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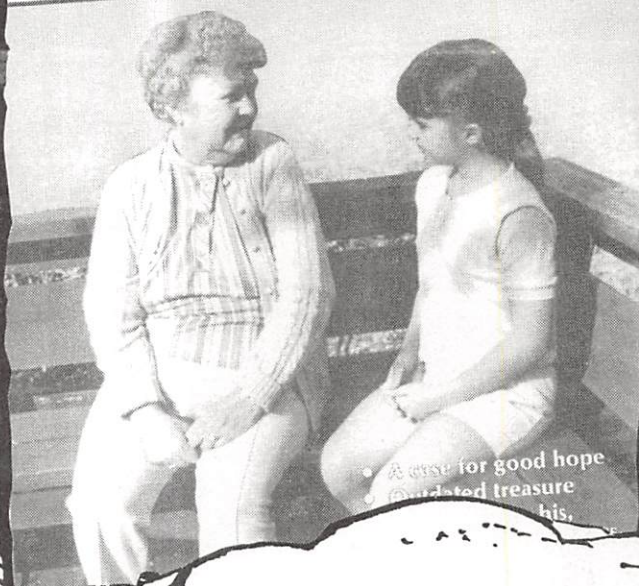
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REQUIEM FOR A MAGAZINE:

R.I.P.
Our Family

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**The Sodomization
of the Catholic Press
in Saskatchewan**
by E. Michael Jones

Requiem for a Magazine: The Sodomization of the Catholic Press in Saskatchewan

by E. Michael Jones

Our Family is the type of Catholic family magazine you probably remember reading as a kid. It's published by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate out of Battleford, Saskatchewan. It has a circulation of around 14,000. It's been around for 38 years. It is full of nuts-and-bolts articles on family issues, personal accounts of how wives fell in love with their husbands again, of how to deal with anger, of what to get Father X for Christmas, of miraculous healings, of pictures of grandfathers carving decoy ducks. It also has a regular feature for children, Junior Echoes, featuring regular advice from Aunt Miriam on why they shouldn't eat the last piece of fruit on the plate, be selfish, etc. Children from across Canada write in to Aunt Miriam about their new ponies and bicycles and Aunt Miriam answers them all, sometimes in rhymed couplets:

We welcome you, new Junior,
Just the way that you are!
With your gifts and your talents
that will get you quite far!
You are special to us and we thank God for that,
So now you can proudly "wear your own hat!"

It is, you might say, an old-fashioned Catholic magazine of the type we might remember from thirty years ago. However, unlike many Catholic magazines from that era, it is still full of what some people might call old-fashioned Catholic morality. The world, you may have noticed, is not the same as it was 30 years ago. Defending motherhood issues, not to mention motherhood itself, is not without its perils these days, as *Our Family's* editor, Father Albert Lalonde, O.M.I., was to find out.

In February of 1986 he published an article on AIDS that was critical of homosexuality. By April he was in trouble with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission. In October he published a piece linking feminism and the occult. One month after that he was fired, and Canada had lost one of the few papers willing to criticize the feminist/homosexual juggernaut in that country. In a country already suffering from a numbing media blackout on such issues, it was a serious loss for Catholics and for anyone else interested in family values.

By December of 1986, the Ontario legislature had passed a bill including sexual orientation in its civil rights code. That meant that it was virtually a sure bet that the rest of Canada would follow Ontario's lead (Quebec had had sexual orientation on the books since 1977), and that meant that before too long, if it wasn't already, it would be virtually illegal to criticize homosexuality in Canada. That something like this could happen in a world which is anticipating 100 million AIDS cases by 1990 is not merely incredible; it is positively awe-inspiring. More than that, it provides some sobering insights into the state of religious orders, the Church, and the government, and their inability to defend themselves against a group that has made the ideology of compassion its most effective propaganda tool in gaining political power.

THE JEWISH PSYCHIATRIST

Melvin Anchell, M.D., is a Jewish psychiatrist from Mission Viejo, California. He has been practicing psychiatry since 1948, has been married for almost that long, has five children, has written a number of books and articles, and has testified in court as an expert witness on the effects of pornography. He has also treated homosexuals, "A Psychoanalytic Look at Homosexuality and AIDS," which appeared in the February 1986 issue of *Our Family*, synthesizes his experiences treating homosexuals and fighting the political ideology of homosexuality. It is not the best article I have ever read on homosexuality, but some of its conclusions seem indisputable, as well as indisputably unpopular given the current political climate.

"There is something fatally wrong," he writes describing his futile efforts to defeat a gay rights ordinance in Houston, "with a culture that condemns its citizens for upholding sexual morality while, at the same time, it passes laws that favor homosexuality." "Today's humanitarian effort," he continues at another point, "to understand and sympathize with those unfortunate individuals who have become perverted is commendable, but it has gone overboard in a tolerance for perversion that has left the normal individual

unprotected. As a result, children and adults are becoming contaminated to an alarming degree."

In addition to describing the social threat of homosexuality in general terms, Anchell goes into the medical threat homosexuality poses to the population at large. He compares AIDS with the bubonic plague and goes on to say that it could be as devastating a nuclear holocaust. Beyond that, Anchell describes just what homosexuals do to each other in detail graphic enough to make you want to turn the page to Aunt Miriam's column: "Ingesting the AIDS virus by licking the anus and excrement accounts for the invariable gastrointestinal infections. Diarrhea is a symptom present in practically every case of AIDS—some homosexual AIDS patients pass as much as 15 liters of diarrhetic material from their bowels each day."

