

HIERARCHY SPEAKS FOR THE CHURCH

Anti-Catholic groups such as GLAAD have been selling the false notion that there is a “stark contrast between the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the laity,” and that “These bishops and cardinals are often greatly out of step with what the vast majority of Catholics believe.” As the Catholic League-Polling Company survey recently disclosed, that is mostly bunk. But more important is the lie that the voice of the hierarchy is not the genuine voice of the Catholic Church.

Don't take Bill Donohue's word for it, listen to what Jesus said just before his Ascension: “Full authority has been given to me both in heaven and on earth; go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations. Baptize them in the name ‘of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.’ Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you. And know that I am with you always, until the end of the world.” (Mt 28: 18-20)

St. Athanasius picked up on this by saying that “the very tradition, teaching, and faith of the Catholic Church from the beginning was preached by the Apostles and preserved by the Fathers. On this the Church was founded; and if anyone departs from this, he neither is, nor any longer ought to be called, a Christian.”

The *Catholic Catechism* is also explicit: “The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome.”

It makes sense, then, that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops would proclaim that "The pope and bishops are the authoritative teachers in the Church"; they constitute the Magisterium, or teaching body, of the Church.

So much for the myth of two churches. The laity are an important part of the Church, but they do not speak for the Church.