

THE NEWSJOURNAL OF CATHOLIC OPINION

CONSCIENCE

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**US Bishops’
Roman Connection**
Politics with a
Rightward Slant

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THE NEWSJOURNAL OF CATHOLIC OPINION

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Catholics for Choice shapes and advances sexual and reproductive ethics that are based on justice, reflect a commitment to women's well-being and respect and affirm the capacity of women and men to make moral decisions about their lives.

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CATHOLICS
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EDITOR'S NOTE

THE ICONIC IMAGES THAT GRACE THIS ISSUE HARK BACK TO another era in the Catholic church. Many of us remember the parades that brought towns and villages to a standstill, the religious events in which everybody shared. Today, those events seem to be few and far between, if they exist at all. To take but one example, this year's Eucharistic Congress in Dublin was a pale shadow of its predecessor that took place in the same city in 1932.

The year 1932 may be a distant memory, but it was not that long ago that the church was the center of people's social lives, as well as their religious lives. Today, that has changed, perhaps irreversibly. The main reason, based on our research, is that the church has changed immensely. The number of people who, when asked, state they are Catholic may still be rising, but the relationship between the faithful and church leaders, as well as the priorities of the hierarchy, have certainly shifted.

The sex abuse scandal, stemming from the bishops' decision to protect the institution of the church over the needs of young boys and girls, has certainly affected how people feel about their leaders. But there is more.

Jodi Enda examines how Rome and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have conspired to clamp down on dissent from all sources—in the Girl Scouts and the convents, among politicians and the academy. Kathryn Joyce continues this investigation by looking at how the Catholic church's notable healthcare outreach around the world has been tarnished in some places by local bishops' insistence that HIV & AIDS care centers must not provide condoms. And, in a battle that may be just starting, Kim Puchir examines how the pope and the bishops may be trying to usher in a new, more conservative era in Catholic higher education.

We end with two stories that look at these issues from another slant. Noted pollster John Russonello shows how Catholic voters in the United States rely on their own consciences when deciding how, and for whom, to vote, rather than following instructions from the pulpit. Martin Pendergast reflects on the groups of priests in Austria, Ireland, England and Wales, and the United States that are developing their own agendas for reform—a series of changes of which the bishops will not approve.

The local church may not be at the center of people's lives any more, but for hundreds of millions people, their Catholicism is very important. The sensus fidelium, however, is not what the bishops dictate—rather, it is how people personally choose to act. Looked at from any angle, change is afoot in the Catholic church.



DAVID J. NOLAN
Editor

Conscience is a unique magazine, and one we would like to get as wide an audience as possible. So, I have a favor to ask. Think for a moment. Ask yourself, do I know other people who I want to be as well-informed as I am? I'm sure you do, because inquisitive people always know other inquisitive people.

So, please consider buying them a subscription as well. To purchase, please visit our website, www.CatholicsForChoice.org, or call us at (202) 986 6093.

“Pope Benedict has put more conservative bishops—including several Americans—into powerful positions in the Vatican, giving them outsized sway back home.”

—JODI ENDA, p14

Conscience offers in-depth, cutting-edge coverage of vital contemporary issues, including reproductive rights, sexuality and gender, feminism, the religious right, church and state issues and US politics. Our readership includes national and international opinion leaders and policymakers, members of the press and leaders in the fields of theology, ethics and women’s studies.

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Scan with your smart phone to follow the latest news and action alerts about reproductive rights, sexuality and gender, church and state and individual conscience on the Catholics for Choice website.

COVER: ALTAR SERVERS LEAD A PROCESSION FOR PALM SUNDAY MASS IN WASHINGTON, DC, IN THE 1960S. © CORBIS / WALLY MCNAMEE CA. 1960

ABOVE: PARISHIONERS OF ST. AMBROSE CHURCH IN ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA PREPARE FOR A PROCESSION ON THE FEAST DAY OF ST. ANTHONY IN THE 1920S. IMAGE COURTESY OF MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY/CORBIS CA. 1925

Religion Cannot Be Used to Discriminate

THE MOST RECENT issue of *Conscience* focused on important issues of religious liberty, including the various ways that religion is being used to discriminate against others. This disturbing tactic threatens all of our rights. For example, there are 30 lawsuits—and counting—challenging the federal birth control rule, which ensures that employees will have birth control coverage without a co-pay. In those cases, the owners of private businesses and religiously affiliated schools are claiming that their religious opposition to contraception should exempt them from compliance with the law. They are essentially asking for a free pass to discriminate against their female employees.

These aren't the only cases that are troubling. We are also seeing religion being used to discriminate against same-sex couples seeking venues for their wedding receptions, and teachers have been fired from religiously affiliated schools for using assisted reproductive technology.

Historically, the courts have rejected attempts to use religious beliefs as an excuse to discriminate. For

example, as far back as the 1960s, a restaurant owner's claim that he did not have to serve African Americans because of his religious opposition to racial integration was ultimately rejected. The courts stopped such claims back then, and they should do so again now.

BRIGITTE AMIRI
Senior Staff Attorney
American Civil Liberties Union,
Reproductive Freedom Project

From the Front Lines of a Hospital Merger: A Victory for Reproductive Rights

I HAD THE DUBIOUS privilege of being on the front lines opposing a planned merger between two Pennsylvania healthcare entities, Abington Health System and Holy Redeemer Hospital, in July 2012. I am an OB/GYN on the medical staff at Abington Memorial Hospital, which has long been committed to providing comprehensive reproductive healthcare for women. Of the approximately 65 abortions performed every year at Abington, many are to save the life of the woman or to terminate a chromosomally abnormal fetus.

Holy Redeemer included as one of the conditions of the merger that Abington stop doing all abortions. The limitation was agreed upon, unfortunately, before

consulting with Abington's OB/GYN department or the medical staff in general. Besides causing an uprising among the medical personnel, the planned merger outraged the community, which depends upon Abington, a secular hospital, for all aspects of reproductive healthcare.

As chair of the Pennsylvania section of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), I helped promote ACOG's support for reproductive health services, including abortion. We worked with Merger Watch and were joined by several organizations including Catholics for Choice, the National Women's Fund and the American Civil Liberties Union, as well as the OB/GYN resident physicians at Abington, to try to defeat the merger.

Within three weeks from the date of the announcement of the planned merger, the decision to merge was reversed. While it should have been unnecessary to wage this fight, this was a victory for women's medical care and reproductive rights.

In my practice, most of my Catholic patients use birth control. In the state of Pennsylvania, 35 percent of women who have an abortion are Catholic. I fully support the freedom of women to follow their religious beliefs, and to deviate from doctrine according to their own consciences. As a physician, my first obligation is to provide the best possible care for my patients and support their autonomy. It is unac-

ceptable to have any religious doctrine violate my obligation to honor the Hippocratic Oath or my conscience.

SHERRY L. BLUMENTHAL,
MD, MSED, FACOG
Chair, Pennsylvania Section
American Congress of
Obstetricians and Gynecologists

Stopping the Merger, and the Slippery Slope of the Bishops' Directives

LOIS UTTLEY'S ARTICLE (*Conscience* Vol. XXXIII No. 2) certainly voices the significant dilemma that Catholic hospitals face in adhering to the *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services* and the ensuing conflicts with the secular universe.

I was recently involved with a group of 20 people who successfully lobbied to stop the merger between Abington Memorial Hospital and one of its neighboring Pennsylvania hospitals, Holy Redeemer Hospital. Our group of men and women, Catholics, Protestants and Jews, opposed the intended merger, which came as a total surprise to the community as well as to the Abington medical staff. The Stop the Merger committee, which collaborated with Merger Watch, Catholics for Choice and other community groups, began an online petition that quickly gathered 6,000 signatures in a week, sparked several community meetings, received a lot of local media attention and resulted in the potential resignation of some of the hospital's medical staff, including its OB/GYN doctors.

Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

Our concern was that our secular community hospital would be required to live under the umbrella of the bishops' Directives and that this would not only mean it would stop offering abortion services. We were also concerned that other women's reproductive rights would be affected; that end-of-life issues and personal directives of patients could be vetoed; that partners' visitation rights would be affected; and that our community hospital, for which we all felt such a connection and pride, would change its focus and identity due to the decision by the board of directors to value the bottom line more than patients' and staff's values and beliefs.

We prevailed: the merger was cancelled. And, for now, the people and families who go to Abington Memorial Hospital are able to make their own private choices on a wide spectrum of medical issues.

LESLIE KREITHEN
Huntingdon Valley, PA

The Influence of the Catholic Church on Sexual and Reproductive Rights in Mexico

IN RESPONSE TO "THE LAY state and religious freedom in Mexico" by Roberto Blancarte (*Conscience* Vol. XXXIII No. 2), I would like to add a few comments. I believe that recent changes in the Mexican Constitution represent a potential threat to sexual and reproductive rights in Mexico despite the fact that, as Blancarte mentioned, there are also

some positive aspects to the amendments. Even without the reform, bishops all over the country have been making public statements about "evil" sexuality education, "useless" condoms, "sinful" abortion and "dangerous" rights for homosexuals. Their voices have been reproduced by the media and heard by the population, even if they do not listen to Catholic radio stations or watch Catholic TV channels. The question is, what is going to happen if there is even more space allowed for the Catholic church in Mexican society?

There is no doubt that without the influence of the Catholic church, Mexico would be a country with better laws and policies to

protect sexual and reproductive rights. Any attempt to give more rights to the church is to give the hierarchy an opportunity to influence the public agenda, particularly in states where they have a strong influence already.

Just as an example, last June a group of NGOs and institutions went on record in national newspapers to say that they were against a campaign by the Consejo Nacional de Población to promote condoms among young people. Almost all those NGOs and institutions were Catholic-oriented or part of the Catholic church indirectly. Fortunately, the condom campaign continued despite the complaints, but in the past,

other sexual and reproductive health programs have been cancelled due to the strength that the church already has.

On December 1, a new president, supposedly from a lay party, will take office: Enrique Peña Nieto. He has close ties with the hierarchy of the church and therefore, we need to follow his movements closely if we don't want to have a backlash against SRHR in the next six years of his charge. And we also need to follow the movements of the church if we don't want it to interfere with health, education and rights issues as it has done in the past.

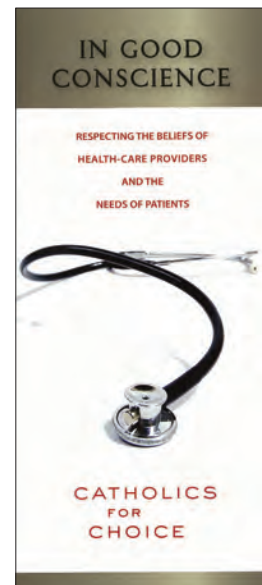
RICARDO BARUCH D.
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The Church and Abortion

Uruguay Votes to Regulate Access to Abortion

IN OCTOBER JOSE MUJICA approved a bill decriminalizing abortion in Uruguay. The bill had been passed by both houses. Regulations will be introduced in the next 30 days.

The legislation would make abortion available to a woman during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy—after she has seen a panel composed of a doctor, a psychologist and a social worker and then had a five-day waiting period. In cases of rape, the limit would be 14 weeks, and late abortions would be legal for women whose lives are at risk or in cases of significant fetal abnormality. While those under 18 must obtain parental consent, the law would allow for minors to circumvent the requirement by appealing to a judge.

Women's rights groups have criticized the bill because of its refusal clauses for hospitals and, as advocacy group *Mujer y Salud* en Uruguay leader Lilián Abracinkas said, "The spirit of this text is that it discourages women from having abortions." Nevertheless, it would represent a significant change from the current law, which, though it allows abortion in case of rape or

threat to the life of the woman, subjects women who have illegal abortions, as well as abortion providers, to prison time. Under the new law, women who seek abortions outside of the official guidelines could still be prosecuted.

A recent poll from CÍFRA found that 52 percent of Uruguayans support legalizing abortion.

Argentina's Activists, Building on Recent Legislative Successes, Hope for Legalization of Abortion

IN MARCH OF THIS YEAR, Argentina's Supreme Court unanimously decided that abortion would be allowed in any case involving rape, according to the newspaper *La Nación*. Previously, there had been a question of whether only women who had some "mental incapacity" and had been raped would qualify for a legal abortion.

Nevertheless, it is left up to each state to adopt a protocol to make the court's decision a reality, and some areas are fighting the court's finding. In the province of Córdoba, for instance, a judge has decided that the decision, as worded, "is insufficient" to establish the grounds under which a woman is allowed to access abortion in case of rape,

according to Argentina's *La Voz*. The Supreme Court held that a woman's sworn statement that she had been raped would suffice, but in Córdoba, she must appear before a panel that will decide if she meets the criteria.

El Proyecto de Ley de Interrupción Voluntaria del Embarazo, an advocacy organization, is working for legal abortion access in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, in hopes that ending the code of silence around abortion will eliminate criminal and health repercussions associated with illegal procedures.

Currently, there is a thriving clandestine abortion system in the country; according to Ministry of Health estimates from 2010, 40 percent of pregnancies in the country end in abortion. A poll sponsored by Catholics for Choice last year found that 34 percent of Argentines know someone who has had an abortion.

Pregnant Teenage Girl with Leukemia Dies after Chemotherapy Delayed

A TEENAGE GIRL WHO WAS both pregnant and suffering from acute leukemia tested the Dominican Republic's laws, among the strictest in Latin America, which favor the fetus' rights over the woman's. Doctors determined that the 16-year-old, who was known as Esperancita, was in urgent need of chemotherapy but hesitated to treat her because it might terminate the pregnancy, according to Agencia EFE news service. Lawmaker

Pelegrin Castillo, one of the drafters of Article 37 of the constitution, which prohibits abortion, told CNN that the law does not prevent doctors from administering the chemotherapy, but it does prohibit performing an abortion on the patient for any reason. According to a 2009 edition of the *Dominican Today* website, Article 37, formerly known as Article 30, was the subject of protests when it was approved because of "the Catholic Church's alleged influence on the assembly members' decision."

The patient began her therapy on approximately July 24, about 20 days after she was admitted to the hospital. She died on August 17 due to complications from leukemia.

Irish Expert Group Due to Release Abortion Report

IRELAND'S EXPERT GROUP on Abortion, which was convened in January of this year, is due to report in October about the country's response to a European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruling on abortion. The December 2010 decision on the *A, B & C vs. Ireland* case found that a woman's rights were violated when she was denied a lawful abortion although her life was at risk from her pregnancy.

RTÉ News reported that Kathleen Lynch, Minister of State at the Department of Health, "believes the government will have no choice but to recommend legislation" on abortion

based on the expert group's recommendations.

Cardinal Seán Brady, Primate of All Ireland, disputed the ECHR's authority, stating that the ruling does "not oblige the Irish Government to legislate for any form of abortion in Ireland." Brady claimed that legislation for abortion access would be "vigorously opposed by many." In turn, the cardinal's entrance into the discussion about the ECHR ruling has brought up questions about the Catholic hierarchy's place in Ireland's public square.

Fine Gael deputy John O'Mahony said that no one should be "precluded" from talking to politicians because present-day Ireland has distanced itself from "a time when the perception was the cardinal of the day would dictate policy." Nevertheless, Pat Rabbitte of the Labour Party cited church-state separation and said, "I don't welcome the cardinal promising to engage in the political campaign."

Priests for Life Future Remains Uncertain

BOTH FATHER FRANK Pavone, national director of the antichoice organization Priests for Life (PFL), and Bishop Patrick Zurek of Amarillo, Texas, claim to have prevailed in the Vatican's ruling about the priest's activities outside his diocese. In May, the Congregation for the Clergy decided that Pavone is still a priest in good standing and that he will continue in the role Zurek designated for



Senator Vicente "Tito" Sotto of the Philippines displays the certificate of his election to the senate in 2010.

him as a chaplain, but he must seek permission to participate in other activities on a case-by-case basis.

When Zurek recalled the spokesperson for Priests for Life to his home diocese in September 2011, the bishop cited concerns about PFL's finances, which, according to an outside audit posted on the organization's website, reflected a \$1.4 million revenue shortfall at the end of 2010. Pavone maintains that he has provided all documentation requested by the bishop.

In a video interview with Amarillo.com shortly after the controversy began, Pavone discussed a multi-million-dollar seminary project for which PFL had

raised funds but had never constructed. "We knew it was an experiment," Pavone said. He then explained what happened to those dedicated funds once the land was returned to the diocese, saying, "The funds were spent on the things we did." He estimated that 15 men had come to "try it out" in the community of clergy focusing on abortion. Including the number of men who attended a weekend "discernment group" he estimated the proposed \$130 million project reached 50 people. When asked for a round number for how much he raised for the construction project, Pavone said he "had other people" in charge of that and would have to

ask them.

In a letter sent to supporters in November 2011, Jerry Horn, senior vice president of PFL, acknowledged that as a result of the negative publicity, "a fairly large number of supporters have decided to hold off on sending contributions to Priests for Life." In August of this year, Horn went further, admitting to *Staten Island Advance* that PFL has "trimmed its budget as much as possible without impacting its life-saving projects." "Personally, I believe that the devil is behind it all," Horn summarized.

The Church and Contraception

Filipino Legislator Resorts to Plagiarism to Sway Opinion against RH Bill

IN AUGUST, FILIPINO Senate Majority Leader Tito Sotto broke down in tears while speaking about the death of his newborn son, which he attributed to his wife's use of birth control pills. The speech was subsequently shown to be copied from as many as five sources, including a New York University website about contraception advocate Margaret Sanger and an American writer for *Feminists for Choice*, though Sotto slanted the words for his own purposes, according to the *New York Times*.

When Internet outcry reached the senator, however, he refused to admit wrongdoing. The Philippines *Inquirer* reported that Hector Villacorta, Sotto's

© REUTERS/ROMEO RANOCO 2010

chief of staff, described copying as a “common practice” in legislative circles, with the recycling of text from old bills especially common. Earlier this year, Associate Justice Mariano del Castillo did admit to committing plagiarism in a court ruling but refused to admit that it was a crime.

Archbishop Jose Palma of Cebu praised Sotto for his speech. According to the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines website, Palma remarked, “The advocacy of leaders really depends on many things and on morality. We are grateful for those who support pro-life laws.”

The Church and Assisted Reproductive Technology

Teacher’s Case Advances in Lawsuit over Being Fired by Diocese for IVF Treatments

EMILY HERX, A FORMER teacher at the St. Vincent de Paul school in the Fort Wayne, Ind., diocese, claims she was fired in June 2011 for using in vitro fertilization (IVF). In April, Herx announced that she was suing the diocese and the school for discrimination—the IVF treatments were related to a medical condition that causes infertility. In September, the

American Society for Reproductive Medicine and the American Civil Liberties Union filed amicus briefs in support of Herx, according to CBS News.

The former teacher, who had worked at the school for eight years, says the church pastor told her she was a “grave, immoral sinner” for using IVF and could bring scandal on the school as a result. When Herx appealed to Bishop Kevin Rhoades, he stated that IVF “very frequently” involves the destruction of embryos and wouldn’t listen to Herx’ assurances that this did not happen in her case.

Ironically, she discussed a first round of IVF with the school principal in 2010,

who said that he was praying for her and gave her medical leave for the treatments.

The Church and Healthcare

Merger Plans Scuttled after Protests from Pennsylvania Community

TWO PENNSYLVANIA hospitals have called off a proposed merger between Holy Redeemer Health System and Abington Health because of community concerns that the partnership would make reproductive healthcare services such as abortion care unavailable. Rep. Allyson Y. Schwartz (D-PA) and an online campaign both collected letters of protest that were sent to hospital executives. There were also complaints from doctors at both hospitals that their employers did not consult them before beginning the merger process.

The two hospitals released a statement in which they said they were “disappointed” by the failure of the merger but believed that halting the process “is in the best interests of both organizations.”

In a departure from many other merger plans, Holy Redeemer had said that it would allow Abington to provide every other form of reproductive health services, including procedures that violated Catholic doctrine—but the hospital must not provide abortions.

Holy Redeemer spokeswoman Barbara L’Amoreaux explained the church’s flexibility in an e-mail repro-

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duced in Philly.com:

“Catholic bioethicists have been recognizing that collaborative relationships between Catholic and non-Catholic health systems are a reality.... In Catholic health care, there is a long-held principle of ‘material cooperation’ which provides that it is sometimes acceptable to cooperate with others even when you do not agree with their actions.”

The Church and State

NYC Church Admonished for Bulletin Endorsing Romney

IN EARLY SEPTEMBER, THE Church of St. Catherine of Siena in the Upper East Side of New York City published lengthy quotes from six former ambassadors to the Vatican who said they “urge[d] our fellow Catholics ... to elect Gov. Mitt Romney as the next President of the United States,” according to the *New York Times*. The remarks, published in a column under Fr. John A. Farren’s name, sparked an outcry among parishioners, who collected 20,000 signatures of protest that were sent to Cardinal Timothy Dolan.

