundy, who left her job at Presbyterian Church (USA) headquarters following protests over her leadership of the 1993 *Re-Imagining God* conference.

Why the uproar? The 1993 *Re-Imagining God Conference* wanted Christians to "re-imagine" the God of Scripture as a goddess named Sophia. They demanded that their church "welcome" all sexual orientations, that it "confess that female imagery for God in Scripture has been suppressed and marginalized in favor of male imagery which serves to legitimate patriarchy," and so forth...

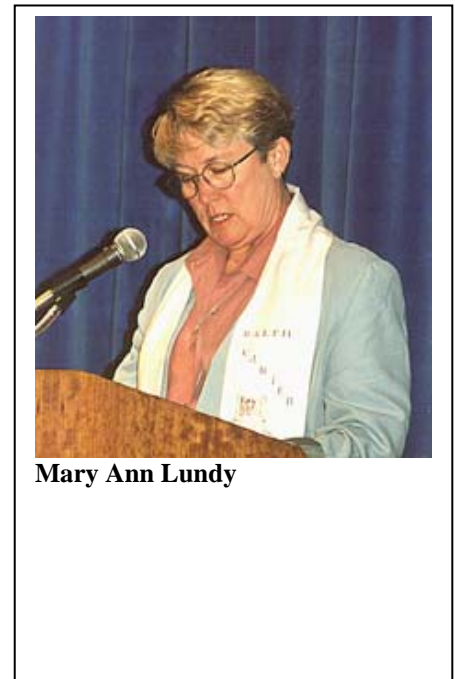
Lundy is, of course, free to worship whomever and however she pleases. The Presbyterian Church USA - not exactly the most conservative of denominations - is equally free to ask for doctrinal adherence, however it defines doctrine, from its employees. Goddess worship, evidently, crosses a Presbyterian USA line.

Now Lundy didn't exactly wither from the experience. Before retiring to New Mexico, she served as Deputy Director of the *World Conference of Churches* and currently represents the Presbytery of Santa Fe in the *New Mexico Conference of Churches* - which is also a *Faith in Public Life* member.

Of course, *Voices of Sophia* has other progressive leaders. One is Ginny Copenhefer, a former lobbyist with the *Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice*. Copenhefer found it distressful that some pregnancy resource centers install ultrasound machines and complained: "It's a manipulative tool. I don't think it's fair to heap guilt on them because they feel they have to terminate a pregnancy. That's just the most cruel form of abuse that I can imagine." The *New Mexico Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice* is a *Faith in Public Life* member...and among its member faith groups is the Presbytery of Santa Fe.

My, oh my.

Now, explain to me what possible purpose is there for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe to be part of the *Faith in Public Life* coalition? V



Mary Ann Lundy

Around the World

Vatican denounces hybrid embryos: Bishop Elio Sgreccia, president of the Pontifical Academy for Life, denounced new norms approved in September by Britain's Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA), permitting creation of animal-human embryos for their stem cells.

This permission has paved the way for experiments to introduce human DNA into cow eggs in order to create embryos that would be 99.9 percent human and .01 percent animal. Up to now, international law prohibited such research as an offense against human dignity with profound moral significance.

Bishop Sgreccia said the British government had "caved in to a request from a group of scientists that, it seems to me, goes against the will of the majority and certainly against the morality of not only Catholics but also of other religious groups and defenders of life, and against all rational morality, which up to now has been quite clear in all of the international treaties."

He added that the scientists' rationalizations for needing to create these hybrids were "mere excuses" for defending the indefensible and that experiments that are inhumane and illicit "cannot be carried out, not even with the hope of achieving a degree of success."

"Success, if it exists, should come through human means. Good should be achieved through decent means; otherwise we are applying pure Machiavellian ideology to science and to scientific experimentation when what is at stake is human dignity," he emphasized.

Bishop Sgreccia noted that experimentation on living human beings and their subsequent elimination has up to now only occurred in concentration camps and were condemned by the Nuremberg Codes and the Helsinki Declaration. "It's important to emphasize that even though some labs are going to carry them out, that does not make them licit," he said.

