

Stones Cry Out

Faithful of Southern Illinois

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." He said in reply, "I tell you, if they keep silent the stones will cry out!" Lk. 19: 39-40

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The Respect Life Office in the Belleville Diocese declares itself to be a witness to human dignity in all stages and circumstances but, in practice, its message focuses disproportionately on a single issue, abortion. It fails to publicly proclaim a consistent ethic of life policy. For years, pastors and administrators have received directives from this office, requesting that they include in their weekend church bulletins, the names and addresses of politicians to whom parishioners are encouraged to write in support of anti-abortion legislation. Pro-life supporters are encouraged to protest along our highways, carry anti-abortion banners and join the national March for Life rally in Washington as well as local anti-abortion prayer services. While these actions may be good, we regret that there have been no such entreaties to other critical pro-life issues, e.g., health care for all or the abolition of the death penalty.

In our own state, an important life issue – the death penalty - has been in the forefront of the news. On January 11, 2011, the majority of both Houses of the Illinois General Assembly voted to repeal the death penalty. Many politicians who declare themselves to be pro-life voted against ending this ultimate punishment, including our local Catholic politicians.

As their central premise, pro-life Catholics state that **all** life is sacred. This same premise, then, must be true for all – what governs life before birth must govern life after birth. We have not been encouraged by the Respect Life Office to write our politicians, urging them to vote against the death penalty. We have not been asked to join a prayer vigil at the Tamms Correctional Center where executions have occurred nor a rally in Springfield to advocate against the death penalty.

Catholic's belief of salvation presumes that even the worst sinner can be saved. Persons on death row deserve the same saving love as those in the womb. It's easy to protect a fetus but it's very difficult to die to oneself and forgive a condemned criminal. Jesus showed us what we must do to get rid of evil in our lives. He taught forgiveness. On the cross, Jesus forgave. Only by working through the pain of those who hurt us and breaking open our hearts with forgiveness will we be able to create a climate of love as Jesus did. Jesus' presence was one of love, not vindictiveness. Love and forgiveness will sustain us, not anger and vengeance.

Gov. Pat Quinn signed the bill abolishing capital punishment in Illinois on March 9, 2011. Eight days later, proponents of capital punishment won House Committee approval of three bills that would reinstate the death penalty. How will the Respect Life Office respond to this movement? Will it guide and lead a discussion on this pro-life issue, challenging people to consider the effects it has on our religious and Christian thought?

YOU BE THE JUDGE *by Les Himstedt*

Ah, March madness! No, I'm not talking about a basketball tournament, but church madness as we see it in this year of our Lord, 2011. In the game of sexual abuse settlements, my instinct tells me that the winner seems to be . . . the American hierarchs!

This season we witness again the top ten first round favorites taking the field. The top seeds, based on the known multi-million dollar settlements, include Los Angeles (\$660), San Diego (\$198), newcomer Northwest Jesuits (\$166), Orange (\$100), Boston (\$84.3), Covington (\$79), Portland (\$71.5), Oakland (\$56), Fairbanks Jesuits (\$50), and Spokane Jesuits (\$48).

The tournament is heavily weighted in favor of the Western Conferences of Dioceses and the Jesuit Provinces. Earning a spot for the first time is little known Belleville, coming from behind with a projected civil court judgment of \$5-7 million. The team's manager, the serene Bishop Edward K. Braxton, has been unusually tenacious in his fight for a spot in Division 1 via a tough, contentious lawsuit.

While the bishop's court record currently stands at a losing 2-0 from previous rounds (Circuit and Appellate courts), he's ready to field his team again on the court, namely, the state's Supreme Court, despite the fact that the referees (Jury and judges) have consistently ruled against his team.

The opening game this year features a return by the Philadelphia team, where a State's District Attorney, a Catholic layman, has just gone public with a grand jury finding of sexual abuse by 37 active priests in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Their coach, Monsignor William Lynn, Secretary of clergy personnel under previous team manager Cardinal Bevilacqua. It was the Cardinal's expertise in canon and civil law that saved the team in past games.

But while The District Attorney begins with a full court press, the current team manager, Cardinal Justin Rigali, now faces irate fans (Catholic laity) while explaining his management strategy. Playing it safe, he quickly benches 21 clergy teammates, placing them on

administrative leave.

The league "owners" (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops) pressured their leader to make a statement. Chairman of the Board, Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York, issued a press release that reassures "fans" that protecting children remains their top priority. A reporter, however, has recently written a story about Archbishop Dolan's previous record while still a manager of the Milwaukee archdiocesan team. Allegedly, he was recently deposed by referees, i.e., questioned under oath by lawyers, about his role in tucking away from public scrutiny substantial amounts of diocesan monies, a possible foul in an attempt to limit a huge team penalty, thereby creating restricted funds no longer available for payout if the archdiocese sought Chapter 11 bankruptcy. They have since done so. Fans find this an ironic way to make clergy child abuse victims a "top priority". But, hey, all things are fair in love, war and court play.