Father Farren, who was filling in for the parish’s pastor over Labor Day weekend, later acknowledged that “no church authority may endorse candidates for political office.”

Nevertheless, a parishioner in attendance at the mass in question reported the incident to Americans



In May 2012, former Argentine dictator Jorge Videla was convicted for crimes he committed during the “Dirty War.”

© REUTERS/ENRIQUE MARCARIAN 2012

United for Separation of Church and State, which in turn filed a report with the Internal Revenue Service because the church “should play by the reasonable rules that other tax-exempt organizations follow,” and therefore avoid endorsing candidates.

DC Parishioners Warn against “Vortex of Partisanship” in Church

THE VISION OF THE Catholic church’s engagement with public life in the US has been changing rapidly, causing division between the hierarchy and the Catholic faithful. These are some of the concerns expressed by a group of 30 parishioners at Washington, DC’s Blessed Sacrament Parish, as published in the *National Catholic Reporter*.

Citing “rather alarming inserts from the Archdiocese” about alleged threats to religious freedom, the

group saw these letters as part of the mobilization effort for the Fortnight for Freedom. The parishioners stated that while they had a variety of opinions about the Obama administration’s contraception coverage policy “in no way do we feel that our religious freedom is at risk.” Further, they termed the bishops’ evocation of Catholic martyrs “grotesque” and expressed their concern that their parish would be “drawn into the vortex of partisanship,” as happened to one individual who was made to feel unwelcome due to the Obama bumper sticker on her car. Rather than identifying with the Fortnight for Freedom, the signatories feared that they were “in danger of becoming pawns and collateral damage in a standoff between our church and our government.”

Former Argentinian Dictator Reveals Hierarchy’s Role in “Dirty War”

JORGE VIDELA, ARGENTINA’S former military dictator who is currently serving a life sentence for human rights abuses, said in an interview that the country’s Catholic hierarchy “advised us about the manner in which to deal with” the thousands of left-wing activists “disappeared” by the regime. His remarks were from an interview conducted in 2010 but were only published in the Argentine newspaper *El Sur* in July of this year.

Videla singled out the late Cardinal Raúl Francisco Primatesta as someone with whom he had had “many conversations” about the country’s civil conflict, known as the “Dirty War.” Primatesta prohibited clergy from denouncing state violence and refused to meet with families risking their lives to obtain information about missing loved ones. The former ruler also recounted contact with Papal Nuncio Pio Laghi, a “regular tennis partner” with the regime’s naval representative, Admiral Emilio Eduardo Massera, according to the *Irish Times*.

Rev. Christian von Wernich is the only Catholic priest who has been sentenced for his role as a police chaplain during Argentina’s civil conflict, but many other Catholic priests served in similar capacities in secret detention centers where civilians were tortured and murdered.

Holy See Opposes Reproductive Rights at UN Conference

AT THE UNITED NATIONS Rio+20 conference on Sustainable Development, held in June in Rio de Janeiro, attendees stopped short of affirming reproductive rights as essential to sustainable development in a contentious atmosphere created in part by the Holy See.

Along with the G77, a group of developing nations, the Holy See pushed for the phrasing, “the sexual and reproductive health of women,” though the Earth Summit 20 years prior did feature the phrase “reproductive rights.” Cardinal Odilo Pedro Scherer, the Holy See’s representative in Rio, justified the suppression of the word “rights,” because it could imply abortion, which “cannot conceivably be brought under the nomenclature of health care or simply health.” The final document did affirm “working towards universal access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable modern methods of family planning.”

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was one of the policymakers in attendance at Rio who spoke out against the step back from “rights” to “health” language. According to the *Christian Science Monitor*, “Clinton received enthusiastic applause when she said, ‘Women must be empowered to make decisions about whether and when to have children,’ and then added that the US ‘will continue to work to ensure that those rights are respected in international agreements.’”



At Rio+20, Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, Holy See Permanent Observer to the United Nations in New York (left), consults with the representative from Nicaragua on Section V, which included language on reproductive health.

Resigning over Loyalty Oaths

THE DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON, Virginia, is engaging in a relatively new trend in the US Catholic church—Bishop Paul Loverde now requires that religious education teachers take a loyalty oath in front of a priest. Rev. Paul de Ladurantaye, the head of education and liturgy for the diocese, claimed that the oath is not meant to “coerce or oppress,” but rather to declare that “there’s something more transcendent than just [one’s] own judgment.”

Kathleen Riley, who resigned her teaching position at St. Ann’s parish, thinks this is precisely the problem with requiring an oath because “the Holy Spirit gives us the responsibility to look into our own consciences.” Teacher Rose-

marie Zagarrri also resigned, calling the oath “a slap in the face.” She agreed that only someone “willing to go against the dictates of her own conscience can agree to sign such a document.”

Nuns Meet in St. Louis to Discuss “Dialogue” with Vatican Officials

THE NUNS REPRESENTED by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), have been engaged in dialogue with the representatives appointed by the Vatican to address “serious doctrinal problems” within the organization that comprises 80 percent of Catholic women’s religious orders in the US.

More than 900 LCWR members met in St. Louis in mid-August to discuss a response to the scathing Vatican report the nuns’ group said was based on

“unsubstantiated accusations” and a “flawed process.” The sisters’ decision at the conference was to engage in dialogue with Archbishop Peter Sartain of Seattle, the Vatican-appointed delegate supervising the reform of the LCWR, but they “will reconsider if LCWR is forced to compromise the integrity of its mission,” according to Reuters.

Previously, Cardinal William Levada, Prefect Emeritus of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, had warned of a “dialogue of the deaf” because of a lack of openness on the part of the LCWR. But the sisters’ reaction to Sartain’s presence at the St. Louis meeting was that “Archbishop Sartain listened carefully.”

Despite the avowed openness to dialogue on both sides, some voices from the Vatican are offering a much

more pessimistic view of the conversation with the nuns. Cardinal Raymond Burke, Prefect of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura, the Vatican's highest court, warned EWTN that "the rogue organization" could be shut down if it fails to implement the reforms demanded by the Vatican. "If it can't be reformed, then it doesn't have a right to continue," Burke said.

Although the Vatican's criticism focused on doctrinal elements such as "radical feminism," abortion and same-sex marriage, Sr. Pat Farrell, former LCWR president, said "dialogue on doctrine is not going to be our starting point," but that instead, the sisters would focus on aspects of religious life they feel were misrepresented by the Vatican's report on the group.

Austria's Dissenting Priests Call for Accountability in Church Leadership

MSGR. HELMUT SCHÜLLER, leader of the Austrian Priests' Initiative, called for a "new model of leadership" within the church that would allow laypeople greater involvement with church decision making, according to the Catholic News Service.

Representing over 500 priests, the initiative has taken on other areas where it sees the need for reform, including mandatory celibacy, allowing divorced and remarried Catholics to receive communion and the role of women in the church.

The movement wants to revive the "Lex Ecclesiae Fundamentalis" project, similar to a Bill of Rights for church members, that was begun after Vatican II but lapsed under Pope John Paul II.

"At the moment there is a very strong dependency on the bishops and their decisions," Schüller said. "But there is no decision making happening in the center of the church" and he takes this to mean that reform-minded Catholics can "move forward without such discussions." (For more on this subject, see p. 22.)

German Bishops Shut Out Non-Paying Church Members

THE GERMAN BISHOPS' Conference has announced that Catholics who opt out of a church tax may no longer qualify for a religious burial; take part in confession or communion; act as a godparent or confirmation sponsor; or work for a church or Catholic-run school or hospital according to a report in the *International Herald Tribune*. The tax, which equals eight or nine percent of the annual tax bill of registered Protestants and Catholics alike, brings in approximately €5 billion (about \$6.5 billion) to the German Catholic church every year, but Catholics have been steadily leaving the official register at a rate even higher than that of Protestants (in 2010, more than 181,000 German Catholics left the church compared to 150,000 Protestants). According to Reuters, the number of Catholics who

left the church increased two years ago as a result of reports of clergy sexual abuse cases spanning decades.

According to AFP, the bishops' decree was upheld two days later by a Federal Administrative Court ruling that Catholics' participation in the rites of the church is indeed contingent upon the payment of the church tax. The case had been brought by a retired canon law professor, Hartmut Zapp, who filed a lawsuit in 2007 protesting that the church could not excommunicate him for avoiding paying the tax. The German bishops' conference had threatened that Catholics who officially left the church would be excommunicated, but this stance was overturned by a 2006 Vatican ruling that

communicating a desire to leave the church to a tax official did not warrant excommunication—only a declaration to a priest would do so.

The bishops' recent statement making church participation contingent upon taxation, described as "excommunication lite," has prompted protests from church reform advocates. "This decree at this moment of time is really the wrong signal by the German bishops who know that the Catholic church is in a deep crisis," Christian Weisner from the We Are Church reform movement told the BBC. The new policy does allow for Catholics who have left the church possibly being able to return, however.

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Irish Priests' Association Contests Validity, Tone of Cardinal Dolan's Seminary Report

A REPORT THAT POPE Benedict XVI asked Cardinal Timothy Dolan to prepare on an Irish seminary in Rome has been rejected by some Irish clergy as reflecting "a deep prejudice" expressed in a "hostile tone and content." Commissioned in 2010 but released this June, the report contained "significant errors of fact" according to the *Irish Times*.

Some of Dolan's criticisms were leveled at the staff, whom he characterized as insufficiently orthodox, and at the trustees, Irish archbishops he called "disengaged" and wanting to "keep doing what [they] have been for the last 35 years." The archbishops contested the report as "unsupported by evidence."

Dolan acknowledged that he did not find proof to support an alleged "reputation for being 'gay friendly'" and that the seminarians seemed committed to living chastely. Ireland's Association of Catholic Priests suggested, however, that the finding did "not justify the detailed, even prurient reporting and naming of individuals and accusations.... Is this just incompetence or perhaps homophobia?"

Subsequently, it was announced that the priests who staff the seminary are being replaced, as recommended by Dolan's report.

The association claimed that the report "effectively destroyed the reputations of [the] priests" and expressed

concerns that the rights of the clergy who staff the college may have been violated under canon law, which protects against libel.

The Sexual Abuse Scandal

Kansas City Bishop Convicted for Failing to Report Abuser Priest

BISHOP ROBERT W. FINN of Kansas City-St. Joseph, Missouri, became the first US bishop to be convicted of shielding a priest accused of producing child pornography. In early September, Finn was found guilty of not reporting suspected child abuse. The bishop had seen child pornography on Father Shawn Ratigan's computer in December 2010, but ordered the priest to stay confined to a convent rather than sharing the information with authorities, as required by state law.

Prosecutors came to an agreement with the defense so that the trial was conducted before a judge rather than by jury. Tom White, a former priest from the Archdiocese of Kansas City, told the *Kansas City Star*, "We have a lot of questions that haven't been answered. I had hoped that the trial would have allowed some of that to come out."

A related suit against the diocese was dismissed, but both Bishop Finn and the diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph still face 27 civil suits, four of them involving Ratigan.

"I think that this is an amazing outcome, getting a



Bishop Robert Finn of the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph during the trial in which he was convicted of failing to report suspicions of child abuse.

bishop convicted of anything," Kansas City attorney Rebecca Randles said of Finn's conviction.

Msgr. Lynn Sentenced for Child Endangerment by Philadelphia Jury

MONSIGNOR WILLIAM J. Lynn, former Secretary for the Clergy in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, received a sentence of three to six years in prison for child endangerment charges, according to the Associated Press. Lynn is the first member of the Catholic hierarchy to be convicted of covering up for the sexual abuse committed by priests under his supervision, in this

case by transferring known abusers to other parishes.

Judge M. Teresa Sarmina told Msgr. Lynn, "You know full well what was right," but defense witnesses claimed that priests could only be transferred by the late Cardinal Bevilacqua, whose authority was absolute, according to the *New York Times*. Rev. Michael Orsi, an acquaintance of Lynn's, wrote an essay for *America* magazine in which he agreed that "few priests are willing to oppose the bishop's wisdom for fear of falling out of favor." Orsi called for better diocesan accountability mechanisms that included priests and layper-

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sons advising the bishop, creating a culture in which priests “will no longer be able to use the excuse ‘I was only a functionary.’”

Irish Children’s Safety Board Reproves Cardinal Seán Brady for Mishandling of Abuse Case

IAN ELLIOTT, HEAD OF THE Irish Church’s National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church, said Cardinal Seán Brady’s actions did not “effectively protect children” in an abuse case that the cardinal was aware of 30 years ago. Brady heard allegations that children were being abused by Father Brendan Smyth and passed on the information to his superiors without informing the authorities or the children’s parents. “Definitely the parents should have been informed. That’s quite clear,” Cardinal Brady told RTÉ television.

Brady apologized to one victim and, during a St. Patrick’s Day Mass in 2010, also issued an apology for his handling of the case. According to the BBC, Brady does not plan on seeking early retirement, nor has the 72-year-old received a push in this direction from the Vatican. Archbishop Dáire MacCarthy of Dublin has only stated, “Cardinal Brady has said that he is staying.”

Nevertheless, calls are coming from all corners of Irish society for the cardinal to resign. Father Vincent Twomey, a prominent theologian, said on RTÉ that he thought the cardinal had lost

his moral authority and it would be best for him to step down. Education Minister Ruairi Quinn pointed out the message sent by having someone with Brady’s record in a leadership role in the Catholic church, which runs 92 percent of Ireland’s primary schools.

Lawsuit Alleging Sexual Assault During Exorcism Names HLI, Arlington Diocese

A woman who claims to have been sexually assaulted by former Human Life International (HLI) president Father Paul Euteneuer beginning in 2008 has lodged a suit against HLI, the Diocese of Arlington, where its headquarters are located, and the diocesan bishop, Paul S. Loverde. Euteneuer, who left his leadership post at HLI for unspecified reasons in 2010 and has since had his “priestly faculties” suspended, is not named in the case because he has already settled with the woman out of court.

Legionaries Allowed Prominent Priest with Double Life to Continue Ministry

THE ORDER OF THE Legionaries of Christ, already tainted by founder Marcial Maciel’s two secret families and sex abuse of seminarians, has been turning a blind eye to the double life of one of its most prominent members, according to Reuters. Italian Cardinal Velasio De Paolis, appointed by the pope in 2010 to oversee the

rehabilitation of the order, revealed in May that he knew for months that Father Thomas Williams has fathered a child.

A popular television personality and author known for his teachings on Catholic ethics, Williams was allowed to continue his public appearances for months after the Vatican official learned of his family. “There is a need to be careful in cases like this. It concerns a private life,” De Paolis explained.

End Notes

Catholic University Course Likens Homosexuality to Rape, Murder

The Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio has drawn criticism for a sociology course description that equates homosexuality with crimes such as robbery, rape and murder. The course, SWK 314 Deviant Behavior, promises to teach students about “murder, rape, robbery, prostitution, homosexuality, mental illness and drug use.”

After it received complaints about the course description, the school released a written statement to NPR in which it said that “the term “deviant,” school officials say, is meant to signify “different than the norm.”

Franciscan University acknowledged that “some ... might take offense at the description,” but then told alumni that they believe “all men and women, regardless of their sexual orientation, are deserving of respect.” The reference to alumni was

in relation to a protest raised by several gay and lesbian alumni who asked the school to change the course description. In response, according to NPR, an attorney for the Franciscan University of Steubenville directed the graduates to not use the university’s name or logo in their activities.

Saudi Arabia Challenges Vatican’s Claim to .catholic Domain

THE VATICAN’S BID TO obtain a new .catholic domain has met with opposition from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which objects that the Roman Catholic church “cannot demonstrate that it possesses a monopoly over the term ‘Catholic,’” reports Singapore’s *Today*. The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, commonly known as ICANN, is planning to open up the new suffix as part of hundreds of new top-level domains to be added to the existing options such as .com and .org.

The Saudi government disagrees with the decision, pointing to the fact that “other Christian communions lay claim to the term ‘Catholic’ such as the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Church,” according to the Saudi Communication and Information Technology Commission, which lodged the complaint.

The Vatican already owns the .va domain but paid \$185,000 for the new address as “a recognition of how important the digital space is for the church.” ■

US Bishops' Roman Connection

POLITICS WITH A RIGHTWARD SLANT

By Jodi Enda



THREE AMERICAN CARDINALS AT THE VATICAN: CARDINAL ROGER MAHONY (LEFT), CARDINAL EDWIN FREDERICK O'BRIEN (CENTER) AND CARDINAL TIMOTHY M. DOLAN, AT THE FEBRUARY CEREMONY WHERE O'BRIEN AND DOLAN WERE AMONG THOSE ELEVATED. © AP 2012

OSTENSIBLY NEUTRAL WHEN IT COMES TO PARTISAN POLITICS, THE UNITED STATES Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has made a stronger-than-usual case this election year for conservative cultural issues favored by Republicans while downplaying more progressive social justice issues supported by Democrats. The palpable shift comes with a



nod from the Vatican, as Pope Benedict XVI continues to appoint conservative bishops and to move some of the most outspoken conservative American church leaders to Rome.

Although the Vatican remains faithful to its longstanding positions on poverty, immigration and capital punishment, its messages on those issues have been diminished in the US by the bishops' intense focus on abortion, contraception and same-sex marriage. Combined with investigations of nuns and even the Girl Scouts, the bishops' emphasis on sexual behavior and reproductive rights has accentuated the notion that the church—along with the Republican Party—is engaged in a war on women.

“I think there’s been a gradual, but constant, shift to the right, and the bishops have taken every opportunity to use the political process to shore up some influence in the culture, having lost so much of it in the ecclesiastical realm,” said Mary E. Hunt, a feminist theologian and co-director of the Women’s Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual, or WATER. This year, she noted, bishops have spoken out against same-sex marriage in states facing referendums, in addition to opposing the implementation of President Obama’s signature healthcare overhaul, which requires employee insurance plans to cover preventive medications, including birth control.

“They’ve staked their claims on those two issues in this cycle,” she said. “I think it’s both because of ideology and because of this effort to make up for the lost terrain they have squandered over the sexual abuse stuff.”

The result, Hunt said, is that “they are running roughshod over women’s agency.”

While bishops are not supposed to endorse specific candidates, a number of them have made it clear that Catholics have a moral choice to make at the polls. And the issues they choose to highlight—again, abortion, contraception and same-sex marriage—leave Catholic voters with just one choice: Republicans.

In late September, for instance, Bishop Thomas Paprocki of Springfield, Illinois, used his column in the *Catholic Times* to point out that planks in the Democratic Party platform backing abortion rights and same-sex marriage “explicitly endorse intrinsic evils.”

JODI ENDA, an award-winning journalist based in Washington, DC, specializes in coverage of politics, policy and the media. As a reporter for the Philadelphia Inquirer and Knight Ridder Newspapers, she covered the White House, Congress, presidential campaigns and national news.

“My job is not to tell you for whom you should vote,” Bishop Paprocki wrote. “But I do have a duty to speak out on moral issues. I would be abdicating this duty if I remained silent out of fear of sounding ‘political’ and didn’t say anything about the morality of these issues. People of faith object to these platform positions that promote serious sins. I know that the Democratic Party’s official ‘unequivocal’ support for abortion is deeply troubling to prolife Democrats.”

be identified with one party or another. As an individual and voter I have deep personal concerns about any party that supports changing the definition of marriage, supports abortion in all circumstances, wants to restrict the traditional understanding of religious freedom. Those kinds of issues cause me a great deal of uneasiness.”

Archbishop Chaput also applauded Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI)—the Republican vice presidential nominee who has been sharply chastised by American nuns for a

from conservative appointments made first by Pope John Paul II, particularly late in his papacy, and then by Pope Benedict XVI. Some also point out that Pope Benedict has put more conservative bishops—including several Americans—into powerful positions in the Vatican, giving them outsized sway back home.

Sara Morello, executive vice president of Catholics for Choice, traces the shift to the 1990s, when several young, socially conservative American bishops developed close ties to Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, then the powerful head of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. In February 1999, Cardinal Ratzinger traveled to Menlo Park, California, for a four-day meeting with church leaders from the United States and other countries. On the agenda: homosexuality and feminism.

After Cardinal Ratzinger became Pope Benedict XVI in 2005, he—like many popes before him—appointed his allies to positions in the Vatican, influential perches that give the pope’s preferred issues greater resonance.

“I don’t think it’s a stretch to see that there is a strong American contingent of very conservative, not-that-old bishops. Whether it’s a coincidence or not, they are in Rome,” Morello said. “What they are pushing is on the front burner.”

“How far did these issues get when they were at the bishops’ conference? Not that far,” said Morello, who was a canonical adviser to the conference in the 1990s. “How far are they getting now that they are in Rome? Pretty far.”

