

MARRIAGE AMENDMENT NEEDED NOW

In 2004, Barack Obama said, "I am not a supporter of gay marriage as it has been thrown about...I think that marriage, in the minds of a lot of voters, has a religious connotation." Four years later he commented, "I believe that marriage is the union between a man and a woman. Now, for me as a Christian, it is also a sacred union. God's in the mix."

God got thrown from the mix in 2012. That's when President Obama, running for reelection, endorsed gay marriage. But even as late as last year, he was still on record respecting the religious rights of dissenters. "How religious institutions define and consecrate marriage has always been up to those institutions. Nothing about this decision [the Supreme Court's ruling overturning the Defense of Marriage Act]—which applies only to civil marriages—changes that."

God got tossed again a few weeks ago when Obama called for homosexual marriage to be recognized as a constitutional right. In doing so, he teed up a confrontation between our long-established constitutional right to religious liberty and this newly invented right to gay marriage.

Contrary to what many have said, this issue is not over. Were it not for unelected judges overturning the express will of the people—in state after state—attempts to subvert marriage, properly understood, would not have succeeded. We need to return power to the people by considering a constitutional amendment.

The time is ripe for Catholics to support the efforts of San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone, the bishops' point man on marriage. In February, he called for support of the federal Marriage Protection Amendment.

As any astute political science undergraduate knows, there is no constitutional right to gay marriage. But now that this

issue has been thrust upon us by our constitutional law professor president, we need to affirm marriage between a man and a woman in the U.S. Constitution.

TAKING LIBERTIES WITH JESUS' MOTHER

It was too hard for Hollywood to resist. After delivering a subtle pro-life message in earlier episodes, the writers for "Jane the Virgin" on the CW Channel got around to exploiting Our Blessed Mother in the third installment.

The show is based on the premise that Jane became pregnant through artificial insemination and remains a virgin. But in a recent episode Jane decided she was going to have sex with her boyfriend. In church during Mass, Jane's grandmother spoke to her about honesty, making her feel guilty. Hallucinating, Jane pictured the choir singing to her. Here is what followed:

Choir: "Tonight's the night you'll lie in bed. You should tell the truth, but you'll lie instead. Don't have sex, Jane, don't have sex."

Grandmother: "Can you really lie to my face?"

Choir and Congregation: "Can you really lie to her face?"

Statue of Virgin Mary: "Virginity for you and me if you keep your legs closed."

Choir and Congregation: "Keep them closed! Keep them closed! Keep them closed!"

When the scene ended, Jane was still in church. She was shown

telling her mother and grandmother she was going to have sex with her boyfriend. Jane's mother said, "Halleluiaah," shocking the grandmother.

Now Bill Donohue knows this show is plain stupid, and only morons would think it funny, but the sad fact is there are plenty of morons around. They count. Of course, the show's writers could have chosen Islam to dump on, but then Jane might have been the object of an honor killing.

NEW MEXICO PAPER SHOWS BIAS

Recently, an editorial by the *Gallup Independent*, a New Mexico daily, attacked the Diocese of Gallup:

Much to the pleasure of the *Gallup Independent*, the Diocese of Gallup filed for bankruptcy a year ago. How does Bill Donohue know they are delighted? Because of a November 12 editorial noting the "one-year anniversary."

The editorial wants Bishop James S. Wall to "Publicize the list of credibly accused abusers by inserting it for three consecutive weeks in the church bulletins of every parish that was ever part of the Gallup Diocese." Reality check: Parishes that have closed have no bulletin.

There is a rampant problem with the sexual abuse of minors among the Navajo in the Gallup area, yet we know of no campaign by this newspaper to demand that they publicize such a list. Wonder why.

The overreach of Bob Zollinger, who runs the *Gallup Independent*, is incontestable: "Publicly release a list of all real property in Arizona and New Mexico, along with the sale

price,” he said. Here’s Donohue’s favorite: “The Diocese of Gallup has no need for such property.”

Donohue does not know if Bob has ever employed any wayward characters at his paper, but if he did, would he not think it evidence of an agenda if his critics opined that his newspaper occupies too much space in Gallup? Moreover, since Bob is one of the richest persons in New Mexico, and rich people have been known to cheat on their taxes, does he not have a moral obligation to let the public examine his tax returns? Perhaps he could publish them for three consecutive weeks in his newspaper.

