

Kennedy says RI bishop banned him from Communion

By RAY HENRY, Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Roman Catholic Bishop Thomas Tobin has banned Rep. Patrick Kennedy from receiving Communion, the central sacrament of the church, in Rhode Island because of the congressman's support for abortion rights, Kennedy said in a newspaper interview published Sunday.

The decision by the outspoken prelate, reported on *The Providence Journal's* Web site, significantly escalates a bitter dispute between Tobin, an ultra orthodox bishop, and Kennedy, a son of the nation's most famous Roman Catholic family.

"The bishop instructed me not to take Communion and said that he has instructed the diocesan priests not to give me Communion," Kennedy told the paper in an interview conducted Friday.

Kennedy said the bishop had explained the penalty by telling him "that I am not a good practicing Catholic because of the positions that I've taken as a public official," particularly on abortion.

He declined to say when or how Tobin told him not to take the sacrament. And he declined to say whether he has obeyed the bishop's injunction.

The paper said the bishop's spokesman declined to address the question of whether he had told Kennedy not to receive Communion. But the bishop's office cast doubt on Kennedy's related assertion about instructions to state priests.

"Bishop Tobin has never addressed matters relative to public officials receiving Holy Communion with pastors of the diocese," spokesman Michael K. Guilfoyle told the paper in an e-mailed statement.

Kennedy did not return messages left on his cell phone by The Associated Press, and his staff refused to make the congressman available for comment. Tobin's spokesman told the AP that the bishop would not comment on the issue.

Church law permits Tobin to ban Kennedy from receiving Communion within the Diocese of Providence, which covers Rhode Island, but he cannot stop Kennedy from receiving Communion elsewhere. It was unclear whether bishops overseeing Washington and Massachusetts, where Kennedy's family has a seaside compound, would issue similar bans.

Kennedy could appeal the decision to officials in the Vatican, but the hierarchy of the Catholic church is unlikely to overturn a bishop, said Michael Sean Winters, a church observer and author of "Left At the Altar: How Democrats Lost The Catholics And How Catholics Can Save The Democrats."

"It's really bad theology," said Winters, who opposes abortion. "You're turning the altar rail into a battle field, a political battlefield no less, and it does a disservice to the Eucharist."

The dispute between the two men began in October when Kennedy in an interview on CNSNews.com criticized the nation's Catholic bishops for threatening to oppose a massive expansion of the nation's health care system unless it included tighter restrictions on federally funded abortion.

Kennedy voted against an amendment to a Democratic health care plan sought by the bishops. But he voted in favor of a health care plan that included the amendment he opposed.

Tobin, the spiritual leader of the nation's most heavily Roman Catholic state, demanded an apology from Kennedy after learning of his remarks and requested a meeting.

"While I greatly respect the Catholic Church and its leaders, like many Rhode Islanders, the fact that I disagree with the hierarchy of the church on some issues does not make me any less of a Catholic," Kennedy wrote in a letter to Tobin, agreeing to a sitdown. "I embrace my faith which acknowledges the existence of an imperfect humanity."

Their meeting fell apart. While Tobin called it a mutual decision, Kennedy accused Tobin of failing to abide by an agreement to stop discussing the congressman's faith publicly.

Tobin followed up with a biting public letter published in a diocesan newspaper.

"Sorry, you can't chalk it up to an 'imperfect humanity.' Your position is unacceptable to the Church and scandalous to many of our members. It absolutely diminishes your Communion with the Church," Tobin wrote.

In subsequent interviews, Tobin said Kennedy should not receive Communion like other Catholic politicians who support abortion rights. Still, the bishop stopped short of ordering Kennedy not to receive the sacrament.

John Wilkins, former editor of the *Tablet* of London, is now working on a book about the implementation of Vatican II. Funding for this article, which appeared in *Commonweal* on December 2, 2005, was provided by a grant from the Henry Luce Foundation. The entire article can be found at:

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1252/is_21_132/ai_n27862483/

Lost in translation: the bishops, the Vatican & the English Liturgy

Forty years ago this month, the Second Vatican Council concluded its work in Rome. The first document it promulgated was the constitution on the liturgy. It was a trailblazer for what followed, harbinger of a new era for the church. The draft text lifted the spirits of one member of the council's central preparatory commission, the late Archbishop Denis Hurley of Durban, when he took it out of his briefcase during a journey from Rome to South Africa and started to read it.

