

## Your Favorite Page

- The lab test indicated abnormal liver function.
- The baby was delivered, the cord clamped and cut, and handed to the pediatrician, who breathed and cried immediately.
- The patient was in his usual state of good health until his airplane ran out of gas and crashed.
- The patient lives at home with his mother, father, and pet turtle, who is presently enrolled in day care three times a week.
- She is numb from her toes down.
- The patient was to have a bowel resection. However, he took a job as stockbroker instead.
- When she fainted, her eyes rolled around the room.
- Whilst in casualty she was examined, X-rated and sent home.
- On the second day the knee was better and on the third day it had completely disappeared.
- The patient has been depressed ever since she began seeing me in 1983.
- I will be happy to go into her GI system, she seems ready and anxious.
- Patient was released to outpatient department without dressing.
- Discharge status: Alive but without permission.
- The patient will need disposition, and therefore we will get "Dr. Blank" to dispose of him.
- Healthy-appearing, decrepit 69 year old male, mentally alert but forgetful.
- The patient expired on the floor uneventfully.
- Patient has left his white blood cells at another hospital.
- The patient's past medical history has been remarkably insignificant with only a 40 pound weight gain in the past three days.
- She slipped on the ice and apparently her legs went in separate directions in early December.
- Patient has chest pains if she lies on her left side for over a year.
- He had a left-toe amputation one month ago. He also had a left-knee amputation last year.
- By the time he was admitted, his rapid heart had stopped, and he was feeling much better.
- The patient is a 79-year-old widow who no longer lives with her husband.
- The patient refused an autopsy.
- Many years ago the patient had frostbite of the right shoe.
- The patient left the hospital feeling much better except for her original complaints.
- The skin was moist and dry.
- Patient was seen in consultation by "Dr. Blank," who felt we should sit on the abdomen, and I agree.
- Patient has two teenage children, but no other abnormalities.

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# CROSS LINKS

CONGREGATION OF HOLY CROSS, UNITED STATES PROVINCE OF PRIESTS AND BROTHERS  
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August 2013

Dear Hearts and Gentle People,

It's been an eventful summer, hasn't it? Floods, rains, heat and tornadoes battered parts of the country, as did forest fires resulting in the deaths of 19 good people and numerous homes destroyed. The Zimmerman trial, the Snowden stuff, Pope Francis' trip to Brazil, little Prince George, Congressional ineptitude, the plane crash in San Francisco from which nearly everyone walked away, the Spanish train crash and so on. For ND football fans, Everett Golson's suspension caused massive cardio-intestinal trauma. There was probably a lot more that happened but which I don't remember right now.

### AUGUST APPEAL

With the new academic year starting up, there are increased expenses for the Formation Program.

Any way you can help would be greatly appreciated. See it as an investment in the future of Holy Cross and our Church.

It has been and will be an eventful time for Holy Cross too. Fr. Jim Gallagher, C.S.C., our vocation director, told the community that five men will be entering Old College, 12 entering the postulant year, 13 heading off to the novitiate, six taking First Vows, and two will be preparing for their Final Vows in early September. He asks that we all keep those young men in our prayers in the months to come.

We also commend to your prayer **Rev. William C. O'Connor, C.S.C.**, who died July 18, 2013. "Dutch" (as he was known) spent the great majority of his priestly life in parish ministry in South Bend, California and Arizona. He also worked in the Marriage Tribunal offices of the Dioceses of Orange (Calif.) and Phoenix (Ariz.).

Back in the May issue of *Cross Links* I made the following comment about Pope Francis: "(He) has certainly been an interesting change of style and I pray for him as he possibly leads the Church in new directions. I think everyone of us is going to have to be prepared for change ... there will be resistance from the right, the left, and from the middle too." By now, we've all seen that change is in the air and there is resistance. That's what triggered the reflection on the next two pages. The key principles to keep in mind are 1) Some things cannot be changed; and 2) the word "change" doesn't mean throwing cherished beliefs or things away. Rather, think of change as meaning "process," "development," "adjust," "modify."

In closing, I simply remind you of our need for your assistance in the mission of Holy Cross, through prayer and through financial support. The cost of education impacts families severely and the same is true of Holy Cross: We have more than 40 men in formation at Notre Dame. Any help you can give would be appreciated.

