

The Parish of St. Edmund, King and Martyr

Waterloo, Ontario
www.stedmund.ca

UPDATE

The Anglican Catholic Church of Canada / The Traditional Anglican Communion

September 19, 2009 - **St. Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, 690**

October Schedule

October 4	Sunday	The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity
October 11	Sunday	Harvest Thanksgiving
October 18	Sunday	St. Luke the Evangelist
October 25	Sunday	The Twentieth Sunday after Trinity
October 28	Wednesday	St. Simon and St. Jude, Apostles

Service Times and Location

- (1) All Services are held in the Chapel at Luther Village on the Park - 139 Father David Bauer Drive in Waterloo.
- (2) On Sundays, Matins is sung at 10:00 a.m. (The Litany on the first Sunday of the month), and the Holy Eucharist is celebrated (sung) at 10:30 a.m.
- (3) On weekdays - Major Holy Days - the Holy Eucharist is usually celebrated at 7:00 p.m., 10:00 a.m. on Saturday.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

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HOW LIBERALS ARE DESTROYING RELIGION AND CULTURE IN AMERICA

Bill Donohue Takes Aim at the Secular Left

In 1978, a young scholar in his early 30s named Bill Donohue, working on a book about the ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union], went to New York City to interview its founder, Roger Baldwin. Donohue asked him why the ACLU was opposed to a moment of silent "meditation" in the classroom. Baldwin responded, "I suppose you could get by with that, but it's a subterfuge, because the implication is that you're meditating about the hereafter, or God, or something."

That revealing moment allowed Donohue to confirm that Baldwin opposed a moment of silent meditation because he feared some student might actually think about God - Baldwin's impulse, and that of the ACLU, was not the "separation of Church and State"; it was the extinction of religious faith itself.

His interview with Baldwin provided Donohue with a glimpse of the secularists' psyche he has never forgotten, which has served him well as president of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights. It is also the reason Donohue's recently published book *Secular Sabotage: How Liberals Are Destroying Religion and Culture in America* does two things better than any other book of its kind.

First, it demonstrates how *fear and hatred* drive the secularists' attempt to quash the presence of Christianity in American society. Second, Donohue proves that the "secular sabotage" he describes is *deliberate and intentional*.

Why is this important? I have often wondered, and I am sure Donohue has as well, why Christians have not protested more loudly against both the loss of their religious liberty and the relentless mocking of Christianity, particularly Catholicism, in the media.

The faithful, I think, are disposed to give their critics

the benefit of the doubt, not wanting to see in them the kind of hatred toward their beliefs that Donohue reveals in his book. Similarly, Christians often offer benign interpretations of the secularists' agenda, exercising their capacity for tolerance in ways that allow the secularists to establish their beachhead and gain credibility.

As Donohue puts it, many have failed to see that liberalism has evolved from the egalitarianism of the civil-rights movement to mere anarchy. The left-wing secularists aren't working toward a vision of a better world that went "up in flames with the crash of the Berlin Wall, the Soviet Union, and all the other Marxist wonderlands," which is the source of their despair: "That they have absolutely nothing to offer in the way of an alternative social order not only reveals their intellectual bankruptcy, it explains their rage. This is the revenge of the nihilists."

Secular Sabotage leaves little, if anything, out of its account - Donohue includes chapters devoted to multiculturalism; sexual politics; the arts, primarily painting and sculpture; Hollywood films; the Supreme Court; the Democratic Party; Catholicism; and Protestantism. Throughout his narrative, Donohue translates his gift for the perfect sound bite on a cable news show to providing the most jaw-dropping illustrations of the anti-Christian bigotry he describes. Here is one I missed in the controversy surrounding former President Bush's nomination of a Catholic, John Roberts, to the Supreme Court:

NPR's [National Public Radio] Nina Totenberg opined, "Don't forget his wife was an officer, a high officer of a pro-life organization." Then she went in for the kill; "He's got adopted children, I mean, he's a conservative Catholic." Adopted kids? That's a sure sign he doesn't like abortion. Probably believes in God, too. How Roberts

survived all this is still unexplained.