He had been discouraged by the other material that he had seen; this was different. "For the first time," he testified, "I felt able to say: this council is going to mean something in the life of the church."

Archbishop Hurley, a prominent progressive at Vatican II who died last year at the age of eighty-eight, was later to play an important part in the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), set up by bishops of the English-speaking world to translate into the vernacular the Latin liturgical books as reformed by the council. It is a tragic and disturbing story. As editor from 1982 to 2003 of the Catholic weekly the *Tablet* in London, I had a rule of thumb to apply to the stream of instructions coming out of the Roman curia. If the curial congregations became concerned about an issue, it should always be assumed that they had good reason. But the methods they used and their answers could be wrong. This twin-track assessment fits the ICEL case all too well. The early translations were done under great pressure and they contained many inadequacies. When ICEL itself set out to remedy these, its work foundered on Vatican distrust.

... Before the liturgy constitution was promulgated, the English-speaking bishops, who were the first to see the advantages of pooling their resources, had established the core of ICEL. In a formal meeting at the English College in Rome on October 17, 1963, ten English-speaking conferences agreed to share the translation work: those of Australia, Canada, England and Wales, India, Ireland, New Zealand, Pakistan, Scotland, South Africa, and the United States. By the time the council ended in 1965, the ICEL secretariat had been opened in Washington, D.C. In 1967 the Philippines became the eleventh ICEL member; there were also fifteen associated conferences of countries that used English in the liturgy without its being the predominant language. A vast task awaited them: The translation of several thousand texts in some thirty distinct liturgical books. And that "full, conscious, and active participation" desired by the council would turn out to be a far more complicated undertaking than anyone had envisaged.

... Those early years were frenetic. In Rome, the Vatican consilium for implementing the constitution on the liturgy, set up in 1964, worked night and day to complete *editiones typicae* in Latin and make them available to local bishops' conferences. The first Eucharistic Prayer was joined by three more in 1968. Sunday Mass sheets appeared each week. Liturgists burned the midnight oil as they debated how best to achieve a style appropriate to English usage. How to deal with the long periodic sentences that give the Latin its characteristic rhythm? ICEL decided to break them down into shorter components.

That preference triggered a battle royal. The aim was to achieve a noble simplicity of language that was true to the original while pleasing to the ear and apt for proclamation. But to what extent did simplification in the interests of modern sensibilities mean falsification? The more rhetorical style of the Latin presents a balance between God's action and the human response. Fierce criticism of the 1973 missal accused it of trivializing the profundities of the original, and of exalting human religious striving at the expense of the initiative of God, which is always prior.

The ICEL texts were widely circulated for comment and critique. There was an attempt to enlist Catholic poets and writers, but they were not willing to participate: this was not, they felt, an assignment for them.

Considering the pressures, it is remarkable that so much was achieved. Nevertheless, when the first texts came out, the bishops of England and Wales were less than happy, and in the early 1970s they went ahead with their own version of the breviary; they were joined in this effort by the Scots, Irish, and Australians. They also issued their own partial translation of the missal and of the funeral and confirmation rites, which turned out to be short-lived.

Two members of the International Theological Commission were also unhappy. One was Joseph Ratzinger, later to be head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith for twenty-three years and then John Paul II's successor as pope; the other was Chilean Jorge Medina Estevez, later cardinal and head of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, as it was renamed in 1975 after a merger (here CDW). In 2005, Medina would announce the name of the new pope, Benedict XVI, to the waiting world. Both had been among the signatories of a letter to Paul VI in 1972 complaining that the English, French, German, and Spanish vernacular translations were watering down and endangering the church's doctrine. Paul VI listened but the Holy See's instruction to translators, a series of guidelines known by its original French title, *Comme le prévoit*, remained in force. But the two future leaders never forgot.

By 1978, ICEL had produced English translations of all the texts issued by Rome. ...

