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EDITORIAL

The Story Of A Very “Special” Bishop

Note: On the eve of the International Congress of Married Catholic Priests that took place in Atlanta, Georgia from July 28 to August 3 of this year, the President of Corpus, U.S.A., Allen Moore, received the following letter from Bishop Francis Murphy of Baltimore:

Dear Allen,

I am writing this letter to greet you and your membership at this important gathering, the 5th. Congress of the International Federation of Married Priests.

Allen, I write as a friend and fellow traveler along the journey the Federation has been on these past years. Since the late 1960's, I have been involved with priests in the Baltimore Archdiocese and beyond, guiding, counseling and offering whatever assistance I could as these men discerned their own futures in the priesthood. A great sorrow for me over the years has been the way the process has laid all the responsibility for change on the individual priest, while the church as an institution has not been willing to review its own procedures or policies. I feel such a profound loss to the Church, to the believing community, from this intransigence on the part of the institution to address the issue of a married priesthood head-on, honestly and creatively. As a bishop, I remain appreciative and grateful for the many contributions many of you have made and are making to the church and world community.

I do not want to sound naive, as if one word from the hierarchy and all would be resolved. As a bishop, I believe in the role of authority that legitimates belief and practice in the name of the community. But this authority must be credible. As you know, better than many, the matter is complex and there are differing positions to be considered but that is no excuse for not at least keeping the conversation going and all options open. I am disappointed that this present gathering has not been seen as a significant occasion to continue the dialogue. To my mind, sincere and honest dialogue is the only way a Spirit-filled resolution to the matter of married priests can be reached.

For myself, I am so edified by the love you and your members have for the church and by your living out new models of a renewed priesthood. Your lives, it seem to me, reflect in a very real way a quality of discipleship that Jesus spoke of when he said: “Whoever would be great among you, must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all;” and at an earlier time Jesus had reminded the disciples that, “Many that are first shall be last; and many that are last shall be first.” Surely, your searching together, your trying one way, then another, for viable options is the way the universe and the earth itself has worked out the journey of life. Your own faithfulness to this path is a sacred trust.

My great hope from this gathering is that you as president and all the others in the Federation take courage to stay the course even amidst current setbacks and difficulties. In the end, a renewed Church for the New Millennium will be born, shaped in a large measure by your experiences and those of other faithful who carry the wisdom of the Spirit and the yearning of the community for wholeness and new life.

As I am making a successful struggle with cancer in my liver, I ask your prayers for my full healing.
Fraternally yours,

Frank Bishop P. Francis Murphy, Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore

Note: Bishop Murphy died a month later, September 2, 1999.

FOCUS

Corpus Canada 10th Anniversary Conference Regina, Saskatchewan, September 3-5, 1999: A Report

From the Notes of Chris Diamond, Cobble Hill, BC

Registration was conducted by Miguel and Tina Leon with grace and charm. In welcoming everyone, Eleanor Kutarna said "we are meeting on the edge of the millennium." She then invited Jim Noonan and François Brassard to light the Corpus candle which had been present in Ottawa in 1994, in Victoria in 1995, and now in Regina in 1999. A second candle from the Atlanta Congress was also lighted. At the close of the Conference, Jim took the Corpus Canada candle to Ottawa to be lighted at the National Capital Region 10th anniversary celebrations in Ottawa in October.

After the opening song, "Here I am, Lord", Linda and Pius Sieben led the opening prayer, and Gustave Dubois read from Phillipians 1:3-11. Then Colleen, Emil, Vanessa and Daniella honoured the Past, the Present, and the Future by adding three more candles for remembering, thanksgiving, and visioning. All recited in alternate psalm mode "A Time for Everything," and Linda led the closing prayer. Then, everyone sang "Angels Among Us." After the solemn entrance of "Ratty and JP," the latter read a warm word of welcome ably assisted by the resplendent "Ratty."

Pius introduced Anthony Padovano, our guest speaker, as an angel sent to guide us. His talks will be reported in a separate article.

Saturday 11am:

My notes at this point show concerns without always showing a logical connection in the discussion. The question was asked: "Are regional based communities working?" Arthur replied first with a history of the change in '95 from a National Board with Executive to the National Co-ordinating Team operating in a non-hierarchical way via consensus, and second, how we broadened the objectives of Corpus Canada to include "promote small faith communities." -Grant asked: Have we thrown out the idea of a National Corpus and somehow lost it? And what about Kristus? -Francois replied that the ministry of married priests and church renewal is addressed through "The Journal." -Fred asked: What is the Organizational Method [of Corpus Canada]? -Leonard reported on the Winnipeg community's organization. -Arthur: Presently we are led by what the local communities say to their local rep. The rep. reports this to the Team, thereby letting everyone know. If necessary, open discussion takes place and a decision is arrived at by consensus. The idea was that local communities would mushroom. -In Grant's opinion, this system has not worked. -Martha: As a woman, I do not see myself in Corpus anymore. I want to be treated equally. -Jim: In many ways it is not working. Many are in isolation: two groups on Vancouver Island, one in Ottawa, one in Calgary, and so on. Leadership in Corpus is lacking; we have drifted and dropped in membership. -Ron described the Discipleship of Equals group in Edmonton who meet every 4/5 weeks. Corpus meetings focus on any Corpus member who might be having difficulties. -Colleen: Same idea in Saskatoon. -Joe: The Journal is going to only a small select group. What about the bishops? Previously many who received it did not pay for it. The perception is that we have a separate church. -Connie: At Edmonton, we decided to limit the mailing to those who asked. -Chuck spoke about setting up a web site. -Arthur: People on Internet can receive The Journal as email. -Emil: Local groups can send a copy of The Journal to their local bishop. -Gustave: The Organizational Method is not working. -Fred: We must make it happen, and we need not limit ourselves, but be inclusive and inviting. -Colleen: In Saskatchewan the focus is not on Corpus but on christian small faith community where about a dozen members celebrate eucharist every Sunday.

