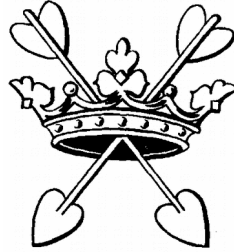


# The Parish of St. Edmund, King and Martyr

(Waterloo, Ontario)



**The Anglican Catholic Church of Canada**  
(A member of the worldwide Traditional Anglican Communion)

## UPDATE

March 7, 2005 - **St. Thomas Aquinas**

### April Schedule

April 3	Sunday	-	The First Sunday after Easter
April 5	Tuesday	-	The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
April 10	Sunday	-	The Second Sunday after Easter
April 17	Sunday	-	The Third Sunday after Easter
April 24	Sunday	-	The Fourth Sunday after Easter
April 25	Monday	-	St. Mark the Evangelist

### **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 - **Holy Days** and **Days of Obligation** - the **Holy Eucharist** is *usually* celebrated at **7:00 p.m.** when the Chapel is available.

## **Notes and Comments**

- 1) The answer - **Question (and Answer ?)**  
- from last month's UPDATE? Not yet! I thought we would have more than a few rubricians on our UPDATE mailing list! A *rubric* is "an authoritative rule; especially a rule for the conduct of a liturgical service". Anyone?
- 2) The sixth of six parts of an address given at the recent (September, 2004!) Essentials Conference - **Ecclesial Existence Today** - see page 4.
- 3) "Process thinkers" - continuing commentary on the Windsor Report - **Overreach** - see page 6, for the second of three parts.
- 4) Too true! - **That's what Christians do now!** - see page 7.
- 5) A reminder of our primary obligation as Christians - **Worship** - see page 8.
- 6) In response to a query - **When and how to genuflect** - see page 9.
- 7) We (Christians) claim authority and truth - **Why Christianity must offend liberal "broad-mindedness"** - the first of two parts - see page 9.

## **St. Thomas Aquinas (c.1225 - 1274)**

St. Thomas Aquinas was born in Aquino, a town in southern Italy from which he takes his surname. In his masterwork, *Summa Theologica*, he represents the pinnacle of scholasticism, the philosophical and theological school that flourished between 1100 and 1500 and attempted to reconcile faith with reason and the works of Aristotle with the scriptures.

The family of Thomas Aquinas was a noble one, his parents, the Count of Aquino and Countess of Teano, were related to Emperors Henry VI and Frederick II, as well as to the Kings of Aragon, Castile, and France. During his early education, Thomas exhibited great acumen in the medieval trivium of grammar, rhetoric, and logic. Because of his high birth, Thomas' entry into the Dominican order in the early 1240s was very surprising. His family employed various means to dissuade him from his vocation, including imprisoning him for two years.

After a stint as a student in Paris, Thomas made his way to Cologne to teach, receiving ordination to the priesthood in 1250. Soon after this, he was assigned to teach at Paris, where he also worked toward his degree of Doctor of Theology, which he received in 1257, with his friend St. Bonaventure, after some intramural political difficulty. The remainder of his life was spent in prayer, study, and writing his great *Summa Theologica*, a systematic attempt to present the findings of scholasticism. Although Thomas is sometimes perceived simply as an analytical and methodical writer, he was, especially in his later years, given to periods of mystical ecstasy. During one such experience, on December 6, 1273, he resigned from his writing project, indicating that he had perceived such wonders that his previous work seemed worthless.

The *Summa Theologica* was left unfinished, proceeding only as far as the ninetieth question of the third part. St. Thomas Aquinas died a few months later, on March 7, 1274. He was canonized in 1323 by John XXII. Although interest in Scholasticism in general and Thomism in particular waned during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris* in 1889

reestablished Thomism as the leading theological school of the Catholic church. Today, Thomist theology stands at the center of the Roman Catholic tradition.

