

ROGUE CATHOLICS UNWELCOME IN DETROIT

Prior to the June meeting of the American Catholic Council at Detroit's Cobo Hall, Detroit Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron rebuffed the dissident group.

It was with good reason that Archbishop Vigneron warned local priests and deacons not to participate in the event: many of those who attended, and those who are on record supporting the event, reject core teachings of the Church. Indeed, this loose confederation of Catholic senior citizens has long been in open rebellion with the Magesterium.

At the event, the group endorsed a "Catholic Bill of Rights and Responsibilities," asserting that every Catholic has the right to have a voice in the way the Church is run. It began by saying, "To be human is to have rights. These include life and freedom, together with rights necessary to sustain them: shelter and nourishment, health and work, education and leisure. None of these rights is absolute."

This is incorrect: the right to life is absolute. The Founders knew this, which is why Jefferson wrote that it was inalienable. Most important, since when have these folks become pro-life?

It is similarly incorrect to say that "Distinctions between clergy and laity are functional and arbitrary." They are indeed profound and substantive. But this does raise an interesting question: If there are no real differences between clergy and laity, then why do these dissidents lobby so hard to open the ranks of the clergy to married priests and women?

Perhaps most telling, the rebels spoke of the right to "participate in a Eucharistic community," as well as the "fullness of the liturgical and sacramental life of the

Church.” Ironically, it is because these activists are not in full communion with the Church that they weren’t welcome.

Following the event, Sister Maureen Fiedler, one of the most veteran dissenters in the Church, admitted that those in attendance were part of a “graying” crowd, and bemoaned that it was also “a very ‘white’ crowd.” Indeed, the *National Catholic Reporter* noted that “well over half the participants were 65 or older and most of the rest were at least 50.”

We knew that octogenarians would dominate the event, but had no idea know that they would mostly be white. Next time we will be sure to mention how lacking in diversity the dissidents are.