

EPISCOPAL BISHOP SHOULD BUTT OUT

We would not defend a Catholic bishop who publicly criticized a decision by a high-ranking cleric of another religion about matters that pertain only to the members of that religion. We respect house rules. It's too bad that Greg Rickel, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia, Washington, does not.

Recently, two teachers at a Catholic high school in the Seattle area, a man and a woman, resigned, and it is believed they did so because it became known that they each got engaged to a person of the same sex. They voluntarily signed a contract pledging to uphold Catholic teachings, something they obviously violated. This should be a "slam dunk" case, but, of course, a few dissidents protested.

Then an Episcopal bishop, Greg Rickel, weighed in. After Seattle Archbishop Paul Etienne spoke in defense of what happened at the Catholic high school, Rickel sounded the alarms. He accused Catholic officials of "making oneself God," something he said was "the greatest heresy." He also accused them of "discriminating and ruining the livelihood of two people who simply want to love." He added it is "no wonder we are in decline."

Rickel would not only do well to respect house rules and mind his own business, he needs to attend a local Catholic college and learn what Catholicism teaches. He may then learn—he could actually go to a Catholic elementary school—that Catholic clerics do not believe they are God. As for the teachers, yes, Catholic schools are known to fire those who reject Catholic teachings on racism, genocide, sexuality, and many other matters.

Regarding the decline of Christianity, Rickel should heed the

words of one of his own, Rev. David Goodhew, director of ministerial practice at Durham University in England. "The church is a movement and the Episcopal church is moving downward...Some optimists hope the decline is slowing. This is not borne out by the data."

In other words, Bishop Rickel, worry about your own problems. There are many. His church has been in free-fall for decades, precisely because of its quest for "relevancy."