One strategy used by Donohue to defend religious liberty and the Catholic Church is to simply restate the issue by substituting other religions, other ethnic groups, or sacred icons. This came in handy when dealing with artists desecrating images of Jesus Christ or the Virgin Mary. For example, when Donohue asked a Jewish defender of Serrano's *Piss Christ* - a crucifix submerged in urine - "if she would be offended if someone put a Star of David in a bowl of feces, she expressed horror at the mere suggestion."

In story after story, Donohue underscores the fact that the secularists he challenges will not abide the same ridicule of Judaism, Islam, or Buddhism that they perpetrate against Christianity. Even more troubling, however, is the lack of a single instance when his common-sense arguments changed anyone's mind. Why have the secularists become incapable of rational exchange? The description Donohue applies to those who charged the Bush White House with theocracy seems apt: "They harbor a hatred against them [Christians] that is so visceral as to make them mad."

Beyond providing the definitive chronicle of a secularist attack on Christianity in America, Donohue has issued a wake-up call to soft-hearted Christian citizens who refuse to see that, for decades, Christianity has been systematically targeted for removal from the public square and, ultimately, destruction.

If more Christians in this country realized they were facing a genuine enemy, one motivated by an ill-camouflaged hatred, perhaps their resistance would be more sustained and vigorous. In publishing *Secular Sabotage*, Donohue, one of the most influential lay Catholics in America, has thrown the equivalent of a Molotov cocktail back at the radical liberals with whom he has locked horns for many years. Whether his book will incite others to follow his example remains to be seen. I hope it will, because *Secular Sabotage* could not arrive at a more opportune moment.

By **Deal Hudson**, director of *InsideCatholic.com* - August 31, 2009

ROBERT'S RAMBLINGS

Reminiscences: South Africa

Just as the border between Canada and the U.S. is porous, so was that between Zimbabwe and S Africa. Both were once part of the same British Empire. Because Zimbabwe is landlocked, those who felt the need for seaside holidays often travelled South. Because for most of its life Zim had no universities or tertiary colleges, students travelled South. Children (myself included) even went South to those boarding schools which their parents and grandparents had attended before them. Mr Rhodes disapproved of the death penalty, therefore the condemned were sent South to be hanged. The Ndebele people were descended from the Zulus of Natal. Sindebele is only a dialect of Zulu. Many Afrikaners had come North. Had not Mr Rhodes' exhortation been, "Go North, young man"? The Afrikaans language was learned in Zimbabwean schools. Dual citizenship was not uncommon. But as I said in last month's column, Rhodesia remained proudly separate, more self consciously British.

North of the border the working day began earlier. For example, three of the parishes with which I was involved held their daily mattins at 6 am. Those same parishes had their sung eucharist on Sundays at 7 am, at which one of them would get some 280

communicants. When I was a deacon 6 am on Sundays saw me distributing holy communion from the reserved sacrament to the sick in the local hospital. I had to be sharp about it in order to be back in time for the parish communion at 7. On week days factories and building sites began work at 7.

The first Dutch arrived in the Western Cape of South Africa in 1652. Strictly speaking they were not to be settlers but temporary farmers providing fresh food for sailors plying between Holland and the Dutch colonies of South East Asia. Too many seaman had been dying of scurvy, caused by lack of vitamins. The small settlement was administered by the East Indies Company, nicknamed Jan Companje. But the farmers liked the place and became permanent. After all, geography text books tell us that that small corner of the country has a Mediterranean climate. A few decades later the company sent out Huguenots, French Protestants who had suffered persecution at home. They introduced viniculture, some of their cuisine, some of their words; above all, their Christian names, surnames and place names, so that it's now not uncommon to find an Afrikaner called, say, Pierre de Villiers producing estate wine

on a farm named La Rochelle which has been in his family for 300 years.

