

It is important for us to speak clearly. When we say that the Church says something, we must be clear. Are we speaking about the hierarchy, the academy or the faithful? When the hierarchy condemns someone for speaking about what the Church teaches, we must clarify what component of the Church they are speaking about.

Pope's words used in gay-friendly church's defense

Written by Iain Clacher 10/8/08

The gay-friendly Catholic parish in South Brisbane that has angered the Vatican over its liberal ways looks set to infuriate church conservatives yet again. But this time, the Pope's own words have been used in the 'renegade' parish's defence.

A new banner has been unfurled at St Mary's Catholic Church featuring the words: **"Everyone has a place in the church; every person without exception should be able to feel at home and never rejected"**. The quote comes from a speech Pope Benedict XVI made last month in France.

St Mary's made national headlines again this week after it was revealed a recent video of a baptism at St Mary's had been posted on YouTube. The video showed resident priest Terry Fitzpatrick using the words, "We baptise you in the name of the creator, sustainer and liberator of life", adding "who is also father, son and spirit".

The parish's "non-sexist" liturgy has been criticised repeatedly by church conservatives as "wrong". The parish's accepting attitude towards openly gay parishioners has also upset conservatives, who have complained direct to the Vatican.

In May, the Archbishop of Brisbane, John Bathersby, was prompted to issue an ultimatum to the parish over its use of unauthorised liturgy, allowance of women and other lay preachers, and the presence of a small statue some considered to be Buddhist.

I regret that I was not able to determine the source of this article, which was forwarded to me.

Vatican's cardinal sin: A disgraceful attempt to dig up Cardinal Newman's body and exhibit his bones has been thwarted by decomposition

Peter Tatchell
October 8 2008

Nature has thwarted the Vatican's ghoulish, heartless plot to disinter, dismember and display the remains of the 19th century English theologian, Cardinal Newman. When a posse of papal grandees dug up his grave near Birmingham, they found it empty. The Vatican grave robbers had apparently been foiled by bacteria and worms.

Newman's body had decomposed to nothing, leaving a vacant grave and frustrating plans by the Catholic church to break up his body and hawk his bones as holy relics.

The only personal artifact found in the graveyard earth was a tiny piece of tassel from the cardinal's cap. Its survival from the ravages of decomposition will no doubt, in due course, be hailed by the Vatican as The Miracle of the Red Tassel and be cited as a divine intervention that proves Newman's holiness and his worthiness of veneration. Sigh.

Newman died in 1890 and is now being fast-tracked to sainthood. Pope Benedict XI wanted his remains reburied in a grand marble tomb in Birmingham Oratory Church, where he could be worshipped and the church could raise vast sums of money from pilgrims by selling "Holy Newman" souvenirs.

The Vatican's reburial scheme would have violated the Cardinal's repeated, explicit instructions to his executors, which were that he should be buried with the man he loved, and with whom he lived for more than 30 years, Father Ambrose St John.

As well as making money out of Newman's sainthood, the Pope wanted to rebury Newman separate from St John to scotch allegations concerning his homosexuality. The Catholic Church has always been deeply embarrassed that the two men were buried together in the same grave and that they wrote about each other in passionate romantic language. Such evidence has prompted credible suggestions that the Cardinal might have been gay, at least by orientation if not by sexual practice.

Foiling the Vatican's knavish plans, Newman's and St John's bodies have decomposed together, uniting them forever in the same soil. They cannot now be separated, as the Pope wanted. Cardinal Newman's wishes have triumphed over the homophobia of the Catholic hierarchy.

... The cardinal's body has turned to dust in the place where he wanted to be buried, beside the man he loved. There will be no reburial. Pope Benedict has lost his battle to overturn Newman's wishes.
Sweet justice.

[This article appeared on the Guardian Web site.](#)

AN UNKNOWN GOD

Essays in Pursuit of the Sacred

By Tony Equale

Tony Equale, a priest who resigned from active ministry, has written a book in which he reflects on priestly formation, the crisis in Catholicism, and the past and future of faith.

Paperback, bound, 323 pages, \$15.95 (shipping included).

The book is self-published. It can be ordered directly from the author-publisher at his home, 414 Riggins Rd, NW, Willis, VA 24380. Tel (540) 789-7098. Or you may order by e-mail at tonymary@swva.net. Only checks or money orders, please. Please include appropriate shipping information.

Payment includes shipping by USPS media mail. If you want an earlier delivery by UPS or FED EX, please advise ... and shipping will be extra.

Tony writes:

“This book was meant for dialogue. Much of what is elaborated here came from conversations, real or imagined, that I’ve had with friends over the years ... all unfinished. These essays address what I believe are the common elements of our search for the Sacred. If my suggestions are not exactly what many would call traditional, they nevertheless derive from the deepest soils of our tradition. You will find yourself on familiar ground.

