

An excerpt from “Labor Day – All Work is Holy” by Daniel O’Rourke. It appeared in The Observer, Dunkirk, NY on August 28th.

“...The Institute for Policy Studies and United for a Fair Economy reported in 2004 that the ratio of American Chief Executive Officer (CEO) remuneration to that of the wages of American workers was 431 to 1. Admittedly CEOs work and work hard; they perform essential functions. Their 16-hour days are filled with responsibility, stress and pressure; they must constantly be alert to trends and developments. The average worker has none of these round-the-clock responsibilities. They punch that clock and go home. Absolutely, CEOs should be much better paid than the average worker but are they worth 431 times more? Of course not. This is Gandhi’s sin of “wealth without work,” or at least disproportionate wealth without proportionate work. CEOs in other highly productive capitalist nations also have high pressured, stressful jobs, but the ratio of their pay to their worker’s is dramatically less.

“According the Dr. Mark Kroll in “CEO Pay Rates: US vs. Foreign Nations” in 2005 Japan had a ratio of CEO remuneration to the average worker’s of 11 to 1. In Germany it was 12 to 1, in Great Britain 22 to 1. In the United States it was 475 to 1 — even higher than the Institute for Policy Studies’ figure. (With their stock options, bonuses and numerous perks, CEO remuneration is complicated and difficult to report accurately.) ...”

Congratulations to all those bishops who speak the truth before they retire.

Return of the ‘Gibbett’

Last time on *Liturgy Wars*, the US bishops shocked everybody -- themselves included -- by rejecting the second part of the long-controversial new translation of the Mass.

To recap, what was expected to be a ho-hum passage of the Proper of Seasons at mid-June's Spring Meeting in Orlando hit the wall after Bishop Victor Galeone of St Augustine (a onetime Latin teacher who's maintained his fluency) took a rhetorical chainsaw to the proposed text's use of the word 'gibbet,' forcing the vote to a mail ballot of those prelates absent, at which point the Florida prelate, the bishops' worship shop, and the global translation body ICEL each took their case to the remaining voters. The result: two weeks before all ballots were due, the USCCB announced that the texts had failed to garner the requisite assent of two-thirds of its Latin-rite membership, and would be revisited at the November meeting in Baltimore.

Amid the frenzy, the Holy See sent up a clear vote of confidence in the ongoing process, announcing its *recognitio* to the first part of the new translation of the third edition of the post-Conciliar *Missale Romanum* -- the Order of Mass -- which had been under review at the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments for the better part of two years. Intended for use across the English-speaking world, the final 'White Book' of the liturgy's unchangeable parts was subsequently released by the US conference, the first step of a catechetical effort intended to familiarize churchfolk with

the revisions, whose rollout will, at the earliest, come in Advent 2011 (a year after the Anglophone conferences vote on the final section of the 12-part *Missale Romanum* package).

With all that as background, Galeone -- now a hero to the project's critics for being viewed by its lead movers as a 'worthy opponent' -- has loosed a new salvo in the pages of the current *America*.

While most of the article reprises the former Latin teacher's critique of the text's word-choice and syntax ('gibbet' encore included), and even offers some praise of the new renderings, the Baltimore-born bishop goes on to knock 'the present membership of ICEL' for, he says, 'fall[ing] squarely into the camp of those who prefer a translation that is frozen in static, never-changing formulas—even if comprehension is sacrificed in the process'... and that's before closing with a report on the mind of the bench, and his \$.02 on why the Proper failed.

The piece is subs-only, but here's the wrap:

At the Orlando conference, it was pointed out that only eight bishops had submitted amendments to alter the proposed texts. The legal maxim “silence gives consent” should warrant the conclusion that the vast majority of bishops agree with the proposed translations. I submitted no amendments. I refrained from doing so out of frustration. At our meeting in Los Angeles two years ago, I submitted four amendments with well-reasoned explanations as to why the texts were flawed. Not one amendment was accepted, nor was any reason given for their rejection. I have spoken with other bishops who feel equally frustrated.

