

# Los Pequeños Pepper

*Publication of Los Pequeños de Cristo*

September 2004



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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.*

# Faithful Citizenship

*Walking the tightrope of nonpartisanship isn't easy*

By Stephanie Block

On August 9, the Archdiocese of Santa Fe sponsored an evening “presentation and discussion” at the Catholic Center titled *Faithful Citizenship: Voting Our Faith into Action.... How? Faithful Citizenship* is the name of a USCCB document that teaches a consistent ethic of life should be the moral framework from which to address all issues in the political arena. According to publicity, the workshop would explore what a “consistent ethic of life” means.

The evening’s presenter was Sr. Louise Akers, S.C. Though currently working as coordinator of the Cincinnati Sisters of Charity’s Office for Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation, Sr. Akers told the workshop that she had once taught at Pius High School in Albuquerque as part of her order’s mission work. Among her recent activities, Sr. Akers has organized the Mary of Magdala Prayer Service, committed to the ordination of women as priests in what she has termed a “patriarchal church.” FutureChurch, in partnership with Call to Action, is the initiator of the annual event. Akers was also a panelist at a May 15, 2004 Women-Church Convergence, convened for the same purpose.



**Sr. Louise Akers,  
S.C. during a panel  
at the May 15, 2004  
Women-Church  
Convergence**

Sister’s presentation examined Cardinal Bernardin’s “seamless garment” theory of social concern. Akers, who at one time worked in Bernardin’s office of social justice, listed healthcare, care of the earth, unions, the death penalty, immigrants, abortion, euthanasia, and war among the spectrum of issues that a Catholic voter must consider.

Participants in the Catholic Center event were conspicuously frustrated by the tenor of the presentation. At the question and answer session, several people emotionally presented Church documents that declare abortion and euthanasia to be preeminent threats against society, striking at the foundation of all other human rights.

Sr. Akers insisted that she, too, was opposed to abortion, but urged the group to understand that the entire scope of social concerns she had enumerated deserved consideration. She cautioned the group to recognize that they lived in a pluralistic country and Church. “Everyone in this room has a right to act on their principles and to get their principles put into place. That’s why we need dialogue,” she said.

Akers launched into a fractured history lesson. Pre-Vatican II, she said, taught that non-Catholics would be barred from heaven, which was why we had missionary activity. Vatican II, according to Sister, changed such thinking and teaches us to honor all other faith journeys.\*

“What about Islam?” someone asked.

“Of course, Islam.”

“Even when it says we are the infidel and we should be killed? We have to respect that?”

“No! No! We only respect the tenets of *real* Islamism – what it means to be Muslim. We affirm anything life-supporting.”

Not that this was to be construed as a sanction against a pro-choice candidate, mind you. Sister assured the group that she was non-partisan (although an article by Sr. Joan Chittister, “Is John Kerry a Good Catholic?” was included among her free handouts. The point of the article seemed to be that single issue voting – such as in the case of abortion – was sinful) and that no candidate was perfect.

The evening ended with a “Prayer for Leadership” composed by Catholic dissenter Joan Chittister.\*\* All were asked to pray: “Give us leaders who lead this nation to virtue without seeking to impose our kind of virtue on the virtue of others.”

Sr. Akers was no more than honest when she assured exasperated New Mexico pro-lifers that she was not presenting Sr. Louise's opinions about responsible Catholic voting but those of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. The government relations staff of the USCCB distributed a presidential questionnaire for major party presidential candidates that was soundly criticized by the Culture of Life Foundation (and others) precisely for its "seamless garment" approach to politics that seems to favor Democratic party positions.

The questionnaire asks candidates if they "support" or "oppose" statements on issues as divergent as child-safety gunlocks, the redistribution of farm subsidies, immigration and refugees, abortion and school choice.

According to an article in *Cosmos and Culture*, Patrick F. Fagan, a research fellow on cultural and family issues at the Heritage Foundation, says that many of the questions involve policies over which Catholics may properly disagree. The USCCB questionnaire, however, gives the impression that there are specifically *Catholic* positions for all of them. "On immigration, on housing, on welfare, there are many ways to skin these cats. These are all very valid areas of real differences on what is the prudent way to achieve the good." Catholic social teaching provides the principles, but there are many, legitimate practical applications.

