

Los Pequeños Pepper

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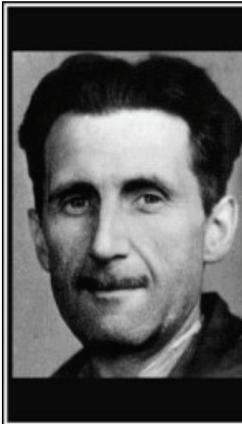
The IAF—An Unholy Alliance for Catholics

By Dorinda Sears

The antithetical relationship of Catholic clergy with an organization founded by the Marxist Saul Alinsky should send the proverbial chills up the sensibilities of all Christians.

Alinsky was the founder of the Industrial Areas Foundation, and his first rule of ethics was that “conscience is the virtue of observers and not agents of change.” He wrote the book “Rules for Radicals” and dedicated it to Lucifer for being the first ever revolutionary to rebel against the establishment and set up his own kingdom, which as we all know was hell.

Indeed, the argument could be made that Alinsky had somewhat of a penchant for hell as he was certainly headed in that direction when he wrote that “...in action one does not always enjoy the luxury of a decision that is consistent both with one’s individual conscience and the good of mankind.” In this he does not even pretend to have the common good in mind. His second rule of ethics is that the end justifies the means. In other words, according to Alinskyian theory, the significance of ethical values is measured not by any criterion for goodness but rather it is measured functionally as to what will and won’t work. For this secular man and his protégés, nothing but victory is of concern.



Political language is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable and to give an appearance of solidarity to pure wind.

(George Orwell)

So, indeed, it was puzzling and frightful to see Archbishop George H. Niederauer of the Archdiocese of San Francisco and Santa Rosa Bishop Daniel Walsh join Ernesto Cortez, the Southwest Regional Director of the Chicago-based Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), in a public meeting at St. Rafael’s, in San Rafael, California, on the evening of February 10, 2009, to jointly address Marin [County] Catholics on the role of Catholics in public life.

After the event ended, I and several others went up to Archbishop Niederauer and asked him if he was aware of the IAF’s beginnings and if he knew anything about its founder. He said “no.” Then stepping quickly away he politely asked me to mail him information on Alinsky.

I was left thinking it indubitably peculiar that the bishop would not have taken greater caution in vetting an organization with which he so publicly aligned himself.

Rather than mailing information to Bishop Niederauer, I suggested that he spend a few minutes googling Alinsky, Ernesto Cortez and the IAF. In fifteen minutes he’d have seen what an unholy alliance he had constructed for himself and his laity.

Because, if the good bishop didn’t already know it, the IAF, despite its claim to the contrary, is a highly political organization with an ideology that is so far left it is, given its continuing successes, likely to take these United States full circle into another revolution. One that will most assuredly, I might add, be nothing like the first American Revolution. It won’t be for a republican democratic form of government, for individual rights and freedoms, according to our constitution and it won’t be for the rule of law. If the present trend continues, the second revolution will be fought, in the name of a purer democracy, for the power of the people—mob rule—for a populist form of government, where everyone is made equal and taken down to the lowest common denominator, where, in the words of Ernesto Cortez, on February 10, 2009, “the afflicted are comforted” and the “comfortable are afflicted.”

Before long, our republican democracy could look more like the populist governments we have seen operating in Latin America and other third world countries.

That would be one way to rid the nation of illegal alien problems; if Alinskyian successes continue, we’ll see those, who once made a dash for American citizenship, dashing back home.

The IAF has but one goal—power. They seek it under the guise of being an organization dedicated to “social justice” for the ‘poor and downtrodden’ and the change they seek is not of the sort that is consistent with the constitution of these United States or the aims of our forefathers, our human dignity or free men anywhere.

Alinsky’s professed and primary goal was the overthrow of the United States government, and, to this day, those in his organization either wittingly or unwittingly work toward the same end.

Social Change Wheel



In the face of Christ’s call for peace-filled action, the immediate goal of the IAF is to agitate for class conflict. First it goes to work mobilizing faith-based communities on neighborhood issues, and then, as time goes, it gains loyalties from these grassroots efforts for an overarching end goal of an extreme-left political agenda. The clarion call out to the masses is always CHANGE.

Alinsky’s instructions were to “clothe everything in moral arguments.” He warned his protégés that they would get nowhere without the appearance of the morally principled. He told them to always appear to be seeking justice.