From [www.ccel.org](http://www.ccel.org)

### **From here and there**

a) People are funny, they want the front of the bus, the middle of the road and the back of the church.

b) The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. **George Orwell**

c) Say what you like about the Ten Commandments, you must always come back to the pleasant fact that there are only ten of them. **H.L. Mencken**

d) From a Southwest Airlines flight crew member: "Welcome aboard Southwest Flight 245 to Tampa. To operate your seat belt, insert the metal tab into the buckle, and pull tight. It works just like every other seat belt; and, if you don't know how to operate one, you probably shouldn't be out in public unsupervised.

e) Don't wait for six strong men to take you to church.

f) Some have tried to argue that the blessing of same sex unions is not sufficient ground for breaking fellowship because it does not involve central or creedal doctrinal issues such as the incarnation, the trinity or the resurrection. The arguments are entirely unpersuasive and even disingenuous, ignoring the fact that those advocating same sex unions do so on the basis of a revisionist understanding of the doctrines of creation, the image of God, the Christian life, the cross and the afterlife. **J.I Packer**

g) The moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life - the sick, the needy and the handicapped. **Hubert Horatio Humphrey**

h) As the pastor of a local church entered the pulpit he was handed a note to be read to the congregation. The note said: "Mark Anderson having gone to sea, his wife desires the prayers of the congregation for his safety."

The pastor picked up the slip of paper and read aloud, "Mark Anderson having gone to see his wife, desires the prayers of the congregation for his safety."

i) The more something becomes familiar, the more it seems to be okay. The more you steal quarters, the more it seems okay to steal. So the more familiar we get with inappropriate behaviors, the more we tend to start thinking of them as normal and okay. **Dr. Laura Schlessinger**

j) We are not 'anti-women'. We affirm the gifts and ministry of women in the Church.

Equality, however, is not sameness. We stand by the pattern of ministry as received by the Church through the ages and all over the world, contained within catholic tradition. Priesthood for women cannot be clearly demonstrated from Scripture and tradition, nor does a small part of the Church universal have the authority to depart from received faith and order - particularly not in this vital area which, far from being a minor point of order, affects the very sacramental life of the Church. From **Credo Cymru** (Forward in Faith in Wales)

k) **In Communion** - Speaking properly and

theologically, if A is "in communion" with B, and B is "in communion" with C, then, A is "in communion" with C.

From all that I know of the Church of the first 500 years, the equation above is in fact operative. If you "broke communion" with a heretic, you also "broke communion" with **all** who continued to hold the heretic "in communion". Only in this way is "being in communion" even potentially an effective mode of common discipline.

"Full communion" means that we are "in for a dime, in for a dollar", committed to each other. **Vincent Eareckson**

l) Impartiality is a pompous name for indifference, which is an elegant name for ignorance. **G. K. Chesterton**

m) Being called a poetess brings out the terroristress in me. **Audre Lorde**

n) **Only in America** can a pizza get to your house faster than an ambulance.

o) Don't say you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michaelangelo, Mother Teresa, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein. **H. Jackson Brown, Jr.**

p) He who allows oppression, shares the crime. **Erasmus Darwin**

### **Ecclesial Existence Today - 6 of 6**

#### **Ad Rem**

Karl Barth wrote his famous *Theological Existence Today!* (which the German government quickly banned) on the

occasion of the imposition by the Nazis, in June 1933, of a new set of authority structures and authority figures in the German protestant church. But he did not write it simply to protest that imposition or to support the New Reformation movement that had arisen in defence of the church's formal independence from the state. Indeed, he reserved his harshest criticism for the New Reformation men, because (as he saw it) they held out to the church a subtle but deadly temptation: the temptation to respond to the crisis by seeking salvation through church politics rather than by seeking it where alone it can be found. Formal independence was of no value indeed, it was of negative value - apart from material independence. What had to be recognized was that the church had its own leader, hence its own *Fuhrer-Prinzip*, and that leader was and is the Lord, Jesus Christ.

