

Bishop Tobin is interviewed by Chris Matthews concerning his ban on Representative Kennedy's reception of Holy Communion in his Diocese.

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21134540/vp/34116440#34116440>

Peter found the article by Tony Equale to be compelling.

... At any rate, it resonated a lot with me, particularly maybe in light of some recent reading I have been doing. The concept of God not as a being at all, much less an omnipotent external being, I have been getting from Spong. But also I am about half way through Karen Armstrong's *The Case for God*, and am getting similar notions. The idea of the Sacred as a dimension of life or existence, or a ground of being immanent in all that is, and therefore as a good substitute for God, minus all the baggage and associations that have accumulated over the millenia, is appealing to me.

The concept of a "nameless presence, that asks nothing, wants nothing, does nothing, but to be with us" seems to be akin to what Armstrong calls the "apophetic" route to God - something to the effect that we can say nothing about God, except in negative terms, that is, what he (it) is not.

Also I find fascinating what seems to be a thesis of hers - namely that in the modern period (since the Renaissance) religion has been presented and preached with the same kind of empirical certitude that the new "scientific" revolution has asserted - that theology is a rational set of dogmas that in fact can be supported by what we know about "nature" - whereas in the medieval and earlier periods theology was rooted in experience and performance (according to her Aquinas said one can learn nothing about God from nature), and therefore was not conceived as a set of "rational" conclusions based on empirical, outside evidence, but coming from something deep and personal at the core of our awareness and in the realm of subjective or even mystical knowledge via analogy and mythos (metaphore) - something real but "ineffable" that can only be articulated in mythical language.

Since the nineteenth century (Freud, and Darwin, etc.) religion no longer has a "rationalized" ally in science, which is increasingly seen in non-Newtonian terms as less than benign, predictable, mechanistically reliable, and with the advent of quantum physics much more a smoke-and-mirrors exercise where what is "real" can be quite indeterminate and elusive, quasi-spiritual. So our certain and literal and unchanging dogmatic conclusions don't work so good any longer and therefore come across increasingly as incredible.

I guess that she will argue that religion has to recover its mythic, mystic, numinous aspects and then to reenter the modern world in radically different attire.

Vatican ban on offer to Anglicans

BARNEY ZWARTZ

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THE Vatican has ordered a Victorian bishop to withdraw an offer to let Anglicans ordain deacons in a Catholic church tomorrow because four of the seven are women.

Bendigo Catholics and Anglicans have both expressed sadness at the decision, which comes a month after Pope Benedict XVI told Anglicans they were welcome to become Catholics and keep their Anglican identity.

Sandhurst Bishop Joe Grech offered Bendigo Anglican Bishop Andrew Curnow use of the city's oldest Catholic church for the celebratory service because the Anglican cathedral is closed for repairs.

Bishop Grech said yesterday that he had checked widely before offering St Kilian's, and had the approval of the Papal Nuncio (ambassador), Archbishop Giuseppe Lazzarotto.

But he was ordered to withdraw the offer by a Vatican department - he did not want to say which - after a Catholic complained to Rome about the planned service.

"It had wider ramifications, and the conclusion was it was better not to have it," Bishop Grech said.

"I was saddened, obviously. I was disappointed I couldn't help more, but there is tremendous rapport between us and the Anglicans. They know it's not a snub, it's the doctrine of the church."

Sandhurst Vicar-General John White also said he was disappointed. "We believe we have a very good working relationship with the Anglicans, and there was no way we were endorsing their theological stance for the ordination of women - it was a generous offer to help when they could not use their own facility."

Anglican theologian Charles Sherlock - a member of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission, which is discussing theological rapprochement between the churches - said it was particularly disappointing because Bishop Grech had been so generous.

"It is disappointing that he is not allowed to act as he thinks best for the people of God in Bendigo," Dr Sherlock said.

Anglican Dean Peta Sherlock (Dr Sherlock's wife) said the Anglicans would hold tomorrow's ordination at St Andrew's Uniting Church instead, and were grateful for the hospitality.

"I think it's indeed sad. Catholics in Bendigo are shocked by it. They say 'it's not us', and we say 'we know'. It was a fantastic good news story, and now it's gone."

Dean Sherlock said the Anglican cathedral closed in January. "There's bits falling off. Anything cement or mortar has perished."

She said restoring the cathedral would cost \$5 million. An appeal had been launched, which so far had raised \$20,000.

"We are worshipping in the hall next door and having fantastic fun. We sit closer together, talk to each other and sing much better. But it's the big stuff we can't do: weddings, funerals, ordinations."

Local Catholics criticised the decision and apologised to Anglicans in letters to the Bendigo *Advertiser*. Beryl Rokesky wrote: "I was ashamed to call myself a Catholic ... Contrary to what we were taught in Catholic schools, Catholics aren't the only ones who will end up in heaven."

Peter Bugden wrote that the decision was evidence that the Roman Curia was concerned with power and control, and that Christianity had been usurped by Churchianity.

Bishop Curnow is on retreat with the seven ordinands and could not be contacted.

[The long-anticipated Irish inquiry into the physical and sexual abuse of children has been released.](#)

The Vatican should apologise for failing to co-operate with an inquiry into sex abuse by Catholic priests in Ireland, a Dublin bishop has said.

Auxiliary Bishop Eamonn Walsh made the comments in an interview with Bloomberg news service on Friday.

The inquiry revealed that the Vatican and the Papal Nuncio in Dublin had ignored requests for information.

The Vatican said the requests had not come through "appropriate diplomatic channels."

However, Bishop Walsh told Bloomberg he was disappointed and surprised by the Vatican's attitude.

He said that the Vatican should have shown "courtesy and cooperation" and added, "If it were me, I would apologise."

He told the news service he was speaking in a personal capacity.

Police

The Report of the Commission of Investigation into the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin, which was published on Thursday, covered a period from 1975 to 2004.

It revealed a litany of child abuse by priests which had been covered-up by the church, on occasions senior police officers also colluded in the cover-up.

In the course of its work it asked for details of reports on abuse sent to the Vatican by the Dublin archdiocese in 2006.

The Vatican did not reply but told the Irish Foreign Affairs department the request "had not gone through appropriate diplomatic channels".

A request for information from the Papal Nuncio was also ignored.

In February 2007, the commission wrote to the Dublin-based Papal Nuncio asking him to forward all relevant documents in his possession.

It also requested that he confirm whether he had any such documents but the Papal Nuncio did not reply.

Ashamed

Earlier this year, the commission again failed to receive a reply after sending the Papal Nuncio extracts from its draft report which referred to him and his office, as it was required to do.

The Vatican told the Irish Times it "was a matter for the local church involved".

A senior Vatican spokesman said diplomatic practice required that outside requests made to the governance of the Vatican pass through diplomatic channels, in this case the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin and the Irish Embassy to the Holy See in Rome.

The leader of the Catholic Church in Ireland has said he is deeply sorry and ashamed by the abuse the report had revealed.

Cardinal Sean Brady also apologised for the way the church covered-up the crimes.

The commissioner of the Irish police, Fachtna Murphy, apologised for the police failure to protect victims.

Victims groups are now calling for a similar inquiry to take place in every diocese in Ireland.

However, Bishop Walsh has said he does not believe that should happen.

He said it would be better for the Church to use its "time, energy and money" to improve child protection measures.

Story from BBC NEWS:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/8382999.stm>

Your comments and articles are appreciated. Send to tony@tonyercolano.com