Topping the list of Americans with a commanding presence in Rome is Cardinal Raymond A. Burke. As the archbishop of St. Louis in 2004, he advocated denying communion to then-Democratic presidential nominee Sen. John Kerry and other prochoice politicians, a pronouncement that was largely disregarded by his colleagues. In 2010, a month before he became a cardinal, Burke told American Catholics that they should never vote for candidates who supported abortion rights or same-sex marriage.



© REUTERS / KEVIN LAMARQUE

Bishops at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops meeting in November 2011.

As for the Republican Party platform, the bishop wrote that “there is nothing in it that supports or promotes an intrinsic evil or a serious sin.”

When the *National Catholic Reporter* asked Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia whether a Catholic “in good faith” could vote for President Obama, he responded: “I can only speak in terms of my own personal views. I certainly can’t vote for somebody who’s either prochoice or proabortion.

“I’m not a Republican and I’m not a Democrat,” the archbishop continued. “I’m registered as an independent, because I don’t think the church should

budget proposal that would reduce aid to the poor—for confronting the “immoral” system of deficit spending. “Jesus tells us very clearly that if we don’t help the poor, we’re going to go to hell. Period. There’s just no doubt about it,” Chaput said. “But Jesus didn’t say the government has to take care of them, or that we have to pay taxes to take care of them.”

Cardinal Edwin F. O’Brien, as archbishop of Baltimore early this year, entered the political fray when he lobbied Maryland lawmakers to oppose a bill legalizing same-sex marriage.

Experts on Vatican politics say the rightward tilt among the bishops stems

Cardinal Burke now heads the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura, the Vatican's highest court, and sits on the body that evaluates candidates for bishop.

"From his place in the Vatican, not only can he be more influential in the United States, but in other countries," Morello said. "It's dangerous."

David Gibson of the Religion News Service recently wrote that Burke was "believed to be one of the instigators of the controversial Vatican crackdown on a major group of American nuns, the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, who Rome viewed as straying too far from orthodoxy and spending too much time on social justice issues." Burke told Gibson in an interview that his opinion "is certainly heard," if not always heeded, at the highest levels of the Vatican. He further asserted that many American bishops look to him for advice.

Other Americans who were involved in the Vatican's decision to investigate the nuns include former Boston Cardinal Bernard Law—who resigned in disgrace over the church's sex abuse scandal only to be appointed archpriest of a key basilica in Rome, a post he quit last year—and Cardinal James Stafford, a former Denver archbishop who in 2008 criticized then President-elect Obama as "aggressive, disruptive and apocalyptic."

The investigation was overseen by Cardinal William Levada, the former archbishop of San Francisco who succeeded the current pope as head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Levada, long the highest-ranking American in the Vatican, retired from the doctrinal office in July.

The Vatican reprimanded the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, which represents 80 percent of American nuns, for promoting "radical feminist themes incompatible with the Catholic faith" and for failing to support church teachings that ban same-sex relationships, contraceptives and the ordination of women. It appointed three American bishops to overhaul the conference.

Rome's offensive against women did not end there.

In June, the doctrinal office censured Sister Margaret A. Farley of the Yale Divinity School for writing a book that, according to the *New York Times*, "attempted to present a theological rationale for same-sex relationships, masturbation and remarriage after divorce."

At the beginning of this year, pressure from the bishops helped persuade the nation's largest breast cancer foundation, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, to stop

birth control or abortion rights.

Daniel Maguire, professor of moral theology at Marquette University, characterizes the bishops' politics as "the pelvic orthodoxy syndrome: same-sex marriage, contraception, abortion."

Maguire, author of *Sacred Rights: The Case for Contraception and Abortion in World Religions*, said the Vatican is split between social conservatives concerned about issues relating to sex and reproductive rights and economic liberals focused on workers, the poor and the abuse of



US Cardinal Raymond Burke at the Vatican following his elevation to cardinal in 2010.

giving money to Planned Parenthood, according to Reuters. (In the face of public outcry, the foundation quickly reversed itself.) Last year, the 11 bishops in Ohio banned Catholic churches and schools there from donating to the nonprofit.

The bishops' conference also launched an inquiry into the Girl Scouts of the USA, reportedly in response to conservatives' claims that the organization had links to Planned Parenthood and other groups that support family planning, such as the Sierra Club, Oxfam and Doctors Without Borders. Girl Scout leaders have stated they have no partnership with Planned Parenthood and do not take positions on

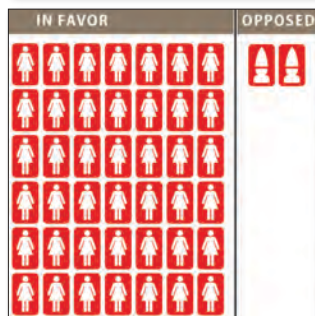
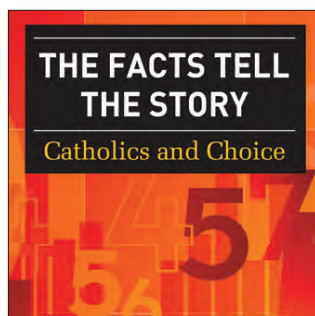
power in the marketplace. The appointment of conservative bishops, however, has swung the pendulum in favor of the former, he said.

According to Maureen Fiedler, host of "Interfaith Voices" on public and community radio, it's a question of emphasis. "The issues on which they speak out, the bishops here, are almost exclusively the culture war issues," she said. "They do press releases on things like Paul Ryan's budget, but they don't get in front of microphones."

It hasn't always been this way.


Anthony Padovano, a Catholic theologian and professor of literature and philosophy at Ramapo College of New

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Jersey, laments the loss of the “independent-thinking bishops” that were common in the years following Vatican II, half a century ago. In those days, he wrote pastoral letters for the bishops—including one on human life—and recalled: “I found them, at that time, surprisingly open.”

Under the last two popes, Padovano said, “I think the American hierarchy lost a sense of what it was to really be American because there were no efforts made to allow freedom of speech and other kinds of freedoms that Americans were used to. They were taking their marching orders from Rome and, more and more, the pope was appointing bishops that would do exactly that.”

Historically, there was disagreement and healthy debate among the American bishops, he related. Now, “they’re being driven,” Padovano said. “The Vatican is expecting them to go in these directions. They’re being obedient.” As a result of their obsession with sexual issues and their opposition to the ordination of women, Padovano asserted, the bishops “have lost an incredible amount of credibility.”

In a summer campaign known as “Fortnight for Freedom,” the bishops turned their opposition to President Obama’s requirement that no-cost contraception be covered under most employee health plans into a question of religious liberty. The effort, Padovano concluded, was a flop: “I don’t think it changed anything.”

Furthermore, he said, the bishops have downplayed issues on which the church traditionally has sided with Democrats, such as aiding the poor, standing by workers, opposing war and distributing wealth more fairly.

To be sure, said Bill D’Antonio, a fellow at Catholic University of America’s Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies, there remain a small number of “fairly progressive” bishops. But, he said, their voices have flagged.

The dwindling number of progressive bishops differ from their more conservative counterparts in another significant way, D’Antonio pointed out. “They don’t become cardinals.” ■

Beyond Principled Duplicity

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, CONDOMS AND HIV & AIDS IN AFRICA

By Kathryn Joyce

IN 2010, WHEN POPE BENEDICT XVI opened the door to approve condom use to prevent the transmission of HIV, he opened it just a crack, in a statement so laden with conditions and insult that it was hard to tell whether this was the groundbreaking news many took it to be. Was it an historic change to the church's longstanding ban on contraceptive use, or waffling rhetoric that altered little more than a headline?

At first, it seemed like big news when Benedict told German journalist Peter Seewald, in his book *Light of the World: The Pope, the Church, and the Signs of the Times*, that condoms might be permissible in limited situations. But the situations he had in mind were limited indeed: use by male sex workers, for whom trying to prevent HIV transmission could be “a first step in the direction of moralization, a first assumption of responsibility, on the way toward recovering an awareness that not everything is allowed and that one cannot do whatever one wants.” If the condemnation implicit in this statement wasn't apparent enough, Benedict went further to suggest that illicit sexual relations weren't quite human, and that condom use was only an option for those

so debased that protected sex could constitute “a first step in a movement toward a different way, a more human way, of living sexuality.”

Benedict clarified further that condoms weren't “really the way to deal with the evil of HIV infection. That can really lie only in a humanization of sexuality,” he said.

Even the further clarification to the news media by the Vatican's spokesperson, Rev. Federico Lombardi, that the provision was not solely for male prostitutes, was less than fulsome. He said that condom use is “the first step of taking responsibility, of taking into consideration the risk of the life of another with whom you have a relationship. This is if you're a woman, a man, or a transsexual. We're at the same point.”

Conservative Catholics rushed to emphasize that Benedict had made no statement addressing condom use within marriage, and thus his statements had no bearing on most Catholics' sexual lives—that the status quo still reigned. Nonetheless, headlines trumpeted the news as a revolution for the church. Two years later, what it has meant on the ground in countries dealing with epidemic levels of HIV & AIDS is far from clear.

HIV & AIDS advocates have long maintained that the Catholic ban on condom use, though largely ignored in the West, has led to devastating results in developing countries dependent on humanitarian aid, which is often filtered through

Catholic or other religious groups. Because Catholic leadership discourages the use of condoms, or religious relief organizations block their distribution, hundreds of millions are left more exposed to disease. Just the year before Seewald's book was published, in 2009, the pope himself asserted that condoms don't solve the AIDS crisis, but make it worse by encouraging promiscuity. It's an attitude shared by many other faith-based NGOs working on the ground in HIV & AIDS hotspots.

One development worker who has tracked the distribution of condoms in African countries, and who requested to speak off the record, illustrated what the ban can mean in countries like Zambia. There, a generalized AIDS crisis has left approximately 13.5 percent of the adult population HIV-positive according to 2009 estimates. In 2003, AIDS reduced the life expectancy of Zambians to the lowest in the world, at just 33 years old. While the recent availability of anti-retroviral (ARV) medical treatment has been transformative, Zambia is still a country where public awareness campaigns note the obvious: every family is either “infected or affected” by the crisis.

But despite the scale of the epidemic, Catholic teachings hampered the availability of condoms in sometimes mysterious ways, said the development worker, whose job before 2010 was to track the supply chain of condoms donated by international aid agencies. If 50 million

Kathryn Joyce is a journalist and author of Quiverfull: Inside the Christian Patriarchy Movement and The Child Catchers: Rescue, Trafficking and the New Gospel of Adoption, forthcoming in 2013. Her work has appeared in the Nation, the Atlantic, Mother Jones, Slate and many other publications.

condoms were delivered to Lusaka, he found, too often they had disappeared by the time medical aid bundles, or “kits,” reached peripheral areas where people needed them—removed, many aid workers believed, by Catholics with a moral objection to their use. Other times, nuns or other religious NGO staffers working in local clinics simply refused to order condoms from the central authorities.

“There was a big mismatch between what was being sent to the country by donors and what was actually being distributed at the peripheral levels,” the source recalled.

It wasn’t only Catholic groups, either. This individual from the development sphere spoke to a Salvation Army employee in Zimbabwe who declared that they didn’t distribute condoms because their availability would encourage pro-

NGO to relocate. But even when there is support, too often it is tepid.

“Since the time the pope made a declaration supporting condom use, there is still fear and embarrassment on the issue, especially among Catholics,” says Teti. While the pope’s statements have made it somewhat easier to discuss condoms with Catholics, Teti says few Catholic leaders fully embrace their promotion, offering information alone. “This is not followed through to ensuring the commodity is available,” she asserts. “I have yet to see a condom promotion event by a Catholic or faith-based organization”—something she sees as a particular loss considering Catholics’ substantial health infrastructure.

It’s a lukewarm sort of change that hasn’t had enough impact on the ground, agrees Tyler Crone, coordinating director of the Athena Network, which addresses

ventional wisdom other development workers repeat: that “men don’t use condoms in Zambia”—as in many other African countries—for a variety of cultural factors, including personal preference, gender inequalities that prevent women from demanding condom use, and widespread homophobia that suppresses open discussion of gay health issues.

In the face of this ingrained opposition to condoms, the pope’s statement not only wasn’t revolutionary, it was all but ignored. “He opened the door so slightly,” says Simpson, “that I think it was hardly noticed in southern Africa.”

In the complex reality Simpson describes, Zambian men aren’t usually eager to use condoms, and Catholic leaders aren’t the only the force stopping them. Rather, in Simpson’s long work in the country, including 20 years teaching English at a Catholic boarding school,

The bishops might still be saying the same things about condom use, but the people, including many priests, aren’t listening.

miscuity and undercut efforts to promote abstinence. Zimbabwean sex workers reported to our source that, despite the government’s claim that there was universal access to condoms, they couldn’t find them at local clinics.

While this development worker’s experiences are several years old, Caroline Teti, a sexual and reproductive health advocate working with civil society initiatives in Kenya, says that not enough has changed. Despite the pope’s statement and the growing popularity of condom use in Kenya, says Teti, “challenges related to the supply chain abound.” Local Catholic officials still fail to consistently support condom use as a means to protect against HIV transmission.

In one case, a local diocese refused to receive rent from a prominent NGO working on HIV & AIDS—apparently because they were distributing condoms on Catholic-owned land—forcing the

gender inequality and HIV & AIDS. Crone sees basic availability of condoms as a persistent problem around the globe: “While condoms are now a lot less contentious than they once were, there are still not enough of them out in the world.”

Indeed, Tony Simpson, an anthropologist at the University of Manchester who has worked on and off in Zambia for nearly 30 years, says that while the pope’s statement may have made headlines in Europe, in Zambia, they barely made any waves at all.

Part of the reason is that the church’s position on condoms isn’t the only factor in whether or not they are used. “Nobody ever told me that I don’t use a condom because of the pope, or because the church said I shouldn’t,” says Simpson, author of *Boys to Men in the Shadow of AIDS: Masculinities and HIV Risk in Zambia*. “They don’t use condoms because they don’t like condoms.” That echoes the con-

he has met Catholic priests who compare condom use to commonsense safeguards like wearing a seatbelt in a car. The bishops might still be saying the same things about condom use, but the people, including many priests, aren’t listening.

“I think that’s very much the case of people who are not sitting in Rome somewhere, but are seeing the consequences of AIDS firsthand,” Simpson says. It’s a reflection of the longstanding duality between Catholic teaching and Catholic practice when it comes to HIV & AIDS prevention: a lesser-of-two-evils contradiction that many Catholic aid workers have weighed for themselves, publicly adhering to doctrine while counseling life-saving condom use to those who need to hear it.

As HIV & AIDS advocate Calle Almedal told *Conscience* in 2010, “The doctrine is there, but then you have the pastoral care, which is about the reality that

people live in. And that's where those nuns were—out there in reality, and they gave realistic advice to people.”

Yet that realism has not translated to public advocacy among Zambia's Catholic leaders, who Simpson says “don't see any point in raising their heads above the parapet, because they know what the conventional teaching of the church is.”

In Zambia, however, the very human realities of complex sexual lives—including those of the clergy themselves—may have pushed that disconnect between doctrinal rhetoric and practice to its end point. In Zambia, the cultural imperative of childbearing is so important that it often outweighs church teachings on celibacy. Many priests and other Catholic religious leaders have sexual lives and families; sometimes they have HIV too. But the priests' experience of living with HIV & AIDS, and accessing life-saving medicine, has been as veiled as their colleagues' quiet support for condom use.

The result has been a church-wide open secret, as the church's silence on HIV & AIDS, and the diverse realities of people's sexual lives, combines with Zambia's cultural emphasis on discretion—something Simpson's students called “the African gift of silence”—particularly discretion around the affairs of high-status individuals like priests.

“A lot of parishioners see their priests suffering from HIV, or see that they have developed AIDS. They see the priest losing weight and going down, then suddenly gaining weight and getting strong again,” says Simpson. “We've all become AIDS experts—we look at people and we know.” But nothing is ever acknowledged, he continues. Priests are never seen lining up in hospitals for the ARV medication like other Zambians, so lay Catholics in the country assume that priests have their medications brought to them under cover of night, secretly. If disease prevails, the parishioners bury their priests without admitting what killed them, nor the widow and children he may have left behind.

That continued secrecy underscores the strong stigma and shame that still

surrounds HIV & AIDS in Zambia, where the disease is still referred to euphemistically as “the disease of these days,” and some parents do not even reveal their HIV status to their children.

For Zambians who are trying to address the epidemic openly, there is a sense that they must adopt “European ideas” about disclosure and a nontraditional openness about sexuality. A principal at Simpson's school suggested it would be powerful for teachers and other leaders to lead the way against stigma by self-disclosing their own use of ARV therapy.

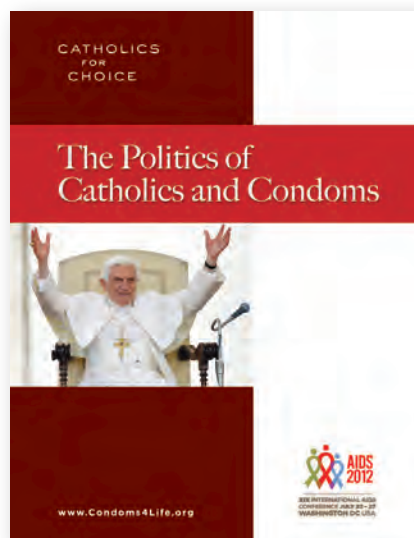
In an environment like this, Simpson argues, a truly transformative step the church could take would be to admit the number of priests, nuns and bishops who are living because of ARV therapy—an option condemned in the past with the same language used to discourage

condom use, when it was suggested that treatment, like contraceptives, could encourage careless promiscuity.

“The church could take the lead and say this is a thing that could happen to anybody,” says Simpson. “If it could happen to a priest, it could happen to anybody else.”

To do so would be an opportunity for the church to move beyond the obstructionism it has engaged in with regards to condom distribution to an actual position of advocacy, challenging stigma by refusing secrecy and even the tradition of principled duplicity within their own house. Acknowledging the truth about people's lived sexuality—from the fact that people have sex outside marriage to the reality that clergy have sexual lives—could amount to a much more human understanding of sex than the pope has envisioned so far. ■

Get more background on condoms, the Catholic hierarchy and faith-based AIDS care.



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Troublesome Priests?

AWAKENING CHANGE IN THE CHURCH

By Martin Pendergast

THOUGH SOME WOULD DENY it, the Catholic church does change, and so do priests. In recent decades, the winds have changed from a more progressive Catholicism to today's conservatism, and many priests seem to have reoriented themselves accordingly. Do those who were immersed in the Second Vatican Council's teachings during seminary years so easily forget everything they once embraced? In the interests of ecclesiastical careerism, do they become sudden enthusiasts for the "hermeneutic of continuity," Pope Benedict XVI's call to reclaim the past, thereby turning their backs on the Council's impetus for reform? Do these clerics transfer previous enthusiasms to uncritical promotion of the best (and the worst) of the conservative-leaning "new movements," such as *Comunione e Liberazione*? Or does a strain of the catholic remain within Catholic priests, uncultivated because the times lead them to believe they are alone in wanting the church to grow in new directions?

At the same time, winds of change have sprung up, with priests across all continents initiating projects of reform

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Msgr. Helmut Schüller of the Austrian Pfarrar Initiative at the 98th German Catholic conference held in Mannheim, Germany, in May 2012.

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and renewal within the Catholic church. The media has often reported these initiatives either as strident rebellion or groans of the depressed, doomed to lead nowhere. Where this urge for transformation might lead is still unclear. Is it a global fight between those who would preserve and those who would overwrite Vatican II? Many of these priests' initiatives are in early stages of development, so what follows can only be a snapshot of what many clergy see as a longer-term project.

In Austria, Ireland, England and Wales, and the United States, common themes emerge in the various clergy associations, even if the starting points

vary according to local contexts. The Austrian Pfarrar Initiative was one of the first to challenge current Catholic conservatism. Representing more than 500 clergy, it is fronted by the former Vicar-General of the Vienna archdiocese, Helmut Schüller. Previously president of Caritas Austria and very much an "institution man," the emergence of Schüller as a reformist surprised many. He has stood firm on the Austrian priests' 2011 Appeal to Disobedience, which notes that "the Roman refusal to take up long-needed reforms and the inaction of the bishops not only permits but demands that we follow our conscience and act independently."

The Austrian appeal contains themes that are prevalent in other Catholic agendas for change: new models of church leadership in the face of decreasing and aging clergy numbers; optional celibacy; admitting divorced and remarried Catholics to receive Communion; advocating reappraisals of the church's gender discrimination and sexual theologies, including admittance of women to ordained ministries; and honoring same-sex relationships.