But the climate in Rome was changing. In 1978, Karol Wojtyla was elected pope, and he saw it as part of his mission to reimpose theological order and central control. In line with perceptions that a "restoration" was under way, John Paul II consulted all the bishops about allowing the former Tridentine rite to be more widely celebrated again. Almost the entire episcopate of the world opposed the proposal, on the ground that two forms of the Roman or Latin rite within the one church would bring disunity. This had been the concern of Paul VI when he ruled in 1969 that the Tridentine rite must be regarded as having been replaced. He was acutely aware that for the Lefebvrist dissidents, the rite was a badge of rebellion against the Second Vatican Council – for them, he said, it was like the white flag of the French monarchists with its fleurs-de-lis.

John Paul II went ahead regardless. In 1984 he issued an indult permitting the Tridentine rite to be publicly celebrated in certain circumstances. Just as the bishops had feared, groups hostile to the Second Vatican Council's reforms took heart from the decision. The tide bearing ICEL along had now passed its peak, though at the time this was not apparent. Seeing the way things were going, bishops became more nervous. There was controversy over the question of inclusive language, which ICEL was already grappling with in the late 1970s.

... Any commission charged with English translations at that time would have felt the need to use inclusive language. By the 1980s it was hardly possible in ordinary speech or writing to continue to use the words "men" or "man" as applying also to women. The ICEL translators felt their way forward, both on the horizontal level, where masculine collective nouns, pronouns, and adjectives described groups including both women and men, and on the vertical level, where references to God were wholly masculine. Women religious, concerned that they should not yet again be marginalized by terms that excluded them, lobbied powerfully and effectively.

ICEL adopted the stylistic norms approved by the U.S. bishops' conference for the use of inclusive language in translating biblical passages. Some of the early texts attempt to reflect the complexity of the biblical material: "Lord God, your care for us surpasses even a mother's tender love." The critics made their alarm vociferously clear. ICEL had been taken over by the feminists, they announced, and had become an inclusive-language factory. There are masculine words in the Psalter which have always been taken in Christian tradition to presage the coming of Jesus Christ, "the Man." If those were changed, a theological dimension of the meaning of the text would be lost. Such objections were partial and exaggerated, and discredited to an extent by inept translations that the objectors put forward as alternatives; nevertheless, some of the American bishops began to listen, and so did Rome.

ICEL's major work, the revision of the Roman missal, began in 1983. In 1988, the first of three extensive progress reports was issued, to be followed, suddenly and unexpectedly, by the appearance of a threatening cloud on ICEL's horizon. The prefect of the CDW was now the German cardinal Paul Augustin Mayer, OSB, a brilliant linguist who had previously been secretary of the Congregation for Religious. There he had reined in American women religious who in his view had gone too far in rewriting their constitutions in accordance with the instructions of Vatican II. At one gathering, Mayer observed that the bishops approved some original prayers for the missal simply "because they were on the market." The episcopal vote, he alleged, had become a rubber stamp. A religious sister who was present raised her hand. "Your Eminence," she asked, "do I understand you to say that the bishops haven't really prepared beforehand how to vote on these texts?" Mayer slammed his fist on the table. "I said nothing of the kind!" But he had. And in 1988, just before he stepped down at the age of seventy-seven, Mayer sent a letter to the conferences of bishops saying that ICEL needed to be reformed, restructured, and redirected.

The English-speaking bishops stood by their commission. In November 1988, ICEL's chairman, Archbishop Hurley, arranged for a meeting with Mayer's successor, Cardinal Eduardo Martinez Somalo. A former diplomat, Martinez was pleasant to deal with. The Mayer letter was put on the shelf, a few cautionary words were spoken, but for the time being harmony continued under Martinez and his successor, Cardinal Antonio Maria Javierre Ortas, prefect from 1992 to 1996. It was the calm before the storm.

Meanwhile, Pope John Paul II was exerting his iron will over the church. The ace in Rome's hand was the ability to appoint almost all the bishops in the world. In this way national conference after national conference was deliberately shunted toward the conservative side. The tendency was to choose "safe" men. As the effects of the policy took hold in the United States, some bishops of the American conference, which had formerly been so supportive of ICEL, began to take their distance.