Atlanta Congress Reports:

-Jim spoke about the experience of it: the strength that comes from people from 16 countries; the vision of the speakers and participants. We cannot depend on Church leadership. We will not ignore the Institution but will continue to speak with them. Jim recommended reading the Vision statement of the Congress. -Neil: "We are already

closer to our goal.” So said Julio Pinillos, President of the International Federation: “We are here because the People of God and the priesthood need us... We too have a dream... As Bishop Murphy of Baltimore says ‘Take courage and stay the course!’” The future is on our side. -Joe spent time with the Spanish group from Latin America and with Bishop Hieronymo and his wife from Argentina who talked about the justice issues. -Francois: There were more groups represented in this gathering. There is also a rise in women’s issues and other renewal groups accepted by married priests groups. We were encouraged to do something, anything, whether in sacramental ministry or justice issues in order to bring about reform; we were encouraged to embrace the ‘both/and’ principle of ministry. Doing makes custom and Custom makes Law. -Felix asked about the texts of the major talks. These will be made available.

Saturday pm. discussion:

Arthur clarified the relationship of Corpus Canada and the small faith communities. -Francois remarked that the Organizational Method is working better than we thought. -Arthur said we will keep on this way unless the group decides otherwise. -Jim asked how many small faith communities there are. -Alanna asked what we are doing to promote small faith communities. -Leonard described the situation in Winnipeg. He thought a national group would support and co-ordinate regional groups. -Jim said many Corpus people act as animators of small faith communities while keeping to the original aims. -Arthur suggested changing our name. We have done what we set out to do. If we see a future, then we should reinvent ourselves to be prophetic in the world. -Neil described the situation in the Philippines where there are 7 basic groups held together by projects.

Sunday am:

Emil led the prayer. Eleanor thanked Anthony Padovano for sharing who he is, his wisdom and experiece, and she hoped that Teresa, his wife, would be able to come sometime. Anthony replied and reported Corpus US’ meeting with the NCCB a year ago. It had been a very frank, honest dialogue in a worsening pastoral situation. Corpus US asked the bishops 1. to put an end to the present demeaning dispensation process; 2. why can’t resigned priests have all the rights of any catholic? 3. to write a pastoral letter about the departure of priests and the present pastoral crisis. Round 2 is set for late september with the expectation that dialogue will continue-- dialogue, not definition. A number of bishops find present church policy a scandal.

Minutes of the AGM:

-Francois opened the meeting. -Leonard nominated Arthur to co-ordinate the meeting.

1. Highlights of the Organizational Team Meeting on Friday night: Concern was raised about the number of people receiving The Journal, presently about 400, and the need to increase this number. It was suggested that a move be made to set up a website with links to other sites and/or a hard copy for those without internet access. This may be a better use of our limited resources. -OR, we could join with US Corpus Reports with a readership of 3000. -The present editorial team will serve for two years with the addition of sub-editors nominated by the regions; after one year of discernment, the present team will work with a new team for one year, and in December, 2001, the new team will take over. -Ron offered a vote of thanks to the editorial team and The Journal assembly team. -The National Coordinating Team would be more effective with a designated facilitator and not ad hoc leadership as at present; so, Arthur, Jim, Emil, and Chuck will act as leader for three months each in rotation. -Fran: Anyone can participate in email discussions; -Arthur: The moderator sends messages by email to the members who generally reach a decision by consensus, though occasionally urgency requires that a vote be taken. -\$400.00 to be sent to the National Capital Region Corpus to help with their 10th anniversary celebrations. -Francois and Connie resigned from Community Outreach and Francois from the Media Rep position. There is an opening for a replacement. -Edith, Chuck, and Leonard each indicated that they too are open to replacement on the National Coordinating Team whenever their local groups can name one for each of them.

2. The Financial report was given by Jake. (See separate paper) -Ron asked: Do we need to increase Corpus Canada membership fees back to \$50.00/75.00 as before? (This includes a donation of \$25.00 to Xristos for publication of The Journal.) -Chuck said that the N C Team should decide the increase. It was pointed out that the AGM could make

the decision immediately. There was almost unanimous agreement on the increase.

3. Xristos reports that The Journal is self supporting for this year anyway. -Joe asked if Xristos could send donations to a Corpus member and the reply was that Xristos in Canada could offer financial support to a small faith community if such support were to fall within Xristos' constitutional aim of promoting, developing and supporting small faith communities. 4. The Journal had already been discussed. However, Francois asked for help from anyone who knows how to execute expansion via email/website. -Leonard moved that The Journal provide an email copy. 5. N C Team members are to be selected by each local community. 6. Kirley Foundation: Chuck said that in Alberta it is recognized as a foundation and the ability to give tax receipts is in process; many people are waiting until a tax number is in place.

