Following Christ On the Sidewalk

by Jenny Westberg

There are many reasons to sidewalk counsel—saving babies' lives, ministering to women—but perhaps the most compelling is to walk in the way of Christ.

Thomas a Kempis, in his classic *Imitation of Christ*, wrote: "'he that followeth me, walketh not in darkness,' saith our Lord.—John 8:12. These are the words of Christ, by which we are admonished, that we must imitate his life and manners, if we would be truly enlightened, and delivered from all blindness of heart." Through sidewalk counseling, we have a rich opportunity to follow some specific examples of Christian living, directly from the life of our Lord.

Sidewalk counseling is a last-minute plea to the mother on behalf of the child who is about to die. This tactic of verbal intervention has a precedent in Christ's response to the scribes and Pharisees in John 8:7. In a situation roughly analogous to legal abortion, a human being (in this case, the adulterous woman) faced imminent death in an execution which was fully sanctioned by the law.

Jesus intervened to prevent this death. His method of intervention, which sidewalk counseling imitates, was the use of words—in fact, a single sentence, which awakened the consciences of those who had the authority and intent to kill their captive.

Jesus, of course, spoke exactly the right words, in the right order, in the right tone of voice. We will obviously be unable to match His results: undoubtedly, we will need to use more than one sentence; and, often, our words will fall flat. However, with the help of the Spirit, our efforts will occasionally bear fruit; more important is the very act of imitating Christ's perfect example.

Still other lessons are revealed in Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well (John 4). First, Jesus initiated the conversation. We follow this example by offering our help actively, rather than passively. In this, sidewalk counseling differs from the essential but distinct ministry of the Crisis Pregnancy Centers.

Second, the woman at the well, like many of those we encounter on the sidewalk, was relatively slow to recognize Jesus as the Christ. Jesus speaks with her at some length, with great patience, and favors her with a gradual revelation of the truth. As sidewalk counselors we imitate Christ when we exercise patience; avoid scolding; avoid giving up on a seemingly hopeless prospect. We recognize that for some people, the light dawns quickly; for others, slowly.

Third, the woman was a Samaritan, and "Jews, in fact, do not associate with Samaritans" (John 4:9). On the sidewalk, we meet many modern-day Samaritans: those segments of humanity of whom it could, at times, be said, "Christians, in fact, do not associate with..." (your choice: "...bikers." "...drug addicts." "...pimps." And so on.) We meet all these outside the clinics, and we are called to treat them with the respect due brothers and sisters, created in the image and likeness of God.

Sidewalk counseling can be an imitation of Christ in many other ways. We can take abuse with humility (Luke 23:9-11); we can pray with fervor (Luke 22:41); we can grieve for the dead, and grant them the dignity of our physical presence (John 11:32-36).

"Try, then, to imitate God, as children of His that He loves" (Eph. 5:1). Sidewalk counseling is one of many ministries through which we can make this attempt. Is Christ calling you to serve Him in this way?

The Desecration Of St. Patrick's

by Patrick J. Buchanan

Outside New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral, at the Sunday Mass on Dec. 10th, thousands of homosexuals and pro-abortion feminists shouted their hatred, and shook their placards: Keep Your Rosaries Off My Ovaries. Eternal Life to Cardinal John O'-Connor NOW! Keep Your Church Out of My Crotch. Know Your Scumbags. Curb Your Dogma. Papal Bull.

Dozens snuck inside. As Cardinal O'Connor's sermon began, suddenly, "The radical homosexuals turned a celebration of the Holy Eucharist into a screaming babble of sacrilege by standing in the pews, shouting and waving their fists, tossing condoms into the air." One, taking communion, broke the consecrated Host in sacrilege, and threw it to the floor.

So writes Ray Kerrison, New York Post columnist; Bill Reel of the *Daily News* describes the scene outside: "Several slender young men wearing gold-colored robes similar to clerical vestments hoisted a large portrait of a nude Jesus drawn in such a way as to appeal to the prurient interest of homosexual males."

America's paper of record, *The New York Times*, only blocks away, relegated the hate crime to local news, page B3, then, gently chided the trousered apes who perpetrated the satanic sacrilege:

"There is plenty of room for controversy over church positions on homosexuality, AIDS, and abortion...But some of the demonstrators turned honorable dissent into dishonorable disruption."

"Several slender young men hoisted a large portrait of a nude Jesus drawn in such a way as to appeal to the prurient interest of homosexual males."

Had a synagogue been so desecrated, would the *Times* have been so restrained?

New York Gov. Mario Cuomo, anxious to cover all bases, was a portrait in political balance. Denouncing the desecration as an "outrage," he yet conceded there had been "awful provocation."

But what "awful provocation"?

Cardinal O'Connor has done nothing but assert Catholic doctrine on homosexuality and abortion: Both are intrinsically wrong. That doctrine is found in the Old and New Testaments, revered as Revelation by all Christians. The Cardinal has no more authority to alter that teaching than does the governor of New York; indeed, as Archbishop, he is under moral obligation to witness to the truth.

Considering that no U.S. bishop has power to stop the sale of condoms, or to interfere with acts of homosexuality, or to shut down even one of the human butcher shops where 1.5 million children are yearly done to death, what were the fanatics screaming about?