Other issues are "non-negotiable," however – such as abortion, euthanasia, fetal stem cell research, human cloning, and homosexual marriage. To lump these together with issues that allow for many different approaches generates an impossible confusion among the poorly catechized.

Bishop Rene Henry Gracida, Bishop Emeritus of Corpus Christi, Texas, expresses the concern in an August 10, 2004 statement: "I have had an opportunity to review a copy of the 2004 Presidential Questionnaire submitted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to President George Bush and Senator John Kerry. I am disappointed that the Questionnaire is so broad and covers so many issues that are before the American public today that its value in helping to show the differences between the positions of the two candidates on the really important issues will be minimal.

"... from the perspective of the Church's teaching some issues far outweigh others in importance. For instance, there is no moral equivalence between the issue of abortion-on-demand and farm subsidies. The Questionnaire should have been much shorter and should have been limited to questions on those issues on which there is a clear unequivocal teaching of the Church, e.g., abortion, cloning, assisted suicide, embryonic stem-cell research and marriage.

"There is no clear unequivocal position of the Church on such issues as the minimum wage, immigration, farm subsidies, etc. The inclusion of questions in the Questionnaire can only result in confusion in the minds of Catholic voters who do not understand that there is no moral equivalence between these two groups of issues. I can only hope that both presidential candidates will refuse to reply to the Questionnaire, or, if they do reply, that the leadership of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops will recognize the danger to Catholic voters and will publish those replies with a clear teaching on the greater importance which should be attached to the replies to the first group of questions I have listed above that have far greater moral implications for the Nation." ☪

\* Section "846-856 in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explain the Church's teaching of "outside the Church, there is no salvation." Properly understood, the Church has not changed this teaching. The *Catechism* gives numerous pre-Vatican II sources to explicate its continuity of true teaching. Further, the *CCC* affirms that there has been no change in Church teaching on its mandate for missionary work (see #849-856).

\*\* In June 2001, Sr. Joan Chittister defied a Vatican order against speaking at the Women's Ordination Conference in Dublin. When asked about using a prayer written by Chittister, Akers said that she chose it because Sr. Joan is a friend.

***“The inclusion of questions [for which there is no clear unequivocal position of the Church] in the Questionnaire can only result in confusion in the minds of Catholic voters who do not understand that there is no moral equivalence between these two groups of issues.”***

-- Bishop Rene Henry Gracida, Bishop Emeritus of Corpus Christi, Texas

# THE HEART OF THE MATTER:

*Women and Priesthood: Part III*

By Marie P. Loehr

*...This is My Body, given up for you....*

In conclusion, once again: why does the Church insist that women cannot be ordained to the ministerial, that is, liturgical, priesthood?

The deep reasons for this inability to ordain women lies not with Church authority or arbitrary rigidity. This is not a matter of superficial custom, local convention, historical accident or accretion. It is not a matter of mere Church discipline. This prohibition stands because it is based on the nature of Holy Orders and the Eucharist, doctrinally and sacramentally. The nature of both sacraments is determined by the nature of the Trinity, the exigencies of the Incarnation, and the divinely willed order of Creation.

The liturgical, ministerial priesthood is the very principle of generation proper to the Godhead acting in space and time. It is this principle of generation--the power to beget life--that precedes, initiates, and stimulates fecundity at the heart of the Trinity itself. Christ's human masculinity springs from this generative reality in the Trinity, and shapes all human masculinity at its connected spiritual and biological roots. Ordained liturgical priesthood is the seedbed of union in, with, and through Christ. It is rooted in the generative nature of God. It is from this life-initiating essence that all life and growth, spiritual *and* material, has its existence.

Our common participation in the priesthood of Christ--as man or woman--is a flowering forth from that origin. It is a germination from that intensely focused seed and source. The generative initiative of God is expressed through Christ in liturgical priesthood. This generative initiative is the essence of masculine being, as germination is the essence of feminine being.

Generation plants the seed and pattern of life. Germination nurtures it and brings it to fruition. This is not biological determinism. It is spiritual exigence.