7. Issues overview: The issues to be discussed over the near future will be emailed out by Emil and printed in The Journal in a process of discernment. -Alanna remarked that many women do not get involved in using computers, so she urged women to do so. -Jim requested that major decisions regarding Corpus Canada should be discussed by the National Coordinating Team via email but decisions, if possible, should be left until the next AGM.

8. Volunteers are needed to host and organize the next meeting for next year. We needed this AGM, and we are in a different position/attitude on Sunday morning from that of Friday evening.

The Conference closed with a well planned and carried out eucharist that celebrated, affirmed, and strengthened our feeling that we have faith in our God as made known to us in Jesus and that we go on in love for one another. The gift of the Corpus stole signified our mission.

Corpus Past, Corpus Present, and Corpus Future

A Summary of Three Sessions Given by Dr. Anthony Padovano

CORPUS PAST:

There are seven evident signs of change from the situation of Corpus ten years ago.

1. At that time, we had no public meetings; sometimes our children did not know that we are priests. Now we are eager to give public witness.
2. The minds and hearts of God's People have been changed from an approval of married priesthood in the 35-50% category to 85-90%. This is virtual unanimity. This change has come about because of our witness and work.
3. We once affirmed the bad image the institutional church imposed on us:
 - A. That we did something wrong in the sight of God and by the norms of the Gospel. (We no longer believe this.)
 - B. That we were weak and retreated to the ease of marriage from the noble discipline of celibacy. (Today, we believe all commitments are heroic, and we are aware of how much sacrifice it requires to start a new life after one is comfortable with a privileged position.)
 - C. We deserved to be isolated and often hid ourselves (Today, some married priests actively promote a priestly ministry.)
 - D. We saw values in sexual love and this was a sign of bad faith.
4. We wanted the institution to change and did not stress, as we do now, our freedom from the institution and the need to change our own thinking.
5. We avoided public ministry; it was thought to disturb the good order of the institution. Today, we celebrate Eucharist in our homes quite easily and minister where we see that pastoral needs are more important.
6. We have come to demand an expansive priesthood, ordination for women, a ministry of conscience, pastoral resiliency and freedom.

7. A movement succeeds when people no longer join in large numbers because its goals have been substantially accomplished; our fewer numbers may well be a sign of our success and a sign that we no longer need institutional validation. Ten years ago, we, as a group, sought readmission to the clerical state; today, we see that as a liability.

CORPUS PRESENT:

The ultimate Gospel passage on power and authority for an institution (Matthew 16:13-18) reads differently if one sees it as a call to discipleship.

The passage, read in its entirety, is not about Peter's office, but about his discipleship. Peter gets it wrong and Christ rebukes him harshly, calling him "Satan," for wanting a comfortable life and for trying to create a messiahship to suit his own purposes.

Peter is shown regularly in the New Testament getting teaching about Christ wrong (e.g. this passage; second coming; denying Christ; losing faith in the walking on water). What Peter gets right is loving Christ or discipleship.

Many in the Church use this passage from Matthew to create a papacy that is no longer human but filled with divine control, inspiration, infallibility, and aloofness from the human enterprise of discussion and debate. But the New Testament gives us a Peter who is a very human disciple and who is, after all, only one of the twelve. Peter learns by human experience (e.g. the baptism of the Gentile, Cornelius) and from others (e.g. the confrontation with Paul).

The Matthew passage reminds us of how we as clerics often placed ourselves beyond the human dimensions of the Church, pretending to have a wisdom and authority we did not possess.

The task of Corpus Present is to enter into the community of the Church, to humanize it so that the Church is incarnationalized.

CORPUS FUTURE:

New studies and books on slavery and obedience have much to teach us.

Slavery destroyed the freedom and the inner integrity of many slaves. It led them to fear honesty, confrontation, and self-definition (as many clerics and Church leaders do). Slavery eventually created a culture of self-contempt (as Church policies on women, married priests, the divorced, and homosexuals do). Even when slaves ran away, they frequently returned to their masters and punishment because they had become so accustomed to bondage. The task of Corpus Future is to end the servile attitude of so many Christians.

The recently published "Memoirs of Adolf Eichmann" give us further insights on the dangers of comprehensive obedience. He writes: 1) "Obeying an order was the most important thing to me." 2) "It was unthinkable that I would not follow orders." 3) "...taking orders is a very comfortable life indeed... [it] reduces to a minimum one's need to think." 4) [When, after 1945, there were no more orders,] "I found myself completely incapable of living as my own person and fell into a deep depression."

The task of Corpus Future is to liberate people from such dependency. There are Church leaders today who merely wait for orders from Rome to decide what to think about married priests, ordination of women, etc. They will change their attitudes immediately if there are different orders. These leaders need to be liberated from such depression so they can live as their own person.

Corpus Future must seek to create a culture of freedom in our lives and in the Church, responsible freedom, indeed, but freedom nonetheless.

* **Ed. Note:** This summary is made from notes taken during the sessions and from A. Padovano's own notes.

Report

From The National Coordinating Team

On 1 September 1999 the Corpus Canada National Coordinating Team (NCT) met in Regina just before the Corpus Canada National Conference. Present at the meeting were NCT members Sis McNeil, Arthur Menu, Jim Noonan, Emil Kutarna, Chuck McLellan, Leonard Schmidt, and Edith Gvora, as well as Corpus Canada members Alanna Menu, Fran Brassard, Connie Kurtenbach, Chris Diamond and Jake Kutarna, and Corpus Canada's good friend, Anthony Padovano of Corpus U.S.A. NCT member Jack Shea was not able to come. Many things were discussed and I shall briefly touch on some of them in this report. Other matters will be covered in the report on the Annual General Meeting found elsewhere in this issue of The Journal.