I know of no more superior strategy for this than to work conspicuously, as they have, in faith-based communities for and on behalf of the poor and disadvantaged. Forming an alliance with the Christian community, with the added merit of being accepted as co-participants with Roman Catholic religious leaders, is an effective way of seducing even the most scrupulous into thinking that these IAF efforts are in complete compliance with the practices and principles of our faith.

And it’s working. Fifty-one percent of all Roman Catholics voted for President Obama who campaigned with the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA) as one of his flagship issues and who is without doubt a student of the Alinsky method, and he’s employed it ever since his beginnings as an IAF community organizer.

Jesus said over 2000 years ago “the poor will always be with you.” It’s a good bet then that in every neighborhood and in every society the IAF can find and make good use of poverty while pitting individualism against collectivism and making a good case for the latter.

In the words of John Adams, “Nothing in our Constitution suggests that government is a grantor of rights. Instead, government is a protector of rights.” Well, organizations like the IAF work to overturn that distinction. Saul Alinsky’s protégé Ernesto Cortez and the rest of the IAF conspire to take from us our capitalistic republic for some form of populism—all the while insisting that they themselves have no particular political or religious ideology.

The upshot of this has been to foster an extreme preoccupation with the poor to the point that the proper moral order has gone awry and all other considerations—even abortion—have been subordinated, in the name of social justice, to the secular agenda.

A few years back I was at a parish prayer group meeting and brought up abortion as a major reason I could not vote for Obama. Almost in knee jerk fashion another participant became irate at what she said was the “first time ever anyone had made an effort to politicize a prayer meeting.” On the heels of her comment the group leader said, “Jesus would never step over the poor—for any reason.” In other words though millions of babies are brutally killed every year, these people saw poverty and the redistribution of wealth as their bigger issue. In fact, they acted and spoke as if they saw the abortion issue as a political issue, when, in fact, even according to our beloved Pope [emeritus] Benedict, most definitely it is a religious issue.

These are good people. Some of them are daily communicants. Yet they seem to have lost an important link with the truth as it is known in Christ. Perhaps this is because it is nowadays less acceptable to seek an objective truth than it is to seek peace and settle differences. That is why we as a people have developed such an addiction to relativism given to us in ever increasing doses under the generic label of tolerance.

Like all loyal Marxists the IAF claims that capitalism produces greed and greed translates into a desire for abusive power. This criticism fails to recognize a fundamental distinction between economic power and political

power. The capitalist seeks economic productivity whereas the politician, who may even genuinely believe he is acting in “the public interest,” seeks the bully power of the state as a means to coerce and control his fellow citizens. In the end, political power is always used to subordinate individual interests to those of the society at large and though the individual is called to conform to the rules of proper society, it should never be at the expense of his democratic freedoms. Isn’t it the rub that it is always the so-called humanitarian who wants to make ‘good’ use of government coercion to achieve his agenda. This was never as obvious as in the more recent healthcare debacle.

The IAF works to mobilize the poor and the common so that they in turn can become empowered to influence the political process. Grass roots efforts are with faith-based community organizations, and shrewdly begun for the benefit of the people in their own neighborhoods, but always with the end goal of effecting an extreme left-wing agenda. The ultimate goal is always power and its only product is social “change.”

Alinsky’s tenth rule of ethics states that “you do what you can with what you have and clothe it with moral arguments.” He warns his organizers that they will get nowhere without seeming to be morally principled and on the side of justice. Alinsky instructed his protégés to take whatever actions are necessary to gain power and victory over people and governments. The Alinsky way of thinking is that conscience is the virtue of the observer and not the agent of change.

We are already seeing the devastating consequences of the interaction between the IAF and Catholics. During a 9 am children’s Mass at St. Hilary’s Parish in Tiburon, California, Father Lawrence, on February 8, 2009, made an impassioned plea for everyone to sign petitions against the Freedom of Choice Act (FOCA), an act that sought to eliminate all restrictions against abortions and likely force every medical person and facility across the nation to perform abortions or close up shop. Despite the convenience of the petitions being right in the pews, and though there may have been a paltry few signatures gathered, I personally saw no one comply. I suspect this pathetic display of infidelity was the case everywhere.

The question then arises as to how abortion has gained such respectability as a freedom of choice political issue, even for our Catholics, when in times past everyone saw it unquestionably as a religious issue?

Altogether I would say that with the IAF and its community organizers we are offered a strange prism through which to view the relationship between religion and politics in America. If our bishops, priests and religious continue their alliance with Saul Alinsky’s IAF what chance is there for us Catholics to act as a people loyal to our apostolic traditions and beliefs?