Love deeply, laugh often, pray faithfully!

*Fr. Herb*

 Hugs!

# SO WHAT ARE WE REALLY ARGUING ABOUT?

I'm a faithful reader of several online sites that have to do with our Catholic faith. They range from news sources like the National Catholic Reporter to Catholic News Service to National Catholic Register. These three services pretty much cover the range of Catholic thought. I also read several blogs having to do with commentary on issues facing the Church, on liturgy and on social justice.

All these resources allow for commentary and feedback by readers. I've found that these commentaries really reflect the divisions that exist within our Church.

On the one hand, there are those who believe that all Catholics owe absolute obedience to the magisterium. They insist that all practices and doctrines were instituted by Jesus and therefore are unchangeable. Many times the commentary is concluded by a statement to the effect that anyone who cannot accept this should consider leaving the Catholic Church for another religion – the one usually mentioned is the Episcopal Church.

On the other hand are those who maintain there is fluidity in Catholic teaching; that things can and should change in response to the needs of the times and advances in science and human knowledge. Whereas those who favor the traditional are often harshly judgmental, those who favor the new ways are more often sarcastic and dismissive.

The controversies range over all areas of Church life: Liturgy, obedience to authority, human sexuality, role of the laity, social justice and so on. Many traditionalists are afraid that Pope Francis is going to dismantle the “reform of the reform,” while others are hoping that he will do exactly that and change all those “oppressive, patriarchal structures and rules.” What is forgotten in the crossfire is that change has always been a part of our Church's life and yet there are also things that have indeed remained unchanged over the years. Sometimes folks really don't know what they are arguing about!

A few Sundays ago, the First Reading from Acts had the story of the First Council of Jerusalem. The question before the assembled apostles and elders was this: “Should Gentiles be circumcised in addition to Baptism or not?” The assembly agreed on a compromise that was acceptable to both Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians.

In the homily I gave at St. Paul's, I described three levels of Church teaching: dogma, doctrine and discipline. Many folks commented favorably on it because they had not heard of the distinctions before and what they meant for Catholic teaching and adherence. So I thought it would be good to

repeat those points especially because we live in a time of great change and change always brings anxiety.

The first and highest level of Church teaching is **dogma**. A dogma can only be proclaimed by a Church Council, or by the Pope *speaking in communion with the bishops and the laity* (emphasis important). The Pope cannot proclaim a dogma on his own. In the early centuries of the Church there were many struggles over dogma which are the **things we must believe in order to be a Catholic Christian**. Examples would be the divinity of Jesus, the humanity of Jesus, the Trinity, the Communion of Saints, etc. The next time you pray the Nicene Creed at Mass, pray it carefully and thoughtfully. Here you have the essential dogmas of the Church.

The Creed speaks of two Marian dogmas: the Divine Motherhood and Perpetual Virginity. Not mentioned in the Creed are two additional Marian dogmas: the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. The latter was the most recent dogmatic statement, proclaimed in 1950 by Pope Pius XII. No new dogmas have been issued since then and John XXIII specifically asked Vatican II not to issue any new ones. John Paul II came close to issuing a new dogma on Mary as Co-Redeemer along with Jesus, but decided not to because of fears that it would limit the redemptive role of Jesus and deeply harm ecumenical relations (see italicized comment above).

Nowadays most of the tension in the Church comes because folks are confusing dogma with doctrine and discipline. They are not the same thing. Let's look at **discipline** first.

Church discipline is a rule of behavior, binding on Catholics as long as it is in effect. **discipline can be relaxed, altered or abolished**. It is man-made and can be changed as often as our Church desires. It adapts itself to the changing circumstances of time and place, conditions of life, customs of people and races, and so on.

One familiar discipline is the Eucharistic fast. The earliest recorded regular practice was to eat at home before the Lord's Supper if one was hungry (I Corinthians 11:34). Then came the rule which is familiar to many oldsters: fasting from midnight until Mass that day. As afternoon and evening Masses became common in the West, this was modified to fasting for three hours. The latest Code of Canon Law reduced the Eucharistic fast to the current one-hour requirement.