What is at stake in our own church crisis is not mere formal independence from a body we regard as having lost the authority of the gospel, or from bishops who no longer proclaim the gospel. What is at stake is material dependence on "the one Word of God whom we have to hear, and whom we have to trust and obey, in life and in death" (Barmen). It is quite possible to establish, as we must, some measure of formal independence from, or even to sever all ties with, General Synod; to set up a network of confessing churches and to hope that the wider Anglican communion will recognize this network as its true partner in Canada. But we could do all of that without taking a single step nearer to what we are called to be, namely, the church of Jesus Christ. In fact, we could expend so much energy doing it that we actually lose track of our ecclesial vocation to share in the mission and ministry of Christ. And we could end up - let us heed the warning voices! - no more than a self-appointed chaplain to socially conservative culture, in much the

same way that the Anglican Church of Canada is today no more than an aspiring chaplain to so-called progressive or "liberal" culture.

As Barth put it, "even a reform of the church chiefly affecting its external aspect ought to spring from the internal requirement of the church's life itself: it ought to issue from obedience to the Word of God, or else it is no reform of the *church*."

<sup>25</sup> This is what we must aim at - this and nothing else. To hear, in this moment of crisis, "the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword," to hear "what the Spirit says to the churches" about their witness to him, is our first task.

**APPENDIX: Discussion Paper on Eucharistic Fellowship**

1. On eucharistic fellowship
  - a. the sacrament of the eucharist is the enabling means and the fullest expression (martyrdom excepted) of the church's *koinonia en christo*; in it the body of Christ, both in the literal and in the extended or ecclesial sense, is presented to us and to the Father, albeit in an eschatological mystery
  - b. eucharistic fellowship is a *koinonia with* Christ, and so with the Father, and *in* Christ, and so with one another, both these dimensions being epicletic functions of the Holy Spirit's eschatological ministry
  - c. eucharistic fellowship both grounds ordered ministry and is itself ordered by it, through the apostolic ministry of word and sacrament; the bishop functions as an effective sign of that order and ministry, and so also of Christian unity
2. On the threat to eucharistic fellowship
  - a. eucharistic integrity is threatened where Christ is not preached in

accordance with apostolic faith, or where lack of charity or obedience disrupts unity in Christ

- b. a bishop who refuses to preach Christ in the apostolic way, or to practice and encourage charity and obedience, is a special threat to the integrity of eucharistic fellowship: such a bishop requires correction by his fellow presbyters and the college of bishops; if he refuses that correction it is necessary for the sake of the church, and for his own sake, that he be disciplined or even deposed
  - c. in part because the ACC only rarely, if ever, exercises such discipline, the situation has arisen in which a significant number of bishops now fall into that category - enough that canonical discipline is no longer even an available option, and that the church has in many places become ignorant of or rebellious against Christian truth and the Christian way of life
3. On the response of the faithful
    - a. response should begin with the bishops, who, by virtue of their special vocation, authority, and obligation to the wider church, should break eucharistic fellowship with fellow bishops who openly deny the ecumenically agreed substance of the faith, including the basics of Christian moral teaching
    - b. faithful clergy and laity should likewise be encouraged to refuse communion with their bishop if he is placed under this *de facto* discipline; under such circumstances clergy should be offered a letter from the orthodox bishops recognizing their authority for ministry, on condition that they submit to the pastoral guidance and oversight of the same, as exercised

by the nearest such bishop on behalf of the rest; and the laity should be encouraged to receive communion only with and from priests so recognized