These are some of the areas in which clergy are frustrated with what they see

Austrian initiative kept tightly to its clerical identity, without much collaboration with We Are Church, the well-established grassroots lay movement founded in Austria in 1995. Even so, when We Are Church called for the 2012-2013 Year of Faith to be also a Year of Dialogue for the Church, the group expressed solidarity with the Pfarrer Initiative following Benedict XVI's criticism of the Austrian priests' movement on Holy Thursday of this year.

Still, some radical Catholics could criticize these various initiatives as being

eventually expose the actions of many bishops. They were also faced with an increasingly vocal and theologically educated laity expressing disgust and, at times, contempt for the clergy.

More recently, the ACP has broadened its vision, recognizing that root-and-branch reform must involve the whole church. In May of this year, more than 1,000 people attended a gathering, "Towards an Assembly of the Irish Catholic Church." Moving from confrontation to a desire for dialogue, the ACP appears to have been cold-shouldered by

Every Catholic is now faced by the same urgent question: how can we rescue a grace-giving sense of power out of those demonic clutches that have allowed abuse, corruption and dishonesty to prevail in some parts of the church?

as false obedience to unjust ecclesiastical regulations, forcing them to believe one thing, yet do another. Awakening from this imposed pathology, they affirm that now is the time to speak pastoral truth to hierarchical power. The Austrians, along with many priests in Germany, Switzerland and Northern Italy, recognize, however, that "disobedience" can be seen as an offensive word. The Pfarrer Initiative explains, "We do not mean general disobedience for opposition's sake, but the graduated obedience where we first owe obedience to God, then to our conscience, and lastly also to church order." In their "Plea for a Credible Church," the group says, "Because silence is taken to be acquiescence, and because we want to be true to our responsibility as priests and pastors, we have to express this five point protest. It is a 'protest' in the literal sense—a 'witness for' (pro teste) church reform, for people whose pastors we want to be and for our Church."

When priests advocate for change, their model of church sometimes appears to rely on old paradigms, in which the higher and lower clergy are providers to a dependent laity. In its early days, the

clergy-centric. Are these priests, willing to confront existing challenges regarding clerical celibacy, women priests and more appropriate sexual theologies, simply motivated by a subconscious desire to preserve the institution from total irrelevance? Few of these groups have spoken of empowering the People of God to a degree that would make their own role less significant or even redundant. Those who do raise these thorny questions are a relatively small sector.

The Irish Association of Catholic Priests (ACP) grew out of a different context and eventually embraced a wider reform agenda. Irish priests were frustrated at being scapegoated in the country's sexual abuse crisis. Given the traditionally central role of the priest in Ireland, the association carried a significant clerical hallmark in its early declarations. The officially recognized National Conference of Priests of Ireland, founded in 1975, wound up in 2007, having made little impact either on priests or the Irish bishops. On the other hand, Irish clergy knew from their informal grapevines about the extent of the abuse and the cover-up that would

many of the Irish bishops, who miss the importance of conversation within the church. A laywoman speaking at the May meeting said, "The absence of dialogue is in some instances a form of violence, and brings our Church into disrepute." The ACP's objectives and the papers given by clergy and laity at the May assembly strongly resemble those of their German-speaking colleagues.

Other English-speaking clergy groups have been united by a rejection of the new English translation of the Roman Missal, which many see as imposed and unwieldy, as well as by the spate of theologians disciplined by the Vatican. The Association of United States Catholic Priests (AUSCP), with over 800 members in 117 dioceses, judging by the Resolutions passed at its 2012 Assembly, also shows signs of moving beyond narrow clerical interests to endorse broader church reform agendas, such as expressing support for Sisters Margaret Farley and Elizabeth Johnson, theologians who have each had a book censured by the Vatican.

In England and Wales, with the independently-minded National Conference of Priests in abeyance since 2010, a small

group of diocesan and religious priests wrote a letter to the Catholic weekly, the *Tablet*, urging reform. From the outset, this was different from the narrower focus of the Austrian or Irish clergy's original statements, in that it called for greater co-responsibility and dialogue within the church, including the bishops.

The rise of these reform-minded groups may not only be a reflection of priests' looking outward to the fate of the church, but also their more personal need for support. In an environment where numbers of the ordained are falling and the age profile is increasing, and with priests today so much under media scrutiny, there is nowhere to turn for emotional support other than to an in-group. The same motivation that made priests band together in Austria or Ireland is probably what keeps the majority, already affiliated for support

azione and the Neo-Catechumenate.

A new layer has emerged recently. Sociologist Paul Hawken has called the contemporary culture of networking a new consciousness, luring many people of faith into a post-ecclesiastical space. Some retain tentative links with a local church; some attend for feast days or for baptisms, marriages and funerals; but otherwise they drift rather vaguely, seeking an alternative community that embraces today's bigger personal and planetary issues. Perhaps more obvious in the US and Australia than in Europe, this space consists largely of people in the second half of life. Sadly, the polarization may have gone so far that there is little common ground for dialogue between these post-ecclesiastical Christians and formal church structures.

The shrinking common ground within the Catholic church may be due

The Vatileaks scandal suggested that there might be division even within the inner circle of the papacy, and that feuding factions inside the Vatican could eventually implode. Nevertheless, it is likely that change will only come with a new leadership, one that has the determination to transform the church and the power to make it happen, along with a delicate touch that will not destroy those people who will not change. The other possible source of top-level change within the church is some dramatic event—such as unsolvable financial problems—breaking the organization.

Clergy initiatives are, in part, a numbers game. There has undoubtedly been much private discussion, but once some are prepared to go public, there is a sense that a new value-set will impel others to join in and still feel safe. At heart, many clergy still quietly embrace the values of

Examples abound of the institutional church sticking to a playbook that may have once been relevant rather than recognizing the rules have changed.

and thus able to meet more personal needs, unlikely to endorse radical critiques from its fringes.

In order to understand these coexisting progressive and conservative currents within the church, it is important to situate the Vatican II experience within the counter-culture of the 1960s and its significant backlash against all forms of excessive institutionalization. If the Council had not happened, something very similar might well have emerged organically. In church terms, it spawned a range of lay initiatives, the most radical being the notion of the Basic Ecclesial Community, or groups of laypersons who live their faith together. This creative energy has not necessarily been undermined or destroyed with the appointment of more conservative bishops, or the dominance of more “acceptable” movements such as Opus Dei, Comunione e Liber-

in part to priests' vision of a static church that is the cornerstone of their own identity. After all, the church nurtures not only their spirit but also their worldly needs, tying loyalty to the leadership with significant considerations such as pensions. But different understandings of church emerged from Vatican II, and these competing viewpoints have threatened the clerical establishment. In reaction, the hierarchy has closed ranks and become more antagonistic to the outgroups, which we have seen in the stepping up of official condemnations of everything from women's ordination to same-sex marriage. Examples abound of the institutional church sticking to a playbook that may have once been relevant rather than recognizing the rules have changed. The Vatican's upholding of the German church's sanctions on those who refuse to pay a century-old church tax is one recent example.

Vatican II. In Ireland and Austria, dramatic events—such as protests by the faithful and their withholding of financial support for the church, as well as abuse scandals—have activated this dormant seed, and with it, priests who may have been willing to toe the line up to that point.

Today's priesthood benefits from a greater focus on the effects of inequality on the church community. The wisdom of women's groups and LGBTQ Catholics, their parents and families, has influenced many priests who now wish to dissociate themselves from injustice and untruth that may be just as fervently espoused by some of their peers.

Every Catholic is now faced by the same urgent question: how can we rescue a grace-giving sense of power out of those demonic clutches that have allowed abuse, corruption and dishonesty to prevail in some parts of the church? Com-

munities, big or small, can change when they are awakened to this pressing reality, and then when the relationships between all levels of the church are nurtured and used for the common good. These lessons have been learned in the community-organizing movements of people like Saul Alinsky or Paolo Freire.

Relational power starts with establishing citizens' status in civic schemes, or in the case of the church, recognizing the ability of the faithful to teach and to lead as well as to follow. Cultivating new ways of relating within the church will help transform people of faith into vibrant communities seeking justice and cele-

brating God's grace in human history. Signs are that some of the clergy initiatives are beginning to reach priests with the message that they are not alone in wanting change, and the fact that some Catholics are seeing each other across the traditional lay/ordained divide is cause for hope. ■

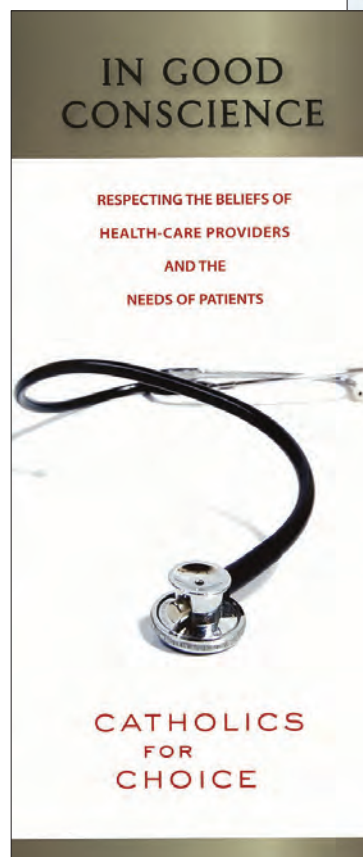
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A Survey of Catholic Opinion

A MICROCOSM OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC

By John Russonello

FOR THE LAST 30 YEARS, CATHOLICS HAVE SERVED AS an important swing voting bloc in American politics. The Catholic vote has mirrored the popular vote in almost all of the presidential elections since President Nixon was in office. Catholics are also very similar to the general public in their ideology and partisanship. Despite this evidence, there is a presumption in the news media that Catholic voters are particularly conservative on social issues, and that their religion and the views of their religious leaders play an important role in Catholics' political decisions. By examining Catholics' attitudes regarding major political issues and the influence of Catholic bishops in politics, we find instead that Catholics are a microcosm of the American public. Their attitudes are based more on their political ideology than their religious identity, and they resoundingly reject the influence of the church in the political arena.

1. From abortion to gay marriage to foreign aid, Catholics hold the same opinions as Americans generally. Catholics are broadly supportive of access to reproductive healthcare services, such as condoms, contraception and comprehensive sex education in public schools. A majority of Catholics also supports legal abortion generally, with even broader support for access to abortion in cases of threats to the life or health of the woman, rape or incest and severe fetal abnormalities. As with Americans generally, Catholics' opposition to gay marriage has decreased greatly over the last decade. On foreign aid, Catholics, like other Americans, prefer to focus on needs at home rather than provide more humanitarian assistance abroad.

2. The demographic differences that emerge among Catholics mimic the patterns found among the American public at large. Women, liberals and Democratic Catholics are more likely to be supportive of access to reproductive healthcare services and legal abortion. As with the general public, the Millennial generation of

Catholics is the driving force behind liberalization of attitudes on LGBT issues. Finally, those who attend church frequently are much more likely to prioritize religion when making political decisions—but even among this group, half say that the Catholic bishops should not participate in the political arena.

3. Catholics broadly reject the influence of religion in general, and Catholic bishops specifically, in politics. Catholics clearly see politics and religion as separate spheres—even more so than other religiously affiliated Americans. Catholics are less likely than Protestants to say that religion is the biggest factor in their thinking about government and public policy. They also resoundingly say that the views of Catholic bishops are not important to their voting choices, nor should they influence the voting behavior of Catholic politicians, including on the issue of abortion. Finally, Catholics broadly oppose the bishops' use of the political arena to advance their opinions on morality.

The inquiry conducted by Belden Russonello Strategists LLC (BRS) on Catholics' attitudes included the examination of public opinion research previously conducted for Catholics for Choice by BRS, as well as research conducted by BRS for other clients on related issues and publicly available information from the Pew Research Center and the *National Catholic Reporter*. Findings in this report are drawn from nationally representative samples of American Catholic adults or voters unless otherwise noted. The Pew Research Center and the *National Catholic Reporter* bear no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations of the data presented here. The detailed findings refer to BRS survey data unless otherwise noted. A complete list of surveys and reports examined is in the Appendix.

In reading the report, when the percent sign (%) appears at the top of a column, the numbers add vertically; when % appears at the left of a row, the numbers add horizontally. An asterisk (*) indicates less than 1 percent; a double hyphen (-) indicates zero. Due to weighting, rounding, omission of "do not know," "refuse" or other responses, percentages may add to more or less than 100%.

JOHN RUSSONELLO is a partner at *Belden Russonello Strategists LLC*, where he conducts research and develops message strategies for political candidates, nonprofit organizations and associations. Previously, he had a political consulting practice and was press secretary and speechwriter for House Judiciary Committee Chairman Peter Rodino.

A PORTRAIT OF CATHOLICS

Generally, Catholic voters look very similar to registered voters among the general population, with similar proportions of women and young adults. Catholic voters are somewhat more likely to be Latino, to say they are moderate and to identify as Democrats. Finally, Catholic voters are less likely than the general American voting public to attend church once a week or more.

BROAD SUPPORT FOR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES AND COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION

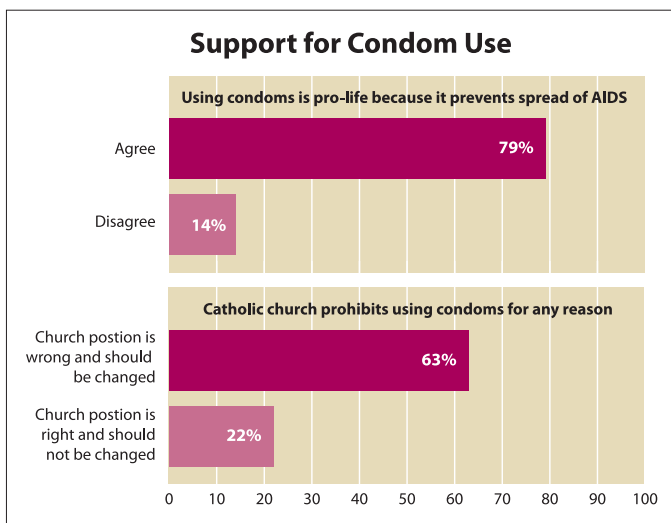
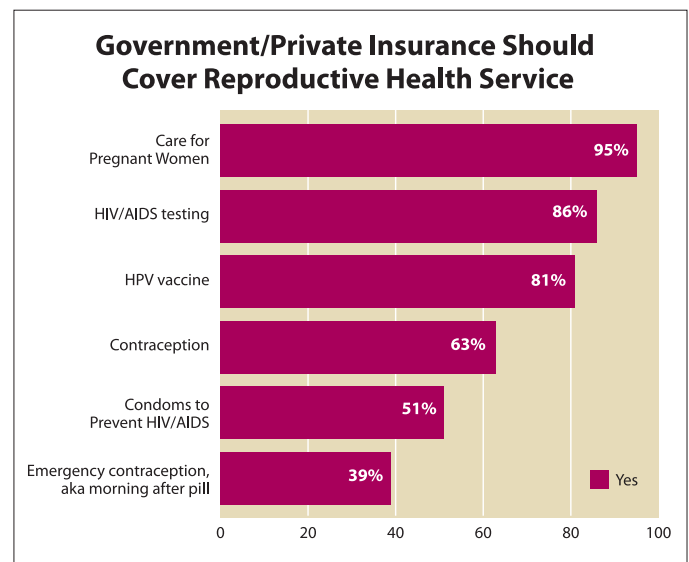
There is a clear demand among Catholics for the tools to make their own decisions about their reproductive health. Catholics broadly support the use of condoms, in addition to access to other reproductive health services, such as contraception or the HPV vaccine. Catholics also believe that religious institutions or individuals should not refuse to provide these services for religious reasons. Finally, Catholics broadly reject abstinence-only sex education in public schools.

1. Support for access to reproductive health services

Catholic voters broadly support access to and use of condoms. Eight in ten (79 percent) American Catholics agree that using condoms “is pro-life because it helps save lives by preventing the spread of AIDS.” Only 14 percent of Catholics disagree. Before 2010, when Pope Benedict XVI approved condoms in certain situations to prevent the spread of HIV, many Catholics already believed the prohibition on using condoms for any reason was wrong. A broad majority (63 percent) of Catholic voters said that the church position was wrong and should be changed. Just two in ten (22 percent) Catholics said that the position should not be changed.

Support for insurance coverage of a range of reproductive healthcare services reveals that Catholics’ support for access

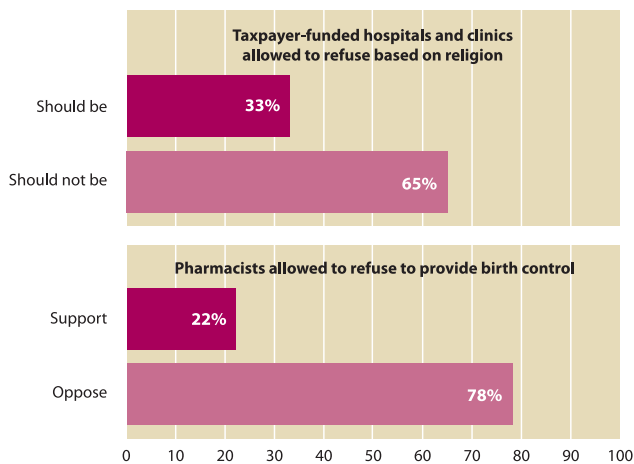
to reproductive healthcare is broader than just condom use. Majorities say that private and government insurance policies should cover care for pregnant women and follow-up care after the baby is born (95 percent yes); HIV & AIDS testing (86 percent); the HPV vaccine, which is given to girls to prevent them from getting cervical cancer (81 percent); and contraception, such as birth control pills (63 percent). Half (51 percent) of Catholic voters also say that insurance should cover condoms to prevent HIV & AIDS. The only service asked about that did not receive majority support for coverage is emergency contraception, also known as the morning-after pill (39 percent said it should be covered).



Not only do Catholic voters believe individuals should have insurance coverage for reproductive health services, they broadly oppose publicly funded providers refusing such services based on the providers’ religious beliefs. Majorities say that both government-funded Catholic hospitals (73 percent) and other hospitals and clinics funded by taxpayers (60 percent) should be required to include condoms as part of AIDS prevention.

More broadly, Catholics do not want providers to be allowed to refuse other reproductive health services based on their religious beliefs. More than six in ten (65 percent) Catholic voters say that taxpayer-funded hospitals and clinics should *not* be allowed to refuse to provide procedures or medications based on religious beliefs. Nearly eight in ten (78 percent) oppose pharmacists being allowed to refuse to fill prescriptions for birth control. Catholic voters clearly want access to reproductive health services, and they do not want religion to inhibit this access.

Opposition to Religious Refusals to Provide Healthcare Services

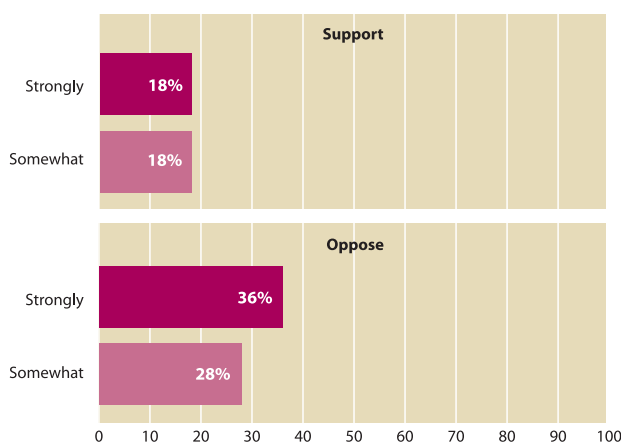


BRS/CFC 2009: Q31. Do you think that hospitals and clinics that take taxpayer dollars should or should not be allowed to refuse to provide certain procedures or medications based on religious beliefs? / BRS/CFC 2008: Do you support/oppose each of the following? Do you support/oppose that strongly or somewhat? Q26. Allowing pharmacists to refuse to fill prescriptions for birth control.

2. Support for comprehensive sex education

In addition to supporting access to reproductive health services, Catholic voters want to have access to comprehensive sex education. A broad majority (64 percent) of Catholics opposes requiring public high school sex education programs to teach only about abstinence as the way to prevent pregnancy and

Opposition to Abstinence-Only Before Marriage Education in Public High Schools



BRS/CFC 2008: Do you support/oppose each of the following? Do you support/oppose that strongly or somewhat? Q28. Requiring public high school sex education programs to only teach about abstinence as the way to prevent pregnancy and disease.

disease. Only a third (36 percent) of Catholics supports requiring sexuality education to teach abstinence-only before marriage. Strong opposition (36 percent strongly oppose) is twice as high as strong support (18 percent strongly support).

SUPPORT FOR LEGAL ABORTION AND LEAVING ABORTION OUT OF POLITICS

As with Americans generally, Catholics favor legal abortion but the exact circumstances of the abortion matter. Few Catholics say abortion should never be legal, and there is broad support for abortion in severe circumstances, such as threats to the life and health of the woman. Catholics do not believe there is a religious obligation to oppose abortion nor do they say there should be religious repercussions for supporting legal abortion. However, abortion is not a driving factor in the political decisions most Catholics make about candidates or important legislation.