One of the chief concerns was how to increase readership of The Journal. Presently, The Journal goes out to under four hundred people and organizations in Canada and abroad. The NCT would like to see circulation within Canada increase. It was felt by many of those present that the best way of increasing distribution of The Journal would be to establish a Corpus Canada Web Site, which would give people accessing the web site the opportunity to subscribe to an internet version of The Journal or to request the printed version. Chris Diamond, principal editor of The Journal, and François Brassard, who does the desktop publishing of The Journal, were asked to look into setting up a Corpus Canada web site, with the view of having it up and running (although not necessarily finished) by the beginning of the year 2000.

We also discussed some good ideas for increasing membership that had been suggested by Saskatoon Corpus Canada member Sheldon Oleksyn. These included advertising in newspapers, obtaining lists of names from dioceses, CWLs, etc., offering The Journal via email or web site, and applying to Canadian foundations for grants to update computers, etc. It was decided to concentrate on setting up a web site before exploring other avenues for increasing readership.

The idea of combining The Journal with Corpus Reports, the periodical of Corpus U.S.A., was discussed, as was having Corpus Reports include a section with selections from The Journal. Further consideration of combining the two periodicals was tabled till the next NCT meeting next year. The idea of having Corpus Reports include a section from The Journal will be referred to The Journal's editorial board for consideration.

The present editorial board of The Journal, based on Vancouver Island, announced their intention of resigning at the end of the year 2001. In the coming year 2000 other groups of Corpus members in other parts of Canada will be invited to consider taking on the responsibility of editing The Journal. The Vancouver Island team is willing to continue photocopying, labelling and mailing out The Journal, should a new editorial board not wish to take on those aspects of publishing The Journal. If a new board comes forward, the present board would gradually shift editorial responsibility to the new board during the year 2001. Taking on various responsibilities as it was able, the new board would have a year to learn how to edit The Journal. It would assume full responsibility for editing The Journal at the beginning of 2002.

If a group from within Corpus Canada does not come forward within the coming year to take on the editorship of The Journal, the present editorial board will initiate discussions with Corpus Reports with a view to folding The Journal into Corpus Reports. Although we would all be sad to lose The Journal as a Canadian publication, the present editorial board cannot be expected to do this ministry indefinitely.

We would not ask any group that takes on editorship of The Journal to do it for more than four years, the first year being one in which the new group gradually assumes editorial responsibility and the fourth year being one in which the group gradually hands over editorial responsibility to the group taking its place.

The NCT also looked at itself and how it has been functioning over the past two years. We felt that we could better do the business of Corpus Canada if some member of the NCT took leadership in facilitating the Team's setting of its agenda, its discussions, and its decision making. Given that Team members live right across the country, all of this business has to be done by e-mail. The Team has to do business this way because Corpus Canada cannot afford

to bring the Team together more than once a year.

It was decided that the role of NCT facilitator would be held for a three month term, and then pass to another member of the Team. Four Team members were selected to take this role in the coming year. They are: Arthur Menu (September to December, 1999); Jim Noonan (January to March, 2000); Emil Kutarna (April to June, 2000); and Chuck McLellan (July to September, 2000). Arthur Menu will prepare a job description for the facilitator's role by December of 1999.

Since its inception the NCT has tried to make decisions by consensus. In doing so we have tried to model the way Corpus Canada would like the Church as a whole to make decisions. Nevertheless, we decided at this meeting that there may be times when a decision must be made and there is not enough time for the Team to complete fully the process of discernment that would be required to reach a consensus decision. We felt the spirit of consensus would be respected if, when such an occasion arose, the Team agreed by consensus to make the decision by majority vote. We discussed how well Corpus Canada was working as an association of regional communities. The members of the NCT represent their regional communities and make decisions for Corpus Canada based on the views of the regional communities. Some concern was expressed about how well this structure met the needs of Corpus members who were not part of any local community. It was decided to bring this issue to the floor of the national conference for discussion. The Team agreed to a request for a \$400.00 grant to the National Capital Region Corpus group to help them pay for expenses incurred in their tenth anniversary celebration on 16 October, at which Joanna Manning and Allen Moore have been invited to speak.

Francois Brassard and Connie Kurtenbach announced their resignation from the position of Community Outreach Representatives. Francois also announced his resignation from the position of Corpus Canada Media/Public Relations. On behalf of the NCT and Corpus Canada, I would like to thank Francois and Connie for their good work for Corpus Canada in these positions. Corpus members may not realize that Francois has given numerous interviews to both English and French speaking media over the past few years through which he has well expressed the views of Corpus Canada on a range of topics.

Leonard Schmidt, representing the Manitoba Corpus group, and Edith Gvora, representing the Victoria Corpus group, asked to be replaced on the National Coordinating Team as soon as volunteers can be found to take their place.

