

the flock

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IN THIS ISSUE OF 'THE FLOCK'
PUTTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT (p1)
WE HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE (p6) DO WE NEED PEDESTALS (p8)
IGNORING THE ELEPHANT IN THE LIVING ROOM? (p8)
UPDATE ON THE SOHO MASSES (p9)
A NEW ARCHBISHOP FOR SOUTHWARK (p11) OBITUARY (p12)
A HELPFUL BOOK (p12) SUMMER SCHOOL REMINDER (p13)
SPECIAL OFFER FOR FLOCK READERS (p13) DEAR FRIENDS (p14)
OUR LADY OF EUROPE (p15)

PUTTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

First we must express our deep sympathy with victims of sexual abuse and with their families. To hear that any Catholic priest used his privileged position to abuse children fills us all with shame and horror, and that this was ever condoned by any bishop is totally unacceptable.

However, there is no question that the Catholic Church and our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI are undergoing a savage and ill-informed attack from the secular media of this country. We intend to list a few facts which we hope will put this attack in its proper context, partly out of regard for the truth but also to give ordinary lay Catholics the information they need to defend our beloved Church, to their family and friends, workmates, colleagues and fellow parishioners - while agreeing that child sexual abuse is a terrible evil which must be promptly rooted out, wherever it is discovered.

I. The Church

Recent coverage in the media gives everyone the impression that the sexual abuse of children is a particularly Catholic problem. Even the three party leaders discussing the Pope's visit in their televised debate spoke as if this should be taken into account, although they could have been expected to know better.

The figures show a different story. An American study, published on line by

Sam Miller, who is not a Catholic but a prominent Jewish businessman from Cleveland, reveals that while a disgraceful 1.7% of Catholic Clergy have been found guilty of sexual abuse, 10% of Protestant Ministers have been found guilty. It also showed child abuse to be far more prevalent in schools, youth organisation and sports training with Catholic clergy at the bottom of the list below doctors, teachers and farmers. Mr Miller ends his article with these words “*Walk with your shoulders high and your head higher . . . Be proud to speak up for your Church. Be proud that you are a Catholic.*”

The official figures in England and Wales are lower. Only 0.4 % of Catholic priests have been accused of child abuse in England and Wales since 1970 - less have been found guilty.

That it happens at all is a terrible scandal but the truth is that only a very small number of Catholic priests ever abuse children sexually and it is dishonest of the media not to make this clear. When a Muslim terrorist plants a bomb which kills a large number of people we are always told, every time it is mentioned, that this movement concerns only a very small number of Muslims who are not representative of the vast majority. Where is a similar disclaimer for Catholic priests? Why are the British people being given only half the story?

The truth is that a young child is now safer in the Catholic Church than in any other institution including nursery or school. Since the Nolan Report, as soon as a priest is reported to have abused a child, the police are informed and the priest is removed from his parish that day and kept in a Convent or Monastery away from children while the accusation is thoroughly investigated. Even after the police have dropped the case, satisfied that there is no truth in the allegation, the Church continues to complete Her own investigation until satisfied.

It is encouraging that some non-Catholic journalists have pointed out these facts online and in personal articles out of an interest in seeing fair play. Sadly Church Officials in this country have been very slow to join in and help redress the balance.

II. The Pope

Our Holy Father has come in for special attention in this outpouring of hatred

and abuse which is particularly distressing, as not only is he innocent of the charges made, he is the one who has done so much to prevent any future possibility of sexual abuse by Catholic clergy.

I think we need to remind our non-Catholic friends, used to much smaller National bodies, that the Catholic Church consists of 1.3 Billion people world-wide who are looked after by over 400,000 priests. Obviously with these numbers it would be absurd to expect the Pope to leap into action at every allegation – true or false – and investigate it himself. Fortunately he doesn't have to as the local Bishop has the power and indeed the duty to suspend the priest immediately, inform the police and set up an investigation while fully co-operating with the police inquiry.

So lets stop blaming the Pope for generally failing to react to allegations of sexual abuse.