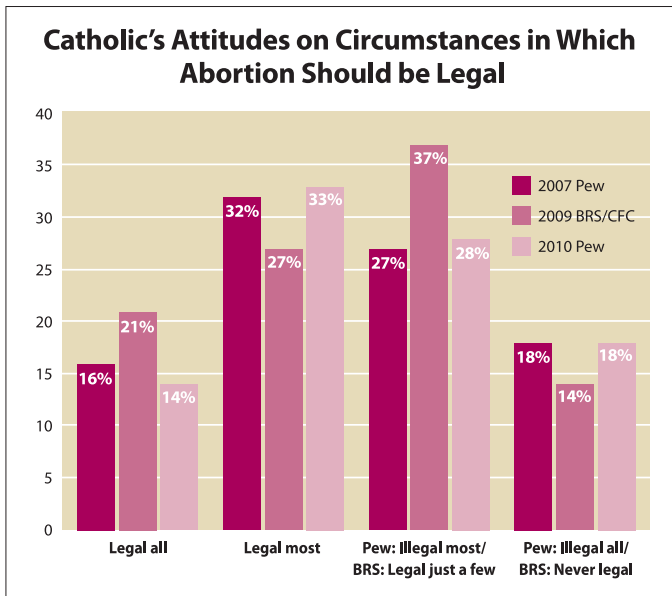
1. Support for legal abortion

Since 2000, there has been little change in Catholic voters' attitudes on legal abortion. Around six in ten (2000: 66 percent agree; 2004: 61 percent; 2008: 58 percent) agree that it should be legal for a woman to have an abortion. Between three and four in ten disagree (2000: 34 percent disagree; 2004: 38 percent; 2008: 42 percent).

While the results for this question suggest that there may be a downward trend in support for legal abortion, different question wording shows that support has been constant over time. When asked about the number of circumstances in which abortion should be legal, a majority of Catholics consistently says that abortion should be legal in at least a few circumstances or more. In a 2007 Pew Research Center survey, 16 percent of Catholic adults said abortion should be legal in all cases, 32 percent said it should be legal in most, 27 percent said it should be illegal most, and just 18 percent said it should be illegal in all cases. In 2009, a BRS/CFC survey of Catholic voters found similar results—21 percent said abortion should be legal in all circumstances, 27 percent said it should be legal in most circumstances, 37 percent said it should be legal in just a few and 14 percent said it should never be legal. The Pew Research Center found very similar numbers again in 2010 among Catholics—14 percent said abortion should be legal in all cases, 33 percent said legal in most, 28 percent said illegal in most and 18 percent said illegal in all.

The position of Catholics on abortion legality is very similar to Americans' attitudes overall. In the same 2010 Pew survey, 17 percent of American adults overall said abortion should be legal in all cases, 33 percent said legal in most, 27 percent said illegal in most and 17 percent said illegal in all.

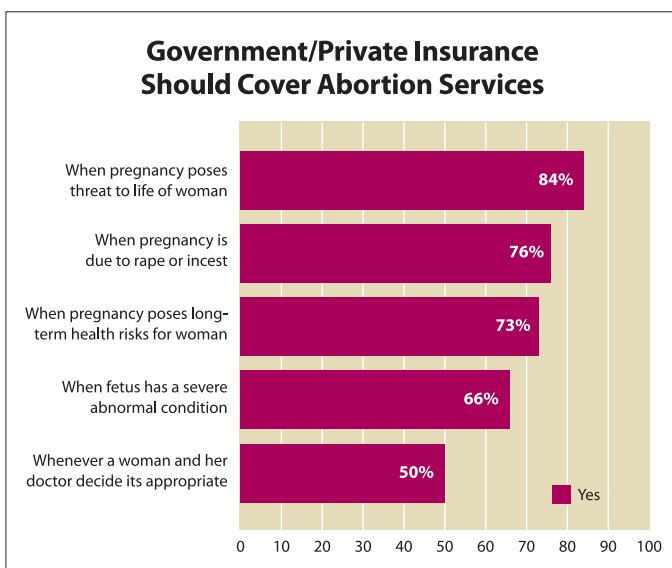
As with the general public, the circumstances of an abortion matter for Catholics' support. On a question asking whether government or private insurance should cover abortion services



under various circumstances, a clear ranking emerges. Catholics broadly support coverage for abortion when:

- the pregnancy poses a threat to the life of the woman (84 percent yes, should cover);
- the pregnancy is due to rape or incest (76 percent);
- the pregnancy poses long-term health risks to the woman (73 percent); or
- the fetus has a severe abnormal condition (66 percent).

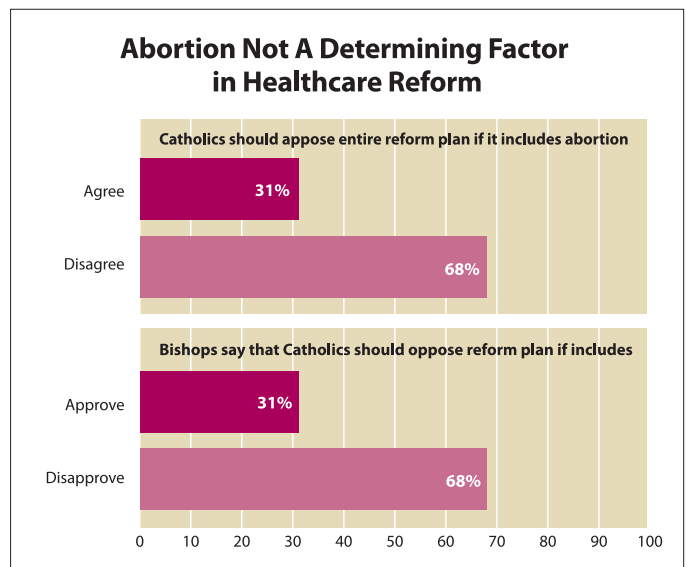
There is less support for insurance coverage for whenever the woman and her doctor decide abortion is appropriate (50 percent yes, should cover). Even in this circumstance, though, half of Catholics believe abortion should be covered.



2. Importance of abortion and religion in politics

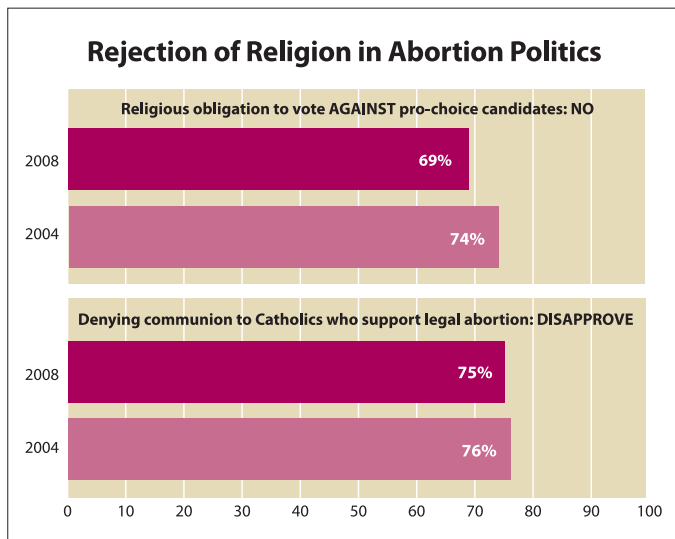
Abortion is not a top political issue for Catholics. In a 2010 Pew Research Center survey, Catholic adults ranked abortion (43 percent very important) far below other issues, such as the economy (92 percent very important), jobs (91 percent) and immigration (60 percent), in terms of their importance in the Congressional elections.

Even when abortion becomes a central focal point of the political discussion, as it did during the 2009 healthcare reform debate, Catholics do not prioritize the issue when making political decisions. In the BRS/CFC 2009 survey, a wide majority of Catholic voters disagreed that Catholics should oppose the healthcare reform plan if it included coverage for abortion (68 percent disagree), as well as disapproved of the bishops telling Catholics they should oppose the entire reform plan because of abortion coverage (68 percent disapprove). A 2009 Pew survey found the abortion issue had a similar lack of influence on Catholics in the healthcare debate: just 11 percent of white Catholics who opposed the healthcare reform legislation said the biggest factor in their opposition was coverage for abortion.



While abortion is not a top political issue for Catholics, they reject the influence of Catholic bishops in determining their attitudes on abortion. In the 2010 Pew survey, Catholics who had an abortion opinion (23 percent) were less likely than Americans generally (26 percent) and much less likely than Protestants (37 percent) to say that religion is the biggest influence on their abortion attitudes.

In addition, Catholics do not believe that those who support legal abortion should be punished for doing so. About seven in ten Catholics say they do not have a religious obligation to vote against prochoice candidates (2004: 74 percent no, do not; 2008: 69 percent). Three-quarters of Catholics disapprove of denying communion to Catholics who support legal abortion (2004: 76 percent disapprove; 2008: 75 percent).



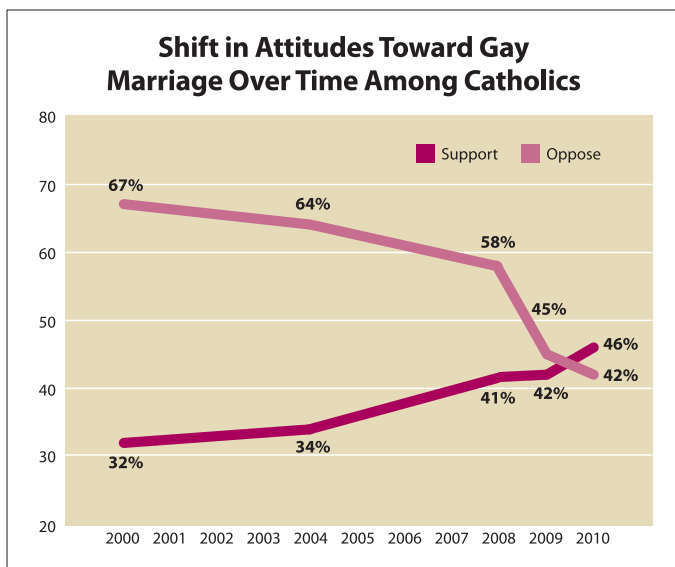
CHANGING ATTITUDES ON LGBT ISSUES

Americans' attitudes towards LGBT individuals and their rights have changed dramatically over the last twenty years. Catholics are no exception. Since 2000, Catholics have become more supportive of gay marriage. Attitudes among the Millennial generation of Catholics are a key factor in explaining these shifts.

Shift in attitudes over time

The general public has become more accepting over time of same-sex marriage. The Pew Research Center reports that in 1996, 27 percent of American adults favored same-sex marriage; in 2010, 42 percent of Americans said the same.

Catholics have largely followed this trend. In 2000, a BRS/CFC survey found that 32 percent of Catholic voters supported



making gay and lesbian marriage legal. By 2008, that percentage had increased to 41 percent of Catholics. A Pew survey in 2009 found that 42 percent of Catholics favored same-sex marriage, increasing to 46 percent in favor in 2010.

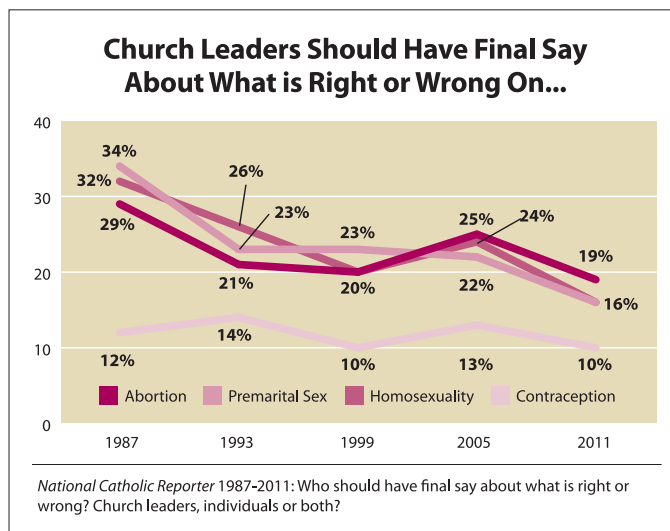
Finally, a 2007 Pew Research Center survey found that Catholics were more accepting of homosexuality than other religiously affiliated Americans, such as Protestants. A majority of Catholics said that homosexuality should be accepted (58 percent) rather than discouraged (30 percent), while Protestants' attitudes ran in the opposite direction (38 percent accepted, 51 percent discouraged). Catholics who attend church weekly were only somewhat more likely than less frequent attendees to say homosexuality should be discouraged (37 percent).

SEPARATING CATHOLIC BISHOPS AND THE CHURCH FROM THE POLITICAL REALM

Catholics resoundingly reject the bishops' influence in politics. They do not believe church leaders should be the sole arbiters of morality on key political issues and they say the bishops' views are unimportant to how they make their political decisions. Catholics also say that Catholic politicians have no religious obligation to agree with the bishops and that the bishops should not use the political arena to advance their positions.

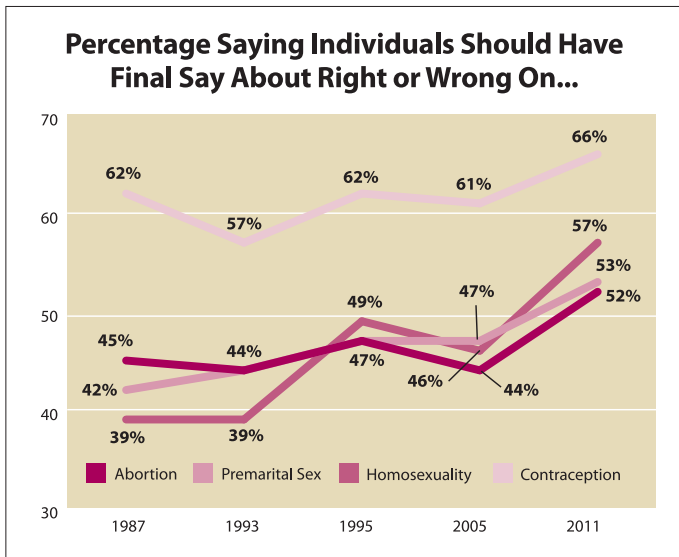
1. Little importance placed on bishops in Catholics' political decisions

On a range of issues, the influence of Catholic bishops has been diminishing. According to the *National Catholic Reporter* survey series, Catholics have become more individualistic over time in terms of who should have the final say about what is right or wrong on issues of abortion, premarital sex and homosexuality. In 1987, about a third of Catholics said that church

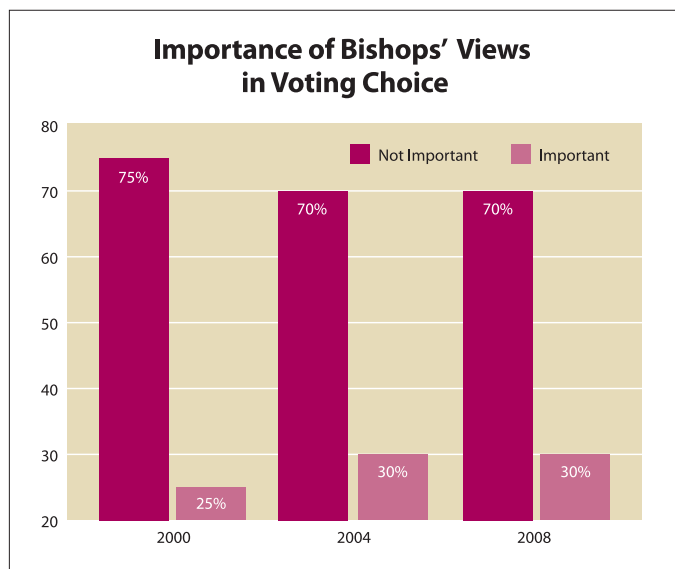


leaders should have the final say on what is right or wrong in these issue areas. By 2011, this percentage had dropped to just around two in ten Catholics. The percentage of Catholics who say church leaders should have the final say on contraception has consistently hovered around just one in ten.

In addition, on each of these four issues, the plurality of Catholics across time and issue has said that the individual should have the final say on morality, as opposed to church leaders or both church leaders and the individual.



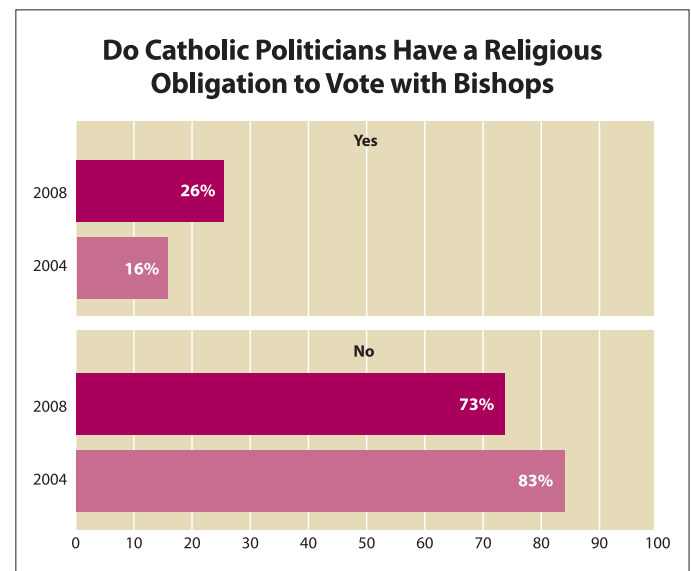
Catholics also reject the bishops' influence on their decisions about candidates. At least seven in ten Catholics consistently say that the views of Catholic bishops in the United States are not important in how they decide to vote. Between a quarter and three in ten Catholics say the bishops' views are important.



Similarly, a 2007 Pew survey found that Catholics are less likely than other Americans to say religion is the factor that most influences their thinking about government and public affairs (9 percent). Among the total population, 14 percent say the same, and among Protestants the percentage is 20 percent. Instead, the biggest influence on Catholics' political thinking is personal experience (35 percent). Catholics who attend church weekly are somewhat more likely to say religion is the biggest influence (15 percent), but this percentage is much lower than it is among the general population who attends weekly (27 percent).

2. Oppose influence of Catholic bishops on politicians

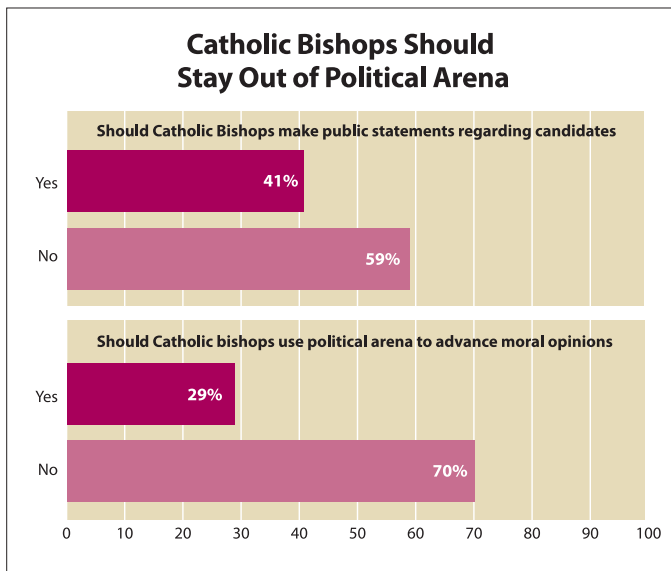
Just as Catholics reject the bishops' influence in their own political decisions, they do not believe the bishops should have an influence over politicians. In both 2004 and 2008, a broad majority of Catholics said that Catholic politicians do not have a religious obligation to vote on issues the way Catholic bishops recommend (2008: 73 percent no, do not; 2004: 83 percent). In 2008, about four in ten (41 percent) Catholics felt this way strongly.



In addition, Catholics do not believe that politicians who support legal abortion should be denied communion. In 2004, nearly eight in ten (78 percent) said this should not happen, while just two in ten said the opposite (20 percent).

3. Oppose Catholic bishops participating in political arena

Catholics not only reject the bishops' influence over themselves and on politicians, they also disapprove of the bishops' involvement in the political arena in general. A majority (59 percent) of Catholics in 2000 said that bishops should not make public statements regarding candidates for office. Four in ten



(41 percent) Catholics disagreed. Garnering broader opposition is the idea that Catholic bishops might use the political arena to advance their moral opinions, with 70 percent opposed and 29 percent in favor.