I would like to thank Edith Gvora for taking minutes of the NCT meeting, upon which I have based this report. *The National Coordinating Team conducts the business of Corpus Canada by e-mail through the Corpus-N internet mailing list. All members of Corpus Canada are eligible to join this list, receive NCT e-mails, and participate in NCT discussions. If you are a member, have access to e-mail, and are not presently on the Corpus-N list, please contact Jake Kutarna, the Corpus Canada treasurer (see the back page of The Journal for Jake's address), and ask to be subscribed to the list. If you are not a member of Corpus Canada, please refer to the Corpus Canada advertisement on the back page of The Journal which has information on how to join Corpus Canada.*

THE THEOLOGICAL SOAPBOX

Sex And Faith (Part I)

At the last Journal editorial board meeting, someone suggested to me that I write a Theological Soapbox on the theology of sexuality. Not long after that, at a meeting of our Corpus Sidney group, the topic of how the Church deals with sex came up and one of those present said that she had never understood the connection the Church makes between sex and faith. At that point I began to feel that God was telling me to take up the challenge to write an article on the theology of sexuality. And so I shall.

But I do so with some reluctance. In order to do theology authentically one must reflect on many things, including one's own personal life experience. When I think about the way the Church has influenced my experience of sexuality, it brings back unpleasant memories of how those charged with my religious education inculcated Church teachings that delayed and diminished my psychosexual development.

So I do not approach this topic with my usual enthusiasm. Yet it is a topic that must be addressed, and I feel that I should do so, however inadequately, as a way of inviting others to share their understanding. I hope that in time we may as a community work out a theology of sexuality that will enable all of us to experience sexuality the way God intended.

I will begin by stating immediately what I believe to be the foundation for a sound theology of sexuality. It is the Genesis account of the creation of the first man and woman (see especially Genesis 1:28 and Genesis 2:24), an account that Jesus quoted and ratified (Matthew 19:5). In Genesis 1:28 God commands the man and woman to be fruitful and multiply. This establishes that one of the divine purposes for sex is to bring new human life into the world. In Genesis 2:24 it is stated that husband and wife become one flesh. This establishes that another divine purpose for sex is the union of husband and wife in an intimacy that includes the whole person, body and soul. These two divine purposes of sex are explicitly mentioned in the Bible, but they need not have been. They are implicit in the two great commandments: love God with your whole being and love your neighbour as yourself. In bringing new human life into the world we co-operate with God's creative purpose and give glory to God. In entering into a communion of our whole person with another human being we love the other person as ourselves. Because of the overarching comprehensiveness of the two great commandments, which state the divine purpose for all human life and activity, we need not limit the divine purpose of sex to the two purposes explicitly mentioned in Genesis. Any sexual act by which we love God and our neighbour, because it fulfils the divine purpose for human life in general, fulfils the divine purpose of sex.

Love is the great interpretative principle for understanding the spirit (not the letter) of the Bible. Anyone who claims that the Bible lays down a particular commandment that applies in a particular set of circumstances must demonstrate that in those circumstances obeying the commandment is the only loving thing that can be done. If some alternative loving thing can be done, then the commandment does not apply.

Now that I've put forward the foundation for the theology of sexuality, I would like to look at the way the Church taught sexual morality when I was a child. This teaching shaped my generation and many preceding generations of Catholics. Things changed after the Second Vatican Council. People born after the Council may find the sexual teaching to which my generation was subjected so grotesque as to be funny. They may wonder that anyone could have taken it seriously. The only response I can give is the response that every previous generation gives when its adherence to an absurdity is questioned: you had to be there.

I am going to describe the teaching simply and briefly in five propositions, as I understood it. The teaching may have been presented in a more sophisticated manner, but a child interprets what he or she hears in ways that make sense to the child. In what follows, by "child" I mean a person before the age of puberty.

- 1.Children are able to sin sexually.
- 2.Children are tempted to sin sexually.

3. A person sins sexually if, while alone, they cause themselves to feel sexual pleasure in any way, including wilfully entertaining a fantasy in the imagination.

4. A person sins sexually if, with another person to whom they are not married, they cause sexual pleasure in themselves or in the other person.

5. All sexual sins are serious (mortal) and will bring condemnation to hell if not repented of.

Now you may well wonder what a child of my era would make of such teaching. Bear in mind that sex education was not taught, especially in Catholic elementary schools. I first understood what sexual intercourse was at age ten when I read a medical encyclopaedia. Even then I couldn't be sure that I understood it right.

So to a large degree the teaching of sexual morality we received was gobbledegook. We did not understand the true meaning of the word "sexual." However, as Freud so boldly declared, children are not asexual. Their sexuality is at an early stage of development. Children are in touch in a vague but real way with their sexuality. Even very early in life children find other children fascinating in a way that an adult would recognize as sexual.

Nevertheless, children are incapable of taking hold of their sexuality in such a way as to perform a consciously sexual act for a particular purpose. They cannot use their sexuality to procreate, establish intimacy, or express love, or, conversely, to thwart those purposes.

For that reason, we can state with certainty that children can neither sin nor be tempted to sin sexually. In teaching that children can sin and be tempted to sin sexually, the Church was teaching a falsehood, albeit unknowingly. In its ignorance of child development, the Church simply treated children as miniature adults. The damage it did was incalculable.

Children's developing sexuality can be shaped by what they experience and are taught. It is known that children who are sexually abused are more likely to experience one or more of a range of sexual dysfunction later in life, among which may be the very pedophilic tendency of which they were the victim. Children who are sexually abused experience themselves as the objects of adult sexual interest and begin to perceive themselves as such. When they become adults themselves they may perceive children as sexual objects just as they were perceived.