We’d be fools to believe that the IAF today is not an Alinskyian organization, because in practice they are what he was. And so might we be if the present trend continues. How many of us Catholics aren’t already preoccupied with the moral weight of poverty at the expense of human life—abortions—end-of-life issues and our Catholic doctrine and principles?

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development’s “Poverty and Faith Justice” has had an influence on the Catholic praxis in terms of showing everything through the prism of class struggles. We must be aware of this if we are to stay faithful to a God who would have us fight for justice and human dignity in accordance with the values and virtues He has laid out as distinguished from those peoples who put their faith in governments.✎

Dorinda Sears is the founder of *The Lay Catholic*: www.thelaycatholic.com



Um...change *what?*!

Reclaiming Catholic Social Teaching: A Defense of the Church's True Teachings on Marriage, Family, and the State

By Anthony Esolen
Sophia Institute Press (2014)

Review by Stephanie Block

If you've wandered for any time through the draughty corridors of contemporary "Catholic" social teaching, you will have run across a list of "seven themes" that are promulgated as "the heart of our Catholic social tradition."

These "themes" are:

1. Life and Dignity of the Human Person
2. Call to Family, Community, and Participation
3. Rights and Responsibilities
4. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
5. The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
6. Solidarity
7. Care for God's Creation



Anthony Esolen's new book, *Reclaiming Catholic Social Teaching A Defense of the Church's True Teachings on Marriage, Family, and the State*, proposes a richer approach to examining Catholic social doctrine. He urges us to return to "first principles," as laid down by Leo XIII, that form a single integrated tapestry of truth.

If we were to form a list of these bare-bone principles, roughly corresponding to the chapters in Esolen's book, they would read something like this:

1. Man is made in the image and likeness of God.
2. Virtue sets man free – and man was created for freedom.
3. Marriage is the cornerstone of human society.
4. The family is the heart of true economy and education.
5. Healthy, just social life is grounded in solidarity and pious associations, "solicitous for the common welfare."
6. Honorable work is a good, not an end; the moral law shapes the relationship between people.
7. The State's political authority is grounded on the preceding principles (recognition of the human person, of the moral law, of its proper role).



There are similarities between the two lists but their emphases are quite different. In the first point, the USCCB's concern for the "life and dignity of the human person" considers that life and dignity as if it might be disassociated from the Creator, who simply isn't mentioned.

Esolen is unapologetic about the "deficiency" of attempting to build a society that doesn't understand Man's ontological situation. "I mean more than that it will not be perfect. Nothing that man constructs will ever be perfect. I mean that it will be constructed according to false principles; as if you should attempt to build a barricade out of paper, or a canoe out of lead; or to feed a child with sand. It would mistake the

nature of the being it purports to satisfy." (p. 15)

Lest the framers of the "Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching" appeal to Catholic documents on various

social issues, one can agree that, yes, the Church has much to say about the value and dignity of human life *because he is "imago dei."* A section of the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* is devoted to just this point and, referencing *Guadium et Spes*, explains that "the relationship between God and man is reflected in the relational and social dimension of human nature." One can't begin to address social problems if one doesn't recognize the nature of the society's essential elements – human beings.

There is nothing in the USCCB list that focuses on forming the moral sensibilities of human beings. It is perhaps implied by acquiescence to the seven "themes." Yet without that framework, nothing else makes sense. "If this is not true," Esolen writes, "then, as Dostoyevsky famously put it, all things are permissible. I know there are atheists who believe we can build a morality up from odds and ends of old sentiments, political expedience, self-interest, and more or less popularly acknowledged 'goods.' In vain. Those things alone are no stronger than straw. What obliges me to accept another man's calculation of utility? You may say that a taste for brawling in the streets is obviously evil, because it upsets the good order that should prevail in suburbs flush with material comforts. But upsetting that order is precisely what I intend! What you call good order, I call dreariness. And I have Mikhail Bakunin and his fellow anarchists at my back. Nor am I impressed by your material comforts. Why should men be soft and pampered? What obliges me, in your moral system?" (pp. 19-20).

The *Compendium* acknowledges this when it reflects on the social consequences of sin. Reflecting on the thought of Thomas Aquinas, the *Compendium* concludes: "The exercise of freedom implies a reference to a natural moral law, of a universal character, that precedes and unites all rights and duties."

After points one and two, the two lists veer in widely different directions. Esolen is certainly concerned about the poor and vulnerable, the dignity of work and the needs of workers – but these are not the *principles* of Catholic social teaching. Rather, they are a *consequence* of rightly-formed understanding.