However there are two cases where he is to some extent involved which require some examination.

1. Father Murphy of Milwaukee Archdiocese. *The New York Times* used this case to attack the Pope most unfairly without consulting Father Thomas Brundage JCL, the presiding judge in the case, about the true facts. It is clear that bad mistakes were made but they were not made by the Pope, Cardinal Ratzinger as he was then. The facts revealed by Father Brundage reveal that Father Murphy who taught in a school for the deaf, abused a boy in 1964 and went on to abuse other boys.

The boys complained to Father David Walsh who quite correctly reported the matter to the Archbishop, Rembert Weakland, who unaccountably did nothing for years. So Father Walsh informed the Police who, surprisingly, took no action either. Eventually Father Walsh wrote to the Pope's representative, the Papal Nuncio in Washington about it. A meeting was held in 1974 attended by two Papal representatives and Father Murphy was suspended and removed from the school but the delay, inexcusable as it is, cannot be laid at the door of the present Pope. No-one in Rome even heard about this crime until ten years after it happened and Father Murphy was already suspended. Archbishop Rembert Weakland has also been disciplined now and removed from his Diocese.

Because the boys now said the Sacrament of Penance was used to approach them, this case had to go to Rome so Archbishop Weakland wrote to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, headed by Cardinal Ratzinger, the present Pope, but it is unlikely he even saw the letter as the answer came two months later from Cardinal Bertone, his Deputy. This is because Cardinal Ratzinger was best qualified to deal with matters of Doctrine while his Deputy handled administration.

By now Father Murphy had had two severe strokes and was not expected to live long and as, he was already suspended and could no longer harm children, it was decided that it would be better not to start the lengthy defrocking procedure which would involve the boys again as witnesses. Two months later Father Murphy died and went to answer to his Maker.

I hope this shows that to claim as so many papers did that the Pope ‘did nothing and blocked action in this case ‘ is just not true.

2. Father Hullermann of Munich Diocese

The second attack concerns a Father Hullermann of Munich Diocese where the Pope was Archbishop. In 1980 Father Hullermann was accused of sexual abuse and sent for therapy, which at that time was thought to be effective. He came to live in a rectory in Munich to receive this therapy and while there helped out in a Munich parish on Sundays. This should not have happened but the present Pope who would have been involved if Father Hullermann were appointed parish priest, would not necessarily have known this was happening. In 1982 the Pope was made Prefect of the Congregation for the Faith in Rome and seven months later, when he had completed his therapy, Father Hullermann was, against the advice of his therapist, assigned to a parish in Grafing. He was convicted of serious sex offences in 1986 and this is described by the media as a ‘smoking gun’ against Pope Benedict XVI although he had been four years in Rome by then.

On the strength of these two false accusations we have the Oxford Professor, Richard Dawkins describing the Pope as “*a leering old villain in a frock...in charge of a profiteering, woman-fearing, guilt-gorging, truth-hating, child-raping institution.*” Fortunately, Damien Thompson puts this in perspective

by writing “*The article conjures up the image of a nasty old man who’s losing his marbles. It’s not very nice about the Pope either*”!

We also have Foreign Office officials compiling a very offensive plan for the Pope’s visit which includes items such as ‘visit an abortion centre, bless a homosexual civil union, etc.’ The French paper, *Le Monde* joins in with a disgusting cartoon of the Pope with a child and there is a petition on the internet protesting about his visit. On 26th April Radio 4 broadcast a Report on “*The Pope’s Track record in dealing with paedophile priests*”! They discussed the two cases covered above at some length, even describing Archbishop Weakland as a ‘whistleblower’, but finally, disappointed at the lack of any real evidence against the Pope, they assured listeners that ‘Lawyers were still combing through documents looking for any evidence against the Vatican and the Pope’.

Now why would they want to do that?