When the Church taught children that they were capable of sexual sin and subject to sexual temptations, the Church was teaching them to regard themselves and other children as sexual objects in an adult sense. I regard this as a form of psychological sexual abuse, one of the consequences of which is that some children, when they entered upon their adult sexuality, experienced the same range of sexual dysfunction as children who are physically sexually abused. Church catechists knew that they could not simply say to children that they should not sin sexually because it was obvious that the children did not understand what sexuality meant. They had to give examples. But they could not bring themselves to give good and clear examples of real sexual sins such as adultery and what that meant. You cannot adequately explain sexual sin without explaining sexual intercourse, and the Church and parents agreed in excluding that from the curriculum.

So we were given, as I recall, the following examples of sexual sins: immodest dress, using dirty words, and looking at dirty pictures. The conclusion I reached as a child was that sexual sin consisted basically in looking at a person of the opposite sex whose genitals (and/or breasts, if a girl) were uncovered, or looking at a picture of the same. On that basis I identified sexual desire with curiosity about what the private parts of the opposite sex looked like. I remember once persuading a neighbour girl to disrobe briefly for me, and being disappointed at the experience. Where was the "sexual pleasure" my teachers talked about? Where was anything that deserved eternal hellfire? Could it be a problem with my vision?

Even now when I walk by the adult magazine section of a book store, that child part of me wonders, if I just looked at the pictures the right way, would I finally experience what my teachers were talking about? I suspect the child in me will forever remain a voyeur.

What is sad is that satisfying a perfectly good and natural curiosity about the bodies of human beings was erroneously labelled a sin. How could curiosity about the world be a good thing that was encouraged in school and praised by my teachers but be a bad thing when it came to human bodies? Through its teaching the Church planted a contradiction in my mind that caused confusion and frustration and false guilt. What is terrible about false guilt is that the things for which we truly ought to feel guilty get lost in all the false guilt. When one feels guilt for too many things, one becomes morally paralyzed.

This article has taken me to childhood's end. In my next Theological Soapbox I will examine what happened when the irresistible force of puberty met the immovable object of the Church's sexual morality.
Arthur Menu, Sidney, British Columbia, Canada

JOURNEYS TRANSFORMATION AND RENEWAL:

Jim Noonan is an English professor at Carleton University and although he left the priesthood 15 years ago, he says the Bible is his favourite book. The works of Shakespeare are second.

Noonan, 65, says he left the priesthood in 1984 after 25 years of service because he wanted to get married. "I felt more and more as time went on that the idea of compulsory celibacy was wrong and unnecessary and even inhuman," he says with quiet conviction.

The current vocation crisis (an overall shortage of priests), he says "is a sign that things have to change." Noonan isn't alone. Many Roman Catholics believe the church is behind the times and due for a major makeover, especially on the issue of clerical celibacy. But more tradition-al Catholics say the church shouldn't cave in to reform pressures. They pray for the conversion of the 'dissenters.' Noonan says he prays for change.

When he first entered the priesthood, Noonan says he was satisfied that he would never marry, "but a lot of things can change after 21." He says he had met people throughout his service whom he thought he could spend his life with, but at the time he left he "wasn't planning any immediate marriage." It was seven years after he resigned from the clerical priesthood that he chose to marry. He and his wife Norma have had no children together, but he says he is close to his wife's three grown children from a previous marriage.

Compulsory celibacy in the priest-hood? Noonan says it is strictly a human law. "There is nothing divine about it...it's an imposed discipline coming from church authorities," he says. "It was only imposed in the 12th century on the Roman Catholic Church...In Jesus' time many of his disciples were married. There were married bishops and priests in the early church...It was very much a human law that got imposed for a variety of human reasons; it doesn't affect the basic moral order."

Rev. Jim Whalen, a Roman Catholic priest in the Ottawa region, agrees that celibacy for priests is based mostly on tradition, but he maintains it's valid and important. "If the Pope decided tomorrow that he wanted married priests or whatever, he could. We're not against him deciding that...up to this point he says, 'No. We need celibacy more than ever in the world as a sign of love, of real love, of dedication and sacrifice,'" Whalen says sternly.

But the tradition of celibacy doesn't cover the entire spectrum of the Catholic Church. In the Eastern Rite, married men can be ordained. However, those who are ordained as single men must remain celibate throughout their life of service, and only these priests are appointed to positions of higher church authority.

And it is a little known fact that the Roman Catholic Church does permit married priests in extraordinary circumstances. For example, married Anglican priests who convert to Catholicism, and want to continue to serve as church leaders, are permitted to function as Catholic priests and remain married. Noonan finds this particularly peculiar. "That's why people like myself think it's a grave injustice that men who have been raised, lived, and served the church for many years as Catholics can't do this, and yet someone who has just become a Catholic in the very recent past is allowed to serve as a married priest...it's an oddity," he says.

Whalen describes this special situation as an accommodation-not an oddity. "In the case of the Anglican minister becoming a priest...there's not that many. There's a few, and the church does not want to hold a previous faith against them...so the church opens the doors as much as they can...we bend over backwards," he says.