Perhaps another way to say this is that the USCCB "themes" fail to form a Catholic conscience. People who are educated to think that they have responsibility to be "good stewards" of "creation" – a daunting, if not unrealistic, responsibility, at that – will accept (or advocate) public policy that is quite different from that of people who are formed to understand their relationship to the rest of creation has a circumscribed moral framework.

Social justice isn't manmade. It's a product of living realistically – in conformity with the laws of human nature. "Faith is the heart of this new inner life and this new way of living among men. In these days it is of most urgent need, because while in former days heretics attacked particular articles of the Faith, it now "has come to this, that men deny altogether that there is anything above and beyond nature."

It's important to emphasize that Esolen doesn't introduce anything *new*. He does, however, take a very complex and voluminous body of material – Church teaching about social concerns – and present it in a readable, interesting, and *faithful* manner.

The gift of *Reclaiming Catholic Social Teaching* is, therefore, that rather than priming Catholics to advocate for particular *political* positions – as we find the "Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching" attempting to do – it strives to introduce them to the clear, moral ground from which they can form loving, holy *social* positions. ❧



Pope Leo XIII (pope from 1878 to 1903) authored *Rerum Novarum*, which laid the foundation for dealing with social issues from a Catholic perspective.

Anything Goes

By Susan Matthiesen

St. Augustine, *Confessions*, 12, 6, says: *The mutability of mutable things is simply their capacity for all the forms into which mutable things can be changed.* In other words, the ability of changeable things to be changed simply for the sake of change results in the capacity for all the forms into which something changeable can and will be changed by man – or as the 1934 Cole Porter song says, “Anything Goes.”

Once man changed the meaning of God's marriage there now will be a never-ending parade of various types of manmade “marriages” – man to man, woman to woman, transvestite to transvestite, man to beast, multiple men to one woman, multiple women to one man, and so forth. Some child will want to marry his or her pony so that will be permissible; after all, why not, since man's ability for the profane seemingly knows no bounds. Manmade marriage was formed merely for the sake of what the “I” wants, not what lies within God's plan of salvation for mankind.

Same-sex “marriage” recently changed into another new novelty marriage form, and the original change agents are not one bit happy. Homosexual “marriage” became legal in New Zealand on August 19, 2013, and already, one year later, those same change agent homosexual groups are horrified, shocked, and outraged.

On September 12, 2014, the Daily Mail Australia reported, “Two heterosexual men tied the knot this morning under New Zealand's liberal marriage laws. Marrying not for love, but for Rugby World Cup tickets, the two men from Dunedin in the South Island of New Zealand officially said ‘I do’ in front of 60 family and friends at Eden Park in Auckland. The ceremony was broadcast live by Edge Radio, who's *I Love You, Man* competition was launched earlier this year in a bid to find two straight men willing to wed for the sought after tickets.”

Travis McIntosh, 23, and Matt McCormick, 24, best friends since age 6, won the bromantic radio contest in August and are over the moon – not for a life together, but for the opportunity to head to the Rugby World Cup in England next year. “We entered the competition as a way of taking our (heterosexual) friendship to the next level,” said Travis. “Matt called me and asked me to marry him and I said yes without first asking why. I knew he'd have a good reason. Through the official proposal and preparing for the wedding we've spent so much time together, and we've had to share a lot of intimate details with one another. We had so much fun with it all. We got kitted out in amazing suits and I walked down the aisle to *Cruisin'*.” The wedding was a very male-populated event, with each of the pair having a best man.

After a honeymoon on the Cook Islands, life will return to normal for the non-traditional newlyweds. “We're certainly not ready to start a family.” McIntosh told the *Otago Daily Times* that he thought the marriage would last about two years. McIntosh said the wedding was not mocking the institution of marriage. “We are not here to insult anyone,” Travis told the *NZ Herald*. “We are here to do our own thing and travel our own path. It's just seeing how far two good mates would go to win a trip to the Rugby World Cup.” The Edge's host, Mike, said that the wedding ceremony was filled with good laughs. “They're such funny guys, so the wedding was hilarious. I think it's a good thing to celebrate bromance in such a quirky way, and Matt and Travis really epitomized that.”

However, the same Australian gay rights change agents, were horrified and outraged, and condemned the wedding. “Something like this trivializes what we fought for,” angrily protested Neill Ballantyne, coordinator of Otago University Students Association Queer Support. “The wedding was an insult because marriage equality was a hard-



fought battle for gay people. The competition promoted the marriage of two men as something negative, as some-

thing outrageous that you'd never consider." *Legalise Love* [a New Zealand gay-rights organization] co-chairman Joseph Habgood sullenly said the competition made clear that men marrying each other was "something they think is worth having a laugh at." Other campaigners called it a "homophobic stunt that makes a mockery of marriage equality." *GayNZ* whined that insensitive hurtful homophobic jokes were made throughout the ceremony, with one of the grooms making a throat-slitting gesture at the mention of the men sharing a bed together.