Bishop Peter Smith of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, also commented on the ruling: "Human beings have one sole nature, specifically separate from animals," and therefore one ought not "exceed the limits of the species and try to mix human and animal natures." "Instead of promoting this kind of ethically problematic research, why not encourage research with adult stem cells which is not controversial?" he asked. "The Catholic Church is not against this kind of research and encourages that which is done with stem cells extracted from the blood and from the umbilical cord." √

Around the Nation

Archbishop Burke Addresses Problem of Catholic Pro-abortion Politicians: Archbishop Raymond L. Burke, bishop of St. Louis, Missouri, has recently published a document titled: "The Discipline Regarding the Denial of Holy Communion to Those Obstinate Persevering in Manifest Grave Sin."

Burke addresses the 2004 presidential election campaign scandal of pro-abortion candidate John Kerry insisting that he was a Catholic in good standing. At one point, Burke was the only US bishop to issue a canonical ban on pro-abortion politicians receiving Communion.

The United States bishops met during this period to determine if Communion should be denied Catholics in public life who defy Church teaching. The ensuing statement attempted to mollify everyone. It read, "Bishops can legitimately make different judgments on the most prudent course of pastoral action." Burke criticizes this, saying the statement "failed to take account of the clear requirement to exclude from Holy Communion those who, after appropriate admonition, obstinately persist in supporting publicly legislation which is contrary to the natural moral law."

Burke adds, "To remain silent is to permit serious confusion regarding a fundamental truth of the moral law. Confusion, of course, is one of the most insidious fruits of scandalous behavior..."

Pro-life advocates cite lack of Church leadership as the biggest obstruction to battling the culture of death. √



**Archbishop Raymond L. Burke,
bishop of St. Louis, Missouri**

The full text of Archbishop Burke's document may be obtained at:

www.therealpresence.org/eucharst/holycom/denial.htm

Around the Archdiocese

FutureChurch: For the *Call to Action* types in Albuquerque, the Aquinas Newman Center parish bulletin advertises Study Evenings at Catherine House (a “house of hospitality for the Adrian Dominican Sisters”) throughout the autumn. The Adrian Dominican Sisters’ website provides details: Sisters Geneal Kramer and Pauline Richter, using materials from *FutureChurch* – a *Call to Action* affiliate working for women’s ordination – will lead the “study nights and reflection days.”

Spiritual Renewal Center: Amid yoga, tai chi chih meditation, Enneagram studies, and a lecture on Sufism, the Dominican Sisters Retreat Ministry will host Craig Barnes, lecturing “In Search of the Lost Feminine.” Barnes, who has written a book by the same title, explains his thesis: “Ever since the earliest tales of western literature we have thought that heroes and war, suppression of women and their sexuality, disdain for ecstasy, and the agony of death were givens of civilization. War, we have thought, was inevitable, heroes lived forever, time was linear and immortality reserved to only a special few. In very recent times, however, we have uncovered evidence that these concepts are not necessarily bedrock at all, women have not always been dishonored, nor war always the foundation of progress, nor sexuality the stuff of seduction, enchantment and disgrace. An earlier civilization existed before the stories of ancient Greece and before Biblical times in which quite the reverse was true. ...ancient storytellers, among them Homer and the authors of Genesis, systematically, and intentionally, erased the clues of the cultures which had preceded them.... Prompted by these stories, aided by commercial expansion and catastrophic natural disasters, these early writers set out to, and did, establish patriarchal property, and accordingly, the complete subordination of women.”

Genesis is out; Barnes is in. What an exciting topic for a Catholic Retreat house! [See *Pepper*, this issue, “Voices of Sophia,” p 11] v

Around Gallup

The Reiki Wars: The Gallup *Independent* carried a strange article by Sister Mary Matthias Ward (“Spiritual Perspectives: Healing of Mind, Body and Spirit,” 8/11-12). Sister writes, “Here at Sacred Heart Retreat Center in Gallup, we have a Reiki Retreat. We have a labyrinth, yoga, and Centering Prayer. All of these from time to time have been labeled as “New Age,” and we have received our share of criticism.”