Maybe Bob is not anti-Catholic. Maybe he’s just loopy: he’s gotten into several physical encounters, two of which were with city mayors (in one instance the mayor pinned him to the floor, which is the way things usually go for Bob).

SETH MEYERS TRASHES EUCHARIST

During a recent edition of “Late Night with Seth Meyers” on NBC, the late night host made the following statement in a monologue:

“A church in Seattle has filed a lawsuit claiming that the legal marijuana retailer next door is too close to a church,” Meyers said. “‘It’s causing some problems,’ said the priest, through a giant mouthful of Communion wafers.” [Talking as if his mouth is full, and acting as if he is stuffing more food in his mouth], Meyers continued, “It’s like super close to the church. I mean, sometimes it seems like it’s coming a little closer” [he acts as though he is taking a big drink].

There is a Seattle church that has filed a lawsuit protesting

the licensing of a legal marijuana retailer next door, but it is not a Catholic church: Mount Calvary Christian Church Center filed the lawsuit. But those who write script for Meyers are not interested in attacking Protestants—it's much more fun mocking Catholics. That they stooped so low as to trash the Catholic celebration of the Eucharist shows the depth of their disorder.

FOX TV'S "MULANEY" GETS RAUNCHY

"Mulaney," is a Fox TV show starring comedian John Mulaney that mimicks Seinfeld and offers typical sit-com fare blended with occasional stand-up appearances. But unlike Seinfeld, who managed to be funny without taking cheap shots at Catholicism, Mulaney can't pull it off without getting raunchy. He also fails to entertain.

The story line from a recent episode is silly: Mulaney dupes his mom into thinking he's a practicing Catholic, and even asks a priest to lie to his mom about going to church. He doesn't succeed in his quest, but not before telling the priest that he is not like other comedians. On his knees in prayer, he says, "I would like to point out that I never did jokes about priest molestation during that whole thing—even though a lot of stand-up comics did and I totally could have." So kind of him.

While still on his knees, Mulaney's girlfriend walks in, asking, "Are you praying?" Mulaney grabs his crotch and says, "No, I'm just masturbating." They had to pipe in the laughter.

Five shows into the season, Fox has already decided to go with

13 episodes instead of 16. Let's hope they make a further cut. If this is what passes as humor at Fox in 2014, the network is in trouble.

SUPPORT GIVEN TO AMISH MOVEMENT

Bill Donohue was recently asked by the Respect Amish movement, a grassroots effort in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania to have the Catholic League join its cause; the goal is to stop religious discrimination and bigotry directed by "reality TV" at Amish culture. We were happy to lend our support, lining up with the Diocese of Harrisburg.

By supporting the rights of other religions, we not only help them, we make it more difficult for militant secularists to wage war against us.

CHRISTIANS VICTIMIZED ABROAD AND AT HOME

A couple of weeks ago, the 2014 Report on "Religious Freedom in the World" was published by Aid to the Church in Need, a Pontifical Foundation entity.

Aid to the Church in Need monitors religious liberty around the world. Its latest report covered the period October 2012 to June 2014. It concluded that of the world's 196 countries,

changes in the condition of religious liberty were noted in 61 of them: in only six countries did things improve; conditions worsened in the other 55.

In 81 countries, or 41 percent of the total, religious freedom was recorded as either impaired or in decline. Muslim countries were the worst offenders: no group was persecuted more than Christians; also, Jews and other Muslims did not fare well. Secular authoritarian regimes, e.g., North Korea and China, also have a horrible record.

Comparatively speaking, religious liberty in the U.S. is in good shape; there is little outright oppression. However, conditions are deteriorating, thanks to the efforts of left-wing activists. Issues such as “faith schools, homosexual marriage and euthanasia” are driving the conflict between “progressives” and traditionalists. The report observes that “where the rights of homosexuals or gender equality campaigners conflict with the rights of conscience of religious believers, the former groups usually take precedence.” What is particularly outrageous about this situation is the fact that religious liberty is enshrined in the First Amendment.

In other words, it is open season on Christians: in nations run by Muslims and communists, they are being murdered and oppressed in record numbers; in democratic nations, they are being discriminated against by militant secularists. This is where religious extremists and secular extremists come together. Both are a menace to religious liberty.

HOLLYWOOD BILLBOARD

This billboard [[click here](#)] will be located in Los Angeles on Pico Boulevard, west of Fairfax Avenue. It will be on display December 1 – December 28.