Conservative groups were quick to call the response of horror, anger and outrage from homosexual activists "ironic." Bob McCoskrie, national director of Family First, a lobby group opposed to same-sex marriage said, "The change in law was an arrogant act of cultural vandalism. This competition makes a mockery of marriage, but so did the redefining of traditional marriage."

Putting aside this ironic situation of the mutability (changeability) of man-made secular false marriage, let's briefly compare the meaning of God's immutable (written in stone) marriage, that is, TRUE MARRIAGE, which is between one man and one woman, the first comparison being that the word *marriage* means *matrimony*. The root word for matrimony is *mater* (mother) which most clearly means *to make a mother* or *motherhood*, something naturally impossible for two homosexuals to achieve, as well as two lesbians, or even Matt and Travis. Marriage has always been about what God, Who is immutable, planned for mankind, not man or his latest secular fashion fueled by the revolution of change for the sake of revolt against God.

Secondly, the procreative terrestrial trinity of love – **THE FAMILY** – is the visible earthly image and likeness of the Holy Trinity of God. Man is made of body and soul, and it is in the body, not of one person alone, but of the family – **man/woman/child** – that the Trinitarian image of God's love is visibly reflected on earth. The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, binding in love one man and one woman, reflects the Holy Trinity because of married love and the procreative gift of man and woman. All else – man/man or woman/woman, Matt/Travis traveling their own path – is not the immutable image and likeness of God, but rather a mutable, ever changing and profane sterile image which procreates nothing and mocks God.

Moreover, the Holy Trinity is male – Father, Son, Holy Spirit – and the Church and the soul of each person are female, always referred to as "she". The Holy Spirit, who erroneously some think is female, cannot be anything but male since the Blessed Virgin Mary is His Spouse. If the Holy Spirit were female, then the mystical marriage of Mary to the Holy Spirit would be a same-sex union and it would have been impossible for Jesus to have been conceived.

Lastly, the four Scriptural marriages are male-female images. In his *Sermons, First Sunday after Epiphany*, St Thomas Aquinas says, "Holy Scripture speaks of four marriages. The first, in its historical and literal sense is the bodily union of man and woman; the second is allegorical – the union of Christ and His Church; the third is tropological or moral – the union of God with the soul; the fourth is anagogical or eschatological – the union of God with the Church Triumphant. [#20]

Therefore, it is determined that marriage originated in the mind of God, and always was, always is, and always will be male and female. Anything else is evil and immoral.

The false homosexual and lesbian "marriage" of the tyranny of lust, sanctioned and set into law by the secular world of man is a dangerous path to follow for it leads, not to God, but to the coiling back inside of itself, thereby once again giving birth to the original sin of the disobedience of man and its catastrophic consequences. ❧



No Help Is Coming to Vanishing Mideast Christians

By Michael Cook

The Middle East is losing its ancient Christian heritage. When Iraq was invaded in 2003, 1.5 million Christians were living there. Now the figure is 400,000 and falling. The savagery of the Islamic State has accelerated the Christian exodus.

Mosul, about 400 kilometres to the north of Baghdad, was captured by IS in June last year. Ten years ago it had about 60,000 Christians. Now there are none. IS gave them an ultimatum: conversion or death. For the first time in 1,600 years there was no Christmas in Mosul.

In the wake of horror stories like this in the media, many in the West have denounced Islam as a malevolent religious virus, a barbaric creed. But how have the Christians who live there responded? Not exactly as their Western defenders might expect.



Many have fled. Others favour a policy of isolating themselves and forming their own political parties. Others abjure their history and call themselves Arameans, Phoenicians, Copts or Chaldeans – anything but Arab. But there is another, more positive, reaction. Two impressive recent Catholic documents have issued calling for solidarity with persecuted Muslims, and, unbelievably, hope.

Last year the Catholic bishops of the Holy Land (there are several overlapping jurisdictions, based on their liturgical tradition), issued a pastoral letter which called upon Arab Christians to work with Muslims. Their writ runs only as far as Israel, Palestine, Jordan and Cyprus, but they were addressing all Arab Christians in the Middle East. Their gloomy view was that no help can be expected from the West:

All of us, Christians and Muslims, must also be aware that the outside world will not make any real move to protect us. International and local political powers seek their own interests. We, alone, can build a common future together. We have to adapt ourselves to our realities, even realities of death, and must learn together how to emerge from persecution and destruction into a new dignified life in our own countries.