A few more questions

How can we explain this media hysteria about something concocted out of nothing? If they are really concerned about children who are being abused why don’t people attack places and institutions where it is much more prelevant? What about beginning with abortion clinics where not only are hundreds of unborn children killed but pregnant 13 and 14 year olds are regularly counselled without ever being referred to the police although they are obviously victims of child abuse?

The situation today.

In 2001 Pope John Paul II asked Cardinal Ratzinger to look into the question of sex abuse. The Cardinal decided that Bishops needed more guidance and he devised a form which must be completed every time an allegation of sex abuse is made. This form must be sent to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith when it is completed so Rome know how many allegations are made and what action has been taken. This simple procedure would probably have prevented the delay with Father Murphy’s case and it should help in any future cases. So, far from being the problem, Pope Benedict XVI should be recognised as part of the solution.

The rest of the solution is Prayer and watchfulness. Prayer for Seminary students and Priests, for Bishops and Cardinals for Richard Dawkins and his fellows, whatever their motives, and for our Holy Father.



WE HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE

This is not the first time the Church has been unfairly attacked. It has survived many attacks in its 2000 year history because people do not want to hear sound moral teaching. The Old Testament prophets were also attacked and of course, Our Blessed Lord was attacked and tortured to death for the same reason.

However this attack parallels a similar outburst in Germany in 1937 when Pope Pius XI issued an Encyclical called *Mit Brennender*, the only Encyclical ever written in German. This Encyclical, which was probably written by Cardinal Pacelli, later Pope Pius XII, warned German Catholics that the Nazi regime was intrinsically evil. It was sent to Bishops and priests but also widely circulated among Catholic laity.

Hitler was furious and he ordered his Minister of Propaganda, Josef Goebbels, to nullify this Document. Goebbels couldn't contradict it so he decided to discredit the Church instead. In 1936 twenty one Catholic priests had been withdrawn from parish work after being accused of child abuse, though only seven were eventually found guilty.

Goebbels took this and magnified it out of all proportion, claiming "*thousands of cases are known to the authorities which represent only a small fraction of the true number..*" (Italian journalist, Massimo Introvigne) Goebbels ended up arresting 325 innocent Catholic priests but he had stirred up hatred for the Church, magnified through the media, which of course he controlled.

The German Bishops responded with a very well thought out Document.

First they humbly apologised for the shameful incidents which had occurred, which was only right. Then they asked why, if Herr Goebbels was so concerned about children being sexually abused, he didn't do anything about the secular schools where it was much more prevalent or the 'Hitler Youth' where it was endemic. The dignity and reasonableness of this Document restored Catholic Faith in the Church by putting these highly regrettable, but few, lapses into context with the general situation.

Perhaps it would have been better if our Bishops had looked at that statement before they made their joint apology after their Low Week Meeting earlier this year. As it is they made an abject apology but failed to balance it with any reminder that this is not just a 'Catholic' problem. They seemed to confirm what our enemies and the media are saying instead of balancing their apology with a defence of the Church and mentioning the vast majority of Catholic priests who live such exemplary lives. They have also made it much more difficult for lay Catholics to defend the Church.

It costs nothing to make a general apology for something others have done, but when will the bishops apologise for agreeing to explicit immoral lessons on sex for Catholic children from the youngest in our schools to the oldest? And, most crucially, when will they apologise for the Modern Catechetics which they make mandatory in our schools, even though it fails to teach the faith effectively?

Why the bishops always let us down like this is a mystery but I think we can understand why the media and so many well known people are busy reviling the Church. Catholic teaching still insists on morals which are unfashionable today. Morals such as – 'Marriage is a life-long commitment between a man and a woman', 'contraception and abortion are wrong' 'sex outside marriage, whether homosexual or heterosexual, is always sinful' etc. This hurts the consciences of those who have abandoned these teachings and makes them feel like hitting out at the Church at any opportunity, however contrived. We must stand firm, justifying Church teaching when we get the opportunity and responding to all this calumny with love and prayer.



DO WE NEED PEDESTALS?