God pours forth the fullness of his being and generates Creation. The generative Father speaks his Word, the equally generative Son. That Word--the seed falling into the ground--acts in the Spirit and through the Spirit to stir Creation to life, growth, individuation and proliferation. God forms Adam and fills him with being and life. Christ empties himself of his divine prerogatives to enter human flesh, "taking on the likeness of a slave," says Paul. He penetrates the sterile emptiness of a world closed in on itself, barren with sin, falling away to fragmentation and death. He quickens it in his generative act to new life, re-Creation, re-generation through his kenosis, which is his self-emptying of all his divine prerogatives. He is "the seed falling into the ground" of our flesh and its earth.

The words of the priest at the Consecration of the Mass go beyond this and transubstantiate the bread wholly into the Body of Christ himself, and the wine into his Blood. The Eucharist is the very Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ, really and sacramentally present through the generative word and act of the priest acting *in persona Christi*, in the Person of Christ himself. The Eucharist enters us as seed to quicken us, to conceive new and necessary life in us, to re-generate us out of the death of sin into the life of the Trinity: its commitment, communion, and creativity.

Christ the Word identifies himself with as seed falling into the ground in the Parable of the Sower. The Father is the Sower. The seed is his Word. Word and Seed



**Laying on of Hands: Bishop Peter Hickman, Rev. Mary Ramerman, Rev. James Callan and members of the Spiritus Christi community pray over Rev. Denise Donato.**

**From Women-Church Convergence, 2004**

are Christ in his Incarnation and Eucharist. The Eucharist is pre-eminently the seed sown in the ground of our flesh. Its intimate union in us and with us is an act of fertilization--and its fructification in the Spirit.

Christ is insistent that we must eat his body and drink his blood in order to have life in us. If we do this, we will be incorporated into his mystical body, the body who is Church, his Bride. Paul reveals Matrimony as an image of this union between Christ and his Church. The relation between the principle of generation and the principle of germination holds true even in this deeply sacred mystery and reality. God is insistent on the intimate, even salvific, relationship between spirit and biology. This is so basic that we could say the reason women may not and can not be ordained to the ministerial priesthood is as simple as this.

***Roosters can't lay eggs. Hens can't fertilize them.***

Whatever the totality of Godhead in its unity may be, in Trinity the relationship of God to Creation, Christ to Church, Eucharist to humanity is the intimate relation of man to woman in the fullness and communion of life-creating love. As man enters woman to initiate life and growth and new being, as the sperm penetrates the ovum to stimulate life and growth and individuation, so God enters us to quicken us to new life. If the sperm does not enter the ovum, the female cell remains closed upon itself. It cannot open or grow. If left to itself, the ovum must die, slough off, and fall away--fruitless, disintegrating.

Without the act of generation, or begetting--which is only possible to the masculine, germination, or bearing--which is only possible to the feminine, cannot take place. Generation precedes germination, if there is to be life in all its growth and fullness. Generation initiates and stimulates germination.

To the scandal of so many, God persists in revealing himself as Father, coming among us as Son, reiterating over and over this mystery of Lover, Bridegroom, Husband. Christ reveals himself as a man, masculine, male. He describes God over and over as Father. He is a Son who insists that seeing him, we see the Father. He chooses twelve men to lead his Church. He changes Simon's name to Peter, which means Rock. This signifies virile masculinity and identity with the Father, the Rock of Israel. Peter is the Rock on which the Son builds his Church, as the wise man builds his house on rock in the parable. Rock, in slang use and in its nature, indicates the potent masculine nature and reality of the priesthood Christ deliberately establishes.

God's nature and his passion to create, enter, embrace us, as the *Canticle of Canticles* reveals, do not change from age to age--whatever the culture, its technology, or their illusions. Christ in his words and Word, in his human masculinity and Divine Sonship, does not give us a mere externally convenient image of God we may change to suit our sin-darkened sociological whims. God really IS Father, GENERATOR, in essence, act and relationship. Thus the priest, in the Person of Christ, re-presents Christ the Bridegroom in essence and in act. The Bridegroom can only be male, because to be bridegroom signifies a masculine generative role and function, both spiritually and materially. Therefore the priest must be male for his priesthood to be valid. His priesthood must be valid for the Eucharist he consecrates to be valid.