In 2007, the Pew Research Center found that Catholics were split on a somewhat similar question. Nearly half (48 percent) of Catholics said churches and other houses of worship should keep out of political matters, while the same percentage said churches should express their views on day-to-day social and political questions. The difference in attitudes between the two surveys is likely due to question wording, since expressing views on social and political questions is probably seen as more innocuous than trying to advance moral opinions politically or sway decisions about candidates for office. In the 2007 Pew survey, Catholics were less likely than Protestants (58 percent) to say the church should express views on social and political matters. ■

Appendix: Surveys Reviewed

2011

National Catholic Reporter, "Catholics in America survey," April 25-May 2, 2011. Nationwide online survey conducted by Knowledge Networks of self-identified Catholic adults; n=1,442.

2010

Pew Research Center, "Majority Continues to Favor Gays Serving Openly in Military: Support for Same-Sex Marriage Edges Upward," October 6, 2010.

Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, "Religion and the Issues: Few Say Religion Shapes Immigration, Environment Views," September 17, 2010.

2009

Belden Russonello & Stewart, "Catholic Voters' Views on Health Care Reform and Reproductive Health Care Services," September 16-21, 2009. Nationwide telephone survey of registered Catholic voters for Catholics for Choice; n=923.

Belden Russonello & Stewart, November 3-17, 2009. Nationwide telephone survey of registered voters; n=1,200.

Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, "Though Most Oppose Public Funding, Abortion Plays Small Role in Health Reform Opposition," November 19, 2009.

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, July 21-August 5, 2009. Nationwide telephone survey of adults, 18 and older; n=3,003.

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, November 12-15, 2009. Nationwide telephone survey of adults, 18 and older; n=1,003.

2008

Belden Russonello & Stewart, July 8-15, 2008. Nationwide telephone survey for Catholics for a Free Choice of registered, likely, Catholic voters; n=1,033.

Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, "US Religious Landscape Survey: Religious Beliefs and

Practices: Diverse and Politically Relevant," June 2008.

Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, "A Portrait of American Catholics on the Eve of Pope Benedict's Visit to the US," March 27, 2008.

2007

Belden Russonello & Stewart, August 15-September 10, 2007. Nationwide telephone survey for Catholics for a Free Choice; of Catholic adults, 18 and older; n=1,009.

Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, May 8-August 13, 2007. Nationwide telephone survey of adults; n=35,556.

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, August 1-18, 2007. Nationwide telephone survey of adults, 18 and older; n=3,002.

2006

Belden Russonello & Stewart, March 27-April 16, 2006. Nationwide telephone survey of adults; n=1,755.

2004

Belden Russonello & Stewart, June 2-10, 2004. Nationwide telephone survey for Catholics for a Free Choice of registered, likely, Catholic voters; n=2,239.

2000

Belden Russonello & Stewart, October 10-15, 2000. Nationwide telephone survey for Catholics for a Free Choice of registered, likely, Catholic voters; n=1,003.

1998

Belden Russonello & Stewart, August 12-September 3, 1998. Nationwide telephone survey for the Rand Institute of American adults, age 16 and older; n=1,500.

1994

Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, July, 1994. Nationwide telephone survey of adults, 18 and older; n=3,800.

Undermining the Idea of a Catholic University

THE CATHOLIC HIERARCHY CLAMPS DOWN ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM

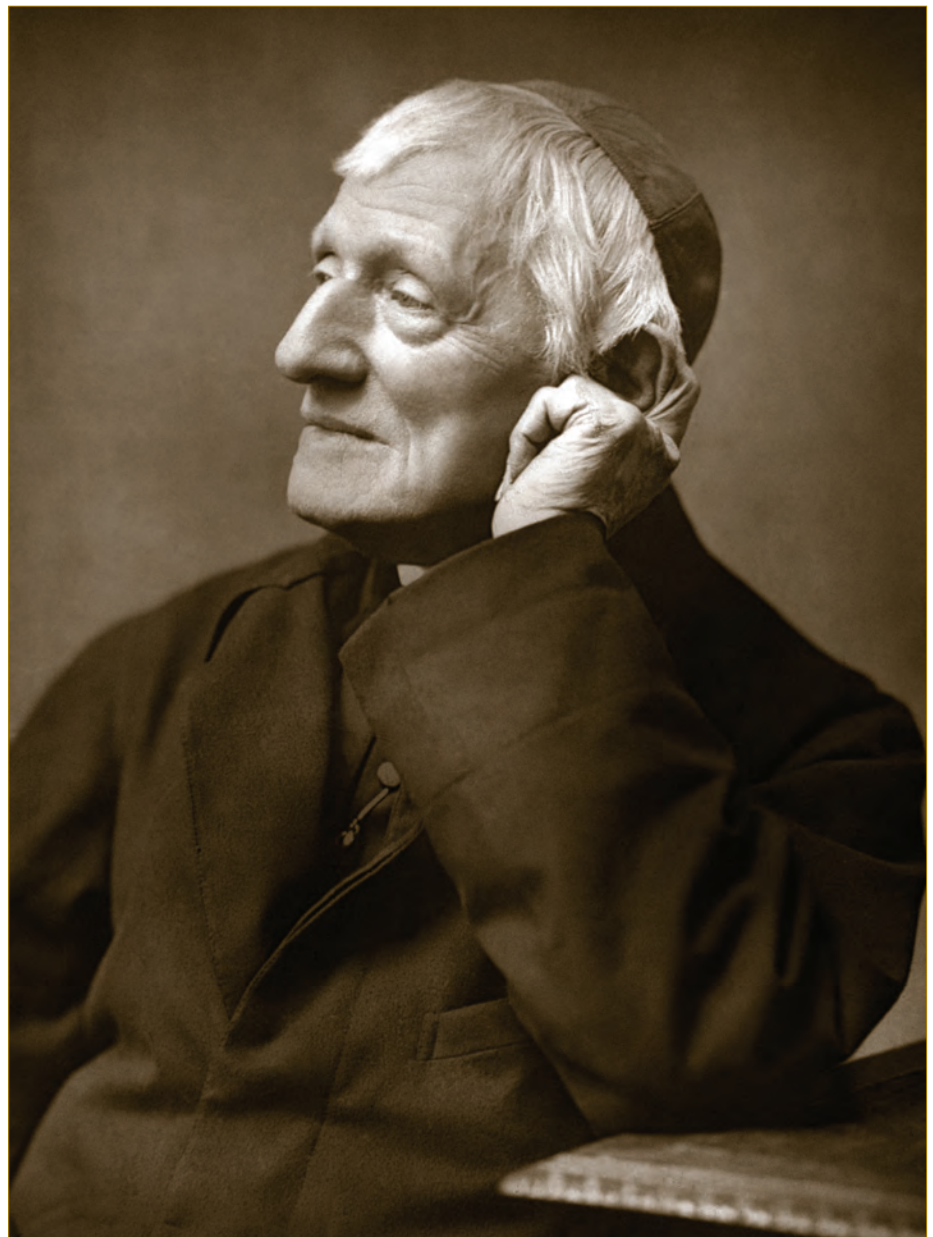
By Kim Puchir

RECENTLY, THE VATICAN HAS come out as an educational enforcer by declaring that the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru, the most prestigious learning institution in the country, is no longer Catholic or Pontifical. The church claims that the university forfeited its Catholic status due to repeated infractions against hierarchical authority, while the university maintains that its rights to govern the school, and use its name, are both protected by civil law.

The feud was emblematic of the struggle for control going on in Catholic institutions of higher learning all over the world: who decides what is a Catholic education? Until now, most have considered a Catholic education to be an expansive description, rather than a restrictive one. This expansive Catholic intellectual tradition has been upheld by scholars and clergy alike—with some of the greatest champions having been popes. But recent developments may represent a change in how the Vatican instructs bishops to exert control over universities in their dioceses.

KIM PUCHIR is communications associate for Catholics for Choice and editorial associate for Conscience magazine.

A new publication in the Catholics for Choice Opposition Notes series, “The Cardinal Newman Society,” is forthcoming.



Cardinal John Henry Newman, author of *The Idea of a University*. This pamphlet, published in 1873, was based on a series of lectures he gave in Dublin, Ireland, in 1852 during his time as rector of the new Catholic university there, University College Dublin.

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According to the Religion News Service, in May 2012, Pope Benedict XVI urged Catholic universities to “reaffirm their distinctive identity” by ensuring the doctrinal orthodoxy of their faculty and staff. Benedict’s statement was driven, he said, because of “instances of apparent dissidence between some representatives of Catholic institutions and the church’s pastoral leadership.... [This discord] harms the church’s witness and, as experience has shown, can easily be exploited to compromise her authority and her freedom.” His remarks came just a few months after the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops denounced a theology professor at the Jesuit-run Fordham University in New York. Sister Elizabeth Johnson’s book

Italian news service *Vatican Insider* stated, the Holy See can threaten to make the issue into an international incident should Peru fail to live up to the concordat. The contest over the PUCP carries financial as well as symbolic value, with the winner standing to acquire an estimated \$300 million in assets and a number of lucrative properties, including a shopping mall.

But who gains control over the university ultimately boils down to one question—what is Catholic education? Public records from 1937 specify that the Peruvian university must be dedicated to the teaching of “sciences and humanities according to Catholic criteria.” One of its unorthodox moves was the 2002 award of an honorary doctorate to Gianni Vattimo, an Italian philosopher who is two things

radical operations in the name of saving it. The US has its own Catholic educational landscape, and it happens to come with a self-appointed watchdog—the Cardinal Newman Society (CNS). “The Enemy inside the Gates: The Surrender of Catholic Higher Education,” is the dire view popularized by the CNS, an online advocacy organization with no official standing in the church. The cure proposed by CNS president Patrick J. Reilly is surgery: lopping off from the campus everyone who doesn’t fit very narrow criteria for “Catholic identity.” The CNS seeks to root out those who support a few issues (notably abortion, contraception and LGBT rights) by combing through Catholic universities’ websites. With blog posts, open letters

The real conflict is between the old guard who teach liberation theology, and the new, more conservative forces, such as Opus Dei.

Quest for the Living God was, according to the bishops, not representative of “authentic Catholic teaching.”

The Peruvian example, at first glance, seems an isolated case. The Pontifical Catholic University of Peru (PUCP), grew out of a bequest from a single major benefactor, José de la Riva-Agüero, who sought to create a university with a Catholic mission. The Catholic hierarchy has a tight involvement with the school because Peru is one of many nations with a concordat with the Holy See. Some of these binding treaties with the Vatican are more extensive than others, but in the case of countries like Peru, the concordat has woven canon law into the society’s legal fabric, circumventing the state’s normal legislative process and granting a privileged status to the Catholic church over all other religions.

In contradiction to church law and university statutes, however, the Pontifical University appointed its own chancellor and refused to open its financial records to the local archdiocese. As the

of which the Vatican takes a dim view: a relativist and a proponent of gay rights. Did this constitute an affront to “Catholic criteria?” Perhaps, but according to the *New York Times*, more than any specific incident, the real conflict is between the old guard who teach liberation theology, and the new, more conservative forces, such as Opus Dei member Cardinal Juan Luis Cipriani Thorne, Archbishop of Lima. Both represent influential schools of thought within the Catholic church, so who decides what part of that tradition should shape the present?

The now ex-PUCP’s loss of its name was the result of a unique confluence: a university reliant on one man’s bequest plus the state’s restrictive concordat with the Holy See. But the more universal lesson is to be learned from the Vatican’s choice to come down like a hammer on perceived deviance from orthodoxy, where in years past less blunt instruments would have been employed to correct the matter.

It is not only the Vatican that is willing to submit Catholic higher education to

to university presidents and articles published in conservative news outlets, the CNS strategy is to manufacture enough so-called scandal that the targets are disinvited from speaking engagements or labeled insufficiently Catholic for Catholic colleges’ milieu.

Fr. John Paris, a professor at Boston College who was targeted by the group for a statement he made about Terry Schiavo’s death, called the CNS “a self-appointed vigilante committee,” and said “they neither represent the church nor the academic community ... and yet they want to censor the academic community in the name of the church.” These sentiments have been echoed by others in Catholic schools and the Catholic media, but perhaps the most damning criticism came from Archbishop John G. Vlazny of Portland. Vlazny wrote a memo in 2006 on behalf of the higher education committee of United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to the ecclesiastical advisors for the CNS in which he called the group “often aggressive, inac-

curate, or lacking in balance” and “often objectionable in substance and in tone.”

THE POPE: PATRON OF THE INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY

History tells us that medieval universities, which were closely woven with the Catholic church, were always places of conflict. Teachers and students alike tended to seek out the pope as a trustworthy arbiter in disputes with local bishops or school authorities. For centuries before the advent of centralized European nation-states, schools were a contested territory between the church and a few noble patrons. Medieval popes saw that they had a vested interest in schools that produced the educated personnel the church needed, and thus took far more liberal stances on universities in comparison to the line drawn in the Peruvian sand by Benedict’s papacy.

In a publication titled “The State of Catholic Higher Education,” the Cardinal Newman Society’s Reilly explains that Catholic identity is something to be *maintained* or *restored*. This static, backward-looking view represents one of the organization’s more fundamental mistakes—continually harkening back to some singular Catholic tradition, some golden age of the Catholic university that was free of the sort of controversies that are bread and butter for the CNS.

In the medieval era the popes played a central role in encouraging the growth of scholarship by creating universally accepted degrees in what had been a fragmented European intellectual landscape. In addition, the papacy also bestowed special protections in the form of clerical status or “benefit of clergy” on students—a rather lawless bunch who sometimes exploited these privileges to get out of barroom brawls, according to an article by Professor Kimberly Georgedes in Oxford’s *Forum on Public Policy*. Professors repeatedly had to seek recourse to popes over unpaid wages. Oxford was one of several universities that appealed to the pope to get out from under the thumb of a domineering bishop, as documented by Robert S.

Rait’s *Life in the Medieval University*. In 1212, Pope Innocent III forbade local ecclesiastical authorities from demanding oaths from professors, and in 1231, Pope Gregory IX issued a precedent-setting bull that granted the University of Paris self-government.

In the classrooms of the day, there was no such thing as our modern concept of academic freedom, but the

wonder that virtually all the heretics from the 13th to 16th century were scholastic theologians.”

Perhaps no one better than Thomas Aquinas exemplified the academic inquiry and its backlash that existed simultaneously in the medieval Catholic university. In 1270, Aquinas fell afoul of the Bishop of Paris, who was against the teachings of Aristotle and several other



This 14th-century illuminated manuscript page by Laurentius de Voltolina depicts a lecture by Henricus de Alemania at the University of Bologna.

emphasis on dialectical defense of all positions, including theological ones, and the existence of at least four accepted schools of theological thought, indicate that medieval Catholic university students enjoyed a great deal of leeway in their intellectual pursuits. But there was a darker side. According to a 2012 article written by Georgetown professor John W. O’Malley, SJ, for *America* magazine, “restless and relentless questioning” was especially emblematic of scholars in the arts and theology. That these well-developed analytical skills were sometimes turned upon established doctrine leads O’Malley to conclude, “It is no

non-Christian thinkers favored by the theologian. Aquinas died while under investigation, but that didn’t stop the authorities from excommunicating him posthumously. And yet, 50 years after his death, he was recognized as a saint and his theology has been one of the essential fonts of Catholic thought ever since.

This winding route to church acceptance might have had even more twists and turns had Thomas Aquinas lived today. Cardinal Avery Dulles questioned in 1975, “If [St. Thomas Aquinas] were alive today ... would [he] be welcome” at the Catholic University of America? What today’s hierarchy might

find hard to swallow would be Aquinas' insistence that theologians and bishops each have their own magisterium, or area of expertise, that must be respected within the church, and particularly within the university.

It's also questionable whether Aquinas would be able to attain a *mandatum*, or approval to teach theology from the local bishop, now required under Canon 812.

A SCAVENGER HUNT: TWO APPROACHES

In 1990, Pope John Paul II signed *Ex corde Ecclesiae*, literally, "From the Heart of the Church," a document that was an attempt to close ranks in Catholic education after years of openness to modern society, especially in the United States.

Leaders such as Cardinal William Keeler of Baltimore and Archbishop Alfred Hughes of New Orleans have boycotted graduation ceremonies because of their disagreement with the politics of a speaker. Bishop Joseph Martino of Scranton publicly criticized Misericordia University for allowing gay rights advocate Keith Boykin to deliver a lecture. Each of these incidents, along with countless others, is celebrated by the Cardinal Newman Society as a protection of Catholic identity. Indeed, the furor is sometimes drummed up by their own scandalmongering.

Not everyone rises to the bait. When Bianca Laureano, adjunct professor at the College of Mount Saint Vincent, had her prochoice activities posted on the

"not-LGBT rights." Newman, by contrast, believed that "it is obvious that to be in earnest in seeking the truth is an indispensable requisite for finding it." It is easy to imagine the cardinal—also a poet, musician, historian and philosopher—soaring on his restless intellect far beyond the CNS' narrow definition of Catholicism as a series of notes. After all, Newman, one of the foremost proponents of the sacredness of conscience, was willing to question anything, even papal infallibility, earning him the label "the most dangerous man in England" at one time. He, too, might make some waves in today's Catholic universities.

It's clear that Catholic educational institutions have long been sources of

If St. Thomas Aquinas were alive today, would he be welcome at the Catholic University of America?

Ex corde's guidelines contained several unresolved contradictions, among them a value placed on academic freedom and a simultaneous movement towards a university under much tighter control of the local bishop. Another feature was the *mandatum*. Americans found it especially hard to orient themselves towards this new direction in Catholic education, taking nine years and three drafts before the US application of *Ex corde* was accepted by the Vatican. According to a contemporary *Houston Chronicle* article, presidents of US Catholic universities claimed that *Ex corde* ignored the fact that "this nation has developed the world's most extensive network of Catholic colleges because most schools are free of outside control" and thrive off academic freedom.

Today, *Ex corde* is being interpreted as narrowly as possible by some hardline US bishops to pare away at the academic life of the schools under their control, though it's interesting to note that many bishops are not themselves academics.

CNS blog, the college president, Charles L. Flynn, Jr., sent a letter to alumni defending Laureano's right to express her prochoice views because "there is no subject that is off limits to inquiry at Mount Saint Vincent."

A Georgetown student took exception to the CNS' outrage over the honors bestowed on labor leader John Sweeney, who is an LGBT rights advocate. He wrote in the student newspaper *The Hoya*: "Assuming John Sweeney's endorsement of gay marriage is a violation of Catholic doctrine, it would be laughable to ignore the grandeur of this man's actions that have routinely followed biblical calls for economic justice."

The Cardinal Newman Society says on its website that it was inspired by Cardinal John Henry Newman's belief that "the university is dedicated to the search and transmission of all truth." But for the society that bears his name, the "search for truth" is like a scavenger hunt in a tiny, fenced area with all the prizes clearly flagged: "not-abortion"

conflict and confrontation. It appears that the Vatican has decided to clamp down on any dissent from its current interpretation of what represents Catholic orthodoxy. What that means for the institutions and those who work in them will be worth watching closely.

THE FUTURE OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

There are many thinkers who see the Catholic search for truth as both more complicated and more compelling than a hunt for the heretical. James Turner, professor of history at Notre Dame, wrote in *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry and Practice* that he hopes for a Catholic university of the future "that would likely startle us out of our socks if we could see it now."

Perhaps one of the benefits of the debates within Catholic higher education is that they are provoking a healthy discussion about the mission of Catholic schools. In 2010, a Boston College program produced "The Catholic Intellectual

Tradition: A Conversation at Boston College.” Calling the faith tradition “a 2,000-year-long-conversation,” the booklet says, “The most probing questions in every discipline are never deemed to be in opposition to faith but are welcomed into the conversation on the conviction that ongoing discovery of the intelligibility of the universe will reveal more of the truth about God.” It reads like a love letter to Catholic learning. This, one feels, is truly “from the heart of the church.”

One should note that the Vatican clampdown is not without precedent. Both schools and scholars have been affected by the more conservative view of Catholic higher education. Leading Catholic theologian Charles Curran was barred from teaching at the Catholic University of America in 1967 because he believed contraception could be a moral choice. Hans Küng, a German theologian, lost his chair at Tübingen University in 1979 because he questioned papal infallibility. And in 2008, Rosemary Radford Ruether, a theologian whose appointment to teach at the Catholic University of San Diego was abruptly canceled because of her prochoice views, reflected on what her experience meant for Catholic academia

overall: “My concern is that Catholic colleges and universities are in danger of becoming intellectual ghettos where controversial issues, particularly in relation to Catholic teachings and practices, cannot be discussed.”