- c. those clergy and parishes deprived of their livings and places of worship by a bishop with whom they have broken communion should be supported as far as possible by a fund set up for that purpose; if the orthodox bishops, though acting and authorizing as one body, are individually or collectively threatened with canonical discipline by the ACC, they should stand together and make a common defence, appealing to the wider Anglican communion for support
4. On warrant
    - a. such actions have been undertaken many times in the history of the church, for good reasons (defence of the creed, for example) and bad (conformity to the will of Henry VIII, say); that they should be undertaken now is evident in so far as the gospel and authority of Jesus Christ are challenged by fellow bishops
    - b. that is most obviously the case where bishops have abandoned the Nicene faith, and acts of discipline should begin there; but it is also the case where bishops undertake to alter the sacrament of marriage or to change church teaching on sexuality (for example, blessing sexual intimacy outside of marriage), since they have no authority to do so and, in doing so, do grave injury to church unity
    - c. no disciplinary action or inaction is warranted that in itself does further injury to the unity of the universal church; whatever course is taken must be a course that leads the

faithful deeper into unity with all who hold to the Nicene faith and to the Christian way of life, and who respect episcopal order as far as possible under the conditions of a church seeking to overcome its historic divisions

By **Douglas Farrow** – Associate Professor of Christian Thought at McGill University, Montreal

<sup>25</sup> *Theological Existence Today!* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1933), 19.

### **Requiem**

So many 'ships' pass through our lives.  
Some stay a long, long time,  
While others sail by fleetingly,  
Bound for some further clime.  
There are parents, siblings, husbands,  
wives,  
Dear friends who kept in touch,  
Those who briefly came into our lives,  
Yet all have contributed much.  
Enrichment they added to everyone,  
Wisdom and knowledge they gave;  
They helped us be what we are today;  
With thanks their dear names we engrave.  
Because of them our lives are blest.  
Grant them, O Lord, eternal rest.

By **Helen E. Glover**

### **Overreach - 2 of 3**

*(The Windsor Report, discussed below, was commissioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury to address the current crisis within the Anglican Communion brought to a head by the consecration within the Episcopal Church of the United States of a divorced man who openly lives in a same-sex union, and the decision of the Bishop and Synod of the Diocese of New Westminster in The Anglican Church of Canada*

*to permit and provide for the blessing of same-sex unions in church.)*

The problem is that the Communion as a whole and in its parts remains uncommitted to basic scriptural, creedal and doctrinal orthodoxy even in the face of the explicit principles embodying Trinitarian orthodoxy for Anglicans in all parts of the Communion to a greater or lesser extent. From the standpoint of the process thinkers, there is no principle such as Trinitarian orthodoxy that cannot be altered or changed and no way to distinguish in a hierarchy of importance one position from another.

The forms of Episcopal and Synodical overreach with respect to Scripture and Doctrine are legion but they need to be exposed to view in order to highlight the untenable situation that the now fictional Communion is in. What follows does not intend to be exhaustive but seeks to provide a snap-shot of the doctrinal and moral bankruptcy of the churches of the Anglican Communion.

The Communion has long been exercised by the question about the Ordination of Women to the ordained ministry. In the Windsor Report, for example, that question is used as an example of the process of reception that should have but has not been followed by the North American Churches with respect to the same-sex controversies. The Report is naïve in supposing that a *pax dissidentium*, a form of reasonable dissent that recognizes that there are and must be room for different theological opinions on this matter, exists within and throughout the community. 'T isn't so, as the Canadian Church clearly shows.

In 1986, the Canadian Church, without any consideration for the larger Communion, revoked the conscience

clause with respect to the Ordination of Women to the ministry thus making acceptance and approval of the Ordination of Women to the ministry a *sine qua non* of membership in the Anglican Church of Canada and requiring, through the mechanisms of process in most dioceses, subscription to this matter and proscribing any forms of dissent either practically or notionally. In the case of ordinands who might be suspected of harbouring doubts or uncertainties about the Ordination of Women to the ministry, they were subjected to liturgical test-cases to see if they would receive communion or not from women priests. The process of reception was a one-way street; the only exception was a grandfather clause for those who had been ordained prior to the 1986 General Synod decision.