WE are right to respect the office of Bishop or priest but some Catholics like to put their bishops and priests on pedestals. Unfortunately if the bishop or priest lets them down then, these Catholics are scandalised and some even talk about leaving the Holy Catholic Church. This is not correct or even reasonable behaviour as a brief look at our history will show.

Right at the start of the Church a Catholic Bishop, Judas Iscariot, betrayed Our Blessed Lord and later hung himself. No faithful Catholic thought this meant that Jesus' teaching was false - on the contrary, the Church went on to grow amazingly fast, and without the help of swords.

The truth is bishops and priests are human beings with free will and they can, like us, exercise their free will to become saints or to become sinners. They have the same frailties we all have and probably even more temptations than us, because devils will concentrate more on Church leaders. So if some fall from time to time we should not be too surprised or ever think of leaving the Church. We should pray for them and renew our Faith in Our Lord and His Holy Church, remembering the sixth chapter of St John's Gospel, when Our Lord asked the Apostles if they were going to leave Him as His other followers had. First there was an awkward silence then St Peter said "*Where should we go Lord? You have the words of eternal Life.*"



IGNORING THE ELEPHANT IN THE LIVING ROOM?

EVERY time the problem of child abuse is aired we see people walking round the elephant which has not only invaded the living room but is systematically wrecking it. I am referring to homosexual activity, which no-one ever mentions in this context.

Most of the cases in America concern clerics sinning with sixteen or

seventeen year old males. Now this is obviously very wrong but it is not paedophilia, described in the 1963 Chambers Dictionary as ‘intercourse between a male and a child.’ Sixteen and seventeen year olds are not children but adolescents. In this country these cases would not have even involved the police as we have a lower age of consent.

I can understand that the media won’t give these cases the right name as they are busy trying to show homosexuality in a good light as normal and even healthy and any link with sexual abuse will damage this image. However, I do not understand why our bishops follow them down this road, even berating H.E. Cardinal Bertone when he quite rightly referred to such cases as homosexual in nature.

This kind of falsification doesn’t help children who are under threat. While adolescents should be able protect themselves, small children who are really vulnerable, cannot. They demand and require our careful protection wherever the threat is coming from. It is interesting that this fierce attack on the Catholic Church has opened the subject up so widely, people are now coming forward to report teachers, doctors, etc. in various parts of the world who are quite unconnected to the Church but who sexually abused them when they were children. The Mayor of New York City, for instance, where the attack opened, is now worried about being able to pay for the numerous cases coming to light involving City teachers, youth workers and welfare officials. If this undeserved slur on the Church results in other children being safer in future, some good will have come from it.



UPDATE ON THE SOHO MASSES

I am often asked if these Masses are continuing and I am sorry to say they are – at five o’clock every first and third Sunday in the Church of our Lady and St Gregory in Warwick Street near Piccadilly. And, yes, a group of us still pray the Rosary outside in reparation for the objectively sacrilegious Communion being received by Catholics who are openly living homosexual lifestyles.

In a recent interview with *Justice*, the ex-Carmelite priest who arranged these Masses, Martin Pendergast, boasted that our numbers were dropping. Well, it has been a very cold winter and Warwick Street is a draughty street, but if any of you can join us now the weather is better your support would be very welcome. I know that supporters who cannot reach London, including many good Sisters, do pray with us from a distance and I want them to know we appreciate that.

Mr Pendergast also said in this interview that he believes the Vatican “*is looking at this model as one which could be used potentially in other parts of the world.*” This may sound ridiculous but as the Vatican have been kept informed about the Masses from the beginning and have taken no action to stop them, it is understandable. I wonder if he believes the Vatican will also allow heterosexual activity outside marriage or perhaps do away with sin altogether! Like the politicians say, he should ‘get real’.

Meanwhile we should all pray for these people who are not getting the guidance they deserve and also for the priests like Canon Pat Browne,(Dean), Fathers Seamus O’Boyle, P.P. John Creagh, MHM Timothy Radcliffe O.P., Dave Stewart S.J., Michael Kirwan S.J., Tim Curtis S.J., Philip Endean S.J., and Brendan Callaghan S.J. who never give them true Church teaching in their homilies and who not only offer Mass for them but give them Holy Communion, although they openly admit their situation. Archbishop Vincent Nichols, who allows these Masses to continue also needs our prayers, especially as he seems, against all the evidence, to be in denial.