Women cannot generate life in the normal order of Creation, even by our technological perversions of sexuality and reproduction. Women can only accept the generating seed to germinate it in her body or in her spirit. She can only bring it to fruition and bear it. This feminine nature and role is the work of the Bride--as wife or Church. As a man cannot germinate life, so a woman cannot generate life. A woman cannot be a Bridegroom in her nature, her flesh or her feminine role. Therefore, women cannot be ordained to the ministerial, liturgical priesthood of the Roman Catholic Church. ☩



**Women "Priests:" Dr. Iris Mueller, Dr. Ida Raming and Rev. Joan Hammond lead congregation in praying the words of Consecration at an attempted Eucharistic service in N. VA, April 2003.**

**From Women-Church Convergence, 2004**

# Confronting Sin

*It takes COURAGE to do what Fr. Harvey does*

The three of them stood in a front pew during Fr. John Harvey's presentation at San Clemente in July. One was dressed in a tight, short skirt that defied his masculine physique. The other two, less flamboyant, were no less defiant, trying to glare down the Rev. John Harvey, founder and director of Courage, a spiritual support ministry for homosexually oriented Catholics. They objected to his message that Christ and the natural law call all people to a life of chastity.

The unflappable Fr. Harvey described the work and structure of his organization and then welcomed questions.

"What do you have to say to me?" asked one of the protestors. "I am baptized Roman Catholic. I am openly gay, living in a monogamous relationship for 18 years with the same man. I believe that my relationship is blessed by God and I believe that the relationship is holy."

Father spoke softly. "In the order of Catholic teaching, what you are doing is objectively wrong. I respect your opinion but I disagree with you and so does the Church."

The fellow was incensed. He shouted: "Your rhetoric is spiritual violence against me!"

"Then that's the end of the discussion between us," said Fr. Harvey.

Another man was disturbed by references in the talk to studies that demonstrated the profound unhappiness of many people with same-sex attractions. "The studies only reflect the people who come to psychologists with problems. What about the many who don't go to psychologists and are happy with their lifestyle?"

"From experience," said Fr. Harvey, "I have learned how to help people move away from homosexual acts. I'm not here to explain those who are happy and feel their lifestyle is OK. My field is to help people know what God's teaching is and to help them achieve it. I only deal with those who come to me."

Father continued that one might ask the same question about all the Catholics who disagree with the Church on one point of doctrine or another. "I regret their choices, but they're free. I can only help those who want help – and they come to me in the thousands."

The personal testimonies that followed, of those who were struggling to lead chaste lives in the face of deep temptations, was riveting, expressive of wounds in human nature that may express themselves in myriad ways. Julie's search for a loving touch, Alphonso's father-hunger, and Ken's wrenching story of childhood abuse each formed the backdrop to a spiritual journey that left most hearers humbled and inspired. "For us," says Fr. Harvey of his work with Courage, "the most important change of all is from lust to chastity, not from homosexuality to heterosexuality." ☪



**Fr. John Harvey, founder and director of Courage**



# Call to Action Bishop Leads Protest

*Pax Christi's* founding president, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, visited New Mexico on August 5-6 to mark the 59th anniversary of dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. About two hundred people met at Santa Maria de la Paz to hear the bishop speak on Friday night and half of those joined him the following day in a protest at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, calling for the abolition of all U.S. nuclear weapons.

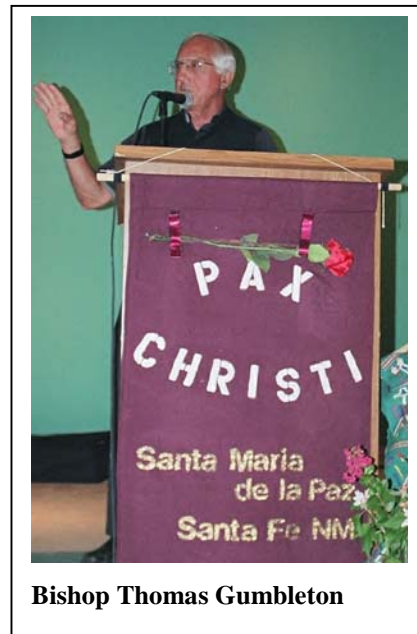
A staunch supporter of *Call to Action*, Gumbleton said that war, "according to Jesus...can never, at any time, be justified." Modern warfare, in particular, "cannot be on the agenda."