It was also pointed out that four national conferences of bishops have already approved the texts (11 national conferences are members of ICEL). Why then, should our conference refuse to go along with them? My observation is that if the bishops in those countries felt the same frustration that many of our bishops are experiencing, isn't it possible that they might have approved the texts just to be done with it? The conferences that have accepted the ICEL texts represent only a small fraction of English-speaking Catholics worldwide, whereas U.S. Catholics represent 85 percent of the Catholic English-speaking world. That important point should not be lost.

In fact, following my intervention, three bishops informed me that although they agreed with me, they still voted for approval since they felt it was time to move on. At the conference, several bishops publicly voiced the same sentiment—as one of them expressed it, “With all its difficulties, the translation should go forward.” But Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk of Cincinnati warned that it “depends on what you're moving forward to,” arguing that the new texts would be “a linguistic swamp.”

Other bishops at the conference were in agreement with Pilarczyk. For example, Bishop Richard Sklba of Milwaukee admitted, “If I have trouble understanding the text, I wonder how it's going to be possible to pray with it in the context of worship.” He added that if the texts were approved, our priests and people would press the bishops to return to them

time and again in order to remedy the perceived defects.

Bishop Donald Trautman of Erie has observed that the texts contain a number of archaic and obscure terms, such as “wrought,” “ineffable” and “gibbet.” He also lamented ICEL’s preference for replicating in English the structure of the Latin periodic sentence, thus making comprehension difficult. “John and Mary Catholic,” he concluded, “have a right to have prayer texts that are clear and understandable.” Clear and understandable—without sacrificing either accuracy or elegance—therein lies the challenge!

Since the motion failed to receive sufficient votes for either approval (166) or rejection (83), the Latin-rite bishops who were absent from the conference had to be polled by mail. With all the mail-in ballots counted, the motion still failed to pass. Consequently, we bishops will have to revisit the proposed draft of prayers at our November meeting.

In the past 1,500 years, languages spoken on the street have changed. And so the dilemma constantly recurs of how to represent the teaching of Scripture, tradition and the liturgy in a way that remains faithful to its original meaning but at the same time is easily understood by the people. It is no easy task, but proposing translations that leave our people scratching their heads is not the answer.

That is the reason the motion for the proposed texts failed to pass. We bishops who voted against the motion did not do so out of a spirit of obstinacy. We love the Lord. We love the church. We love the liturgy. And what we desire for our people is what the bishops at the Second Vatican Council approved in the “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy,” No. 21, speaking of the restoration of the liturgy (emphasis added): “Both texts and rites should be drawn up so that they express *more clearly* the holy things which they signify: the Christian people, so far as is possible, should be enabled to *understand them with ease* and to take part in them fully, actively, and as befits a community.”

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God as Universal Presence
by Michael Morwood

We can too easily allow ourselves to be intimidated - and allow Christian 'orthodoxy' control the way we think. We have become enslaved in theological bonds. We hesitate to speak up and share the doubts and the questions we have.

One difficulty we run into constantly is the charge: but you cannot question this and that, or not believe this and that, and remain a Christian. We can too easily allow ourselves to be intimidated - and allow Christian 'orthodoxy' control the way we think. We have become enslaved in theological bonds. We hesitate to speak up and share the doubts and the questions we have. I am reminded of John Henry Newman ... lamenting

in the 19th Century that we Christians do not share the secrets of our hearts; we are fearful to speak honestly; 'we suffer to wither and decay what would be a bond of union among us.'

When we share, as many people working in the realm of adult faith development will attest, we find we are not alone in either the doubting or the questioning. Let us stop being intimidated and let us acknowledge that most items on that list of orthodox belief depend on interpreting Jesus as someone who connects us with an elsewhere God.

The way forward is to stop doing that. That is our task, I believe: to shape a spiritual vision based on the understanding of God as a universal Presence at work in all places at all times.

How might we do this? How would we tell the story of Jesus? How would we talk about Pentecost, Church, Eucharist, Sacraments and prayer?

Four and a half billion years ago a supernova exploded in our galaxy. In the explosion were created all the heavy elements, such as carbon and iron that make our existence and the existence of our solar system possible.