The native inhabitants whom these Dutch encountered were not black Africans. As yet blacks had not arrived in this part of the country. The first meetings of Xhosa blacks with whites was to take place over a century later several hundred miles to the East. The original people in the Cape were the little Bushman or San, and the Hottentots or Khoi Khoi. The former were diminutive hunter gatherer nomads who lived in families. They are now almost extinct except for a few in Botswana and Namibia, where modern African governments try to "civilize" them forcibly. The Khoi Khoi were cattle herders who lived in larger nomadic tribes. Thanks to the white man's diseases such as measles and TB they are now extinct. Both peoples were anthropologically distinct. They were not so much black or brown as yellow, with high cheek bones.

Since both peoples were uninterested in becoming farm workers or domestic servants, the Dutch imported Malay slaves from their colonies in South East Asia. They introduced the Muslim faith, some of their cuisine, some of their words, fishing, above all their artistic skills as artisans. Miscegenation took place. Very slowly the Dutch language began to evolve into the Afrikaans language with differing grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary, though the two languages remain mutually comprehensible, if only just. Slowly there evolved the people of mixed race locally described as coloureds or brown Afrikaners, since that is what most of them speak. There were a few Lutherans, thanks to a handful of Germans settled by the Company, and there were a few fine German missionaries, but for the most part the Dutch Reformed Church had the country to itself.

Brits and French fought each other not only in Europe but also in Canada, the Caribbean and India. When Napoleon conquered Holland and placed one of his brothers on its throne as king, the Brits were determined he'd not control the sea route to India. They therefore captured the Cape from the Dutch for a short period. With Napoleon exiled on the island of Eiba, Brits thought it safe to hand the Cape back to the Dutch. But Napoleon escaped. (Able was I ere I saw Eiba.) It took Wellington and Waterloo to defeat Napoleon more permanently, who was then exiled on the island of St Helena for the rest of his natural life. This time the Brits were determined to hang on to the Cape for the long haul.

The Brits treated the Dutch in South Africa as they treated the French in Canada. All that would be required of them was nominal allegiance to the Crown. Their church, education, language and laws

were guaranteed to them, though since English common law was more humane than the Dutch, English criminal law was introduced with such features as the jury system and the abolition of penal torture. The Brits abolished slavery throughout their Empire in 1833, thanks largely to the protests of devout Anglican laymen such as William Wilberforce, commemorated in the South African Prayer Book on July 29. It wasn't until 1820 that the first Brits arrived as settlers. With the cessation of the Napoleonic wars there was much unemployment in Britain, where the government decided to give working and professional people a new life abroad. These 1820 settlers, townsmen to a man, were placed in wild bush on the Eastern frontier, where they were expected to farm mostly unsuitable land, and to act as a buffer between the black Xhosa herdsmen who were migrating Westwards, and the Afrikaner herdsmen who were migrating Eastwards. Most of these settlers soon abandoned farming and began a greater degree of urbanization. They started agitating for freedom of the press and for parliamentary self government.

With the Brits came the English language and the Anglican church. The country was now officially bilingual. (Most South Africans are better at this than most Canadians.) But of course there are other languages too, and in the new post apartheid South Africa, Sesotho, Setswana, Xhosa and Zulu are also official. Translating Bibles, hymnals and the Book of Common Prayer is a tedious and expensive process. Every time a new liturgy is to be experimented with or authorized, it has to be translated. On big diocesan or provincial occasions there is a mixture of languages. And why not? Provided all are singing the same tune to "Abide with me" or "Glory be to God on high", all get on well enough. English is a minority language in the "official" Anglican communion, just as it is in the Traditional Anglican Communion.

Tentative revision of England's Prayer Book of 1662 was first mooted in 1911. It wasn't until 1923 that the South African version of the eucharist was authorized. The whole book wasn't completed until 1954. Twice a year in Ottawa on the anniversaries of my ordination and consecration I'd use the South African rite, which Deans McLenaghan and Reid tolerated with high, heroic fortitude, as did parishioners. Perhaps only few of them noticed the minor differences from the Canadian book.