The matter of the Ordination of Women to the ministry may very well be *"the right thing"*, but, as T.S. Eliot so clearly reminds us in *Murder in the Cathedral*, *"to do the right deed for the wrong reason is the greatest treason"*. The matter of the Ordination of Women to the ministry lacks theological consensus and compelling theological justification throughout the Anglican Communion, within and without the particular churches, not to mention the wider Church. It remains an advocacy issue. It is a matter upon which there can be any number of perfectly legitimate points of view theologically. The problem with the Canadian Church is that its General Synod effectively made the acceptance of the Ordination of Women to the ministry a first-order matter, raising a matter of orders to a matter of Faith requiring, not just acceptance, but reception of it as definitive, excepting only those ordained before the 1986 decision. Effectively, there can be only one view.

This clear example of Episcopal and Synodical overreach reveals the *tendenz* of



the synodical bodies who assume a power and a magisterium which they do not have. In the absence of any effective mechanism to limit their decisions they have effectively trespassed on matters of doctrine and faith which are denied to them by their own foundational principles. Synods do not have the power to determine on matters of doctrine and worship. Those matters are subject to the doctrinal authority of *The Articles*, *The Ordinal* and *The Book of Common Prayer*.

This does not mean that there cannot be, for instance, alternative liturgical rites, or even such developments as the Ordination of Women. What it means is that such things have to be subject to the doctrinal authority of such principles and that nothing can be compelled or accepted that stands opposed to them or that is not explicitly allowed by them. In the case of the Ordination of Women, it has to be said, that it could be allowed but not required. Humility and honesty would have to acknowledge this issue as one upon which there is and continues to be a legitimate variety of theological opinions that constrain the presumptuous acts of bishops and their synods; in short, that this is a matter requiring and providing for the legitimate diversity of theological views, not proscribing some in favour of one. In failing to do so, the Anglican Church of Canada violated its claim to be an integral portion of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. Its synodical action was sectarian.

By **The Rev. David Curry**, Rector of Christ Church, Windsor, Nova Scotia - December 29, 2004

### **That's what Christians do now!**

In 1973 the Supreme Court said it was ok

to kill unborn babies. Since then, we have killed more than the entire population of Canada. And it continues. A woman's choice? Half of those who have died in their mothers' wombs have been women. They didn't have a choice. It is called abortion.

Me? I go to church, the minister preaches, I go home. That's what Christians do now.

First, it was in dingy, dirty theaters. Then, convenience stores. Then, grocery stores. Then on television. Now it is in the homes of millions via the Internet. It is called pornography.

Me? I go to church, the minister preaches, I go home. That's what Christians do now.

They call it no-fault. Why should we blame anyone when something so terrible happens. Haven't they already suffered enough? Half of the marriages in America end this way. The children suffered. The family broke down. It is called divorce.

Me? I go to church, the minister preaches, I go home. That's what Christians do now.

At one time it was a perversion. We kept it secret. We secured help and hope for those who practiced it. Now it is praised. We have parades celebrating it, and elected officials give it their blessing. Now it is endowed with special privileges and protected by special laws. Even some Christian leaders and denominations praise it. It is called homosexuality.

Me? I go to church, the minister preaches, I go home. That's what Christians do now.

Not long ago, Christians were the good guys. But now any positive image of Christians in movies or on TV is gone. We are now depicted as the bad guys - greedy, narrow-minded hypocrites. The teacher

can't have a Bible on her desk, but can have Playboy. We don't have Christmas and Easter holidays - just winter and spring break. We can't pray in school, but can use foul language. It's called being tolerant.

Me? I go to church, the minister preaches, I go home. That's what Christians do now.

Yes, all these things came to pass within 30 years. Where were the Christians? Why, they were in church. All these things are for someone else to deal with. Times have changed. Involvement has been replaced with apathy.

But don't blame me. I didn't do anything. I go to church, the minister preaches, I go home. That's what Christians do now.

### **Worship**

Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve.

Worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

The most difficult and yet the most glorious thing that we are called to do in this world in anticipation of the next is to worship the LORD our God, the Blessed, Holy and Undivided Trinity. As the congregation of Christ's flock, we are called to enjoy and glorify God, the Holy Trinity, for ever and ever, even unto the ages of ages and world without end.