The answer is at hand. Paganism is a jealous, devouring god that abides no other.

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Guest Editorial:

A Shepherd Speaks For the Voiceless

November 15, 1989, became a historic date in the battle to stop the killing of innocent preborn children. And we have San Diego Bishop Leo T. Maher to thank.

For it was on that date that he advised anti-life Assemblywoman Lucy Killea that she no longer had the right to receive Holy Communion in the Catholic Church.

He came to this decision, and thus instructed Ms. Killea, because he is a Bishop of the Roman Catholic Church and he comprehends the reality of abortion which takes the life of an innocent baby each time the act is performed, be it by chemical, device or surgical instrument.

The letter which Bishop Maher sent to Ms. Killea stated in part, "I pray that you'll receive the light to form a right conscience on the fundamental teaching of God. The right to life is a fundamental right and without it there are no rights."

Succinct and to the point, this quotation expresses the basic principles of the entire pro-life movement and its adherents of all faiths as well as those who profess no faith but still believe that life is sacred.

The quote further places the battle to stop the killing of innocent children in the very context that the media constantly criticizes and chides. That is, does a leader within a church have a right to speak out against this heinous crime of abortion?

There are those, particularly in the instance of the Killea case, who have cried out against Bishop Maher, screeching and moaning that he has gone too far. There are those who have stated that he should not have "punished" Killea in this manner when other so-called Catholics such as Teddy Kennedy and Mario Cuomo are getting away with the same thing without reprimand. Yes—getting away with murder!

Well, let's take a look at "going too far" as that phrase relates to all Catholic leaders in the United States. For the problem really is not whether or not Bishop Maher went too far, but rather why all Bishops in America have not already taken the same steps, the right steps, in a matter as grave as this.

Abortion slays a child, a child created in the image and likeness of God. The Roman Catholic Church has taught, from the very first, that abortion kills and is a sin against the Laws of God.

Politicians who profess to be Catholic have hidden behind their so-called "personal opposition" to this killing for years and years, ever since the first argument to legalize the killing came into the public forum in the sixties. These men and women of gelatinous spines have argued that, though they may not believe in abortion themselves, they cannot do much about it because they do not want to impose their personal beliefs on others? As much as that kind of weak-kneed argument sounds like rubbish to me, they have been using it and they have been getting away with it, too.

Now, enter the Killea matter, some twenty-five or so years into the battle. Ms. Killea says that she came to her support for abortion-killing after a lot of thought. She says that she can live with her position both intellectually and emotionally. She says that she can understand that the Bishop might not agree with her, but she says he was too drastic.

When you think about the natural way in which a baby is conceived in the womb, how can you think that killing this baby makes sense? Is Killea suggesting that women cannot control their urges and thus should not be held responsible for their actions?

Killea may be able to live with her position, but children—who are undeniably present in the womb from the moment of fertilization—will NOT be able to live with her position. In fact, those condemned to death by abortion will never have the opportunity to develop the intellectual and emotional skills Killea claims to have.

Killea espouses a philosophy which leads many frightened and lonely girls and women to the drastic act of denying continued life to a fully alive baby, simply because that baby resides in the womb. She is the one who is drastic in her support of an act which is deadly in its effect.

The Bishop says simply: "No Catholic can responsibly take a 'pro-choice' stand when the choice in question involves the taking of innocent human life."

Simple, accurate and perfectly logical.

Oh that every Bishop in the United States of America would reflect on the eloquence of Bishop Leo T. Maher as compared to the jibber-jabber of politician Killea. Reflect and then act in accord with this man among men—this Shepherd who has acted on the Lord's promise to leave the 99 behind and seek out the one who is lost.

America has a St. Thomas More among us; his name is Bishop Leo T. Maher, Diocese of San Diego, California. ■

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St. Pat's: Liberals wink at desecration

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Militant converts to this all-consuming heresy were witnessing to their new faith. Unable to shut their ears and eyes to what Cardinal O'Connor has to say, they want him to shut up; they want the Catholic Church to shut up; they want all men of God to cease bearing witness against the devils that possess them. And, their frustration is all the greater because they know the Church cannot do what they want it desperately to do: Bless a life-style that is carrying them away in numbers reminiscent of the Black Death.

AIDS is indeed a horrible disease. But who has done more than the church and its nuns to relieve the suffering and ease the dying of its tens of thousands of victims?

"Good morality is good medicine," the Cardinal has said again and again. Is he wrong? The primary cause of the spread of AIDS is promiscuous homosexuality; the secondary cause is the sharing of dirty needles by the drug addicted. Why, then, is AIDS the fault of a Church that has not ceased to preach that both are morally wrong, that has, again and again, called home those who have strayed?

What happened at St. Patrick's was not unpredictable.

Several weeks ago, the "arts community" of New York rose to defend a crude AIDS exhibit, introduced by a $7,000 catalog that preached open hatred of Cardinal O'Connor:

"This fat cannibal from that house of walking swastikas up on Fifth Avenue (St. Patrick's) should lose his church tax-exempt status and pay retroactive taxes from the last couple centuries. Shut down our (abortion) clinics and we will shut down your 'church'. I believe in the death penalty for people in positions of power who

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