With its variety of Christian denominations, climates, cuisines, landscapes, languages, peoples, vegetations and world religions, to say nothing of its fauna and flora, South Africa is a fascinating country to live in. There are signs though that in terms of

crime and corruption, law and order, government incompetence, it is going the same way as Zimbabwe. Ten thousand murders a year, rampant AIDS, much unemployment, shortages of housing, education and medical treatment, are not encouraging. We all hope and pray otherwise, not least because of the Continuing Anglicans there and

north of the border in Zimbabwe, Bishop Michael Gill in one place, and Vicar General Ncube Murinda in the other. Not to mention the fact that Father Raymond Ball worked in South Africa for a good few years.

+Robert Mercer CR

DEALING WITH ISLAMISM

The first of three parts

Commenting in a useful way on Islamism is a daunting task. For one thing, the threat posed to our Western world by this militant and often violent form of Islam is bewildering. Imperfect as our society may be, it surely represents the best that mankind has produced, with its freedoms, respect for human rights, and opportunities for collective and individual advancement. To borrow a well-known line from the TV sitcom, *Seinfeld*, "How could anybody not like us?" Yet we face today a force which, in the name of a major religion, threatens to change our society in the most radical way, in effect setting it back many centuries while potentially killing millions along the way.

A measure of our bewilderment is the proliferation of names which are variously assigned to this threat and its purveyors. Beyond *Islamism*, one hears and reads about *Jihad*, *Radical Islam*, *Militant Islam*, *Islamic Extremism*, *Islamic Terrorism*, *Islamofascism* and other such names which attempt to distinguish this abhorrent form of Islam from its more benign mainstream.

Whatever it may be called, the phenomenon is very real, and it must be understood if it is to be thwarted.

But therein lies a problem. By what rules of logic and rationality can it be analyzed, and judgments made? When in the 20th century we confronted Hitler's Nazis and Mussolini's Fascists (and to a lesser extent Japanese Imperialism) we pretty well understood what we were up against, because their political philosophies, as repugnant as they were, were clearly understood. Likewise, Communism was more or less an open book. In these cases we were able to judge the opposing systems in the context of a familiar analytical frame of reference, the product of centuries of evolving western thought.

Not so in the case of Islamism, partly because its proponents, practitioners and apologists think in

radically different ways, according to a mindset that is based on a rigid and harsh interpretation of the Qur'an and an evolved body of religious doctrine called the *hadith*. Thus, the extremists see Islam as the only true religion, while rejecting and condemning all who do not subscribe to it. They believe it is the will of Allah that the world become a universal *ummah*, or Islamic community, and that all non-believers be converted, subjugated or eliminated within the political confines of a global Caliphate, returning to the 7th century Islamic ideal.

Regrettably, our failure to analyze, understand and speak frankly about Islamism is also due in no small way to an atmosphere of political correctness and self-censorship, producing a doctrinal blindness that was not present in the cases of National Socialism, Italian Fascism and Marxism-Leninism.

The radical search for a new Caliphate lay dormant for centuries, as Muslim expansion into Europe and Asia was reversed, and as social progress was inhibited through factional strife, corruption and ineffective leadership. It was awakened in the 1920s with the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, but this was largely ignored by the free world. Our attention was caught in 1979 with the expulsion of the Shah of Iran and occupation of the American embassy in Teheran, but little heed was paid by the West until the horror of 9/11. Since then, Islamist fervour has been growing exponentially throughout the Middle East and beyond, with new outrages in London, Madrid, Bali, Mumbai and Lahore, to say nothing of pre-empted strikes elsewhere.

By **General (Ret'd) Paul Manson**, Version 4, March 16, 2009 This article originally appeared in *On Track*, the journal of the Conference of Defence Associations Institute. General Manson served as Canada's Chief of Defence Staff from 1986 to 1989. With permission. Thanks to Major General (Ret'd) Norm Freeman for forwarding this article.

FROM HERE AND THERE

1) Did you know? **The Vatican uses Linux** for its website! According to Sister Judith Zoebelin, editorial director of the Holy See, Linux is the OS of choice. As it happens, UPDATE is produced in OpenOffice running on Linux, and our Parish website runs on Linux!