A NEW ARCHBISHOP FOR SOUTHWARK

WE understand that Archbishop Peter Smith has been appointed Archbishop of Southwark. Archbishop Smith has an interesting history.

He was for a time Rector of St John's Interdiocesan Seminary where he encouraged his students to study the writings of Pierre de Chardin. In 1995 he went from there to be Bishop of East Anglia where he championed Clare Richards' Religious textbook *Roman Catholic Christianity* in the face of critical letters in the Catholic press. Eventually in 1997 Cardinal Ratzinger in a face to face interview in Rome, insisted he withdraw the Imprimatur and protect Catholic children from so much error. The Cardinal was most emphatic, even claiming that 'there is heresy on every page' so Archbishop Smith had to obey him. There is a full report on this in *Christian Order* December 2003.

In 2001 Archbishop Smith was transferred to Cardiff Archdiocese and put in charge of Pro-Life matters for the Church in England and Wales. Now he is taking over this very important See we must pray for him and his new Archdiocese.



OBITUARY

YOUR prayers are requested for Father Hubert Richards who died recently, may he rest in peace. He was born Hubert Goebbels in a small town in Germany and his family moved to London where his Father set up a butcher's shop in Portobello Road. In 1939 the family, understandably, changed their name to Richards.

When Father Richards became a priest he taught at Westminster Junior Seminary in Ware, where his teaching caused some concern. Nevertheless Cardinal Heenan chose to make him Principal of the Corpus Christi College of Education set up after Vatican II to 'renew' Religious Instruction in Catholic schools and parishes. This College ran for several years and in that time re-trained all the religious teachers and many of the priests of England and Wales in 'Modern Catechetics.' This has produced the results we see around us today.

Father Richards explained that he was trying to give young people a faith more in line with the modern world which they would find easier to accept, but however good our motives, we tinker with revealed religion at our peril.

The College was eventually closed by Cardinal Heenan 'for financial reasons'. Bishops around the country had stopped sending their priests and therefore their funding because they found the priests never returned to them having left the priesthood and married other students. Father Richards also left the priesthood and married a Sister Clare who had been one of his students. Please keep him in your prayers.



A HELPFUL BOOK

THERE is now a very helpful book showing the damage classroom lessons on sex cause to our children, especially when it is given at an early age and is made explicit. It is called *The Outrage of Immoral Sex-ed* and is published by Belmont Publishing in Surrey. The author is Dr Edward Williams who is not a Catholic but who became convinced of the

evil of lessons on sex from his own research.

The Government plan, accepted to their shame by our bishops, has now been shelved because the hasty dissolution of Parliament in time for the General Election caused it to be put aside. But this reprieve could be only temporary so we must prepare ourselves to stand firm if/when it comes up again. Our children will not be safe unless all our bishops are adamant in their refusal to allow sex lessons for five year olds, explicit instruction on sex at any age, and information on contraception/abortion etc in any of the Catholic schools under their authority.

The Catholic way is to follow the Vatican Guidelines, *The Truth and meaning of Human Sexuality*. These have been beautifully interpreted by Lancaster Diocese in their Document, *This is my body*. This was briefly reviewed in the last issue of *The Flock* and it is available to any diocesan bishop who wants to protect the children entrusted to his care from this form of abuse. Otherwise concerned parents have no alternative but to withdraw their children from school and home-school them.