Unlike many critics of Muslim extremism in the West, the bishops reminded their compatriots that Christians are not the only ones who are suffering:

... in the name of truth, we must point out that Christians are not the only victims of this violence and savagery. Secular Muslims, all those defined as “heretic”, “schismatic” or simply “non-conformist” are being attacked and murdered in the prevailing chaos. In areas where Sunni extremists dominate, Shiites are being slaughtered. In areas where Shiite extremists dominate, Sunnis are being killed. Yes, the Christians are at times targeted precisely because they are Christians, having a different set of beliefs and unprotected. However they fall victim alongside many others who are suffering and dying in these times of death and destruction. They are driven from their homes alongside many others and together they become refugees, in total destitution.

Furthermore, the bishops admitted that some Christians had purchased safety at the expense of justice by cosy-ing up to the secular regimes of Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Bashir al-Assad in Syria.

Christians had lived in relative security under these dictatorial regimes. They feared that, if this strong authority disappeared, chaos and extremist groups would take over, seizing power and bringing about violence and persecution. Therefore some Christians tended to defend these regimes. Instead, loyalty to their faith and concern for the good of their country, should perhaps have led them to speak out much earlier, telling the truth and calling for necessary reforms, in

view of more justice and respect of human rights, standing alongside both many courageous Christians and Muslims who did speak out.

Oddly, at least to Western readers, they even lamented the use of the word “persecution” because it marginalised the suffering of many Muslims:

... the repetition of the word “persecution” in some circles (usually referring only to what Christians suffer at the hands of criminals claiming to be Muslims) plays into the hands of extremists, at home and abroad, whose aim is to sow prejudice and hatred, setting peoples and religions against one another.

Instead of setting Christians and Muslims at loggerheads, the bishops urged their flock to work together to build countries where human dignity will be respected:

Christians and Muslims need to stand together against the new forces of extremism and destruction. All Christians and many Muslims are threatened by these forces that seek to create a society devoid of Christians and where only very few Muslims will be at home. All those who seek dignity, democracy, freedom and prosperity are under attack. We must stand together and speak out in truth and freedom.



After the atrocities in Paris, where terrorists killed 17 people earlier this month, many Westerners might find this call for solidarity with persecuted Muslims baffling. Isn't Islam a religion of violence, a “death cult”?

But both of these documents advise Christians not to solve the conundrum of what constitutes authentic Islam, but to work with Muslims of good will, of whom there are many. This is one of the themes in a fascinating article in the latest issue of the Jesuit magazine *La Civiltà Cattolica*. The author is David Neuhaus, an Israeli Jew who converted and later became a Jesuit priest. He works in Israel with Hebrew-speaking Catholics. His message is that Christians must not give in to fear when faced with extremism. They must not regard all Muslims as enemies.

Fear does not know fine distinctions however. It is essential that Christians study each current of political Islam in detail. The Islamic movements in Iraq and Syria are diverse and divided and these movements cannot be simply assimilated to the Islamic movements in Egypt and Palestine. Murder and programmatic displacement of Christians cannot be assimilated to demands that Islamic symbols be respected and prioritized. Emptying Mosul and the plain of Nineveh of Christians is not the same as Muslims demanding that their daughters be allowed to wear a head covering (hijab) in Christian schools in Jerusalem.

Fear leads to isolation and self-absorption. Even if Christians are being slaughtered, exiled and humiliated, they have to recognise that other groups are also suffering at the hands of the Islamic State:

First and foremost, it must be recognized that the first victims of Islamic extremism are Muslims who do not agree with the vision of the extremists. More Muslims have been murdered by the extremists than Christians, more Muslims have fled in fear. Secondly, other minorities, for example Yazidis, Druze and Alawis, are at greater risk than Christians because their religious faith and practice are seen as beyond any acceptable Muslim vision of diversity.

In fact, Fr Neuhaus argues, these calamities offer an opportunity for engagement with Muslims of good will. In the past, outreach through schools and hospitals has given Christianity immense prestige in the Arab world. In the Gaza Strip, for instance, 98 percent of the students in Christian schools are Muslim.

After all the disasters of the last decade, what makes him so hopeful? It is not political calculation, but faith and a determination to be a witness to powerful human values in Christianity. “Faith is the only sure way beyond fear and isolation to openness and service, seeking Christ and following him as he goes out in ever widening circles.”