2) The actions of men are the best interpreters of their thoughts. **John Locke**

3) **Slippery Slopes - Deciding the Hour of Death**

Bloc MP Francine Lalonde says Bill C-384 - which would make euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide legal - is "reasonable" and not a slippery slope. History tells us that this is far from the truth. Throughout the primitive world the physician and the sorcerer were the same person, and had the power to kill and cure. The Hippocratic oath was a turning point in our history, as it was a clear and complete separation between curing and killing.

After the Second World War, the World Medical Association saw what had happened to German medicine - the institution of euthanasia and the barbarity of medicine in the death camps - as a betrayal of the Hippocratic tradition. In 1949 the Assembly of the World Medical Association met in Geneva and reaffirmed Hippocratism.

Now the Hippocratic oath is no longer part of the graduation ceremonies at many medical schools in Canada.

Another example of the slippery slope is abortion. The late Pierre Trudeau introduced this issue in the early 1970s with strict rules: no abortion unless two physicians agreed and for medical reasons only. Today Canada sadly has no abortion law and in fact is the only country in the Western world that has this distinction.

The slippery slope is alive and well.

Dr. Fawzy Marcos in *The National Post* - August 29, 2009

4) **What is the Gospel?** The gospel is the "good news" that God became human in Jesus Christ, took upon himself our fallen humanity in order to restore it into communion with God, conquer sin and vanquish death. This he did pre-eminently through Christ's life, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven. This "good news" must be at the very core of every life-giving action in the church - the sacraments and throughout every liturgical season of fasting and

prayer. From an article by **Bradley Nassif, Ph.D.** - *The Apostolic Mission of Bishops: A Short Reflection*

5) **Human Rights Museum's Committee ignores Real Women**

In its July/August *Reality* newsletter, *REAL Women of Canada* warned that the \$300 million Human Rights Museum project in Winnipeg, Manitoba "is a mess" because it has "established a biased and duplicitous Content Advisory Committee to determine which displays will be installed in the museum." *REAL Women* also warned that the Content Advisory Committee "is mainly comprised of feminist/homosexual activists and their supporters."

REAL Women says that while the Advisory Committee is supposed to be comprised of "human rights experts, scholars and specialists," but 11 of the 16 committee members are radical activists including Jennifer Breakspear, a gay rights activist, Mary Eberts, co-founder of the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, Diana Majury, former co-chair of LEAF's national legal committee, and Ken Norman, a member of the executive committee of the board of directors of the now defunct Court Challenges Program. The article states: "It is the same old, same old, left wing activists promoting themselves and their own agenda."

Canadian taxpayers have provided nearly \$100 million for the construction of the Human Rights Museum and \$22 million for operating costs of the yet-to-be opened institution. The Conservative government has honoured the commitment of the previous federal Liberal government to provide federal taxpayer dollars to the museum.

The *Reality* article warns Canadians about the Trudeaupean vision of the museum and radical agenda of many members of the Content Advisory Committee: "Clearly it is to serve as a propaganda device to promote and affirm feminist/homosexual ideology and a left-wing interpretation of human rights as 'progress' in Canada." *REAL Women* warns that this vision of "progress" includes "abortion on demand, lesbian/homosexual rights and benefits, pay equity, affirmative action and the denigration of men."

The Content Advisory Committee began a series of public consultations in May that will continue through January 2010. *REAL Women* met with members of the committee on June 11 for a 50-minute private consultation and listed three areas that should be

included in the museum: the rights of the unborn, the rights of non-conformist family-oriented women and girls who don't adhere to radical feminist ideologies, the rights of men who have been marginalized while feminist special interest groups have taken center stage in Canadian policy. As *REAL Women* stated: "Defenders of these rights experience intolerance and discrimination."