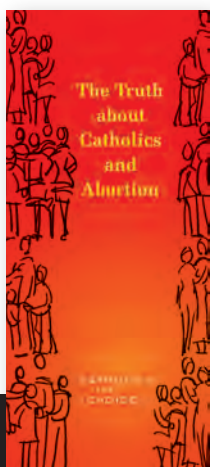
Stripping away the pontifical label for the PUCP is not the only way the pope can intervene in Catholic scholarship. While we may not likely see a pontiff who grants special privileges to brawling students, we can hope for a pope who is secure enough to say, as Pius XI said in 1936, that “the scholar is concerned with the world of time while the deposit of the Faith teaches what transcends time.” Faith and science have often existed side by side, as in the wide Catholic acceptance of evolution in harmony with a belief in divine creation; or in one and the same person, such as Monsignor Georges Lemaître, Belgian priest and peer of Einstein who pioneered the Big Bang theory. Indeed, Pius XII took to Lemaître’s theories a little too well for the scientist-priest’s comfort, with the pope originally seeing the Big Bang as proof of his own theological ideas until Lemaître gently insisted upon his research’s tentative—but specifically scientific—nature.

But if there’s another thing that we

should be able to discern from Aquinas, that once-excommunicated doctor of the church, it’s that the spiritual and intellectual climate within the church has its seasons. Catholic scholarship could concentrate on creating connections between the modern world and our intellectual heritage, rather than having to conform to a rigid Catholic identity, or, worse, fight against being removed from the fold by Vatican enforcers. Whether in Peru or in the US, Catholic education has an embarrassment of riches to draw upon. Those who would try to stuff teachers and faculty into a finite area of investigation will always be disappointed. Catholic thought is forever expanding, just like the universe in Lemaître’s Big Bang theory. And the majority of Catholics throughout history, including some popes, have liked it that way.

Lemaître, who thrived under popes who admired scholarship, was empowered by the church of his day to pursue science that Einstein called “very beautiful indeed.” Perhaps channeling the Roman playwright Terence, the clergyman-scientist wrote, “Nothing that is human can be foreign to the Christian. How could the Church not be interested in the most noble of all strictly human occupations, namely the search for truth?” ■

What does the church teach about abortion?



THE TRUTH ABOUT CATHOLICS AND ABORTION

Church teachings on moral decision-making and abortion are complex—far more complex than the bishops would have us believe. This new publication from Catholics for Choice reveals how church teachings leave ample room for Catholics to affirm that abortion can be a moral choice.

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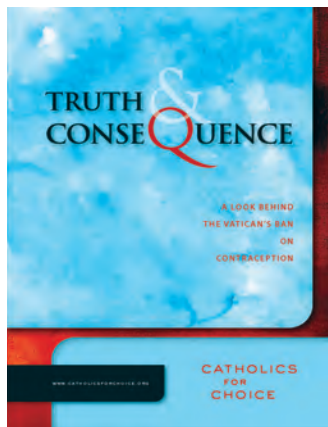


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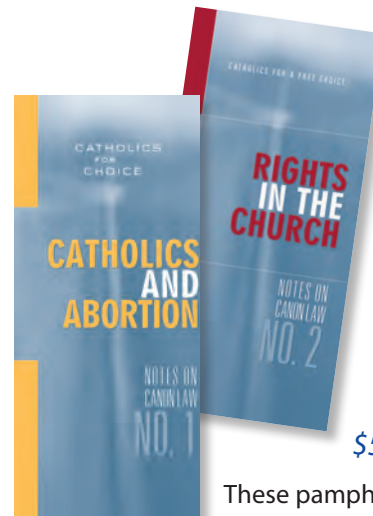
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CATHOLICS AND ABORTION

Notes on Canon Law #1

RIGHTS IN THE CHURCH

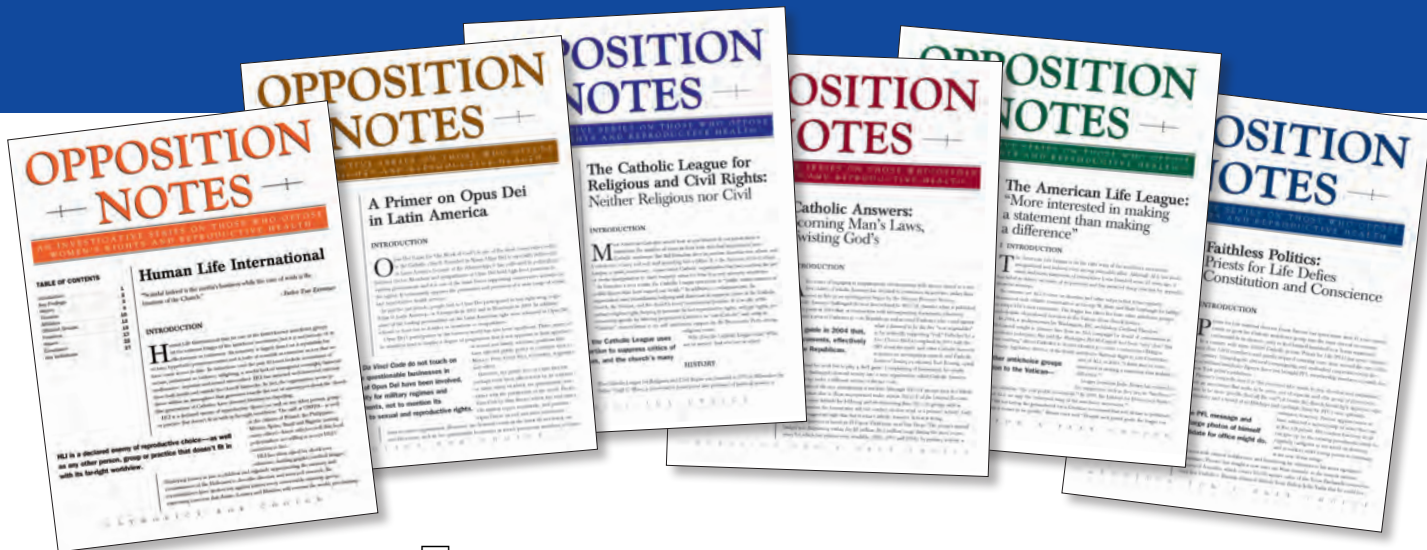
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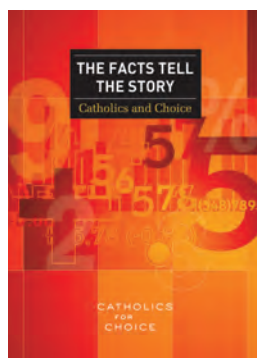
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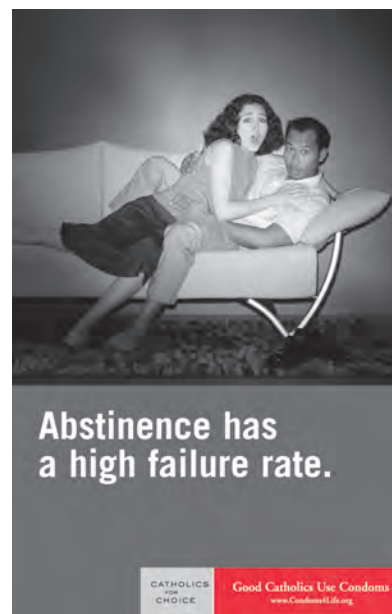
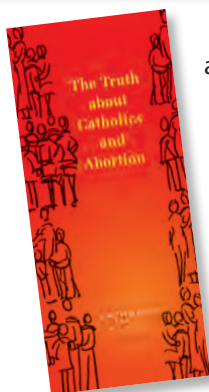


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The Facts Tell the Story provides the latest data about American Catholics' support for and use of legal abortion, contraception and other reproductive healthcare issues. This succinct collection of statistics is a handy reference on polling related to abortion access, contraception and comprehensive sexuality education as well as the separation of church and state.

Also Available:

THE TRUTH ABOUT CATHOLICS AND ABORTION
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Closing the Book on Choice?

By Jennie Bristow

Reproductive Justice: A Global Concern

Joan C. Chrisler (editor)
(Praeger, 2012, 318 pp.)
978-0313393396, \$58

FROM FEMALE GENITAL cutting and human trafficking to contraception, abortion and prenatal care, Chrisler's edited collection of essays provides a thought-provoking overview of the various issues that make up the contemporary problem of "reproductive justice." By addressing this as a global concern, the authors pay careful attention to cross-cultural comparisons, emphasizing that phenomena are framed differently according to the societies in which they occur.

Thus, the idea of "sex selection abortions"—and specifically, the abortion of fetuses because they are female—causes outrage in many Western societies across the political spectrum. Right-leaning critics of abortion seize on this issue as a way of accusing the left of condoning gender bias, while left-leaning supporters of abortion rights criticize such practices as an expression of gender inequality in the first place, and an assault on (unborn) women in the second. Yet as Ramaswami Mahalingam and Madeline Wachman explain in their chapter on "Female Feticide and Infanticide," "women's right to

give birth to a daughter or son (not just to a son) needs to be understood within the cultural-ecological context where giving birth to a daughter greatly undermines the woman's authority and power within her household."



Virginia Braun's chapter explores the similarly emotive issue of female genital cutting (FGC). While many in the Global North frame FGC as an issue of violence or child abuse, women who live in those societies where this practice forms a significant rite of passage may experience more problems when they are excluded from it. In Western societies, the current vogue for female genital cosmetic surgery may be viewed by some as just as objectionable as FGC, but that would be to ignore the disparate reasons why women might undergo the two different procedures.

The crux here is *choice*. Chrisler's introduction does an admirable job of explaining how the concept of "reproductive justice" has developed as a significant modifier to the classic framework of "reproductive rights." "The rhetoric of 'choice' suggests a 'marketplace of options'" akin to the array of equally appealing goods in a shopping mall, she argues. "In reality, reproductive decisions are often painful and difficult," the editor writes—for example, when a woman seeks an abortion because she cannot afford to raise a child, or is

prevented from "choosing" parenthood because she is infertile, or is coerced by "partners, kin, or courts" into using contraceptives or terminating wanted pregnancies. Chrisler explains:

"Thus, even in individualistic cultures, such as the United States, where personal agency and control are expected, reproductive rights can be elusive, and choices are not always experienced as such. In collectivist cultures, especially in poverty-stricken developing nations, where women have little self-efficacy and few opportunities to control their lives or their bodies, reproductive justice is a 'dream deferred.'"

For these reasons, reproductive justice "situates the work in the context of the greater social justice movement," which requires that "people are treated fairly, equitably and respectfully." As such, it is not just an extension of the concept of reproductive rights, which expresses the principle of women's autonomy through the framework of *negative* rights—the right not to be told by the state what to do with her body. Reproductive justice is a different concept altogether, more akin to the notion of *positive* rights, where the role of the state (or, at a global level, the international community) is considered to be enabling a woman to live a better life.

While the sentiment behind this approach is understandable, and many of the specific arguments articulated in *Reproductive Justice* are compelling, the shift away from autonomy to empowerment expressed in these essays holds a number of dangers. The clearest danger is how understanding the context within which women make choices—for example, about sex selection abortion—can end up becoming an argument that they do not make choices at all, but simply respond to the pressures put upon them. The logic of this argument is that women's autonomy should be considered a convenient

JENNIE BRISTOW is editor of the *bpas* publication *Abortion Review* www.abortionreview.org, and author of *Standing up to Supernanny* (Imprint Academic 2009).

Bookshelf

fiction that blames women for making certain decisions when, in reality, they are only doing what their society expects them to do.

IN MY VIEW, THIS UNDERESTIMATES the value of women's autonomy—both as a principle and as an expression of the reality of women's lives. In all societies, women (and men) are constrained by their social, economic and cultural circumstances—nobody can truly “be who they want to be.” Yet in all societies, individuals engage with these circumstances through making choices between the options available to them. Over the years, clichés have emerged recognizing the constrained nature of life choices: “She was between a rock and a hard place” or “I wouldn't start from here.” But we jealously guard our ability to make these choices for the simple reason that to deny us this limited agency means that we lose any decision-making capacity at all.

For example, in Britain one of the more pernicious arguments currently being mobilized by opponents of abortion relies precisely on the argument that women who have an unwanted pregnancy are *de facto* vulnerable, and are thus incapable of making a genuine choice to end the pregnancy through abortion. This has led to the argument that, by merely offering abortion as an acceptable option, abortion providers are exploiting these women's vulnerability and pressuring them into taking a particular course of action. For these opponents of abortion, women need to be enabled to make the “right choice” by a culture that is more supportive of women who carry unwanted pregnancies to term than ours currently is. Such a version of “reproductive justice” ends up purportedly protecting women by denying them access to abortion.

The problem highlighted by the above example is that a “positive rights” framework that seeks to make a better world for women is hostage to different interpretations of what that better world might be. This is apparent in the essays

Academic Freedom and the *Telos* of the Catholic University

Kenneth Garcia (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, 216 pp)

“Academic freedom” usually brings to mind the pursuit of secular knowledge and any barriers that might insert themselves between scholars and their investigation. Neatly avoiding some of the common arguments that pit the academic against church, *Academic Freedom and the Telos of the Catholic University* uses the term to refer to “the freedom to pursue the spiritual dimension of the mind wherever it will go, as well as the freedom not to go there.”

The author grounds the discussion in an overview of early Catholic thinkers from Augustine to Aquinas, up through Cardinal John Henry Newman and present-day commentators on Catholic education. For a subject that has become fraught with controversy recently, Garcia manages to write a compact, reasoned argument. The book leads one to suspect that the reason that there are so many challenges in Catholic higher education today is that we're talking about all the wrong things. Instead, one of the chapters is called “The Direction toward which Wonder Progresses,” suggesting that the mind's attraction to the infinite may be one of the overlooked but essential subjects in Catholic academia.

When the Sisters Said Farewell:

The Transition of Leadership in Catholic Elementary Schools

Michael P. Caruso, SJ (Rowman & Littlefield, 2012, 155 pp)

This book primarily uses case studies and anecdotes to give a face to the women religious who helped build what was the largest private school system in the world for a time. First, there is background on the US Catholic school system and the sisters who were recruited to help live up to the ideal of each parish with its own school. Most of the book deals with the shrinking of that system and the ways different orders and parishes dealt more or less gracefully with changes such as Vatican II, urban flight and funding difficulties. The book's most powerful impact, however, is through the narratives of individual sisters and schools, giving a behind-the-scenes look at just how much goes into a Catholic school and the grieving process that happens when a relationship between an order and a school is lost.

(continued on page 43)

published in *Reproductive Justice*, where the tension is between understanding the reason for such cultural practices as female genital cutting, and wanting to achieve a world in which such practices do not exist. Once the idea of reproductive choice is dismissed as a fiction, the only route to a better world is seen to be the top-down imposition of more enlightened ideas.

This route might seem acceptable if everybody in the world agreed, for example, that natural births and breastfeeding were better than medical interventions and formula feeding, or that families planned through contraception and abortion are better than

families that develop according to traditional methods of fertility control. But these are not universally-held positions or experiences, as the essays within this book suggest. Even within the same society, one woman's childless “better life” is another woman's infertile pain.

For this reason no single state or authority can create the ideal world for its citizens; all it can do is to promise not to interfere in the limited choices that women and men make about their bodies and their private lives. We should think carefully about the consequences of closing the book on the “rhetoric of choice.” ■

Older than the Nation: Latino Catholics and their Changing Presence in the US

By Jessica González-Rojas

Latino Catholicism: Transformation in America's Largest Church

Timothy Matovina

(Princeton University Press, 2011, 328 pp)

978-140083973, \$29.95

THE GROWING LATINO demographic in the United States, which comprises more than a third of US Catholics, warrants this historical account and contemporary analysis of the Latino Catholic experience. The author of *Latino Catholicism*, Timothy Matovina, a professor of theology and the director of the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism at the University of Notre Dame, is no stranger to examining Catholic Latinos. His other books include *Guadalupe and Her Faithful: Latino Catholics in San Antonio, from Colonial Origins to the Present* and *Horizons of the Sacred: Mexican Traditions in US Catholicism*.

Beginning with a preface that provides some key statistics about Catholic Latinos in the United States, Matovina demonstrates the vital contribution that Latinos make to Catholicism early in his narrative. He states, “[Hispanics] are the

reason why Catholicism is holding its own relative to other religions in the United States.” The author cites a 2010 study on the state of American religion that noted that “the Catholic Church in the United States is on its way to becoming a majority-Latino institution.” Beyond the presence and growing power that Latinos are developing within the largest religious denomination in this country, the parallel influences of Latinos and Catholics in the US are shaping the future of the nation.

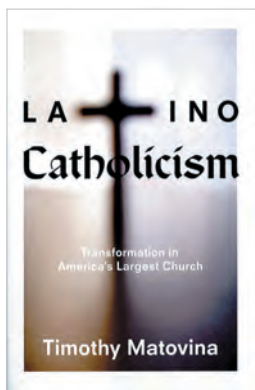
Matovina acknowledges the limitations of the use of the words “Hispanic” or “Latino,” as neither term fully reflects the diversity of the community that the book examines. This is an important footnote, as “Latinos/Hispanics” are not a monolithic group and could refer to people from Puerto Rico, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico and other countries and territories; they could be foreign-born or US-born; they could be Spanish-speaking, English-speaking, bilingual or speak an indigenous dialect; they could be of indigenous, African, Asian or European ancestry. Given this heterogeneity, Matovina does a good job of distinguishing between several dif-

ferent Latino communities, providing brief historical contexts and discussing experiences that may differ based on ethnic background or regional location in the US (Northeast, Southwest, etc.) throughout the book.

The first chapter, “Remapping American Catholicism,” provides a historical analysis of Latinos and their relation to Catholicism in the US. Matovina points out that Latinos have been rendered nearly invisible in many scholarly historical works on the subject. He points to the fact that Catholics comprised a small number of British colonial subjects, while the Spanish colonial presence in territories now part of the United States, such as Florida and California, was made up of Catholics from Spain. Those early settlers established missions throughout the country and propagated Catholicism among Native Americans. US territorial expansion to the south and west during the 19th century involved the first large group of Hispanic Catholics and led to the conquest of approximately half of Mexico’s national territory and the occupation of Puerto Rico after the Spanish-American War. Puerto Rico’s capital, San Juan, was the location of the first diocese of the New World, established in 1511.

In order to examine Latino Catholicism in the US, Matovina says, one must also examine Catholicism in the rest of the Americas, remembering that “Spanish-speaking Catholics have lived in what is now the United States for twice as long as the nation has existed.” To this end, the book includes a brief overview of the global influences of the rise of Castro and communism in Cuba, on the one hand, and the impact of US programs like Operation Bootstrap in Puerto Rico, on the other, driving immigrants (in Cuba’s case) and migrants (in Puerto Rico’s case) to the mainland.

The author further discusses the tensions and differences among the culture, traditions and practices of the Catholics of Mexican (and other Latino) descent



JESSICA GONZÁLEZ-ROJAS is the executive director at the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health and is an adjunct professor of Latino and Latin American Studies at the City University of New York’s City College.

as Anglo-Americans expanded westward and Catholic bishops of European descent were appointed in communities in California and the Southwest. In particular, many of these European-American bishops found Mexican Catholic practices to be too boisterous and undignified. These tensions prove to be a thread throughout the book as the Latino presence in Catholic institutions continues to grow in new communities throughout the US.

THE SECOND CHAPTER, “Integration,” compares the assimilation experiences of previous European Catholic immigrants and those of the newer Latino immigrants. Matovina draws upon sociologists and anthropologists in examining ethnic, class and educational differences among descendants of previous immigration groups and the challenges inherent in forging unity among such an increasingly diverse ecclesial body. Then the author turns to look at larger sociopolitical narratives about Latino immigrants—such as the “Latino threat narrative,” which portrays Latinos as invaders set to destroy US society—that exist in our current discourse and impact Latinos’ integration into Catholic life. He acknowledges that for Latinos, the issue of assimilation or integration is very nuanced, and that they often seek to retain elements of language and culture in their Catholic practices while simultaneously contributing to the US life and economy in ways that are very mainstream.

Herein lies the importance of the church’s Hispanic ministries and the “National Parish” model, where Latinos often feel a sense of welcome and belonging that they often don’t experience in Eurocentric Catholic parishes and in greater society. Matovina demonstrates that “Hispanic ministry initiatives in the US Catholic Church tend to be strongest among immigrants who respond enthusiastically to the national parish dynamics:

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Islam and Assisted Reproductive Technologies: Sunni and Shia Perspectives

Edited by Marcia C. Inhorn and Soraya Tremayne (Berghahn Books, 2012, 338 pp)

Readers looking for an overview of the different policies and perspectives on assisted reproductive technology (ART) will discover many interesting facets to these issues in the Middle East. For instance, the Shia and Sunni traditions have very different approaches to infertility interventions, with the sharing of genetic material from donors presenting a stumbling block for traditional concepts of marriage and kinship. Nevertheless, Iranian Shia have managed to use precedents within their faith tradition to utilize third-party donations in a thriving ART industry that was endorsed by the supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Khamene’i, in 1999.