In the Anglican context, I see at least four major temptations arising within western culture which both undermine the true purpose of Christian WORSHIP and reduce IT or change IT into something else. Professional and amateur liturgists, clergy and worship committees face these temptations and, regrettably, seem not

always to resist them. It is not that they always re-write liturgies but that they use existing liturgies to serve new purposes by the spirit and ethos in which they are actually used. And, if growth in numbers or increase in ministries or making an impact are the real criteria by which to judge then Satan's suggestions are good ones.

1. Satan comes along and, with excellent examples and/or stories, presents the thesis: that a worship service is (at least in part) to keep people interested and in an acceptable and dignified way to entertain them. So the people sit as the audience and the performers are at the front FACING the audience. God is assumed to be the friendly, non judgmental Onlooker who blesses the occasion for the people are sincere in their desire for religious activity, performance and entertainment. Satan's aim as the tempter is to make the people feel welcome, happy and emotionally satisfied/fulfilled. What he wants to cause them to avoid is to fear God the Father, to bow before His Majesty and to seek His Face through and in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Satan comes along and using telling phrases and ideas created by the modern therapeutic culture suggests that how people feel and their sense of self-worth are of major importance in true and vital religion. So he presents the thesis: that a worship service and all other church activities must have as a major aim the purpose of making people feel good about themselves. Folks need to know that God actually loves everyone unconditionally and wants each one to feel affirmed as His child, and this despite whatever they have done and whatever be their position or state in life. What Satan wants to avoid is the idea that it is much more important to be obedient to the Lord of glory and to seek His holiness through bowing before His

Majesty than to be nice and to feel good about ones individual faith.

3. Satan comes along and with moving illustrations suggests that people are alienated from one another and even from themselves in modern society and thus they need a real human community to which to belong. So he presents the thesis: that it is necessary to make the church of God in this place into a community of faith where the worship service is truly a community celebration. Alienated and lonely souls need to find soul-mates and soul-companions so that they feel they belong and that their existence is meaningful. So each person's faith and feelings about God, Jesus and religion is affirmed and the church is seen primarily to exist as the place and sphere of affirmation one of another and each one by all. Satan wants to make sure that the idea of belonging to the local group and affirming each other rather than belonging to the communion of saints of earth and heaven is the ethos here. He is most happy when a lot of emphasis and time is spent on the passing of the peace with its walkabout to embrace as many people as possible.

4. Satan comes along and demonstrates that many people are ignorant of the basics of religion and of the meaning of the liturgy. So he presents the thesis: that a worship service is basically a teaching opportunity for instruction (they may not stay for Sunday School but they are here as a captive audience). Instead of the liturgy flowing naturally according to its own inherent ethos and logic, it is interrupted often in order for the worship leader or the clergyperson to use the opportunity to add comments to whatever is being sung or said or prayed in order to further the education of the people. The service is treated as an evangelistic or missionary opportunity. Satan is most happy when a

congregation is engaged in learning about religion rather than involved in knowing God as GOD, the LORD, and experiencing communion with the Father through the Son and with the Holy Spirit.

By **The Rev. Dr. Peter Toon**

### **Reduplicatives**

Reduplicatives are words formed when a term is either repeated exactly (as in bonbon), or with a slight variation in the vowel (as in ping-pong), or consonant (as in higgledy-piggledy). The process of compound word formation is known as reduplication. Some other examples:

a) A children's book entitled, *Double Trouble in Walla-Walla*, by Andrew Clements.

b) In Malay, a word repeated exactly denotes plurality: meja = table, therefore tables = meja meja. Butterfly = rama rama, therefore butterflies = rama rama rama rama!

c) A financial services institution in Red Bank, NJ purchased another financial institution in Long Branch, NJ. The latter became the Long Branch Branch of the Red Bank Bank.