Noonan says if the church opened its doors to married priests he would return to the priesthood, and his wife would support him. He is adamant that although he left the clerical priesthood, he didn't leave his faith. He says he and his wife attend mass regularly. "I didn't leave the church. I might have ceased working as a priest, but I still am quite a regular Catholic... I still believe God is the creator and end of the universe and revealed Himself in Jesus Christ and set up a church to try and bring people to Himself," he says. "It's a church which has certainly had its ups and downs over the years. It's had many glorious moments and not so great moments...a church which constantly needs reform-including the present time," he says.

Noonan admits he is frustrated with the church, but "only because it is so slow to change in something like the celibacy issue...It doesn't treat married priests very well or allow them to use their talents as they could within the church itself. They have the background and often the commitment and they could do so much more," he says. "Sometimes the church seems almost vengeful towards them because they've left, which hardly seems to reflect the compassion of Christ."

BOOK REVIEW

Poverty, Celibacy And Obedience: A Radical Option For Life

Diarmuid O'Murchu, March 1999, Crossroad Publishing

Reviewed by Jack Sproule, Sidney, BC

This latest book (1999) by O'Murchu deals with Wholeness. For me it re-focuses why people of faith and values - not just clerics or religious and certainly not just Christians,- but people of the great Eastern traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, people of faith who lived before the Agricultural Revolution, carry these ways of living a vowed life of nonviolence.

O'Murchu gives me a totally different understanding of the vows. He connects them with a much more spiritual, ancient, wider tradition. For him it is unfortunate that religious life today is so closely identified with formal religion, heavily domesticated and excessively institutionalized. Religious life has been over identified with the conventional behavior of secular life. Religious tend to work and minister (and be captured) in institutions and systems sponsored by state or church, sometimes by both and such involvement seriously hinders their ability to "stand at the edge" and provide a mirror-image in which the people can see reflected their own searchings, struggles and hopes for a more meaningful existence. Institutionalized religious often fail to name, bravely and subversively, the sins of oppression in this age and so fail to proffer alternative ways of living. Often they do not identify their own arrogance and self-inflation, their own internalized oppressive social and institutional forces that compel them to act immorally and oppressively. They are often at the service of serving the institutions and then fail to be at the cutting-edge in today's world. This work is about a wonderful re-transformation of the vowed life from a religious minimalism in which early Christianity became embedded, (eg. Constantine, St. Augustine etc.) a minimalism grounded in the three vows that only had official legal status at the beginning of the 13th century.

O'Murchu calls for a paradigm opposite the values in this present age: values based on law, order, coercion, intimidation, dualistic thinking, ignorance, superstition, the compulsion to divide everything into adversarial opposites, those values based on ten thousand years of violence that can be experienced in the behavior of power and control systems of religion and patriarchy. Thus not only vowed religious, but everyone, is invited into this vocational shift, everyone is called into growth and risk at the cutting edge of universal basic human core values and away from the violence of dualistic thinking; away from the compulsion to divide everything into adversarial opposites and into a commitment that has to be continually reworked as the enculturation of values requires. This spiritual commitment calls us into places we would rather not go. O' Murchu stretches into totally new horizons, the traditional, minimalist, assumptive legal language of the vows. We are the ones who invented dualisms and not God. We are the ones who suddenly and tragically reversed the original values that Jesus embodied and in our interpretations made them into a religion. This of course comes from our insatiable desire to divide and

conquer over a period of ten thousand years, a Western phenomenon. The Eastern tradition is to connect, not divide. This, for O'Murchu, is an option for the cutting-edge, the life of values, not laws...and so he launches into a reinterpretation of the vows against a background of nonviolence that predates the patriarchal manipulation of spirituality. O'Murchu believes that the religious minimalism of our Western understanding has choked these earlier values to death and so now he wants to transcend the centuries of legalistic and devotional modeling, the ten thousand years of patriarchy and male-domination that portrayed the vows as means toward perfection, guaranteeing salvation in the next life. He wants to transcend the violence of the Hebrew scriptures. For O'Murchu the way of nonviolence is a radical notion FOR life and a commitment to the vowed life. For me this provided an awakening. O'Murchu defines the vows of religion in a global concept. He believes they are guideposts for the people of the 21st century. Explicating Adrian Van Kamm's broad notion of the vows' "value radiating" essence, O'Murchu defines the vows in the context of guidelines of virtue and as the antithesis of violence. This core concept for O'Murchu is an option for the cutting-edge, the life of values, not laws, the cutting edge before Augustine, before our Hebrew Scriptures, before any hierarchical ordering. O'Murchu posits the idea that the male hierarchic structure of religions and cultures must accede to an expansion and an enlivening of the vows as living entities, as opposed to the vows that act as laws and restrictions upon life. The vows therefore are in their global understanding conglomerates of human values, all of which relate to the universal human search for meaning.

"Poverty" with O'Murchu is not about sacrificing material goods but about exercising "stewardship" over the goods of creation according to the equality and integrity of the gospel. "Poverty" becomes the call to stewardship. "Celibacy" is not about abstinence from sexual thoughts and acts. Celibacy is not about splitting off the feeling and emotional dimensions of ourselves but about engaging with the daily struggle and challenge of authentic sexual and "relational growth" joining with the divine creation coming together from the same energy to birth universal life. "Celibacy" becomes the call to human uniqueness, the call to engage with the preferential option for "relatedness". Repression, bottled-up energy often responsible for irresponsible sexual acting-out, will bring nothing but void and neurosis. We cannot become asexual. We are psychosexual people and so with wonderful reflection O'Murchu names the taboos, the oversimplifications, the destructive projections, the secrecy, the lack of dialogue, the denials, and then deals with (actually retrieves) the delicate subject of genitality, the erotic, friendship and mutuality, intimacy, tenderness.