... The clouds were now dark across the sky. In June 1998, the storm broke. ICEL's episcopal board was holding its annual meeting in Washington. They were anticipating the arrival of Cardinal Francis George, archbishop of Chicago, who was now the American representative on the board. Cardinal George was coming from Rome.

There was as usual a full agenda. The bishops had finished morning prayer and had just started their discussions when George arrived. As soon as the then-ICEL chairman, Bishop Maurice Taylor of Galloway, Scotland, had finished welcoming him, George

asked that the order of the agenda be changed. He wanted immediate discussion of the relations between ICEL and the Vatican congregation. The bishops froze.

Bishop Taylor brokered a compromise. The agenda should be adhered to, he said, but provision would be made for the cardinal to address the meeting toward the end of the day. When the time came for Cardinal George to speak, in the late afternoon, he warned the participants that the commission was in danger. They were at a turning point. The principles that had governed ICEL's approach to translation had been rethought. Rome wanted a vernacular, he said, that was different from the vernacular of the contemporary marketplace, so as to lead worshipers into the nuances and deepest meanings of the texts.

The project as ICEL understood it was no longer considered legitimate. According to George, the commission's thoroughgoing use of inclusive language in its translation of the Psalter had been one of the reasons for disillusionment among the American bishops. There was a pent-up impatience with the commission. If ICEL gave the impression that it owned the Second Vatican Council or the liturgy, it would make bad matters worse, he said. It had to change both its attitude and, in some cases, its personnel. Otherwise it was finished. If necessary, the American bishops would strike out on their own. George spoke vehemently.

Next morning, Archbishop Hurley made a frank and formal response, speaking from a script that he had written out in longhand. The ICEL board was grateful for the message, said Hurley, but disturbed by it. It appeared from what the cardinal had said that a fundamental change had occurred in the attitude of the Congregation for Divine Worship to translation theory. Instead of conveying an equivalence of meaning between the Latin and English texts, as had been ICEL's practice hitherto, the congregation now wanted translations that conveyed an equivalence of individual words.

The archbishop pointed out that he had himself participated in the debate at Vatican II over collegiality--the sharing of all bishops in the governance of the church. But the change in translation practice announced by the cardinal, and the manner in which he had expressed himself, seemed to Hurley to mark a distressing departure from the spirit of collegiality in favor of authoritative imposition. For about a dozen years, ICEL had been revising the 1973 missal in accordance with the principles previously laid down. All this might now end in frustration and waste.

As for inclusive language, Hurley agreed that the Catholic tradition must be upheld, and certain words must not be subjected to unreasonable demands in the interests of inclusivity. But the concerns reflected in the use of inclusive language had come to stay. Good sense, faith, and trust in God would lead to a solution. Could not the cardinal convey to the CDW and the pope that the commission believed in fraternal dialogue as the best way of resolving differences?

In a further intervention, Cardinal George reacted strongly to Hurley. He felt he had been insulted, he said. He apologized if anyone had felt attacked by him, but he was telling the members of ICEL things they needed to hear. They must be receptive to criticism of their texts, but they were not listening. That was the road to disaster. It seemed to George that he would have to report to the American bishops that they must choose

between ICEL and Rome. Several times he pushed back his chair, causing some of the participants to fear that he would walk out.

In hearing George's rebuke, ICEL's episcopal board was doubtless also hearing Cardinal Medina Estevez, now head of the CDW. Some twenty-six years earlier, along with Joseph Ratzinger, Medina had been one of the signatories of the letter of complaint sent to Pope Paul VI. The bishops had already had a taste of what to expect. The year prior to George's bombshell, the CDW had for the first time denied its approval to an ICEL text, the interim revised ordination rite, which had been sitting on desks in the Vatican for several years. The letter of rejection to bishops' conferences that had approved the text and submitted it to Rome came with a list of 114 criticisms. These, it was later emphasized, were by no means exhaustive.

After the Vatican's objections, ICEL put all its energies into a complete revision of the ordination rite, which was ready to be sent to the bishops' conferences by 1999. Again there was opposition from a minority of American bishops whose numbers were growing. The group was led by Archbishop Justin Rigali of St. Louis (now in Philadelphia). Bishop Taylor's attempted compromise misfired, and in October he received a severe reprimand from Cardinal Medina warning him that ICEL was completely off course.