### **When and how to genuflect**

The layman's first action before taking his seat is to **bow before the altar** in homage to the Lord who makes the altar his throne. *If the Blessed Sacrament be there he genuflects*, that is, bends the knee so that it touches the ground. Care should be taken in making this act of reverence that the head and body are kept in an upright position, otherwise, if either is allowed to

bend forward the gesture becomes clumsy and undignified.

It was recommended in the seventh Canon of the year 1640 that due acknowledgment should be paid to the greatness and goodness of the Divine Majesty 'by doing reverence and obeisance both at coming in and going out of churches, chancels and chapels according to the most ancient custom of the primitive Church in the earliest times . . .' This small act of ceremonial is exemplified by the procedure in the House of Lords where, if the Queen be present, each member kneels before the throne in homage; if the throne be empty each member bows in passing.

A **genuflection** is also made at the memorial of the Incarnation in the Nicene Creed, '*and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was made man*' and at the words, '*And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us*' when they occur in the Last Gospel at the Eucharist.

The same procedure should be followed whenever passing an altar as when entering a church - a perceptible pause and an inclination of the head, not a mere nod as if to an acquaintance, or *if the Blessed Sacrament be present, a genuflection*. Should it be known that *the Blessed Sacrament be present* a **genuflection** should be made on entering and leaving the church.

From *Ceremonies of Holy Church* by **Irene Caudwell**

### **Why Christianity must offend liberal "broad-mindedness" 1 of 2**

Christianity's claim to unique spiritual authority and truth has never been politically correct. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Century

Romans had no particular objection to Christians worshiping Jesus Christ. They were religiously "tolerant." All they asked was that the Christians pay honour - or at least lip-service - to the Roman god, Caesar, as well. However that was something Christians could not do in good conscience, and they were slaughtered.

Christianity is no less offensive to the modern and post-modern liberal pluralist mindset than it was to the ancient pagan Romans. Our era's dominant relativism and positivism can't stomach real Christianity's uncompromising claim to being the absolute and final truth for everyone, everywhere, and for all time.

The essential Christian assertion is that non-Christian religions and philosophies are true only to the degree that they are in precise accord with Christian principles, and false where they deviate from Christian principles. This angers and scandalizes liberal broad-mindedness. However, as Jesus put it: "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it . . . narrow is the gate and difficult is the way that leads to life, and there are few that find it." (Matt. 7: 13-14)

Christianity's claim of final closure in Christ's Incarnation, death, and Resurrection collides with liberal faith in perpetual historical and evolutionary progress. If Christ was God Incarnate, then there is no possibility that evolution will ever produce a greater human being than Him, and no moral or philosophical progress past His teachings will be possible either.

### ***"The offence of the cross"***

Christianity's offensiveness isn't surprising to the Biblically literate. Isaiah prophesied that Christ would be "a rock of offence,"

upon which many would stumble, fall, and be broken. (Isaiah 8: 11; 1 Peter. 2: 8) St. Paul spoke of "the offence of the cross." (Galatians 5:11) Jesus Himself acknowledged that even His disciples found some of His teachings hard and offensive. (John 6: 61) Soren Kierkegaard wrote that: "Whoever has not the humble courage to dare to believe [the Gospel], must be offended by it, . . . and at last cannot be contented with less than getting this thing rooted out, annihilated, and trodden in the dust."

The point is that Christianity is about truth - not about what is comfortable, popular, fashionable, or politically correct. Nor is it merely a way of life, a code of morals, or just one of several mutually equivalent "flavours" of spirituality one can choose from a smörgåsbord of religions, suited to individual tastes. If Christ is Who He said He was, then He is not just a God for Christians, but God the Creator of the Universe. Ergo: His authority over that creation and everyone in it is absolute, and the religion He founded and taught has a rightful claim to absolute authority over the spiritual life and affairs of the entire human race. "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven," Christ told St. Peter.

By **Charles W. Moore**

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