Fr. John Dear, founder of *Pax Christi* New Mexico, hosted the 2-day event, telling participants about the recent closing of the Lab because of lost computer disks. He said, "If Los Alamos can't keep track of two disks, they can't be trusted with 10,000 nuclear weapons. No one can. All these weapons of mass destruction need to be dismantled. This work is sinful, immoral, and evil, and needs to stop immediately." ☺

## Catholic Teaching about "Just War"

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (# 2302-2317) contradicts Bishop Gumbleton's remarks about war. While stressing the duty of governments to avoid war and safeguard peace, it also teaches that public authorities have the right and duty to make provision for national defense, including the use of military force under some conditions.

That said, the *Catechism* does stress the danger of over-armament and the particular danger of modern warfare for "indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants." It calls this "a crime against God and man."



Bishop Thomas Gumbleton



Los Alamos *Pax Christi* Protest

## Pro-Life News

**Is Abortion Not All That Bad, or Is the Eucharist Not All That Good?** The American Life League has released a new ad that encourages American bishops to withhold Holy Communion from known pro-abortion “Catholic” public figures. The ad’s heading asks “Is Abortion Not All That Bad, or Is the Eucharist Not All That Good?” and goes on to explain that there are 500 “Catholic” politicians in the United States who regularly promote abortion and receive Holy Communion. “We implore the Holy Father to engage his brother bishops on the need for them to enforce this fundamental teaching of the Church: you cannot be a Catholic in good standing and support abortion in the least way.”

**Worthy to Receive the Lamb:** Three bishops – John Donoghue of Atlanta, Robert Baker of Charleston, and Peter Jugis of Charlotte – have jointly issued the statement “Worthy to Receive the Lamb: Catholics in political Life and the Reception of Holy Communion.” In it, they say: “There can be no contradiction between the values bestowed by Baptism and the Catholic Faith, and the public expression of those values. Catholic public officials who consistently support abortion on demand are cooperating with evil in a public manner. By supporting pro-abortion legislation they participate in manifest grave sin, a condition which excludes them from admission to Holy Communion as long as they persist in the pro-abortion stance (cf. Canon 915).”

Therefore, the bishops conclude: “Because of the influence that Catholics in public life have on the conduct of our daily lives and on the formation of our nation’s future, we declare that Catholics serving in public life espousing positions contrary to the teaching of the Church on the sanctity and inviolability of human life, especially those running for or elected to public office are not to be admitted to Holy Communion in any Catholic church within our jurisdictions.”

**You Can’t Be Catholic and Pro-Choice:** Denver’s Archbishop Charles Chaput has written that Catholics who support abortion are not really Catholics. “If you don’t accept what the Church teaches on issues of faith and morals you can’t claim to be a Catholic.”

**Truth Truck in New Mexico:** The Truth Truck has been called a mobile, pro-life “billboard.” With the picture of an aborted child on each side, the truck moves through city traffic, waking people up to the horror of abortion.

The Truth Truck will be touring Albuquerque between September 24-October 1. Donations for this work can be sent to the American Missionary Association – Ken Reed; PO Box 780821; Wichita, Kansas 67278-0821.



## Around the Archdiocese

**At the Spiritual Renewal Center (Home of the Dominican Retreat House)** Catholics can attend a Yoga Retreat or an Enneagram Retreat in September. [*People of God*, August 2004]

If that's not enough New Age for you, Dr. Alexander Shaia, PhD will be giving a retreat on *The Way of the Dream* at the **Canossian Spirituality Center** in November. Dr. Shaia specializes in "Depth Christianity," weaving Jungian psychology, Buddhism, Jewish and Sufi mysticism, and the Hopi and Navaho spirituality into an "integrated way of life." "God and great Spirit" says the retreat description, "converse with us for hours each night." *God AND great Spirit?*

Dr. Shaia is a familiar retreat master in the Santa Fe area. During the summer, he led a Retreat Day for the faculty and staff of St. Francis School and will be speaking at the Cathedral in December. [<http://www.bluedoorretreat.com/About.html>, Shaia's home page, speaking engagements.]