Michael Cook is editor of *Mercator Net*: www.mercatornet.com.

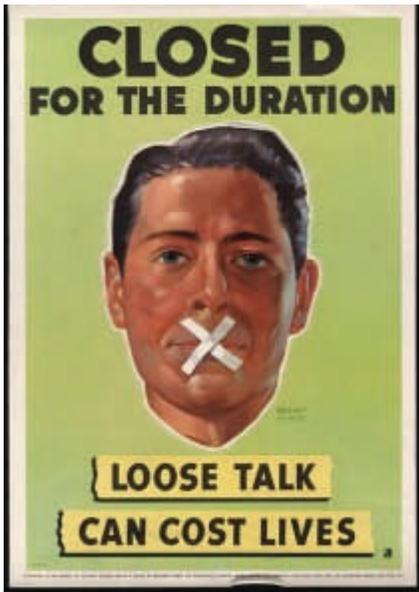
Out-Loud Discussions

By John M. DeJak

In past generations, communication was limited. Society was largely agrarian and the modes of communication and the technology to deliver such to people outside one's immediate circle was limited. It wasn't non-existent, nor was it undesirable. Quite the contrary. Human beings are social animals and all have a desire to communicate and need to communicate.

In modern times, it was the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century and the change in ways one obtains his daily bread that probably provided the most dramatic of lifestyle changes from the formerly agrarian society. Predictably, with those technological and lifestyle changes came the rise of the modern means of communication. These modern means of communication put people in contact with one another with a rapidity and connectivity like never before. With the recent advent of the internet and real-time social media, information is exchanged so rapidly as to be instantaneous; and it gives a pace to life that is both frenetic and mind-boggling.

I thought of all of these difficult issues in light of recent statements by Pope Francis on the size of families and marriage. In his off-the-cuff conversational manner, the Pope has not infrequently caused confusion. Couple this with the instant (and often conflicting) commentary by Church officials, various Cardinals on their Twitter accounts, and every Tom, Dick, and Harry who has a blog and you have a situation where it is very hard to get to the truth of things. (I realize that I am currently writing on a blog!) When one does try to get to the truth of the matter, it becomes very frustrating. What has become clear—whether intended or not—is that within the current Pontificate, there are a variety of agendas jockeying for prominence in the Church. Where once one could look to Rome for a definitive and well-reasoned answer on a particular issue of the day, we now see more confusion emanating from the Eternal City itself and from some bishops of the Church. Most troubling to this author are the seeming retreats from clear statements of doctrine and discipline in an effort to heed Pope Francis's call to go "to the margins;" resulting in, at best, ill-advised comments to the media and, at worst, outright calls for changing that which is (by its nature) unchangeable.



We must be clear that there has been no unorthodox doctrinal statement that has come out of this pontificate. In fact, the only statements of Pope Francis that require *religiosum obsequium* [religious assent] are the canonizations of saints, the Encyclical *Lumen Fidei*, and arguably several other Apostolic Letters that touch doctrinal considerations and moral conclusions. However, there have been an abundance of "out-loud discussions" of a variety of pastoral initiatives that cannot help but give the impression of the dilution of doctrine. With this impression of the dilution of doctrine comes also the disheartening of the faithful who are doing their best to live by the discipline of the Church. What are the faithful to do when the unfortunate speculations and statements of these "out-loud discussions" come from the highest echelons of the Church and which are reported by a media that has not been known for anything close to an authentic *religiosum obsequium*?

In one sense, the faithful can do nothing. The pope and the bishops will say what they want to say; they will analogize the way they wish and their words will be reported—spun or unspun, seen or unseen. But, the faithful can do one thing—they can remain *faithful*. We have the Catechism and the Scripture; we have the timeless teaching of the Church. We should test all in light of the whole tradition of the Church—all of the Councils, all of the Pontificates, all of the holy and approved doctors. The Church has been wise in the past to censor theologians or Church officials for such "out-loud discussions" that, in themselves, are not bad (among learned and theologically sophisticated theologians or bishops), but may give scandal or dishearten the faithful. This has been an especial problem since the Second Vatican Council. Perhaps now is the time for a return to the prudent and just censorship policies of past pontificates, "lest the little ones be lost." Certainly this is a time for self-censorship and discretion by the Successors of the Apostles.

There is virtue in not publishing one's every thought. ✎

John M. DeJak writes for the Bellarmine Forum.