Catholic Feasts: Learning the Faith through Celebration

Rick Hinshaw

Cardinal Donald Wuerl and Mike Aquilina, *The Feasts: How the Church Year Forms Us as Catholics* (New York: Image, 2014)

While the feasts of the Catholic Church might “seem to be a crazy quilt of customs,” they are in reality so much more than that – if we take the time to understand their origins, their meanings, and what they teach us. In *The Feasts*, Cardinal Donald Wuerl and Mike Aquilina give us the opportunity to do just that, and so to allow our own faith to be strengthened and even transformed by our celebration of our Church’s feasts.

“They are lessons, too. They teach us. They evangelize us,” and thus prepare us to evangelize others, Cardinal Wuerl and Aquilina write. “They tell and retell the stories of the Gospel. They proclaim the dogmas of the faith.” As such, “they are our dress rehearsal for heaven,” drawing us closer to God, helping us to know Him better and worship Him more perfectly, preparing us for that eternal existence when “we shall share God’s life intimately in heaven.”

At the same time, our Catholic feast days and special seasons are also vital to us along our earthly journey toward that eternal life. They draw us more deeply into the knowledge and practice of our faith, and equip us for our essential earthly vocation of sharing that faith with others, and so bringing them also closer to Christ.

And, because of their festive nature, “they do all this,” the authors observe, “in the sweetest and most memorable way – in a family way.”

Indeed, the very essence of our feast days is that of celebration. “All the feasts are celebrations of Jesus Christ,” the authors write. And it is that spirit of joyful celebration that makes religious feasts so effective in teaching us our faith, drawing us more joyfully into the life of Christ and his Church, and assisting us in inviting others to experience that joy with us.

In *The Feasts*, Cardinal Wuerl, Archbishop of Washington, D.C., and Mike Aquilina, author of more than forty books—including two previous works with Cardinal Wuerl, “The Mass” and “The Church” – help us to understand why this is so.

They explain how “for close to fifteen hundred years” – prior to the printing press, let alone today’s mass communications technologies – the Church still “raised up devout generations of worshipers, millions of people who had a lively faith in Jesus Christ and a deep familiarity with his saving doctrine.” This was made possible, they explain – quoting “one of the great Church historians of the last century, Father Josef Jungmann” – by the prevalence of feast days in the church calendar, which “impressed the chief mysteries of faith upon the popular consciousness.”

“Calendars,” the authors point out, “help to define us as the people we are,” giving us reference points to the past, a grounding in our present time and a context for future hopes.

And so for Christians, the Church “calendar and its feasts remind us who we are,” providing “a standard medium for the expression of the profound loves at the center of our lives – our love for God and for our family, for our Church and our community.”

“Keeping the feasts is part of our commitment to live as a child of God,” Cardinal Wuerl and Aquilina write. “Christians benefit spiritually when we understand the Christian calendar – when we’ve come to know ‘the reason for the season.’”

“By celebrating Christmas, believers grew in their understanding of the incarnation of the Lord,” the authors observe. “Through the many memorials of the saints and martyrs, ordinary people became familiar with the great historic exemplars of heroic virtue. On Easter – and indeed on every Sunday – they celebrated the glory of God in a human being who is fully alive, who is in fact the fullness of life: Jesus Christ.”

That emphasis on Sunday Mass as “the model for all other feasts” is perhaps the book’s most important focus. Many Catholics today, while they pack our churches for major celebrations like Christmas and Easter, take a decidedly lackadaisical approach to the weekly Sunday Mass celebration. Yet it is “Christianity’s ‘primordial feast,’” the authors remind us – quoting from the Vatican’s Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments – “and the ‘basis and centre of the liturgical year.’” All of our other liturgical feasts, Cardinal Wuerl and Aquilina write, “make little sense apart from it.”

In one sense, the authors trace the importance of weekly celebration to the book of Genesis, when God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh – bringing into being the weekly Jewish Sabbath, “the original religious festival, the prototype of all the feasts.” And indeed, the authors draw a direct connection between Jewish festival traditions dating

from the Old Testament – such as Passover – and our Catholic feast day celebrations. In both cases, they emphasize, believers *learn* about their faith through such celebrations. “Jews absorbed the central ideas of their faith not by studying them systematically,” the book quotes best-selling author Rabbi Harold Kushner, “but by celebrating the weekly Sabbath and the annual cycle of festivals, and gradually absorbing the lessons they conveyed.” Just as, the authors write – again citing Father Jungmann – “Christians through most of history ... *learned* the mysteries of Christianity by *celebrating* the mysteries of Christianity.”