**Dignity New Mexico** – a support group for those with same-sex attractions that, in contrast to Courage, does not discourage sexual relationships – meets on the first Sunday of every month at 7 pm to celebrate Mass at the **Aquinas Newman Center** chapel. On all other weekends, the group meets on Saturday at 4:30 pm at the Aquinas Newman Center church, second or third row in the area northeast of the altar. [Dignity New Mexico webpage: <http://www.swcp.com/~dignity>]



Alexander Shaia, PhD

## Around the Nation

**Bishop Robert Vasa** of the Baker, Oregon Diocese has issued a regulation that requires all persons engaged in parish ministries to sign a 10-point statement of doctrinal fidelity. Imagine: catechists who reject abortion and contraception. Imagine: extraordinary Eucharistic ministers who believe in the Church's infallibly defined teachings.

**New Mexico** made national news in July when a Santa Fe sex ed teacher coaxed a student to put a condom in her mouth. "Come on, sweetie, have a little fun," the male teacher is reported to have said. A representative for the New Mexico Health Department defended the teacher: "He didn't really tell them to just put (condoms) in their mouth...he has told them, if they're the flavored kind, they can go ahead and taste them if they want to. But it's generally to desensitize the whole stigma of 'Oh my God, it's a condom.'"

## Betrayal:

### How Union Bosses Shake Down Their Members and Corrupt American Politics

By Linda Chavez and Daniel Gray

Crown Forum Press, 277 pp. (\$25.95)

Review by Stephanie Block

A conservative political analyst, columnist, and former labor union official, Linda Chavez – born in Albuquerque – was nominated for the national position of Secretary of Labor in 2001. She wasn't always a conservative, though. Her career began in service to the Young People's Socialist League, doing labor-union work for the American Federation of Teachers, teaching in college affirmative-action programs and writing political propaganda for the Democratic National Committee.

Chavez had a conversion, of sorts, and earned the fury of former friends. The day after her nomination, the *New York Times* wrote: "Her opposition to affirmative action has caused her to be vilified by civil rights groups and to be physically threatened when she has spoken on college campuses. That opposition-combined with her marriage to a Jew, Christopher Gersten, and the rearing of her three sons as Jews-have [sic] prompted some to term her a traitor to her people."

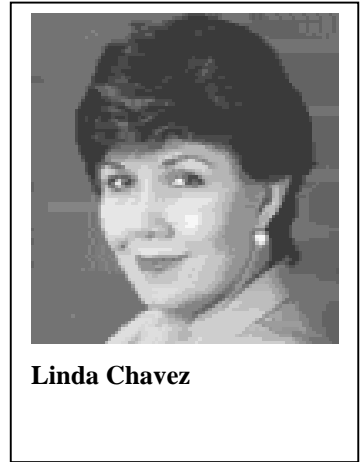
Along the same lines, AFL-CIO president John Sweeney claimed Chavez was "an avowed opponent of the most basic workers' rights" and "a vociferous and aggressive opponent of the federal minimum wage." Between such rhetoric and the disclosure that Chavez had permitted an illegal Guatemalan to live in her home for a couple of years, presumably working for her, Chavez withdrew the nomination. Chavez had powerful enemies.

And politics is a dirty game. *Betrayal* offers a fascinating exposé of Labor's attachment to the Democratic Party, to which it annually contributes millions. Chavez says that union members think their dues are used to provide better representation at the bargaining table. However, most unions today spend the bulk of their members' money on politics and other non-contract-related activities. Members have no say how their money is used "and many have no idea that their dues are being diverted to far-Left causes that they would never support — everything from abortion rights to opposition to the war in Iraq." [National Review Online, Interview of Linda Chavez, 8/5/04]

Unions have powers denied to corporations. They can — quite legally — operate phone banks in support of candidates out of union headquarters, so long as "volunteers" only call union households...though the rules are often stretched. They can pay the salaries of union officials who are assigned to work in federal political campaigns. They can also print up brochures, organize registration and get-out-the-vote drives, and a host of similar activities.