The recommendations were ignored in the public plenary summation later that same day. When committee member David Matas suggested it is a difficult task to "accurately or fairly reflect conflicting or opposing" points of view, *REAL Women* insisted the Human Rights Museum "must try to present the diversity of views in Canada."

From the September 2009 issue of *The Interim - Canada's Life and Family Newspaper*. St. Edmund's is the only ACCC Parish to advertise in/support *The Interim*

6) Tennessee High School Principal

This is a statement that was read over the PA system at the football game at Roane County High School, Kingston, Tennessee, by school principal, Jody McCloud, on September 1, 2000:

It has always been the custom at Roane County High School football games to say a prayer and play the National Anthem to honor God and Country. Due to a recent ruling by the Supreme Court, I am told that saying a Prayer is a violation of Federal Case Law.

As I understand the law at this time, I can use this public facility to approve of sexual perversion and call it 'an alternate lifestyle,' and if someone is offended, that's OK.

I can use it to condone sexual promiscuity, by dispensing condoms and calling it, 'safe sex.' If someone is offended, that's OK.

I can even use this public facility to present the merits of killing an unborn baby as a 'viable means of birth control.' If someone is offended, no problem.

I can designate a school day as 'Earth Day' and involve students in activities to worship religiously and praise the goddess 'Mother Earth' and call it 'ecology.'

I can use literature, videos and presentations in the classroom that depict people with strong, traditional Christian convictions as 'simple

minded' and 'ignorant' and call it 'enlightenment.'

However, if anyone uses this facility to honor GOD and to ask HIM to Bless this event with safety and good sportsmanship, then Federal Case Law is violated.

This appears to be inconsistent at best, and at worst, diabolical. Apparently, we are to be tolerant of everything and anyone, except GOD and HIS Commandments.

Nevertheless, as a school principal, I frequently ask staff and students to abide by rules with which they do not necessarily agree. For me to do otherwise would be inconsistent at best, and at worst, hypocritical. I suffer from that affliction enough unintentionally. I certainly do not need to add an intentional transgression.

For this reason, I shall 'Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's', and refrain from praying at this time.

However, if you feel inspired to honor, praise and thank GOD and ask HIM in the name of JESUS, to Bless this event, please feel free to do so. As far as I know, that's not against the law - yet.

Thanks to Norm Freeman

7) When children write to their Parish Priest

Dear Father:

Who does God pray to? Is there a God for God? Sincerely, Christopher, age 9.

My father says that I should learn the Ten Commandments but I don't think I want to because we have enough rules already in my house. Joshua, age 10.

Are there any devils on earth? I think there may be one in my class. Carla, age 10.

My mother is very religious. She goes to play Bingo at church every week even if she has a cold. Yours truly, Annette, age 9.

Please pray for all the airline pilots on Sunday. I am flying to California on Monday. Laurie, age 10.

I know that God loves everybody but he never met my sister. Yours sincerely, Arnold, age 8.

I would like to go to heaven someday because I

know my brother won't be there. Stephen, age 8.

I hope to go to heaven some day but later rather than sooner. Love, Ellen, age 9.

How does God know the good people from the bad people? Do you tell Him or does He read about it in the newspapers? Sincerely, Marie, age 9.

My father should be a Priest because everyday he gives us a sermon about something. Robert, age 11.

I liked your sermon on Sunday - especially when it was finished. Ralph, age 11.

Please say in your sermon that Peter Peterson has been a good boy all week. I am Peter Peterson. Sincerely, Pete, age 9.

Please say a prayer for our school football team. We need God's help or else a new goalkeeper. Thank you, Alexander, age 10.

I think a lot more people would come to your church if you moved it to Disneyland. Loreen, age 9.

I liked your sermon when you said that good health is more important than money but I still need a rise in my pocket money. Sincerely, Eleanor, age 12.

I am sorry I can't leave more money in the collection plate, but my father didn't give me a rise in my pocket money. Could you please give a sermon about a rise in children's pocket money? Love, Patty, age 10.