That leads me to our own small diocese of Belleville, Illinois. Recent years have not been winning seasons for manager Bishop Edward K. Braxton, and his game plan has not served the fans, in this case, the abuse victims, well. Let me explain.

One player, priest Ray Kownacki, has committed foul after foul (Multiple forms of abuse, including rape, abortion, threats of physical harm, etc.). He was allowed to continue playing game after game through his ministry in Guatemala and six (6) diocesan parish assignments. Coaches (Personnel Board) and managers (Bishops) refused to bench him, despite these horrific problems. They finally dropped him from the team, placing him on administrative leave – 25 years after the first credible accusation.

One disenchanted fan, James Wisniewski, pressed charges in a civil lawsuit that finally came to trial while Bishop Braxton was managing team Belleville. The game referees (Jury in Circuit Court) found him guilty and slapped a hefty fine (\$2.4 million in compensatory dam-

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An Open Letter to the U.S. Catholic Bishops on the Forthcoming Missal

Your Eminences, Your Excellencies,

With a heavy heart, I have recently made a difficult decision concerning the new English missal. I have decided to withdraw from all my upcoming speaking engagements on the Roman Missal in dioceses across the United States. After talking with my confessor and much prayer, I have concluded that I cannot promote the new missal translation with integrity. I'm sure bishops want a speaker who can put the new missal in a positive light, and that would require me to say things I do not believe.

I love the Church, I love the sacred liturgy, I love chant in Latin and English, and I treasure being involved with all these as a monk and priest. It has been an honor to serve until recently as chairman of the music committee of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) that prepared all the chants for the new missal. But my involvement in that process, as well as my observation of the Holy See's handling of scandal, has gradually opened my eyes to the deep problems in the structures of authority of our church.

The forthcoming missal is but a part of a larger pattern of top-down impositions by a central authority that does not consider itself accountable to the larger church. When I think of how secretive the translation process was, how little consultation was done with priests or laity, how the Holy See allowed a small group to hijack the translation at the final stage, how unsatisfactory the final text is, how this text was imposed on national conferences of bishops in violation of their legitimate episcopal authority, how much deception and mischief have marked this process—and then when I think of Our Lord's teachings on service and love and unity...I weep.

I see a good deal of disillusionment with the Catholic Church among my friends and acquaintances. Some leave the Catholic Church out of conviction, some gradually drift away, some join other denominations, some remain Catholic with difficulty. My response is to stay in this church for life and do my best to serve her. This I hope to do by stating the truth as I see it, with charity and respect. I would be ready to participate in future liturgical projects under more favorable conditions.

I am sorry for the difficulties I am causing others by withdrawing, but I know this is the right thing to do. I will be praying for you and all leaders in our church.

Pax in Christo,
Fr. Anthony Ruff, O.S.B.

Anthony Ruff, O.S.B., is a Benedictine monk of Saint John's Abbey and a professor of liturgy and Gregorian chant. He was on the committee which drafted the 2007 document "Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship" for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. He is founder of the National Catholic Youth Choir and blogs at Pray Tell. His letter above to the U.S. bishops is printed in its entirety.

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A Vision for Women in the 21st Century Church

On October 24, 2010, internationally known author and lecturer, Sr. Theresa Kane, RSM, was the featured speaker at the annual fall lecture of Faithful of Southern Illinois. Her lecture focused on one of the most critical issues in the 21st Century Church. She said that the way the Church deals with the injustice of sexism and discrimination will have a tremendous impact on the future of the church and on all members, both women and men.

A historical perspective of women in light of the patriarchal construct of church and society challenged people to envision a new way of being. Historically, our world, our society and our church has been male defined. Women



were considered property of men and we still have examples of this today. For example, very often, in marriage, the woman assumes the man's name, not only his last name but his first name, too. Mary Carr becomes Mrs. Tom Jones. "It's definitely time to recognize the value of womanhood, said Sr. Theresa.

As 21st Century Catholics, Sr. Theresa encouraged us to continue our work for social justice, peace and nonviolence and the vision of church as a community of equals – absent of a patriarchal hierarchy and sexist language. "We're at the beginning of a new moment, of a new understanding of God," Sr. Theresa stated. "We cannot be passive. We have the responsibility to direct and influence our future. We need to be engaged women and men in our Church; to ignore structures and

systems that do not advance community and equality. Remain in solidarity with the Gospel message, not the Church message."



Lecture on Women's Ministries in Early Church



In collaboration with the Women's Studies Program, Department of Theological Studies at St. Louis University, FOSIL sponsored renowned archaeologist and theologian, Dr. Dorothy Irwin, who presented, *"The Archaeology of Women's Ministries in the Early Church"*.

Held on Thursday evening, March 10, in the Sinquefield Room at DuBourg Hall, Dr. Irwin's slide lecture clearly attested to archeological evidence of women leaders in Jewish worship and later in the early Christian Church. Dr. Irwin's research, authentic photographs, frescoes, mosaics and tombstones provided powerful testimony to women's practices, teachings, and work in the church as ordained deacons, priests and bishops.