“So whether you agree with my resolutions or not, you will discover your own ideas represented in these explorations. I look forward to your responses ... to continue our unfinished conversations ...”

A Letter to Cardinal O’Malley from Voice of the Faithful

September 15, 2008

Cardinal Sean P. O’Malley, OFM Cap
Chair: Bishops’ Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life, and Vocations
2121 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02135-3193

Dear Cardinal O’Malley,

In view of a priest shortage which increasingly compromises the ability of the faith community to participate in the celebration of the Eucharist, we respectfully request that you and your brother bishops use your pastoral and apostolic authority to call for a serious ecclesial review of mandatory celibacy for diocesan priests. We do so because we feel compelled to exercise our responsibility as mandated by the Council: To the extent of their knowledge, competence and authority, the laity are entitled and indeed sometimes duty-bound to express their opinion on matters which concern the good of the church. (*Lumen Gentium* 37)

We appreciate the charism of celibacy as a unique gift to be freely embraced. For those to whom this gift is given, it can become a special quality in their personal relationships with God and with others, manifesting itself in a joy and compassion that enhances their ministry. But for those who have not received this gift, it is experienced as burdensome to their vocation of priestly ministry.

For many young men, the requirement of celibacy is a major obstacle preventing them from responding to a call to the priesthood. We have seen a 60 % drop in vocations in the past forty years, adding considerably to the workload stress of an already overburdened and aging priesthood.

Solutions that have been proffered, such as recruiting non-native priests from poor countries, substituting communion services for Mass, lowering standards for admission to seminaries, parish closures, and priests pastoring multiple parishes, fail to address the long-term systemic issues that are at the root of the problem.

Additionally, we point to what many believe are other consequences of the discipline of mandatory celibacy, such as a clerical environment in which many diocesan priests feel unsupported by their bishops, are distanced from their brother priests, maintain few close personal friendships, and look forward to retirement, only to find it a time of illness and loneliness.

More is being written and openly discussed about priests' health and well being, with increased reports of stress, depression, heart attacks, and even suicide. We express our growing concern about how difficult it can be to work and live in a clerical culture that on some deep and profound levels seems to be unhealthy and dysfunctional.

We also believe the discipline of mandatory celibacy fosters a culture of clericalism which enables church leadership to put the needs of the institution ahead of the needs of the faithful, including victims of clerical sexual abuse. This clerical culture can also put the needs of the institution ahead of the need for due process and justice for priests accused of such abuse.

We believe many of you share these concerns, but for reasons we cannot fathom have not found a way to address them in a meaningful and pastoral way.

We believe our Holy Father Benedict XVI demonstrated during his visit earlier this year that he will not turn a deaf ear to the voices of his flock. We trust he will heed the voices of his brother bishops as we trust you will heed ours.

Respectfully,

Dan Bartley,
President
Voice of the Faithful

John Ryan,
Chair
National Working Group for Priest Support,
Voice of the Faithful

Another book announcement.

Fr. Laclau Marries

Fr. Léon Laclau and Marga married recently in a civil ceremony. At the reception after the wedding, Fr. Laclau offered the following toast to his bride: "A Marga, mon amour, merci pour ton amour sans limite, pour ta confiance, ton courage, ta persévérance pour m'accompagner jusqu'au bout; merci de m'avoir ouvert ton grand cœur. Cette histoire d'amour est écrite en lettres indélébiles. L'amour ne s'éteindra jamais. Nous continuerons d'écrire d'autres pages. A toi pour toujours!" ("To Marga, my love, thank you for your endless love, for your trust, your courage, your perseverance in accompanying me to the end; thank you for having opened your big heart to me. This love story is written in indelible ink. The love will never be extinguished. We will continue to write more pages. To you, forever!")

It's also important to note that Fr. Laclau has published a book about their relationship titled **Pour l'amour d'une femme... Privé d'Eglise** ("For love of a woman...Deprived of a church"), Michel Lafon (France), 2008.

Fr. Laclau says, "I have written this book to testify about 22 years of being torn between the love of God and that of a woman. I have lived those years with double guilt: that of being unfaithful to the Church I served, and that of depriving my companion of the joy of living openly. Many priests have known this suffering, even though all have not been sanctioned as I have been, finding myself "deprived of the Church." In spite of this I have always been deeply happy to be a priest. But why this painful celibacy requirement? The marriage of priests can only benefit their ministry. Solitude doesn't lead to fraternity. It's true that I have strayed from the path I chose when I pronounced my vows...I only wish that this path could grow larger and that married men could be ordained to spread the word of Christ and good around them. There would be more vocations, fewer people abandoning the priesthood, and those seeking Hope would be better served."