Of particular interest to Catholics is the book's description of socialist John Sweeney's rise to head the AFL-CIO. Sweeney has become the most powerful labor leader in the United States, turning "the labor movement into a political machine." In words disconcertingly reminiscent of Cardinal Bernardin's, Sweeney's stated goal has been to "put together a seamless garment of activism," and "change the nature of politics itself." [*Betrayal*, pp51-52; Interestingly, Sweeney has also been an adviser of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops through membership on its Domestic Policy Committee, helping to set public policy positions for the US Catholic Church.]

Chavez and co-author Gray recommend changes in labor law, particularly restoring to workers the freedom to choose or reject union membership, removing special privileges from unions, and preventing unions from spending members' dues on politics without their permission. ☺



Linda Chavez

# Feminist Theology –

*The Real Stuff*

In May 2004, the Vatican Offices of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, with the approval of John Paul II, published a *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church On the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World*. The letter was written to address “certain currents of thought which are often at variance with the authentic advancement of women.”

It identifies errors that are particularly characteristic of the times. The first is bred from the natural resentment women feel to unjust demands of subordination. “Faced with the abuse of power,” the letter explains, the temptation is “to seek power.”

Another error is to deny all differences between men and women, calling “into question the family, in its natural two-parent structure of mother and father,” and making “homosexuality and heterosexuality virtually equivalent.”

These false positions tend to promote the idea that “liberation of women entails criticism of Sacred Scripture, which would be seen as handing on a patriarchal conception of God nourished by an essentially male-dominated culture.” Further, they tend to miss the importance of Jesus’ “assumed human nature in its male form.”

Building on John Paul II’s thought, the letter describes the Biblical vision of the human person, showing man and woman equally to be persons created in the image and likeness of the personal God. “Their equal dignity as persons is realized as physical, psychological and ontological complementarity, giving rise to a harmonious relationship of ‘uni -duality’, which only sin and “the structures of sin” inscribed in culture render potentially conflictual.”

It is only with this foundation that the beautiful Scriptural expression of God’s love for his people can be understood, in which “God makes himself known as the Bridegroom who loves Israel his Bride.”

The letter demonstrates how this relationship is consummated in Christ’s actions. “On the one hand, Mary, the chosen daughter of Zion, in her femininity, sums up and transfigures the condition of Israel/Bride waiting for the day of her salvation. On the other hand, the masculinity of the Son shows how Jesus assumes in his person all that the Old Testament symbolism had applied to the love of God for his people, described as the love of a bridegroom for his bride.

“...This aspect is particularly evident in the Gospel of John. In the scene of the wedding feast at Cana, for example, Jesus is asked by his mother, who is called “woman”, to offer, as a sign, the new wine of the future wedding with humanity (cf. Jn 2:1-12). This messianic wedding is accomplished on the Cross when, again in the presence of his mother, once again called “woman”, the blood/wine of the New Covenant pours forth from the open heart of the crucified Christ.”

The letter then expresses the importance of feminine values in society and in the life of the Church. “Among the fundamental values linked to women’s actual lives is what has been called a ‘capacity for the other’.” This means that it is essential for women to “be present in the world of work and in the organization of society.” Without attempting to work out the practical details of how it is accomplished, the letter says that “women who freely desire will be able to devote the totality of their time to the work of the household without being stigmatized by society or penalized financially, while those who wish also to engage in other work may be able to do so with an appropriate work-schedule, and not have to choose between relinquishing their family life or enduring continual stress, with negative consequences for one’s own equilibrium and the harmony of the family.”

In Church life, while reaffirming that priestly ordination must be reserved to men, the letter stresses that “women are called to be unique examples and witnesses for all Christians of how the Bride is to respond in love to the love of the Bridegroom.” Decrying “the power of sin at work in individuals and in societies,” it holds forth the great hope of conversion to God, in which man’s relationship to woman is transformed and shown the “way of love.” ☪



# Meet Mary Agnes Gilbert

*Why a housewife runs for political office.*

It takes a lot of gumption for a stay-at-home mom-type to decide she's mad as hell and isn't going to take it any more.

Or is it disgust with politics as usual?

Or maybe it's a protective mother instinct, trying to stanch the moral hemorrhage that threatens to overwhelm society.

Regardless of the motive, it can't be easy knocking on doors each day, sometimes alone in dangerous neighborhoods, asking for support against a strong, liberal opponent.