Bishop Taylor asked for a formal meeting with the Vatican congregation, but Medina told him this would be premature until steps were taken to ensure it would be "wholly productive." Meanwhile, Medina went on, the congregation had noted irregularities in the preparation of the ordination rite. "For a number of years" the congregation had had to warn ICEL of "an undue autonomy" evident in the translations. But all such interventions, he contended, had met with "a lack of response." As a result, the CDW's task of "ensuring that translations accurately and fully convey the content of the original texts" had often been "hampered and delayed." Medina then accused the commission of paraphrasing and redrafting, and (contradicting the mandate given to ICEL by the bishops' conferences when it was set up, and subsequently confirmed by Rome) he declared that the CDW did not accept that the commission had the right to produce original texts.

There was more, much more, in this vein, leading to Medina's sweeping conclusion that "in its present form" ICEL was "not in a position to render to the bishops, to the Holy See, and to the English-speaking faithful an adequate level of service." The situation was of "particular gravity" considering "the prominence of the English language in the international community." (The cardinal did not himself speak English.)

Then came a demand that amounted to nothing less than a takeover bid. Medina ordered that ICEL's "statutes" be "revised thoroughly and without delay" under the supervision of the CDW.

But ICEL did not have statutes. It had a constitution, precisely because it had been created by the bishops and was owned by them, not by the Vatican. As such, according to canon law, it did not need a status approved by Rome.

Aware that a fundamental principle--the governance given the bishops by Vatican II--was now at stake, Maurice Taylor as chairman of ICEL sought in every way to fend off this demand while mollifying the congregation. In an exchange of letters, he continued to

speak of revising ICEL's "constitution." But Cardinal Medina was relentless. He spoke of "statutes" and he was going to get them.

In additional letters, the cardinal insisted that ICEL meet another new demand. Staff, experts, and translators working for the commission must receive clearance from Rome, he ordered, and all staff and experts used by ICEL so far must be replaced so as "to ensure a genuinely fresh start." He even threatened to deny the commission any further recognition. Meanwhile, the cardinal's second in command, Archbishop Francesco Pio Tamburrino, accused the ICEL bishops' conferences of subverting the Christian faith of their tens of millions of people.

... But the CDW was moving toward its knockout blow. On March 28, 2001, it published a new instruction on the use of the vernacular, titled *Liturgiam authenticam* (Authentic Liturgy), which overturned the entire basis on which ICEL's work had rested for nearly forty years. And in July a supervisory committee of cardinals and bishops known as *Vox clara* (Clear Voice) was established to ensure that the Vatican would get exactly what it wanted. The English-speaking language group is the only one to have had such a committee imposed on it.

Liturgiam authenticam did not recommend, it commanded. It insisted that translations follow an extreme literalism, extending even to syntax and rhythm, punctuation, and capital letters. The clear implication was that in this way it would be possible to achieve a sort of "timeless" English above the change of fashion, a claim reminiscent of that made for the Ronald Knox translation of the Bible, which today is so dated that it is not read except as a period piece.

A stipulation that appeared to mark a further retreat from Vatican II perspectives ruled out ecumenical cooperation over liturgical translations. This meant the end of pioneering links begun in 1967 between ICEL and the North American Consultation on Common Texts and the International Consultation on English Texts. Moreover, according to *Liturgiam authenticam*, "great caution is to be taken to avoid a wording or style that the Catholic faithful would confuse with the manner of speech of non-Catholic ecclesial communities or other religions, so that such a factor will not cause them confusion or discomfort."

Could the framers of the Vatican instruction really be suggesting that translations of the *Gloria* and Creed agreed upon with other churches were causing "confusion" and "discomfort" to Catholic parishioners who had heard them used in non-Catholic liturgies? As recently as 1995, in his ecumenical encyclical *Ut unum sint*, Pope John Paul himself had encouraged the preparation of agreed-upon texts for the prayers of the liturgy that the Christian churches have in common.