Students of assisted reproductive technology in Europe and America will also find much to learn from in this book. The chapter that compares the Catholic hierarchy’s response to ART issues with those of Muslim leaders gives a fresh perspective to the longstanding debates. “In Islam, the human embryo simply is not sacrosanct as in Roman Catholicism,” the author writes, and then contrasts the different authority Sunni clerics exercise over clinics versus the Catholic ban on ART that is largely ignored in practice—or imposed on the unwilling faithful, as the restrictive ART laws are in Italy. It is fascinating to read about another religious tradition, just as rich as Catholicism, being used creatively to respond to new situations unforeseen by earlier leaders. By working within a faith tradition, rather than against it, change is possible.

Sexual Politics: Sexuality, Family Planning, and the British Left from the 1880s to the Present Day

Stephen Brooke (Oxford University Press, 2011, 284 pp)

The sexual and reproductive rights movement went through many changes in the last 130 years or so, but this book looks at these shifts through a particular prism: the working class. Separating out this one section of society helps amplify some of the voices that might otherwise not be heard in a more general overview of topics like abortion access, contraception and LGBT rights.

Brooke says that for working class people, more than others, “the personal was forced to be political” if their concerns were to receive a real hearing, so the author weaves in political activism through socialism and the Labour Party. The Left did not always want to confront sexual issues, and thus, *Sexual Politics* addresses “the limits of the body politic in dealing with the politics of the body.” Nevertheless, the differences working class individuals saw between their own freedoms and those enjoyed by the upper classes served as a catalyst for the movement for sexual and reproductive rights.

The book makes the point that the population in question may be divided by gender but it is simultaneously united by class. During the century in question, however, the country’s racial and ethnic identity underwent several shifts as well. This would have been a useful dimension to add to the discussion of the British working class, which may well have had its own disparities in terms of sexual politics.

(continued on page 44)

their traditional rituals and devotions, recognizable spiritual and material needs, preference for Spanish, and deep resonance with pastors who express

solidarity with them make them relatively easier to form into vibrant faith communities.” The next two chapters, “Hispanic Ministry” and “Parishes and

Apostolic Movements,” delve more deeply into this subject. This section outlines the tenets of the US bishops’ official statements on Hispanic Ministry, *Encuentro and Mission: A Renewed Pastoral Framework for Hispanic Ministry*, and discusses the roles of various other committees, organizations and movements dedicated to serving Latinos in the Catholic faith, such as the National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry and the *Cursillo* movement. As Matovina states, “Nearly one-fourth of 18,280 Catholic parishes in the United States now have Hispanic Ministries ranging from a weekly mass in Spanish to a full program of outreach ministries for Latinos, a sizable

figure though still disproportionate to the approximately 35 percent of the US Catholic population that is Hispanic.”

There is a rising concern within the Catholic church over the number of Latinos who defect from the Catholic faith, such as the growing movement of Latinos over to Pentecostal churches and other Protestant faiths, and the possible threat this poses to Latino Catholicism. There is also unease about the increasing number of Latinos who identify with no religion at all. However, the Program for the Analysis of Religion among Latinos noted “a shrink-while-we’re-growing’ phenomenon: as the percentage of Latinos who are Catholic decreases, in raw numbers

and in percentage of the total Catholic population, Latinos continue to increase.” The chapter on Hispanic ministries and the one titled “Leadership” examine the important role that the leadership of Latinos and Latinas in ministries and apostolic movements plays in terms of building a vibrant faith. This section also addresses the challenges Latino pastoral leaders face when seeking parity. One bishop noted that the lack of Hispanic priests, religious sisters and brothers poses one of the most serious problems facing the Catholic church.

THE CHAPTERS ON “WORSHIP AND Devotion” and “Public Catholicism” describe the Latino cultural faith practices that have caused tension among Catholic Anglo-American coreligionists. These practices include the adoration of patron saints, such as San Juan Bautista in Puerto Rico and the Virgen de Guadalupe in Mexican and other Latino communities. These chapters also depict the strong sense of social justice that many Latinos bring to their Catholic devotion. Many connect the sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ to the struggle for immigration reform or against injustice that Latinos face in their daily lives. Displays of this devotion, such as annual Way of the Cross processions, often create discord in communities, with elected officials looking to revoke permits to conduct street reenactments on or near holy days. Matovina shows the diverse ways that Hispanic Catholics incorporate their involvement in political structures and decision-making processes on the federal, state and local level with their faith, including the ways in which community organizing and voter engagement play an important role. Many Latino Catholics see their activism “as an extension of their commitment to God, church, family and neighborhood.”

In the last chapter, “Passing on the Faith,” and in the epilogue, Matovina acknowledges the challenges ahead in passing on the faith to the next genera-

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(continued from page 43)

Women, Writing, Theology: Transforming a Tradition of Exclusion

Emily A. Holmes and Wendy Farley, editors (Baylor University Press, 2011, 315 pp)

The title of *Women, Writing, Theology: Transforming a Tradition of Exclusion* may sound forbidding to someone wary of being lectured at or forced to confront the worst face of the world, as books about societal inequalities sometimes do. But this rich collection of essays from several faith traditions ultimately takes flight above its academic tone and collection of hard truths in a rewarding journey through the individual conscience.

At its heart, *Women, Writing, Theology* is about a paradox, one that transcends gender as well as faith or lack thereof. In her essay “My God Became Flesh,” Emily A. Holmes states, “All medieval women writers wrote from ... concurrent humility and audacity.” The same may be said of all the women in this collection. Each struggled with the sense that she had no right to embark on her own faith journey but ultimately followed a spiritual calling with little thought to what was “proper.”

One of the most engaging essays is “Speaking Funk” by Kendra G. Hotz, which is unexpectedly about early Christian ascetics who happened to be women. In language modeled after the influential African American novelist Toni Morrison, “funk” is the refusal to internalize oppression. The playful yet serious word provides a “why not” moment—isn’t it just right to say that these female mystics from the early church went to the desert and “found their funk”?

It’s difficult to put the different stories and writers together, but in the end it makes sense that these pieces aren’t stitched together artificially. After all, there was no pre-set space for any of these women’s spiritual yearnings to aspire to. The picture that emerges from *Women, Writing, Theology* is one of the conscience in its purest form, and all the different patterns created by each individual following hers.

Any reader who’s ever had the sense that something has been left out of the official story of their faith will find some treasure in the excavation projects led by these diverse authors.

tion of Latinos, particularly because the makeup of the Latino population is very young. He sums up the task at hand perfectly: “A number of young Latinas and Latinos perceive their elders’ faith as too entwined with suffering, too connected to a bygone immigrant homeland, too focused on strict obedience to authority, too simplistic to address the realities of contemporary life, or simply irrelevant to the concerns of a new generation.” What the Catholic church needs to grapple with are its positions on various issues that impact the real lives of the individuals in the Latino community, such as LGBTQ equality, reproductive rights, cohabitation among non-married Latinos, family formation, gender justice and educational advancement. Matovina ends by stating that the transformative potential of Latino Catholicism depends on how credibly the church addresses these challenges.

OVERALL, THE BOOK PROVIDES an interesting and comprehensive narrative, examining important elements such as Latino Catholics’ strong connection to social justice issues like immigration reform and education, and their role in demonstrating their faith. I have only two main critiques: for the average reader who may not be an expert in Catholic hierarchy and religious structures, greater context-setting would have been very helpful in navigating the storyline as it relates to those various structures. Also, as a reader committed to reproductive justice, I would have liked further exploration into the role of Latinas in the Catholic faith movement in the United States and how issues such as unintended pregnancy, contraception and abortion impact their attitudes about church teachings. Matovina touches on the role of women religious in small ways throughout the book, but it would have been enlightening to delve deeper into the critical role that Latina women play in terms of fostering and supporting the Catholic church. ■

Into the Public Square: Media Strategies for Progressive Religious Voices

By Maureen Fiedler

All Politics is Religious: Speaking Faith to the Media, Policy Makers and Community

Rabbi Dennis S. Ross
(Skylight Paths Publishing, 2012, 176 pp)
978-1594733741, \$18.99

ALL POLITICS IS RELIGIOUS IS a great little book in many ways. Its author is a progressive rabbi who, in the first half of the book, lays out the principles that guide his life and ministry. In the second half, he offers a “how-to” guide for religious leaders who want to publicize a message in print or broadcast media.

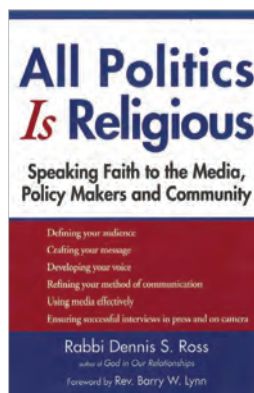
The author’s principles will be news to anyone who hears only conservative, or sometimes archaic, religious messages on the air waves: warmed-over versions of Mike Huckabee or the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. In the current climate, Rabbi Ross is a new and welcome counterforce: a progressive religious voice and a serious counterweight in US media markets. He offers hope that progressive religious voices might get into the public square and articulate a different vision of what religion means in society.

MAUREEN FIEDLER is the host of *Interfaith Voices*, a public radio show heard on 68 stations in North America and a lifelong activist for social justice, peace and women’s rights.

When it comes to issues, Rabbi Ross emphasizes a responsibility to protect the stranger, the widow and the orphan, with a special concern for immigrants. He casts the controversies over reproductive rights and marriage equality as questions of “moral agency,” i.e., who is the proper agent of moral decision-making in issues involving abortion or same-sex marriage? Not surprisingly, he names those closest to the situation as the proper moral agents: the woman or the couple. (He rightly suggests that some in the media literally don’t know that there is *any* religious

support for “moral agency” when it comes to abortion). Finally, he champions the principle of separation of church and state, often under attack by the Religious Right.

The second half of the book is a “how-to” guide for religious leaders who want to get a message out but are inexperienced or perhaps fearful of the media. This section could be read profitably by anyone. It is simply practical media advice for the neophyte. But since I am in media myself, I have a few bits of advice that might go in a second edition of this book.



FIRST, THE RABBI'S ADVICE. He begins with print media: how to formulate a press release, write a letter to the editor that will actually get printed or author an op-ed column. This section emphasizes important guidelines: open cleverly, get to the point right away, make your case briefly and hammer it home. He suggests openings that signal that the message is coming from a progressive religious person, something that will raise interest—and maybe eyebrows—in many circles.

For radio or TV, the author has a range of helpful suggestions. For example, listen to or watch the program on which you will be interviewed. Study how guests are treated. Prepare your message (he calls it a “triangle”) and stick to it. Don't ramble; talk in sound bites. Develop talking points that reflect pastoral or community experience, or even offer a patriotic tone. If appropriate, reflect an interfaith reality. Deflect unrelated (or unwanted) questions with grace and ease. Learn to love the invitation for a

pre-interview; it gives you clues on what's to come. Know that you are never “off-mike” or “off-camera.” Anything you say can be used later in a way you may not like. Rabbi Ross also tailors this advice for religious lobbyists.

But as to media appearances, I would add a few suggestions of my own. First, avoid “insider” language, i.e., language that would not be understood outside your own faith tradition. I was once surprised to learn that my producer (who is Jewish) did not know what “Eucharist” meant, but “communion” was OK. Now, I check all my “Catholic” language with her to make sure it's understandable for a general audience.

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SECOND, I SAW VERY LITTLE in this book about the power of a great, compelling human story. Yet stories grip emotions as nothing else and drive home a point with power. They are often great interview openers.

But the biggest hole in the book waiting to be filled (another book, Rabbi?) is a discussion of electronic communication, especially the Internet and social media. For the younger generation, these *are* today's media. Issues about effective messaging on the Web, on Facebook and Twitter are important. So is the art of the e-mail blast: how to get a message out without pestering people to death.

Finally, thinking about the Mike Huckabees and Pat Robertsons of the world, what guidelines would help someone who wants to offer sustained coverage of a progressive religious perspective? Maybe host a radio talk show? Rev. Welton Gaddy of the Interfaith Alliance is one of the few progressive examples out there. His radio show, “State of Belief,” has an impact way beyond the occasional interview or column.

That said, this book by Rabbi Dennis Ross offers valuable and important advice, providing ideas for heretofore silent progressive religious voices to make themselves heard in the public square. ■

Reports Worth Reading

Safe Abortion: Technical and Policy Guidance for Health Systems, 2nd Edition

World Health Organization, 2012

The 2003 edition of *Safe Abortion* was the first of its kind: a publication looking at both abortion care and policy from a global perspective. The second edition has been updated to reflect the social and medical changes since the first version was published. The World Health Organization (WHO) does a remarkably good job at creating material suitable for its three distinct audiences—policymakers, abortion providers and managers of health delivery systems and NGOs.

Charts and statistics help illustrate the clear relationship between unsafe abortion and disability and death, and the section on abortion methods helps demystify the process of inducing abortion by medication (mifepristone and/or misoprostol). But one of the most valuable aspects of the report is its matter-of-fact treatment of abortion and the extra-legal methods used in many countries to prevent women from accessing abortion.

Using both a human rights rationale and an economic analysis of the costs stemming from unsafe abortion, *Safe Abortion* explains why intelligent policy and service provision make sense for women and for society as a whole. The WHO advocates for the “constellation of services,” meaning that abortion care should be “integrated into the health system ... to acknowledge their status as legitimate health services and to protect against stigmatization and discrimination of women and health-care providers.”

For providers and health policy officials, the questionnaires for evaluating local resources, training and equipment will be helpful. For those interested in protecting or advancing reproductive health rights, the UN treaty monitoring body recommendations and regional court decisions will provide useful examples of language that affirms women’s rights and health.

Colonizing African Values: How the US Christian Right is Transforming Sexual Politics in Africa

Rev. Kopya John Kaoma, Political Research Associates, 2012

This report builds upon Rev. Kaoma’s groundbreaking 2009 work, *Globalizing the Culture Wars*, which traced the connections between threats to LGBT people in Uganda, for example, and Western fundamentalism. In the new publication, Kaoma establishes that this transplanted homophobia is not an isolated phenomenon in Uganda, but rather a continent-wide issue.

The author utilized researchers from several countries to document a parallel narrative that has developed about sexuality in Africa. On the one hand, American religious leaders have cleverly depicted homosexuality as a Western import, while Kaoma sustains that this homophobia was the real transplant, having been consciously instilled in Africa by these ultraconservative ministers.

Most importantly, however, is the way the author addresses this curious and dangerous phenomenon by asking what can be done about it. A native of Zimbabwe, Kaoma points out the way homosexuality was portrayed as something foreign to Africa, and how this makes well-meaning advocates concerned about LGBT individuals in the region vulnerable to charges of cultural imperialism.

The report offers a series of recommendations for addressing the problem, with the main idea being that African leaders—both from the LGBT and the religious communities—must be the ones to end the cycle of foreign meddling and the resulting human rights abuses.

Case studies from Zimbabwe, Liberia, Zambia and Malawi are accompanied by profiles of leading anti-LGBT organizations in Africa, among them the American Center for Law & Justice, Human Life International and Family Watch International. Kaoma draws back the curtain on the growing dangers for

LGBT individuals in Africa, in the process revealing that much of the fervor being pumped into hate legislation comes from without.

Notes on Religious Freedom

Kenan Malik, Pandaemonium blog, June 18, 2012

Malik is a BBC Radio presenter and author with a neurobiology background. This June he wrote a long reflection on religious freedom, divided into 18 short parts, about why religious freedom should not have a special place in contemporary politics. He begins by explaining the difference between two important theorists on the subject, John Locke and Baruch Spinoza. Locke may be the root of some of our contemporary missteps related to religious freedom, Malik says, because he conceived of liberty in terms of nonconformist congregations, rather than a more universal freedom of conscience. Spinoza, on the other hand, focused on “individual liberty and freedom of expression”—both integral to the First Amendment, Malik points out.

“Notes on Religious Freedom” aims to show how the “religious” part of freedom both deserves to be there, and does not merit a more privileged position than other forms of freedom. The author says this is because “religion is no longer the crucible within which political and intellectual debates take place.” That is, we struggle together as a society to accommodate the individual liberties of people with radically different ethical constructs.

Malik walks the reader through his analysis of situations like bans on the burqa and marriage registrars who object to gay marriage. His objective is to show that “the fact that acts of conscience may sometimes have to be curbed does not mean that in these cases there is a ‘conflict of rights.’” By de-escalating some of the thorny issues of our times, this essay provides a valuable perspective on the hotly contested term “religious freedom.”

*“Christians now find themselves in much the same situation as they were in ancient, pagan Rome: surrounded by an antagonistic, sexually-saturated pagan culture, demanding contraceptives, abortifacients, direct abortion, and infanticide to remove the unwanted ‘side-effects’ of sexual libertinism.”*¹

—A “history lesson” about the Obama administration’s contraception coverage policy from *Catholic World Report*, which also claimed “our secularism looks suspiciously like ancient paganism.”

*“Dear Lord, I ask that on Tuesday, Nov. 7 [sic], you find a new job for President Obama.”*²

—Father Michael St. Marie, giving the opening invocation for the Idaho State GOP Convention; the diocese of Boise had no comment on his “prayer.”

*“Hitler and Stalin would not tolerate any competition with the state in education, social services and healthcare.... Barack Obama—with his radical, proabortion and extreme secularist agenda—now seems intent on following a similar path.”*³

—Bishop Daniel Jenky of Peoria, Illinois, in a homily delivered in St. Mary’s Cathedral in Peoria.

*“Somebody told me that there’s a total exemption for Muslims in the back of [the Affordable Care Act], that all Muslims are exempt because insurance, for Muslims, is a type of gambling, which is contrary to the Koran, and therefore Muslims are not obliged in any way to observe the insurance mandate which derives from the act.”*⁴

—Bishop Fabian Bruskewitz of Lincoln, Nebraska, making up a complete falsehood about the Affordable Care Act at the 2012 usccb Spring General Assembly in Atlanta, Georgia.

*“He’d rather have a beer with someone than tell them they’re going to hell.”*⁵

—American Life League president Judie Brown, criticizing Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan for inviting President Obama to the nonpartisan Al Smith dinner.

*“He is forcing business people right now to do things that are against their conscience, that they will have to—if you’re a Catholic—you’ll have to go to confession ... to confess you are complying with a government program that is a sin in the Catholic Church.”*⁶

—Former presidential candidate Rick Santorum, commenting on the Obama administration’s contraceptive coverage policy for employee-sponsored insurance plans.

*“The [deviant] behaviors that are primarily examined are murder, rape, robbery, prostitution, homosexuality, mental illness, and drug use.”*⁷

—Description for the social work course called swk 314 Deviant Behavior, offered at the Franciscan University of Steubenville.

¹ Benjamin Wiker, “Preparing for a Fortnight for Freedom: A Short History Lesson,” *Catholic World Report*, June 18, 2012. ² George Prentice, “Idaho Priest Prays for Obama’s Defeat: Diocese Has No Comment,” *Boise Weekly*, June 26, 2012. ³ Andrew Stern, “Bishop’s linking Obama to Hitler Enrages Notre Dame Professors,” Reuters, April 25, 2012. ⁴ Mollie Wilson O’Reilly, “From the Email Inbox of Bishop Bruskewitz – UPDATED,” dotCommonweal, June 14, 2012. ⁵ Michelle Boorstein, “From Conventions to Colbert, Dolan Plays on Top Stages,” *Washington Post*, August 29, 2012. ⁶ Tara Culp-Ressler, “Santorum: Obamacare Is Forcing Catholics into Confession,” ThinkProgress, August 16, 2012. ⁷ National Public Radio, “College Course Lumps Homosexuality, Rape, Murder,” September 10, 2012.

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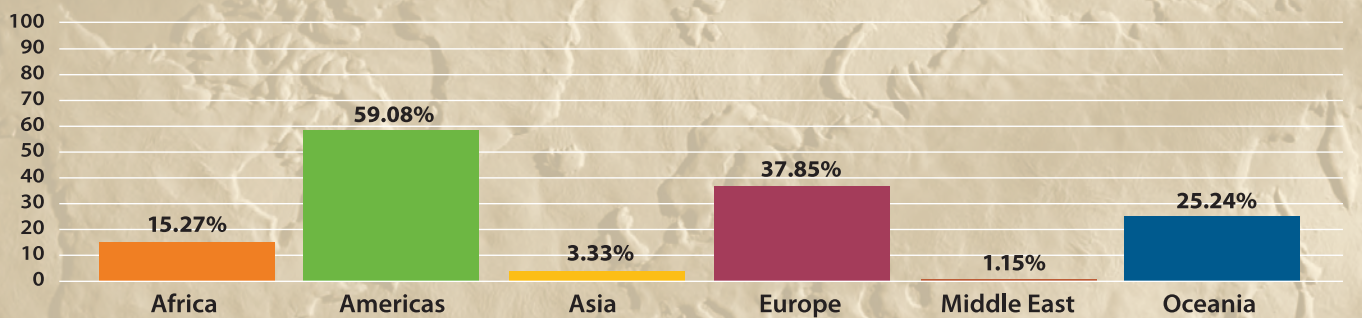
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