

BULLETIN – JUNE 5

A moot point? Several weeks ago, I included in this column my response to the urgings of the Michigan Catholic Conference to accept the invitation of the State Board of Education for public comment on certain proposed gender-issue policies for children in public schools. The White House subsequently eliminated much of the reason for State action by imperious decree, not trumping states' rights by force of law, but threatening withdrawal of federal funds for non-compliance with the decree's blanket policies.

The Administration's action is tantamount to a woman suffering from a headache and hiring a brain surgeon to remove a lobe or two at random. She hasn't taken an aspirin, she doesn't want tests or an MRI or any other study of her condition. She just knows that something hurts, and she read something in a magazine at the hairdresser that has convinced her that brain surgery will make it better.

It's not only the fault of the Executive branch. Every time we swallow the big lies of the culture and its running dogs in the (m)ass media, we are guilty of participating in the popular consumption of equine detritus. Turn on nearly any major network show, especially the situation comedies which purport to show us how ABSOLUTELY EVERYBODY lives, thinks, and acts, and you will be treated to an unrelenting barrage of requisite gay characters and relationships, ethically unhinged authority figures, and anti-Catholic and Christophobic slurs and insults. The messages? Interpersonal relationships have no standards, no one in any position of influence can be trusted, and churches and religion (except *certain* darling religions!) have nothing to offer but hypocrisy and ignorance.

The roots of these messages are all right out of the playbook of Saul David Alinsky (1909-72), the Chicago-born founder of modern community organizing. In a future column, we should examine his "rules for radicals," which were highly popular among many of my college schoolmates back in the tumultuous 1960's. Those schoolmates of mine wound up teaching Alinsky's rules (and little else) to future generations, and the trickle-down effect into the society has been like a broken sewer line on the top floor of a 12-story apartment building. In the case at hand, the government has chosen to act in a very serious manner to potentially disrupt the lives of many to favor and accommodate the few who, until very recently, were nearly unanimously considered by professionals to be suffering from a mental illness and who were in need of treatment, not enabling concessions. Some psychologists are, not surprisingly, asking if there are *any* mental illnesses or aberrations which those in government will not consider out of their reach to "normalize" in order to attract votes.

Nonetheless, it is truly astounding at how boldly unprofessional government officials at the highest level can be in comparing an issue like this to the legislation of the great civil rights era. The President's decision to make a pre-emptive strike in territory where he knows unresolved pro-and-con arguments are going on displays questionable judgment, to say the least. Facebook just two years ago arbitrarily introduced 58 gender options from which its subscribers could choose (in place of Genesis 1:27, "God created mankind in his own image, . . . male and female he created them"). This is a psychological and emotional hodge-podge! Is not that very fact sufficient proof that we are not nearly ready to begin codifying our response to it into law of any kind, other than

guaranteeing *all* people the right to be free from bullying and violence? People with gender-identity issues are not burdened with any kind of externally measurable criteria which might subject them to discriminatory behavior or laws. To say that “the science is still out” on gender identity doesn’t even scratch the surface. “Feeling” one way or another internally is not something that can either be confirmed or denied by anyone else. Telling others that she was an African American did not change the physiological racial makeup of the former NAACP leader in Spokane. When we already know that some pedophiles are very interested in having the government legalize their sexual appetites, we have to pose tough but simple questions: Where are the boundaries between feelings and rights? And isn’t it the duty of government to enact and enforce laws for the *greater* and *common* good?

Treasures from Our Tradition. The early Church consecrated women living alone in the world. Today that consecration is available to women who take solemn vows as cloistered nuns. Nuns who live in the cloister or enclosure of a monastery or convent separated from the world are different from religious sisters, who are NOT nuns. The consecration is also available to women who follow a way of life in communities called “secular institutes,” and to lay women. Curiously, this ritual of consecration is not permitted for religious sisters. It is a rite very different from religious profession, in which the sister makes promises or vows as she undertakes a new way of life in a religious community. Rather, the ritual of consecration is an expression of approval of and blessing for a way of life already embraced and being lived. The prayers talk about the woman’s gift of self to Christ and her gift of self to the Church. The woman may live independently at home, without association with any religious sisterhood or institute, yet be consecrated to holiness and service. Normally, a ring and/or a veil may be given in the liturgy of consecration. The rite may be celebrated for any woman who has never married and who has always lived a virtuous life. (Rev. James Field, Copyright © J.S. Paluch Co.)

We hasten to add a note here lest anyone entertain the thought, common in the popular mind, that this consecration is just another example of the prudish old Church looking down its nose at sexual relations. If we look at the whole of the Church’s life, we see that nothing could be further from the truth. The whole matter of this consecration, as of religious profession and vows, as of the various requirements of celibacy for bishops and priests in the Catholic churches of both East and West, has to do with one’s gift of self exclusively to Christ for the service of his Bride, the Church. When understood in this proper way, consecration, religious profession, and celibacy can all be seen as the individual woman or man representing the whole Church in a bridal response to the Lord Jesus in the individual’s own flesh and blood. Yet none of these are sacraments, although they could in a sense be considered *sacramentals*. Rather, Christ has elevated the communion of life and love of one man and one woman in the partnership of *Matrimony* to be the holy sacrament expressing his union with his Bride, the Church. The total and reciprocal union of heart and mind, body and spirit, which husband and wife share physically, spiritually, sexually, emotionally, materially, parentally, and in every other way, is how Christ chooses to make himself present to his Bride in the midst of the world in a way that the other consecrations, professions, and virtuous lifestyles cannot of themselves express. *All* of these vocations have their place in the Church. All are

necessary complements of one another to manifest the richness of Christ's relationship with his Bride here on earth, and the infinite and eternal richness of the Wedding Feast of the Lamb in the Kingdom of Heaven where Christ and his Bride shall dwell forever in glory. God bless you!

Fr. Den

A challenge we'd love to hear in this silly season: "I'll debate her on one condition, that I get to nail her with silly string every time our bi-partisan fact-checkers catch her in a bald-faced lie. And if, by the end of the debate, she does NOT look like a ball of twine, I will withdraw from the campaign!!"