

CARDINALS BEHAVING BADLY

Thomas P. Doyle

Two weeks ago I was in Quebec City to support a group of victims of clergy sex abuse in their campaign to get the Statute of Limitations for civil cases either eliminated or changed so that it will actually help victims and bag more predators. Needless to say the only opposition comes from the Catholics bishops of La Belle Provence. No surprise! The impetus for this article was the response of the local Cardinal (Gerald Lacroix) to some adult victims who in their youth were violated by priests. He told them that he had no authority over what the priests do. That of course, is a bald-faced lie. It has been repeated by other bishops over the past few years and thoroughly demolished by canon law as well as by several civil court decisions in the U.K. and the U.S. Lacroix thus far has shown no interest in doing anything for victims except to victimize them again.

Next we come to the two princes of the Church from Chile, Ricardo Ezzati, presently the archbishop of Santiago de Chile and his illustrious predecessor, Francisco Errazuriz. In addition to supporting the notorious Chilean priest-pervert, Fernando Karadima, they tried to torpedo the possibility of Juan Carlos Cruz from membership on the papal commission. This all came out in a series of emails between them which somehow became public in which one referred to Juan Carlos as a “serpent.” It appears both of these characters have gotten dispensations from the pope’s orders to support and help the men and women violated by churchmen. It also appears that both of them are sorely lacking in common decency.

Then there is George Pell. His escapades are enough to fill at least one very thick book so we’ll just point out a couple of howlers. Last year he had to admit to the Royal Commission and hence the world that he had spent \$1,500,000 in Australian dollars to have his crew of lawyers “crush” John Ellis, a victim. Pell had to also admit that he did this intentionally to discourage anyone else from suing the “Church.” Now he’s heading back to Sydney to testify again before the commission and he’s hired more lawyers to cross-examine victims, contrary to the Church’s stated policy not to do so. Not surprising. Pell has no semblance of Christian charity about him, especially when it comes to abuse victims and he has no shame either.

On November 14, a former Catholic Navy chaplain named John Thomas Lee pleaded guilty to child pornography charges in Delaware. In 2007 he had been court-martialed by the Navy on charges of sodomy and failing to inform a sex partner he was HIV positive. At his court-martial he confessed to having had sex with numerous partners including a number of military service members.

Lee's fall in 2007 was not unexpected. Not long after Lee arrived at an assignment to Hawaii in 2002 he set himself up with a live-in boyfriend. A very diligent Navy chaplain learned of this arrangement and reported it to the archbishop for the Military Services who was Edwin O'Brien at the time. Edwin went from the military archdiocese to become archbishop of Baltimore and from there to being a cardinal and Grand Master of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre.

O'Brien ignored the report. The priest wrote again and this time O'Brien invited him for a personal meeting in Washington. The persistent chaplain mistakenly believed that O'Brien had finally believed him about this and other similar situations he had courageously brought to the archbishop's attention. Instead, O'Brien said he was concerned about his psychological welfare and insisted he have an evaluation. The Priest, Father X, contacted me for canonical advice and I told him not to agree to it. He wisely told O'Brien and his auxiliary bishop, John Kaising, that he would agree to an exam only if they sent him a written communication telling him in detail why they felt it was necessary. He called their bluff and the exam never took place.

The Navy Times had a front-page story when Lee was sentenced at the court martial. The military archdiocese was asked to comment and said that was the first they knew of any such allegations. No surprise there! That was neither the first nor last time they covered for predator priests in the military and lied about it when questioned.

Lee kept cruising till it all caught up with him. He was sentenced to two years of confinement at his court martial. Obviously he didn't learn much in prison. He's now awaiting sentencing and could get up to fifty years in prison.

Back to O'Brien. (*To his credit, he had the courage to go after the Legion of Christ which had inflicted itself on the Baltimore archdiocese.*) He was military archbishop during the latter part of my own military career and was the one who fired me as a Catholic Chaplain in 2003. I kept quiet about that for several months after it happened, not out of shame or embarrassment but because I didn't want to get caught up in a media splash. I was not exactly successful because someone let

the cat out of the bag a few months later. Naturally I was pummeled by questions about why. O'Brien's concocted reasons were that I had refused to say daily Mass and that I had set myself up as an alternate authority to him. Both were totally bogus and he knew it. He refused to meet with me, talk to me or otherwise communicate about it all. The real reason was obvious: retaliation for my outspoken criticisms of bishops.

Remember the other Cardinal O'Brien? The former Cardinal Archbishop of Edinburgh was outspoken in his criticism and condemnation of gays until it was disclosed that he had engaged in predatory sexual behavior targeting junior priests and seminarians. He resigned in 2013 and was secretly investigated by the Vatican. In 2015 the Vatican announced that he had renounced all the rights and privileges of a cardinal but retained the title. Had he been an ordinary priest he'd have been laicized. The pope could have totally removed him from the cardinalatial upper crust of the ecclesiastical aristocracy. Its been done before. In 1931 Cardinal Louis Billot, S.J., a staunch supporter of Action Francaise, an ultra conservative movement of French Catholics (not unlike some of the contemporary reactionary groups), was solidly behind them. Pope Pius XI was against the movement and placed their newspaper on the Index. Billot wouldn't back off from his support so he and Pius had a personal encounter. About a week later it was announced that he was no longer a cardinal!