The theological question is: Where was God when this explosion took place? Will we imagine God being somehow outside it, an observer looking on, an elsewhere Intelligent Designer planning and organizing from without? No, this happened IN God. Let us think of God as that universal mysterious presence that sustains and holds everything in existence - the Ground of All Being. Let us think in God as the mysterious presence that holds all things, from the galactic to the sub-atomic spheres, in relationship and connectedness - the presence that gives existence and energy to all that is. Keep in mind, this process is going on all over the universe - and possibly other universes. And in using the language of connectedness, relationship and energy we are using language quantum physicists would appreciate - as is the language of 'mystery' and wonder.

We are not using this language to describe God, but rather using it as a pointer to our understanding of God as a universal presence.

This explosion happened IN God and whatever unfolded happened IN God ... Every atom in our bodies was manufactured in that explosion and has been on a cosmic journey for all that time. Scientists, such as Paul Davies, inform us that carbon atoms are recycled continuously in living organisms and that in all likelihood there are atoms in each of us that were once in the body of Jesus, or Buddha or dinosaurs.

From the planet's beginning, God's Spirit has come to visibility in and through whatever was there to work with. This continued with the emergence of the human species. All its development took place in God, giving God a way of coming to expression in the magnificent life-form we are and could yet be. Late in its development this life form

came to serious reflection about itself, its place on this planet and whatever sustained it in existence. This was done slowly and tentatively as human minds in various parts of the planet grappled with questions of meaning, purpose and connectedness. And all the time the Spirit of God was present and active in them, coming to expression in and limited by the knowledge and the worldview of the time as well as the personal giftedness of the thinkers. Gradually religion became an important factor for the human species because religion attempted to give answers to these questions.

We can imagine the Spirit of God active in all parts of the world coming to expression in the great religious leaders - working in and through cultural and religious thought patterns, the knowledge of the time, worldview and particular personalities. India, Egypt, China, American Indians, Australian aborigines etc - the same creative spirit at work in all places, in all peoples.

Then, in Jesus of Nazareth, the same Spirit burst forth in someone gifted enough to give that Spirit extraordinary expression both by the way he lived and by what he taught. Love as the best possible human expression.

Jesus' basic insight has to do with LOVE giving the best possible human expression to God - relationship, connectedness, energy - because that is what love is all about. He could talk with a quantum physicist in a way ID's cannot.

What did Jesus want people to believe about their relationship with God and how this relationship impacted with their daily life? I think Jesus wanted people to believe that God is gracious. God is forgiving beyond imagining.

This is the central in some of Jesus' parables, e.g. the vineyard workers who all receive a generous wage; the return of the wayward son. I think Jesus wanted people to discover, joyfully, that God is actually present to them in the everyday present events and responsibilities of life. Jesus wanted people to recognize that presence, name it and allow it to transform the way they viewed themselves in relationship with God. Where could they recognize it?

Jesus pointed them in the direction of the time-honoured Hebrew tradition of being neighbour; in visiting, caring, clothing, sharing and forgiving.

I think the fundamental insight of Jesus' preaching about the 'reign of God' in our midst was that we have to be the human expressions of God's presence in the world; we have to allow that presence have its way with us in unselfish, generous love. We have to be the presence, for there is no other way God's reign or kingdom of peace, truth justice and love can be established.

People saw themselves, as they still see themselves today, disconnected from God, as if God really dwells in a far away place. Jesus urged them to look closer to home: The stables of our own lives actually contain the sacred presence we seek elsewhere. Jesus sought to connect people with God, not by re-establishing a broken connection,

but by turning their minds to see where the connection always had been. This is a crucial point in understanding Jesus' ministry. I do not think Jesus was driven by the thought that he had something new to give people. Rather, he wanted to draw attention to what was already there.

He never proclaimed that God had locked people out or somehow broken the connection of friendship with people. Never. In his preaching about the kingdom of God, he never proclaimed that he and he alone had access to God's grace, presence and favour. Never. That claim would only surface years after he died when a struggling church community sought to establish its claims to unique access to God. Jesus names the universal connector.