"Obedience" becomes the call or the preference for mutual collaboration. "Celibacy" and "Obedience" are not about submitting our will to a higher authority (why then did God give us a will in the first place?), but about exploring and proffering ever new ways to engage responsibly, collaboratively and creatively with the issues of power and powerlessness that we encounter in daily life. The whole purpose of law - all law - is to protect freedom. Thus he challenges the very language of the vows.

He also challenges the readers to reassess their role in living the vows and calls the male hierarchs, of all religions and cultures, to refocus and redefine the violent parameters of the vows as they have been developed over the past ten thousand years and to assess them in the context of a relatedness that calls all of humankind to virtue. O'Murchu supports his thesis through an anthropological diagnosis of these three humanizing values in history and scripture, thereby indicating the original intention of vowed life in Eastern and Western cultures. Taking his hypothesis a major step forward, he argues that civilization must return to the vowed life according to its original function as the beacon and as the goal for all human living. He argues that we must radically subsume the femininity which has been excluded from the consciousness of humanity these past three millennia. He suggests that this is a must read for all male hierarchs, particularly those hierarchs who dominate the major contemporary monotheistic religions. O'Murchu asserts that to neglect reassessing vowed virtue and the restoration of ideals and goals, will hasten the demise of Christianity and culture as we know it This is due to the unconscionable continued violence of present vowed life, as misdirected against human nature.

Reading this work of O'Murchu offers me a joyful emancipation to pursue and redirect my ideals toward the goals of humankind. This book is one of the most challenging I have read over the years. Only 130 pages!

THIS AND THAT

Celibacy Is The Issue (CITI) has captured the media eye of late. TV, radio and newsprint have featured married Catholic priests actively involved in sacramental ministry. Just today, Oct.10, PBS ran a 7 minute clip on "Religion and Ethics" that was both moving and favorable to the cause of introducing an optional married priesthood in the Roman Rite of the Catholic Church.

Here in Canada, the Globe and Mail of Toronto published a full page Focus article on Sat., Aug. 14th. featuring CITI Canada and Corpus Canada. Following are a few excerpts from that article:

Married priests in Canada and the United States are legion, say the fraternal organizations many of them have formed. Some have been granted a "celibacy dispensation" that allows them to remain priests, but requires them to forsake their right to give sacraments. Others continue to do what the church has expressly forbidden.

Reverend Emil Kutarna is a married priest in Regina who conducts baptisms, funerals and other sacramental rites such as the Eucharist through a non-profit agency called Rent-A-Priest Canada. After serving for 16 years as a celibate priest in his diocese, Father Kutarna married one of his parishioners in 1971. He now has two grown children and has taught at the University of Regina. "I'm going to be 70 in a few months," he says. "What can they [the Catholic Church] do to me? Shoot me? Send me to hell?"

Canon law says priests always remain priests, and the celi-bacy dispensation allows some married priests to continue only to work for their diocese in administrative tasks. Stories are less frequent now of married priests being blackballed from jobs or forced to move by their bishops. Still, married priests are given a lesser role in church ritual than some lay leaders.

Many married priests are also bitterly upset that in recent years the Catholic Church has been willing to ordain married Anglican priests, some of whom came to Catholicism to protest the Anglican Church's ordination of women.

According to Rev. François Brassard, 64, a married priest living on Vancouver Island, celibacy is "a power trip which the medieval popes started to control church land that priests would have passed to their children." Father Brassard is one of the impassioned dissenters. He was among the Canadian priests who, in 1989, following a U.S. organization formed two decades earlier, created a fraternity called Corpus Canada to give support to priests who were leaving to marry.

By the fall of 1997, Rent-A-Priest Canada was launched, modelled on an earlier U.S. agency that adopted the name to attract media attention. Rent-A-Priest was started to address a shortage of available priests by tapping into the community of estranged clerics, and to reach out to Catholics who were themselves feeling estranged.

"In the last 18 months we've had 75 people whose lives were enriched by these married priests," declares Joan Lang, 63, Rent-A-Priest Canada's lay founder living in London, Ont. Performing weddings, home baptisms and other rites, the married priests referred by Mrs. Lang's service cater to what she calls "people who were hurt by the church in some way or perceive that they were."

While Mrs. Lang is herself the widow of a priest, she says she was moved to start the Canadian service by the departure of a young priest from her parish because he was going to marry. "It was just heart-rending," she says. "He was such a good man, so well liked, and I thought, What is the problem? Why can't this young man stay here? And what are we going to do when all these other aging priests die? How are my grandchildren going to have the same Catholic development that I did?"

Most observers believe the increasing shortage of Roman Catholic priests worldwide is due in large part to potential seminary entrants being discouraged by the church's requirement of celibacy. While the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops does not specify the reasons for the declining numbers in Canada, it notes that there were 9,007 diocesan clergy in 1968, falling to 6,031 by last year. And even as the number of Catholics grows in North America, parishes are being combined or closed, and priests are aging and overworked.

Celibacy as the issue in which push has come to shove, then, is less about sexual access as a carnal pleasure than as an avenue to lifelong companionship and parenthood. And men like Father Kutarna believe Rome is being shoved right back on its heels over this matter.