Sister defended these extra-religious practices, however, because as most souls need inner healing and as the Center’s mission statement declares it will “strive for wholeness and holiness,” and as she, herself, finds inner peace from walking around in nature, and as we’re all unique and “don’t all communicate the same way with our God,” you, gentle reader, should “try to be open.”

As for the Reiki Retreat, she writes, “Reiki provides a marvelous way to make use of God’s power.”

Gallupian Catholic Luke Macik rebutted Sister’s remark’s in a Letter to the Editor (9/1). He writes: “Healing is no guarantee that a work is from God. In fact, in his second letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul, tells us, ‘even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.’ Likewise, death and destruction are no guarantee that a work is from Satan. Recall the ‘angel of death’ which God sent upon the Egyptians and Pharaoh who refused to heed His word as delivered through Moses.

“The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, § 2117, warns those who dabble in magic. ‘All practices of magic or sorcery, by which one attempts to tame occult powers, so as to place them at one’s service and have a supernatural power over others - even if this were for the sake of restoring their health - are gravely contrary to the virtue of religion.’

“Scripture warns those who would ‘make use of God’s power.’ Think of Simon the Magician in the Acts of the Apostles who amazed people by his magic, so much so that of him people said, ‘This man is that power of God which is called Great.’ This same Simon was rebuked by Peter, who told him that ‘his heart was not right before God.’ God is not to ‘be used’ by us; rather, we are instruments in His hands.

“Sister Mathias maintains that Reiki is from God. Can we verify this claim? William Lee Rand in an article, ‘Similarities between the Healing of Jesus and Reiki’ [www.reiki.org], tries to demonstrate that Reiki is compatible with a belief in Jesus Christ. That this opinion is false is clearly shown by what Rand denies – that Jesus is the true Son of God. Here is Rand’s nonsense in his own words: ‘It is not known whether Jesus was born with the ability to heal through touch or if this was something he acquired.’ If Jesus is the true Son of God, his ability to heal was not something he acquired. He has it because of who He is—God. The question which Jesus posed to Peter is still relevant to each one of us today, ‘Who do you say that I am?’

“Rand’s speculation about Jesus becomes even more wild: ‘It has been suggested by several researchers that... Jesus traveled to the East and was schooled in many of the mystical teachings of India, Tibet and China. If this is so, it is possible that Jesus was initiated into a healing technique, during this time...’

Rand’s article clearly identifies Reiki with the Gnostics, heretics in the very beginning of Christianity who maintained that they had been given special secret knowledge by Jesus and his apostles. About these, St. John the beloved in his first letter wrote, ‘Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist...’

The early Bishops of the Catholic Church dealt decisive blows to the Gnostic heretics because salvation was for all men, not just those ‘in the know.’ Salvation, however, comes at a price. One must truly believe that Jesus Christ is ‘true God from true God...who for us men and our salvation...became man.’ This is the Creed of the Catholic Church, the belief of those who wrote the New Testament. As Jesus himself tells us, ‘And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.’ (John 17:3)”v

October Calendar

Los Pequeños Monthly Meeting

October 19, 2007

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

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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Reiki and New Age Practice

The *Colorado Catholic Herald* has published a series of articles written by Susan Brinkmann on New Age dangers. One concerns Reiki ("Reiki and the Healing Touch," August 9), which Brinkmann unambiguously identifies as a "New Age" practice.

She cites the work of Moira Noonan, a former Reiki Master and author of a memoir, "Ransomed from Darkness," who says that "Reiki is a method of healing through the transmission and activation of a person's spiritual energy. This therapy looks somewhat like the Christian laying-on of hands, but this is deceptive. The symbolism of Reiki is deeply influenced by Buddhist traditions and invisible spirit guides. These spirit guides are specifically invoked by name to confer their healing powers."