Jesus urged people not to live in fear of God. They were to live in a relationship of trust and closeness - like a child in relationship with a most loving parent. Jesus wanted to 'save' people, not from actual disconnectedness from God - because such a state is never a possibility - but from the religious mentality that nurtured images and thoughts of distance and fear. He wanted to free them from what held them back from believing good news about themselves. He wanted to move them forward to taking responsibility for giving expression to God's presence in human activity.

I imagine Jesus had his own vision of what the human community could look like if his dream had been realized. What strikes me about this vision is its universality and its inclusiveness.

Jesus' message is not just for Jews; it is invaluable for the entire human community. It is always relevant, whatever time in history, and in whatever culture. It is summed up well in the words we know so well: if you live in love, you live in God and God lives in you. Let us note once again: Jesus did not cause this to happen. No, he simply named the universal connector. Anyone who lives in love, lives in God and God in them.

The Spirit of God was always present and active in all the people Jesus addressed. The Spirit was always present and active in the apostles - but limited by the religious conditioning, by the lived situation, by individual personalities and by images and ideas that told these people God was not with the likes of them.

It was not till after the death of Jesus that the Aha! moment dawned, when minds were opened - by thinking about Jesus - and understanding came. Then, the Spirit that had always been present in these people was able to come to expression in a new way. But it did not come from somewhere else.

The New Testament writers presented Pentecost in terms of the Spirit coming 'down' from elsewhere, like a first-time event. They also presented the Spirit's coming being dependent on Jesus' resurrection and his ascent into heaven. This made eminent sense to them and fitted with their understanding of the cosmos and God's place in it. If we reflect on Pentecost in terms of God being always and everywhere present and active on earth, then God's Spirit has always been here. Its presence is not dependent on Jesus

doing anything. It is the awareness of that presence that the teaching, the life, the death and resurrection of Jesus alerted people to.

If we could personify the Spirit of God, we could imagine that Spirit saying. 'At last! At last they have seen what human life is all about! At last they have seen how everyone is connected! At last they have seen the dignity of all people! At last they have a language and the insight to transcend the religious language of choice, elitism, distance and separation, us and them. At last fear and division are cast out! At last, if this message spreads, all people will know and walk in a trusting and loving relationship with the Presence that holds them all in existence.'

Pentecost is a great story! The story conveys what could have been the most wonderful breakthrough in human development: a clear articulation of our common connectedness with one another and the Source and Sustainer of all. This story transcends languages, cultures and religions. This is a story of healings, of breakthroughs in understanding, of what the Spirit of God can do in people when they open their minds and hearts to the power that is within them. This is a universal story, for all people. It set hearts and minds on fire. It was Good News. It demanded to be proclaimed as such and to be told over and over again because it would set people free from resorting to magic and superstition and dependence on people with special powers to access the sacred. The sacred was accessible to everyone.

Recently, in Melbourne, I heard a talk on religious tolerance given by the Japanese Consul. He shared a quote he learned as a boy from his Japanese English teacher: 'Down below the stirring waves of difference and dissimilarities there lies a deep sea of humanity that unites us all.'

That's where Jesus went with 'the crowd'... That's where the original Pentecost was meant to take us... - to be with the 'deep sea of humanity' and to affirm the presence of God in the midst of the struggles, the joys, the development, to affirm the bonds that unite all people.

Yet, incredibly, within the space of several hundred years this reading of the story would be neglected and almost abandoned in favour of Christian insistence that a story of separation and exile from God be the story on which its doctrine, its ritual, its prayers, its spirituality, its identity and its sacramental life be based.

Then traditional Christian theology sought to answer the questions: Who must Jesus be in order to get us into heaven? Who/what must God be like if Jesus has to be an incarnation of God?

And now Christian theology must:

- * 1. be aware that what was proposed arose from particular questions and the religious worldview of a specific time and not from direct revelation from an elsewhere God.
- * 2. be open to the reality that the questions and issues which grounded creedal statements about Jesus needing to be a unique incarnation of God are no longer our

questions and issues. Who here believes in a deity in the heaven who closed access to himself [sic] because of the sin of the first humans?