The other cardinal who got himself in deep trouble within the past few years was Hans Hermann Groer, the archbishop of Vienna. Groer had been a diocesan priest of Vienna but joined the Benedictines in 1974. He took solemn vows in the Order in 1980 and to the surprise of many, was named archbishop of Vienna in 1986. He had not been a bishop and seemed to come out of nowhere although it was said that he had a deep devotion to the virgin Mary which, in the estimation of John Paul II, was sufficient to qualify him for the episcopate. In 1995 several of his former students publicly accused him of sexual molestation. He had already submitted his resignation to the pope on his 75th birthday in 1994 so it was no shock that it was accepted shortly after Christoph Schonborn, an auxiliary, was appointed to succeed him in 1995. Here's the rub. Cardinal Ratzinger tried without success to get John Paul II to authorize an investigation and Groer's successor claimed in May 2010 that Cardinal Sodano had blocked his own attempts to investigate Groer's activities.

We can't by-pass Tim Dolan whose "hale fellow well met" routine is getting him less and less mileage. Most people have heard pieces of information about his tenure in Milwaukee where one of the most scandalous and disgusting

episodes of sex abuse took place. The priest who was chaplain at St. John's School for the Deaf sexually violated at least 200 boys who are now grown men. Archbishop Weakland finally realized he had to do something so he started the process to defrock the priest, Lawrence Murphy. They got as far as the Vatican...the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to be exact...and pleaded with the two honchoes there, Cardinal Ratzinger and Cardinal (then Archbishop) Bertone, to finalize the process. They declined and justified it by saying Murphy, who was old and sick, should be able to live out his life as a priest. Two more cardinals behaving very badly but we're getting off point.

Before Dolan left Milwaukee he got permission from the Vatican to transfer about \$58 million to a cemetery trust fund to shield the money from being available for compensation for victims. The transfer became public and Dolan lied when accused of trying to hide the money. The lie came out in a blog entry of his dated Feb. 15, 2011. Its worthwhile quoting the entire protestation of innocence:

Feb. 15, 2011

Groundless Gossip

Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan

Archbishop of New York

I owe it to all of you - both the Catholic and wider community - to be very clear about the ridiculous and groundless gossip spread about me by a tort lawyer named Jeff Anderson.

You may have heard this man claim that, when I was archbishop of Milwaukee, I "hid" \$130 million of archdiocesan funds so victims of clergy sexual abuse could not sue for it.

Malarkey! The Archdiocese of Milwaukee has an excellent record of fiscal integrity and transparency. I worked hard at that, and my successor, Archbishop ListECKI, continues to do so. (By the way, you might also be interested to know that during my years as archbishop of Milwaukee, and with the generous service of many dedicated people, we established a mediation process that reached settlements with almost 200 victim survivors; that mediation process has been praised by the victim survivors who have participated in the process.)

In my seven years there, the meager resources of the archdiocese were under the vigilance of a sound and respected finance council, composed of prominent and respected business leaders from the financial community; annually we were audited; and each year there was complete,

published financial disclosure. You can find the audited financial statements here. To claim that, given this rigorous supervision, an archbishop could have "hidden" \$130 Million, is beyond ridiculous.

The only discrepancy between Dolan's paltry excuse and the facts was the amount. It was about \$58 million and not \$130 million but that's not the point. The lie became obvious when the court process produced his original letter to the Vatican asking for permission for the transfer and in it he explicitly said it was to prevent the money from being used for court payments: "*By transferring these assets to the trust, I foresee an improved protection of these funds from any legal claim and liability*" June 4, 2007). He and his successor, ListECKI, laid out the viciously destructive and extravagantly expensive strategy that lagged in the courts for over 4 years and which succeeded to re-punishing the Milwaukee victims for having the *audacity* to stand up and challenge the Lord Bishops.

The last cardinal for consideration is Ray Burke. Rather than put him into the category of cardinals behaving *badly* I think behaving *weirdly* is more apt. Everyone knows that Cardinal Ray has a powerful penchant for dressing up in the exotic (and very expensive) elaborate garb of the long gone past. He's become the poster boy for the most outlandish outfit of them all, the fur-trimmed *cappa magna*.

When Burke was bishop of LaCrosse Wisconsin he published some rules for the investigation of complaints of sex abuse by priests. Ignoring the canon law of which he is supposed to be an expert, he set the bar so high that it was close to impossible to nab anyone. He and his infamous successor, Jerome ListECKI, prided themselves on the fact that hardly any priests in the diocese were ever accused. That makes sense when you realize that Burke rigged the process to make it almost impossible and ListECKI carried it on.

Burke's latest cause is trying to make sure the institutional Church shows no compassionate pastoral concern for the divorced and remarried. It's obvious that he and his allies in the episcopate whose blood pressure has been going through the roof on this issue have never understood that marriage is a human relationship and not just a convoluted theological and canonical construct. Fortunately Burke and some of the other cardinals who keep harping that any change would cause schism and betray the very orders of Jesus Himself, are generally ignored by most people who they mistakenly think are actually listening to them.

Today's cardinals who behave badly are not as nefarious as some of their ancestors who clawed their way to the top of the church's aristocracy leaving a lot of collateral damage in their wake, but their behavior still causes serious harm to the very people they should be caring for rather than stomping on.

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