When he first heard the news of *Liturgiam authenticam's* prescriptions, one American Presbyterian who for thirty-five years had worked to foster liturgical dialogue with the Catholic Church was so distressed that he slumped into a chair and wept. "I realized," wrote Professor Horace Allen, Emeritus Professor of Worship at Boston University, "that something terrible had happened which in my own worst imaginings I had never anticipated. A trusted and beloved ecumenical partner had suddenly and effectively walked away from the table."

Just when other churches were revising their liturgical books to match the common texts, the Catholic Church repudiated them. At future ecumenical services of the Word, congregations would no longer be able to pray the Creed and *Gloria* together, using the same words and knowing them by heart. ...

... In October 2001 the presidents of the ICEL bishops' conferences at last met with Cardinal Medina in Rome. He stomped all over them, like a schoolmaster confronting unruly pupils. They came out fuming impotently. As demanded by Medina, the staff and experts who had served the commission were dismissed, including the executive secretary, John Page, a layman who had particularly incurred Medina's ire. For thirty years Page had served on the staff of ICEL. The courteous and gentle American sat at the table during his last meeting with the episcopal board, in Ottawa in 2002, with tears streaming down his face. A year later, Medina retired from the CDW. One of his last official acts--symbolically--was to ordain priests in the Tridentine rite, as though it were on an equal level in the church with the reformed rite.

He was succeeded by Cardinal Francis Arinze. The Nigerian was affable and diplomatic, the soft cop to Medina's tough cop. The ICEL bishops had a day-long meeting with Arinze in October 2003, marking a significant moment in the history of John Paul II's papacy. By then they could fight no more. It was the final act of the drama, and everyone knew it. The bishops sued for peace. They surrendered the prerogatives granted them by their predecessors at the Second Vatican Council. It was now no longer they who created and maintained ICEL, but Rome. *Liturgiam authenticam* even claimed Rome's right to impose its own translation.

The test of the new policies enforced by *Liturgiam authenticam* would be the next translation of the English-language Mass. A draft appeared on an Australian Web site in 2004 and was published in the May 22 *Tablet* that year. It brought a flood of correspondence from the magazine's readers. They wanted to know why there had been no consultation. Was this translation really what then-Cardinal Ratzinger had in mind when he called for a "reform of the liturgical reform"?

... Somewhere on a shelf in the Vatican lies the 1998 ICEL missal, the fruit of thirteen years of work, denied Rome's approval. Though it was passed by all eleven bishops' conferences as the long-awaited revision of its 1973 precursor, it has never been seen by the English-speaking world at large. Its rendering of the Mass achieves a beautiful flow, and the abbreviations and paraphrases that so seriously marred the 1973 version have been addressed. The quality of what it contains can be gauged from the collects. These opening prayers had drawn vehement and damaging attack as the weakest element of the 1973 book. Among the completely redone translations, here is one for the twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time:

Almighty and eternal God,
Whose bounty is greater than we deserve or desire,
Pour out upon us your abundant mercy;
Forgive the things that weigh upon our consciences
And enrich us with blessings
For which our prayers dare not hope.

Together with the collects translated from the Latin are alternative prayers newly composed by ICEL. Here are two. The first is for Midnight Mass at Christmas:

Good and gracious God,
On this holy night you gave us your Son,
The Lord of the universe, wrapped in swaddling clothes,
The Savior of all, lying in a manger.

On this holy night
Draw us into the mystery of your love.
Join our voices with the heavenly host,
That we may sing your glory on high.
Give us a place among the shepherds,
That we may find the one for whom we have waited,
Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh,
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy
Spirit,
In the splendor of eternal light,
God for ever and ever.

The second is for Good Friday:

From the throne of grace, oh God of mercy,
At the hour your Son gave himself to death,
Hear the devout prayer of your people.
As he is lifted high upon the Cross,
Draw into his exalted life
All who are reborn
In the blood and water flowing from his opened side.

These latter texts are so successful that in the opinion of some commentators they carry a new risk--that they would always be chosen over the Roman ones. How could it have been right to leave work of this quality moldering in a Vatican cupboard while a rival group without comparable liturgical expertise started all over again, as if to reinvent the wheel? If any justification is to be offered for causing so many people pain and harassment, the new texts in their final form had better be good.

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