From the parish newsletter of **Father Ralph Beaumont** of the Lake District, UK

TEN EPISCOPAL NUNS JOIN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

After seven years of prayer and discernment, a community of Episcopal nuns and their chaplain will be received into the Roman Catholic Church during a September 3 Mass celebrated by Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien.



The archbishop will welcome 10 sisters from the Society of All Saints' Sisters of the Poor when he administers the sacrament of confirmation and the sisters renew their vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in the chapel of their Catonsville [Maryland] convent.

Episcopal Father Warren Tanghe will also be received into the church and is discerning the possibility of becoming a Catholic priest.

Mother Christina Christie, superior of the religious community, said the sisters are "very excited" about joining the Catholic Church and have been closely studying the church's teachings for years. Two Episcopal nuns who have decided not to become Catholic will continue to live and minister alongside their soon-to-be Catholic sisters. Members of the community range in age from 59 to 94.

"For us, this is a journey of confirmation," Mother Christina said. "We felt God was leading us in this direction for a long time."

Wearing full habits with black veils and white wimples that cover their heads, the sisters have been a visible beacon of hope in Catonsville for decades.

The American branch of a society founded in England, the All Saints' Sisters of the Poor came to Baltimore in 1872 and have been at their current location since 1917.

In addition to devoting their lives to a rigorous daily prayer regimen, the sisters offer religious retreats, visit people in hospice care and maintain a Scriptorium where they design religious cards to inspire others in the faith.

Throughout their history, the sisters worked with the poor of Baltimore as part of their charism of hospitality. Some of that work has included reaching out to children with special needs and ministering to

AIDS patients. Together with Mount Calvary Church, an Episcopal parish in Baltimore, the sisters co-founded a hospice called the Joseph Richey House in 1987.

Orthodoxy and unity were key reasons the sisters were attracted to the Catholic faith. Many of them were troubled by the Episcopal Church's approval of women's ordination, the ordination of a gay bishop and what they regarded as lax stances on moral issues.

"We kept thinking we could help by being a witness for orthodoxy," said Sister Mary Joan Walker, the community's archivist.

Mother Christina said that effort "was not as helpful as we had hoped it would be."

"People who did not know us looked at us as if we were in agreement with what had been going on (in the Episcopal Church)," she said. "By staying put and not doing anything, we were sending a message which was not correct."

Before deciding to enter the Catholic Church, the sisters had explored Episcopal splinter groups and other Christian denominations. Mother Christina noted that the sisters had independently contemplated joining the Catholic Church without the others knowing. When they found out that most of them were considering the same move, they took it as a sign from God and reached out to Archbishop O'Brien.

"This is very much the work of the Holy Spirit," Mother Christina said.

The sisters acknowledged it hasn't been easy leaving the Episcopal Church, for which they expressed great affection. Some of their friends

have been hurt by their pending departure, they said.

"Some feel we are abandoning the fight to maintain orthodoxy," said Sister Emily Ann Lindsey. "We're not. We're doing it in another realm right now."

The sisters have spent much of the past year studying the documents of the Second Vatican Council. They said there were few theological stumbling blocks to entering the church, although some had initial difficulty with the concept of papal infallibility.

In addition to worshipping in the Latin rite, the sisters are expected to receive permission to attend Mass celebrated in the Anglican-use rite - a liturgy that adapts many of the prayers from the Episcopal tradition. Mother Christina said 10 archdiocesan priests, including Auxiliary Bishop Denis J. Madden, have stepped forward to learn how to celebrate the Anglican-use Mass.

The sisters expressed deep affection for Pope Benedict XVI. The pope exercises an authority that Episcopal leaders do not, they said. The unity that Christ called for can be found in the Catholic Church under the leadership of the pope, they said.

"Unity is right in the midst of all this," said Sister Catherine Grace Bowen. "That is the main thrust."

The sisters noted with a laugh that their love for the pope is evident in the name they chose for their recently adopted cat, "Benedict XVII" - a feline friend they lovingly call "His Furyness."