And of course, while each of our feasts celebrates something historic – events in the life of Christ, the lives of the saints, miraculous interventions – they are “not merely the recollection of past events,” the authors quote the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. “In the liturgical celebration of these events, they become in a certain way present and real.”

We know this, of course, with regard to the Mass, in which Christ, every Sunday – indeed, *every day* if we so choose – again offers us the sacrifice of His Body and Blood for our salvation. But this book, as it takes us through some of the significant feast days that fill the Church’s calendar, reminds us how *each* of them celebrate not just a historical event or person, but a *living* embodiment of Christ and His Church that can enter into our lives today if we open ourselves to these celebrations. The gift of the Holy Spirit that we celebrate on the feast of Pentecost, for example, did not occur just one time, to one group of Jesus’ disciples; Jesus sent the Spirit upon all of us, for all time. Our Blessed Mother’s Assumption did not bring to an end her role in human history; rather, it placed her in heaven as Mother of us all, ready to intercede for us with her divine Son. Similarly, the authors write, the feast days of our saints serve as “annual reminders of their great example” – not simply for us to admire, but for all generations to learn from

and emulate – and “their intercessory power before the throne of God.” One of our newest feast days, Divine Mercy Sunday, should fill us with joy and hope at the gift of God’s infinite mercy.

Cardinal Wuerl and Mike Aquilina quote Saint Faustina, the nun who inspired the annual feast of Divine Mercy: “Almost every feast of the Church gives me a deeper knowledge of God and a special grace.” And in this work they offer us the same opportunity to grow in knowledge of God and to gain special graces, by inviting us to journey with them through the marvelous faith experiences that our Catholic feast days and special seasons offer. They help us to connect our feast celebrations to the origins of religious festival in the Jewish traditions of the Old Testament – with even a chapter on “The Feasts That Jesus Kept.” They explain the reasons for religious feasts – from the practical human need for respite and celebration amid the trials of daily life, to the religious teaching that such feasts provide, to the spiritual graces they offer. They give a sampling of some of the many significant feast days on the Church calendar, so that we may enter into their celebration with a deeper understanding of their meaning. And they embrace the many different cultural traditions that make the Church truly universal, and that allow for each culture to mark its own Catholic heritage with its own unique festivals commemorating its own local devotions and saints.

Just as important, the authors make clear, is the power of our feast celebrations to “fortify” us for our work of evangelizing the world.

“The Church is both a mother and a teacher,” they write, “and the feasts are always timely lessons she delivers to her children – giving us something we otherwise lack, or fortifying us against some emerging challenge.” So, for example, they note that the feast of Corpus Christi calls us to be Christ’s witnesses “as we live our faith by loving and

serving others.”

The feast of Christ the King, they explain, was instituted in 1925 by Pope Pius XI “to be an antidote to the poisons of secularism, which was then spreading in deadly forms throughout the world.” Most glaring were anti-Catholic laws in Mexico, under which thousands of men, women and children were martyred, and the religious persecutions in Communist Russia. But Pope Pius warned against a broader sweep of secularism that would exclude religion from public life, with dire consequences. Cardinal Wuerl and Mike Aquilina observe how that reality has taken hold today.

Noting how the Puritan-led government of 17th century England tried to impose a ban on Christmas, they warn that although “the seventeenth century Puritans may seem amusing to us now, they represent an anti-Catholic, anti-festive spirit that is always in the world.

“Today’s Puritans,” they point out, “tend to have a secularist bent, but they are as joyless as their spiritual ancestors. They would rather drain the cheer out of days than permit any public reference to Jesus Christ. They advocate legislation to have his name and symbols removed from every postage stamp, courthouse square, and even window sills that can be seen from the street.” They note that “Western nations treat the name of Christ as an expletive to be deleted from all public discourse.”

Indeed. In fact it seems that the only acceptable use of “Jesus Christ” is when it is literally uttered as an expletive.

“We should charitably resist” the anti-Catholic joylessness of the secularists, the authors urge. “We should, by the example of our joy, teach the world how to feast.” Even as the secular world rejects Christ, they need what we as a Church have to offer.

"We need, once again, to teach the world how to celebrate, how to feast, how to be happy," the authors write.

They have given us a good start, with a book that helps us to better understand and celebrate our Church's feasts and their meaning; and so fortifies us to go forth and offer to the world the joy of the Gospel, as it radiates through the celebration of our Catholic feasts.

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