Mary Agnes Gilbert insists that she's not only ready for the challenge but enthusiastic about her campaign for New Mexico State Senator in State Senate District 17.

When asked what drives her, Gilbert responded: "I'm an active member of Holy Ghost Church and several ministries. I'm a member of Right to Life, The 100 Club, and the Serra Club. I am the mother of 8 and grandmother of 25. These are my family values."

Life issues, such as abortion and euthanasia, and social concerns – particularly marriage – will loom large in the next few years. Gilbert is frank. "Marriage is a covenant between one man and one woman. Abortion, euthanasia, and contraception are murder.

"I've watched our current senator operate in the legislature since 1989. He voted for same sex marriage and has held up bills that protect life and parental notification. He needs to go back and work in his law office.

"My other issues are helping employment by working to cut unnecessary red tape for small businesses, keeping taxes low, insisting children have phonics added to the primary reading programs in public schools, and protecting home schooling. Someone needs to champion these things."

Gilbert's experiences as a campaigner are mixed. "I'm 74 years old, going door to door. Some, of course, will close the door in my face and refuse the flier I'm offering.

"Others, once they know my opponent's record, are aghast. It isn't easy for people; political affiliation is such a strong part of their identity. But the issues speak for themselves and make it difficult for them to retain those blind loyalties. At some point, they have to choose between 'the party' and their own values. What I have to tell them is challenging."

Gilbert isn't trying to make a political career for herself. She just wants to leave the world a better place. "After my husband died, I looked around and was dissatisfied by our political representation and the direction it was taking us. I thought: 'Someone needs to *do* something about this!' That's when I looked in mirror and realized that I was that 'somebody.'

"I see signs all over Albuquerque that read: 'God bless America.' But then I think: 'No, God have *mercy* on America!'" With that, Mary Agnes Gilbert excuses herself. She's off to visit shut-ins for her parish. ☺

*Mary Agnes Gilbert has recently been honored with Archbishop Sheehan's St Francis of Assisi Award, for "people who give unselfishly of themselves...[who are] role models in stewardship of time and talent." She can be reached at (505) 262-1049.*



**Mary Agnes Gilbert**

# September Calendar

## Friday, September 17, 2004:

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

## Pro-life Prayer Each Tuesday:

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

*For other times, call (505) 286-1655*



*An editorial in the Albuquerque Journal - West complained that LPC was a bunch of “rich Catholics.” From their lips to God’s ears!*

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

## From the Trenches

On July 9th, a group of Catholic pro-life activists gathered at a Kerry/Edwards rally at the Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Right off the bat came the first one-finger salute from a fellow who was driving by. But then two sheriff officers, in two different vehicles, arrived and gave me a thumbs-up, which raised my spirits.

I have gone to abortion clinics many times on behalf of the unborn. I go once a week to the local Planned Parenthood on San Mateo in Albuquerque. I pray for those who God, our Father, says He knew before they were in their mother’s womb. I’ve seen many expressions as people speed by – both the angry and the supportive. I thought I had seen it all.

The Kerry/Edwards rally was something else, though. Coming face to face with pro-abortion advocates in such a setting is very revealing. There is nothing ambivalent about their commitment to keeping abortion legal. Their hatred of Catholic pro-lifers is intense. A sizable number made fiercely anti-Catholic comments. They yelled such things as:

“Who wants to be Catholic anyway?”

“What about your pedophile priests?”

“You hypocrites.”

“How about the Iraqi children?”

“How about Bush? Someone ought to shoot him. Someone ought to just kill the SOB.” I heard threats on his life at least five times.

But the hateful looks and remarks were also for us. I held a sign which reads: U CAN’T B BOTH CATHOLIC & PRO-CHOICE. I had several people come inches from my face and scream: “Oh, yes I can,” or “Who says I can’t?” Some cursed.

This went on and on for the five and a-half hours I was there.

There were some civil discussions, as well. Two Catholic men I spoke with were particularly angry about my sign. After a long talk, I finally put my hand on the shoulder of one and told him, “I’m sorry to tell you this, but you’re not Catholic.”

He looked at me for a while and said, “You’re right, you’re right.” Then he turned around and left.

At another point, a distinguished gentleman asked: “How can you assert that message when your own Archbishop doesn’t hold it?”

What could I say? ☹