By **George P. Matysek Jr.**
thenewliturgicalmovement.com

CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING PROPOSALS TO GIVE LEGAL RECOGNITION TO UNIONS BETWEEN HOMOSEXUAL PERSONS - 1 of 4

INTRODUCTION

1. In recent years, various questions relating to homosexuality have been addressed with some frequency by Pope John Paul II and by the relevant Dicasteries of the Holy See. Homosexuality is a troubling moral and social phenomenon, even in those countries where it does not present significant legal issues. It gives rise to greater concern in those countries that have granted or intend to grant - legal recognition to homosexual unions, which may include the possibility of adopting children. The

present Considerations do not contain new doctrinal elements; they seek rather to reiterate the essential points on this question and provide arguments drawn from reason which could be used by Bishops in preparing more specific interventions, appropriate to the different situations throughout the world, aimed at protecting and promoting the dignity of marriage, the foundation of the family, and the stability of society, of which this institution is a constitutive element. The present Considerations are also intended to give direction to Catholic politicians by indicating the approaches to proposed

legislation in this area which would be consistent with Christian conscience. Since this question relates to the natural moral law, the arguments that follow are addressed not only to those who believe in Christ, but to all persons committed to promoting and defending the common good of society.

I. THE NATURE OF MARRIAGE AND ITS INALIENABLE CHARACTERISTICS

2. The Church's teaching on marriage and on the complementarity of the sexes reiterates a truth that is evident to right reason and recognized as such by all the major cultures of the world. Marriage is not just any relationship between human beings. It was established by the Creator with its own nature, essential properties and purpose. No ideology can erase from the human spirit the certainty that marriage exists solely between a man and a woman, who by mutual personal gift, proper and exclusive to themselves, tend toward the communion of their persons. In this way, they mutually perfect each other, in order to cooperate with God in the procreation and upbringing of new human lives.

3. The natural truth about marriage was confirmed by the Revelation contained in the biblical accounts of creation, an expression also of the original human wisdom, in which the voice of nature itself is heard. There are three fundamental elements of the Creator's plan for marriage, as narrated in the Book of Genesis.

In the first place, man, the image of God, was created "male and female" (Gen 1:27). Men and women are equal as persons and complementary as male and female. Sexuality is something that pertains to the physical-biological realm and has also been raised to a new level - the personal level - where nature and spirit are united.

Marriage is instituted by the Creator as a form of life in which a communion of persons is realized involving the use of the sexual faculty. "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife and they become one flesh" (Gen 2:24).

Third, God has willed to give the union of man and woman a special participation in his work of creation.

Thus, he blessed the man and the woman with the words "Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen 1:28). Therefore, in the Creator's plan, sexual complementarity and fruitfulness belong to the very nature of marriage.

Furthermore, the marital union of man and woman has been elevated by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament. The Church teaches that Christian marriage is an efficacious sign of the covenant between Christ and the Church (cf. Eph 5:32). This Christian meaning of marriage, far from diminishing the profoundly human value of the marital union between man and woman, confirms and strengthens it (cf. Mt 19:3-12; Mk 10:6-9).

4. There are absolutely no grounds for considering homosexual unions to be in any way similar or even remotely analogous to God's plan for marriage and family. Marriage is holy, while homosexual acts go against the natural moral law. Homosexual acts "close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved".

Sacred Scripture condemns homosexual acts "as a serious depravity... (cf. Rom 1:24-27; 1 Cor 6:10; 1 Tim 1:10). This judgment of Scripture does not of course permit us to conclude that all those who suffer from this anomaly are personally responsible for it, but it does attest to the fact that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered". This same moral judgment is found in many Christian writers of the first centuries and is unanimously accepted by Catholic Tradition.

Nonetheless, according to the teaching of the Church, men and women with homosexual tendencies "must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity. Every sign of unjust discrimination in their regard should be avoided". They are called, like other Christians, to live the virtue of chastity. The homosexual inclination is however "objectively disordered" and homosexual practices are "sins gravely contrary to chastity".

From the *Offices for the Doctrine of the Faith*, June 3, 2003 - **Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger**, *Prefect*

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