Brinkmann observes that organizations involved in selling Reiki to the largely Christian west either downplay or deny its association with Buddhism. However, it is said to have been rediscovered in the 19th century, by a medical doctor named Mikao Usui during a 21-day retreat devoted to studying Buddhist Tantric texts. Tantric Buddhism involves the use of spells, incantations, complicated rituals and magical powers to achieve enlightenment.

"Reiki energy supposedly entered Usui during his retreat. From that time on, Usui had healing power, and he initiated others into the secrets of that power through what he called 'attunements.'

"In that procedure, 'attunement energies' are channeled into students through Reiki masters, who are guided by the Rei or God-consciousness, and by other Reiki 'guides' and other spiritual entities that help the process along."

"Healing practices that are based on using energy-channeling to heal have morphed into a variety of techniques known as 'healing touch' or 'therapeutic touch.'"

Barbara Brennan, a former NASA research scientist turned New Age healer and author of "Hands of Light," Brennan uses spirit guides, drawing her ideas from direct communication with a spirit guide named Heyoan. "[Brennan's] channelings from this entity are regularly published word-for-word by her institute, and offered to the world as expressions of divine wisdom," Moira Noonan writes, claiming this to be an illustration of the role of the demonic in the practice of Reiki.

Another convert from New Age practices, Clare McGrath Merkle says a company called Healing Touch International (HTI) describes its techniques as "energy based healing therapies from a Judeo-Christian perspective." HTI seeks to "integrate Healing Touch into church/parish healing ministry."

"If you go to their web site and look at their recommended resources and books, it's a mile long of occult texts," Merkle says. "They work in teams at hospitals, and come around to your bed and ask, 'Would you like us to pray over you?' Of course, people who are sick are going to say yes. Then they start doing their 'energy' work."

Merkle believes the root of “energy” techniques is “in Kundalini yoga and the raising of the ‘serpent power’ up the spine, opening the chakras and giving people magical occult powers.” New Age “energy techniques” and “healing modalities” are actually forms of magic.

Speaking about various forms of Eastern meditation, “Some Aspects of Christian Meditation” (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1989) says that we can adopt what is good from other religions “as long as the Christian conception of prayer, its logic and requirements are never obscured.”

Brinkmann writes that the problem with Reiki and healing touch is that it is based on beliefs peculiar to various forms of Hinduism and Buddhism which “posit the existence of a life energy (ki or kundalini) and interpret that energy as spiritual,” which is not a Christian belief.

“Christians believe that man is a union of body and soul, and that the soul is an essential form of the body — not an energy force.”

She quotes the editors at *Catholic Answers*: “From a spiritual perspective, we believe the soul is the life-principle of the body, not something else. Consequently, there is no spiritual ‘life energy’ animating the body. Any energy used as part of the body’s operations — such as the electricity in our nervous system — is material in nature, not spiritual. ... Since this [belief] is contrary to Christian theology, it is inappropriate for Christians to participate in activities based on this belief.”

Those Reiki practitioners who present their work as a form of the Christian laying-on of hands are deceiving themselves and others, according to Father Pacwa, who has written extensively on New Age practices. “The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes the laying on of hands as a ‘sign’ (CCC 699) not a means of channeling ‘energy.’ Reiki is an attempt to make a ‘technique’ out of praying for the sick,” but “praying for the sick has to be understood as an aspect of God’s grace operative in our lives. It’s not a ‘technique.’ That’s where it becomes ‘magical,’ and Christianity is not about using magic.” V

Susan Brinkmann’s article on Reiki and other articles in her New Age series can be read at the *Colorado Catholic Herald* website:

www.coloradocatholicherald.com/display.php?xrc=543 .

The *Colorado Catholic Herald* is the paper for the Diocese of Colorado Springs. Brinkmann’s analyses about New Age practices have also appeared in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia’s newspaper, *The Catholic Standard and Times*, and have been discussed on *Catholic Answers*.



Proponents of Reiki claim to have healing powers by channeling spiritual energy. It is a New Age practice having nothing in common with Christian “laying-on” of hands.