Michael Morwood is Australian adult educator who includes among his books *Tomorrow's Catholic, Is Jesus God? Finding Our Faith and Praying a New Story*, and his latest book, *From Sand to Solid Ground*. This article appeared on the Web site: New Catholic Times, sensus fidelium, <http://www.newcatholictimes.com/>

Seeking political guidance at church

By Rich Barlow

John McCain's nomination this week officially launched the last lap in our lengthy presidential race, with the Arizona senator and Senator Barack Obama of Illinois having less than two months to make their respective cases to the voters.

Undecided Americans can find guidance from an ancient, hierarchical institution with millennia of experience pondering the common good - the Roman Catholic Church. Or so say Portland, Maine, Catholic activist Chris Korzen and coauthor Alexia Kelley in their new book, "A Nation For All"(Jossey-Bass).

Denouncing modern cut-throat politics by both political parties, the book suggests a national agenda that includes combating poverty and pollution. It dismisses ideas behind such Republican slogans as "compassionate conservatism" as failures. But it faults the Democratic Congress for passing agribusiness subsidies that flood the world with surplus food, driving down prices for already impoverished farmers in the developing world. The authors offer suggestions for voters concerned with labor and poverty - traditionally Democratic issues - who lean Republican on social matters such as abortion. While sharing the church's opposition to abortion, Korzen and Kelly argue that making it a single issue can be counterproductive: Brazil bans abortion, they say, yet has twice our abortion rate because it doesn't address the poverty that drives many women to end pregnancies. Indeed, before becoming pope, they write, Benedict XVI said a Catholic could support a pro-abortion rights candidate as long as the candidate's abortion stance was not the reason behind that support and as long as the voter had other compelling moral reasons for her vote, the book says.

Excerpts from a recent interview with Korzen, 32, follow.

Q. *Why would non-Catholics want a "Catholic vision of the common good," to quote your subtitle?*

A. We feel the Catholic social tradition is our church's gift to the world, ways that we can build a society in which everyone can flourish. Some of the principles are endemic to other faiths, indeed to the US Constitution when we talk about "We the people. . ."

Q. Some pundits think the church's sex abuse scandal dealt a body blow to its moral authority.

A. We're talking about 2,000 years of church tradition and more than a hundred years of Catholic social tradition. If folks feel that the sex abuse scandal undermined that tradition, there's not much we can do to change their minds. We believe that there's a lot of common sense built into the Catholic vision of the common good. We're all created equal in the eyes of God, and our duty as citizens is to treat one another with love and kindness, reflected in our public policy.

Q. Catholic economic justice teachings argue for liberals' priorities, while teachings on matters like abortion and gay marriage favor conservatives. How should a voter decide?

A. We try to help people break out of these categories like liberal, conservative. We've seen that degrade into a shouting match. Catholic teaching doesn't fit into these boxes. Faithful Catholics need to understand church teaching and make prudential judgments about how to apply that teaching.

Q. Your proposed agenda omits gay marriage, which the church opposes. What's your personal view?

A. We're against scapegoating people of different sexual orientations. Personally, I think a Catholic can support a candidate who favors something like a civil union, because it has nothing to do with the sacrament of marriage. There are some Catholics who might disagree. It's a question that needs more respectful dialogue within our church community.

Q. Besides [combating] poverty and war, your agenda lists abortion among the "affronts to human life and dignity." How many pro-abortion rights voters will that cost you?

A. The Catholic tradition is very clear about abortion. If folks don't agree, this is a free society. They don't have to read the book. We need to focus on ways that actually reduce the number of abortions [such as reducing poverty].

Q. Your concern is the common good, but you also say individual responsibility is important. Give me examples from Catholic teaching about how government should expect responsibility from its citizens.

A. There are two points in the tradition, subsidiarity and solidarity. Subsidiarity holds that problems should be addressed on the lowest possible social level. For instance, schools and fire departments [are] something local communities have a better handle on. Solidarity says we are responsible for one another, and there are certain challenges we need to take on [at] that high level.

There are no hard and fast answers to these questions about where's the boundary. There's a movement, even within the Catholic community on the far right, to diminish the role of government almost to zero. We don't find a lot of support for that within the Catholic social tradition.

This interview appeared in "Spiritual Life," a column in the *Boston Globe*.