Pope Francis on Rabbits and Large Families

By Landon DePasquale

In his recent trip to the Philippines, Pope Francis spoke forcefully on marriage and the family and sparked further headlines with his comment that Catholics should not “breed like rabbits.” Lost amidst the glaring headlines that the Holy Father has instructed Catholics to stop having kids are beautiful reflections on the family and its importance from our Pope.

Pope Francis spoke clearly and consistently about the importance of the family and the goodness of children. The Holy Father reflected that “[s]adly, in our day, the family all too often needs to be protected against insidious attacks and programs contrary to all that we hold true and sacred, all that is most beautiful and noble in our culture... Specifically, we need to see each child as a gift to be welcomed, cherished and protected.” In seizing upon a particular ill, the attack of the family within our society, he gave a concrete antidote: a care and welcoming of new life. The Pope has spoken again and again about the importance of being open to life and the good of having a large family. To combat the consumeristic mentality that undermines the family, Pope Francis preaches love and sacrifice for the sake of life.



He isn't telling us to have small families

Unfortunately, a humorous aphorism that underscores the teaching of the Church has been misunderstood and has become the takeaway for his trip. It should not be surprising that when Pope Francis instructed Catholics not to “breed like rabbits,” he isn't telling us to have small families. Far from it! Less than a month ago, on the feast of the Holy Family, Pope Francis held a gathering focused on large families, holding them up as examples. At this gathering, the Holy Father said: “In a world often marked by egoism, a large family is a school of solidarity and of mission that's of benefit to the entire society.” If the cure to egoism is a large family and a large family benefits the whole of society, then it would be selfish and destructive to intentionally limit the number of children a family has. The family forms the foundation of society and Pope Francis believes that a large family is a good foundation.

Rather, when Pope Francis instructs that we are not called to “breed like rabbits,” he is combating a very real issue, that of lust and the desires of the flesh that makes humans act as animals. We are not called to simply give in to our desires any time we feel like it, compulsively reproducing as animals do. Rather, we are called to use our reason to exercise control over our desires, including the desire for sex, that we may be intentionally open to life. Being open to life is not a sort of crass hedonism where sex rules our lives, and as a result, we have a large family. Rather, openness to life is an intentional and specific willingness to welcome life, regardless of whether it is anticipated or planned.

Openness to life never involves deciding to be “done having kids.” It involves welcoming as many or as few children as God blesses a family with. It involves making sacrifices in order to put the creation of new life first and foremost in our marriages. It means forgoing artificial contraceptives that disconnect the gift of love from the gift of life. And while openness to life may involve spacing children for the health of mother and child using Natural Family Planning, it never excuses removing procreation from the ends of marriage.

Pope Francis is absolutely right: there is nothing base or animalistic about openness to life. ❧

Landon DePasquale works as Director of New Evangelization at St. Michael's Roman Catholic parish in Wheaton, Illinois. Reprinted from the Bellarmine Forum with permission (bellarmineforum.org).



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Divini illius magistri (On Christian Education)

By Pope Pius XI (1939)

73. Nevertheless, Venerable Brethren and beloved children, We wish to call your attention in a special manner to the present-day lamentable decline in family education. The offices and professions of a transitory and earthly life, which are certainly of far less importance, are prepared for by long and careful study; whereas for the fundamental duty and obligation of educating their children, many parents have little or no preparation, immersed as they are in temporal cares. The declining influence of domestic environment is further weakened by another tendency, prevalent almost everywhere today, which, under one pretext or another, for economic reasons, or for reasons of industry, trade or politics, causes children to be more and more frequently sent away from home even in their tenderest years. **And there is a country where the children are actually being torn from the bosom of the family, to be formed (or, to speak more accurately, to be deformed and depraved) in godless schools and associations, to irreligion and hatred, according to the theories of advanced socialism; and thus is renewed in a real and more terrible manner the slaughter of the Innocents.** ❧

March Calendar

Los Pequeños Monthly Meeting
March 20, 2014
Call (505) 293-8006 for information.

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

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

Mass at the Holy Innocents Chapel
Tuesdays, Thursdays: noon, including
Eucharistic Procession to Planned
Parenthood,
Rosary, and Prayers of Exorcism.

For more information, call
(505) 266-4100



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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.

You courageously rebuked the pious king who had formerly sinned, just as Nathan rebuked David, O all-blessed Ambrose. You publicly excluded him from communion. After submitting himself to penance and correction, he was numbered again in your fold.

- Byzantine Catholic stichera from the feast of St. Ambrose Vespers

To help us control our costs, please let us know if you have moved within the past few months.

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