Other disciplines of the Church that have changed or been eliminated over the years would include Holy Days of Obligation, Friday abstinence, women having covered

heads and not wearing slacks while in Church and mixed marriages being performed in rectories. Liturgical practices are disciplines, such as Mass translations, laypeople doing readings and distributing Communion, standing vs. kneeling during the Eucharistic Prayer and receiving Communion in the hand vs. on the tongue. Priestly celibacy is a discipline; ditto for the diaconate being reserved for men. I'm honestly not sure whether ordaining women is a discipline or a doctrine ...good arguments can and have been made for either one.

Now we get to the crux of the matter and this is the area where most of the conflict in our Church takes place: doctrine. **Doctrine is a non-infallible teaching of our Church, and it is binding on Catholics while in force. Doctrine can and has been altered, modified, abandoned and even condemned.**

Doctrine differs from Dogma in that it can be disputed and speculated upon until such time that it is officially defined by the magisterium of the Church. For instance, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was speculated about and discussed for many centuries before Pius IX explicitly defined it as a dogma for belief by all the faithful.

Slavery, once accepted as a normal part of life, has been condemned. So has usury, the charging of excessive interest rates. Capitalism, once encouraged as the answer to Communism is now being re-examined in terms of its devastating effects on developing countries and the poor. Earth as the center of the world has been abandoned in the face of scientific evidence. The same for evolution. It was once condemned because it flew in the face of the Biblical account of the seven days of creation. Humankind as absolute masters of creation is giving way to a doctrine of stewardship of the earth's finite resources.

The doctrine of limbo for unbaptized infants has just faded away. It was a doctrine that lay people could not read the Bible because they wouldn't understand it or would misinterpret it. Church doctrines regarding just war, economics and capital punishment are changing. Outside the Church there is no salvation (CCC 846). is changing. More resistant to change are papal primacy and women priests.

Time and again, conflict arises in the doctrinal arena because of the use of the word “change.” To change doctrine does not mean to throw it out and get rid of it. Doctrine cannot be changed that way. But, and this is important, doctrine *can* be changed as the Church's understanding grows. Because it is not infallible (and therefore unchangeable), doctrine is always in process of development. Let me use an example of how doctrine can be developed.

Let's say there is a woman wearing a red dress in the room. A little later, there is a woman in a red dress in the corner of the room. A little later, somewhere in this room is a woman in a red dress smoking a cigarette. Later still, I see a woman in a red dress in the far corner of the room smoking a cigarette while talking to a man. Do you see the development? In each case there is a little more specificity. But the core fact never changes: There is a woman in the room who is wearing a red dress.

All the major doctrinal issues of our time have been or are going through exactly this process. War, capitalism, relations between the world's religions, role of women in our Church, our relationship to the earth, the role of science and reason, human sexuality and reproduction, immigration – all these and more have been the focus of debate and discussion at all levels of our Church.

Conflict comes because we tend to lose sight of the fact that the core principles of doctrine do not change. It would be like getting fixated on the fact that the woman in the red dress is smoking a cigarette and an argument starts over whether smoking is right or wrong. What changes is how the core principles are applied to everyday life.

The current national debate on immigration is another good example of this process. The great majority agree on the need for immigration reform. There is a hefty corpus of Church doctrine on this issue. The devil is in the details. How can we do this in a way that respects the sanctity of our nation's borders and national security, yet allows immigrants presently in the country to become legal citizens?

It also helps to remember the example of Jesus. Jesus said that He did not come to change even one iota of the law (core value). Yet at the same time, he taught the primacy of human need when it is necessary and reasonable. So He healed on the Sabbath and He permitted His disciples to harvest grain on the Sabbath, though that was forbidden. He rendered Himself ritually impure by consorting with women and sinners and touching lepers. He developed the law into a deeper level (“*You have heard it said ... but I say to you ...*”). Jesus did not change the core values. He developed them and brought them to a deeper level.

Dogma never changes. doctrine and discipline do. Change comes because of human need and because of changes in human knowledge and circumstance, not because of personal preference. It helps, perhaps, to recall the words of Jesus to the apostles at the Last Supper: “*I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of Truth, he will guide you to all truth*” (John 16:12-13).