Woven into Irwin's lecture were references to Vatican statements regarding the ordination of women that she supports "because it is part of our Catholic history and theology and is called for by the gospel as much as the ordination of men." Irwin added, "I wonder what it would be like if the attitude of the official church was to welcome women into ministry with trust, appreciation and a sincere heart to help carry out Jesus' message."

Dr. Irwin obtained a pontifical doctorate in Catholic theology from the University of Tuebingen in Germany, with a specialization in Scripture.

In Memoriam: Loretta Garing

Using a wheelchair most of her adult life did not dampen the spirit of Loretta Garing, who died on Dec. 22, at age 68. “Do whatever you can,” was her motto as she brought unconditional love and hope to many who needed a listening ear. “Loretta got a lot out of life and gave much back,” said Diane Maertens, one of her adopted family. “She had a great sense of humor and requested that her picture with reindeer antlers be used in her obituary.” Loretta, a member of FOSIL, helped form Seeds of Hope, a ministry to help people with disabilities and was a lay minister at Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church in Belleville. “Soar in the Spirit, Loretta!”



FOSIL Launches New Website

Faithful of Southern Illinois (FOSIL) recently developed a new venue for our members and guests. Our redesigned website was launched in the early January and can be viewed at:

www.fosilonline.com.

FOSIL’s Steering Committee felt it was time to bring our previous website up-to-date. This new website will give our members easy access to the articles of Richard McBrien and Roger Karban, in addition to current FOSIL events. Included is our history, past speakers, calendar of events, the current newsletter and a place for donations under a secured PayPal.. Please note that we do NOT sell or give our mailing list to anyone and your pertinent information is protected.

We are encouraging all members/guests to register at the website. Since the costs of mailings have risen, we felt if members viewed articles, events and history at the site we could reduce our overall costs.

For FOSIL members who *do not* have access to the internet, either through the use of a smart phone, the library or a personal computer, you can still receive the paper copy of Karban and McBrien’s articles. To remain on our mailing list, it’s important that you send your name and address with this request to FOSIL, P.O. Box 31, Belleville, Illinois 62222.

Good Friday Prayer Service



In keeping with its annual Good Friday tradition, a prayer service was held at the Tamms Correctional Center in Southern Illinois. Members of Faithful of Southern Illinois (FOSIL), along with the Coalition for Economic and Social Justice (CESJ) and Southern Illinois Prisoner Action Committee (SIPAC), gathered outside the prison grounds to pray for the victims of the crimes of the inmates, for family members and friends of the victims and for the prisoners. Simultaneously, another group in Peoria, Illinois, joined in praise and song, especially grateful for the end of the death penalty in Illinois. The service ended with silent reflection and the song, “Change Our Hearts.”

ages with an additional \$2.6 million in punitive damages) against the team. Manager Braxton appealed the decision, but the new referees, this time the judges on the Appellate Court, again ruled in Wisniewski's favor.

Even though Braxton's team now had a 2-0 loss record, he refused to bow out, and pressed the court (State Supreme Court) again. Braxton's major mistake is evident; he doesn't listen to his coaches (Diocesan Consulters, Senate, Finance Committee or clergy), but relies solely on some few voices within his inner circle and his favorite legal counsel. But apparently he remains secure in his manager's position, since there is every indication that Board members (USCCB, Nuncio, Vatican) maintain a hands-off position on his actions.

This time, however Braxton's play strategy, that Team Belleville has no requirement to advise their fans of a player's fouls, specifically Kownacki's sexual abuse, has worked against public opinion. Many fans have become so outraged that they refuse to provide any future support to Braxton team. No more rooting for the home team; no more funding for a losing team.

Perhaps we've been wrong in some of our assumptions all along. On second thought, the national bishop's conference is not the team's owner; the fans are. And now, more loudly than ever before, they're asking that Braxton be removed as the team manager, and strongly demand some voice in the selection of his replacement.

So what's it going to take to win? Who's going to win? The hierarchs? Clergy? The faithful Catholic? You be the judge.



Evolving Christianity: Seeing With New Eyes

Because we can only see within the context of our time and space, our old world view is being challenged by new insights and extraordinary scientific discoveries. The 21st Century is calling us to rethink our old world view of life; to realize that there are new ways to understand the stories of our faith. Remaining in an old static view will force our vision of the world, including the church, to become stale and quaint and hinder the development of the fullness of our humanity. We'll fail to see with new eyes.

Sr. Barbara Fiand shared these thoughts with her audience on Saturday, April 9, as the presenter at FOSIL's day of spiritual enrichment. "Revelation and human consciousness are constantly expanding," said Sr. Barbara. "Likewise, our vision of church must expand." Using examples, Sr. Barbara explained how our old images of God and church no longer speak to people, especially the young. "Agony is being stuck in the old world view; ecstasy comes in the journey of moving into a new vision," she stated. "No one has the final truth of who God is; God forever remains a mystery."

We are free people with a hunger for God; we're longing for fulfillment. Jesus showed us how to find fulfillment - through **total** inclusiveness. The inclusiveness of Jesus was the radicalism of his love. "Jesus had an open table and free healing. Can you imagine what would happen if we had a church who practiced this?" stated Sr. Barbara.

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