SUMMER SCHOOL REMINDER

JUST a reminder that the *Christ the King Summer School* runs from 24th to 31st July at the Oratory Preparatory School, Pangbourne. Oxfordshire. If you would like further details write to the Course Director, Dominic Sullivan, 15 Maple Lodge, Whitefield Close, London. SW15 3SS. Tel: 0208 788 8659. Email: dsullivan@los.ac <mailto:dsullivan@los.ac>



SPECIAL OFFER FOR FLOCK READERS

WHAT we Catholics believe the CD of Daphne McLeod giving 16 talks on basic Church teaching is now available for £5. If Flock readers buy one they will receive another one free, so they have one to keep and one to lend. Write to Daphne McLeod, 4, Fife Way, Great Bookham, Surrey. KT23 3PH. enclosing your name and address and £5. Cheques should be made payable to *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* or PEEP.

DEAR FRIENDS

WE live in what the Chinese call 'interesting times' so none of us in the Church Militant can afford to sit back and do nothing. There are several challenges to meet but perhaps the main one at present is restoring the good name of our Holy Mother Church and correcting the calumny spread about our Holy Father, the Pope. Unfortunately the bishops, instead of challenging so many false allegations, have remained remarkably silent.

That means we, the laity, have to speak up for them. That is why this issue of *The Flock* has concentrated so much on establishing the truth on both matters. We hope this information will enable you to play your part in this crusade.

To help you further and also to bring in reinforcements we have decided to print the first item in *The Flock* as a leaflet which we would like you to help us distribute. This will take a little time but if you write in June to me at the address above or to Michael Akerman at The Granaries, Crews Hill, Enfield. EN2 9BB we will send you as many leaflets as you think you can distribute for us. We are not charging for these as we want plenty given out, but if any of you would like to contribute to their cost we would be very grateful if you send whatever you can to Michael Akerman, our Hon Treasurer.

It is important to get this information to as many people as possible, non-Catholic as well as Catholic, before the Pope's visit in September. If there is to be proper protection for the Holy Father while he is here the carefully orchestrated attacks on him and the Church must be disarmed before he arrives by spreading the truth.

At the same time we must pray that people's eyes are opened to the unfairness of this anti-Catholic propaganda and that is why we have enclosed a prayer card to St Joseph the powerful patron of the Church. Also, we have received a very kind offer from the Catholic journalist, Ruth Rees. Ruth offered us a brief article about Our Lady of Europe, who will help us as only she can if we turn to her.

Wishing you all every blessing

Daphne McLeod

OUR LADY OF EUROPE

By Ruth Rees

NOW that we are in Europe, whatever we feel about it, we have the Heaven-sent opportunity to save our continent from its headlong descent into spiritual darkness. I refer to the, as yet little known devotion to Our Lady of Europe, whose beautiful Shrine is situated in Gibraltar, high on a promontory facing the coastline of Muslim Morocco.

In the year 711, Muslim forces invaded the Iberian Peninsular and took Gibraltar. This was the start of the Islamic conquest of Spain, and their first action was to build a mosque. In 1309 King Ferdinand IV won the Rock back, expelled the Muslims and dismantled the mosque, replacing it with a statue of Mary holding the Infant Jesus. King Ferdinand then did something extraordinary: in thanksgiving he dedicated, not just Spain but the entire continent of Europe to Our Lord's Mother under the title of Our Lady of Europe.

Twenty four years later the Muslims recaptured Gibraltar and destroyed the Shrine. It was not until 1462 that Ferdinand's grandson, King Henry IV won Gibraltar back and transformed the mosque back into a Christian Shrine. As the original statue had been destroyed the King had a new and better one made, and it is this one, in its beautiful little white chapel, that is visited daily by an increasing number of pilgrims and visitors from many parts of the world.

Now, this may come as a pleasant surprise to Londoners. There is an identical replica of this lovely statue – a gift from the Diocese of Gibraltar – at Our Lady of Dolours church in Fulham Road. It was brought over from Gibraltar by Bishop Charles Caruana, who has recently retired as Bishop of Gibraltar, and installed on October 14th 2006. Accompanying the Bishop were the Chief Minister, Peter Caruana (no relation), his wife and Ministers from the Gibraltar Government.

The moving installation Mass was celebrated by the Bishop, Father Dermot McNiece, the parish priest and Father Jim Mulherin.



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