DISGUSTING PRACTICES

Dr. Anchell considers such practices "disgusting" and says that the feelings of disgust normal people feel upon hearing descriptions of such things "are normally strengthened by family, religion, and educational influences," thereby preventing many people from succumbing to the temptation to commit unnatural acts. However, in a society subservient to homosexual ideology, all of the outer defenses are down. More and more succumb, to the point where society itself is threatened with destruction, as many medical experts familiar with the far-reaching and potentially catastrophic effects of AIDS feel is the case right now.

In addition to his warnings, Anchell goes into what he considers the causes and symptoms of homosexuality. He claims that "every homosexual is the product of premature seduction in childhood," that "what attracts and excites a homosexual is the physical and mental resemblances of his sex object to a woman," "that homosexuals have psychopathic personalities. That is, they are people who are not capable of feeling affectionate love for their sex partners," and that "from a psychoanalytic standpoint the homosexual is the sickest of all pervers."

SHOCK AND OUTRAGE

Given Anchell's frankness in describing homosexuality and given the political power that has accrued to homosexuality over the past ten years, the reaction to the article was not surprising. The homosexual lobby in Western Canada was "shocked and outraged" by the article. Tom Gale, writing "for the AIDS Network of Edmonton," claimed that "the article is grossly uncharitable, and is full of misinformation, skewed facts, and lies about homosexual men and women, and AIDS." Gale's response was typical of the hysteria the article unleashed. It was also long on accusation and short on substance. Gale never got around to substantiating his claim about the alleged lies or skewed facts in the article. Instead, he praised "Dignity Edmonton"

for their "selfless giving, love, and support," and claimed Anchell propagated "hate" in his article.

Peter Millard, an English professor from Saskatoon, accused Anchell of slander. "As for the accusation that homosexual people are incapable of loving their partners, this is perhaps the most insidious slander because it suggests that the homosexual is not quite human. From my own experience, as well [sic] the experience of a large number of homosexual couples known to me personally over the years (not to mention the literature), I can categorically declare that this is simple nonsense. The fact is that homosexual relationships are just like heterosexual ones: some are longlasting and positive; some are not."

Millard also took exception to Anchell's claim that every homosexual is the product of premature seduction in childhood. It "is simply untrue," Millard claims. He then goes on to add rather apodictically, "No one in fact understands why some people are homosexual any more than they understand what makes a person heterosexual." Millard then goes on to impugn Anchell's motives in writing the article.

By describing in lurid detail certain speculative actions leading to the disease, he wants to inspire disgust in the reader. This, indeed, is the true purpose of the article. While it claims to be scientific and clinical, it is in fact motivated by a powerful and not very rational antipathy toward homosexuality, a state of mind called homophobia.

Millard's response typifies much of the rhetoric levelled against Anchell and *Our Family* by the homosexual lobby. Millard never gets around to telling the reader whether it is a false statement to say that homosexuals eat excrement and stick their tongues into the anuses of other homosexuals. He accuses Anchell of bringing up "lurid detail[s]" which, if true—and Millard doesn't dispute their truth—certainly fall under the category of disgusting. According to Dr. Paul Cameron, who conducted a national random sexuality survey in five metropolitan areas (Los Angeles, Denver, Omaha, Louisville, and Washington, D.C.) and whose results were published in *The Nebraska Medical Journal* (1985, 70, 292-299), "over 90 percent of gays participate in the insertion of the penis into the rectum of sex partners." Furthermore, "90 percent of gays and 65 percent of lesbians report having engaged in oral/anal sexual activity. . . . About 70 percent of gays and 25 percent of lesbians (vs. 7 percent of heterosexuals) report some regularity of this practice." In addition to that, Cameron reports that "19 percent of gays and 4 percent of lesbians urinate and/or defecate on each other," all of which leads Cameron to conclude that "gay activities are not only unsanitary and disgusting but monumental assaults on the human body."

If such behavior is not disgusting, it's hard to imagine what is. As to the causes of homosexuality, someone who has dealt with them for 40 years should be entitled to his opinions on the subject, especially since Millard

professes to be totally in the dark himself on the issue.

In a similar vein, a certain W. Curtin, "Chairperson" of "Dignity Edmonton Dignité," accuses Anchell of "gross generalizations, presentation of false stereotypes and outright lies [which] only promote hatred and discrimination and serve intolerance and injustice." Curtin, like the other members of the homosexual lobby, does not substantiate his claims. However, as with the Big Lie, if the claim is made often enough, it often sticks. The charge that the article and magazine "promote hatred" was never proven, but it took on a life of its own as the move against *Our Family* gained momentum.

POSITIVE RESPONSES

Not all of the responses to the article were negative. Ed Billet of Ontario wrote "to commend Dr. Anchell on his article on homosexuality and AIDS, and *Our Family* for publishing it." In addition to praising the magazine, Billet cited a story which appeared in *Week-end Magazine* describing how a 12-year-old Portuguese boy "was lured off the Yonge Street Strip [in Toronto] and after a homosexual orgy was drowned in a sink. A storm of outrage swept the city and when antihomosexual demonstrations took place the 'gay community' whined for homosexual rights." The politicians did nothing, said Billet, "But God sent AIDS."

In any normal society, discussion of the issue would have been confined to the letters to the editor column of the magazine and that would have been that. But large segments of Canada have bought into the homosexualist movement, as they have down here. Sodomy was decriminalized in 1969 (along with abortion); sexual orientation was passed by Quebec in 1977 and Ontario in 1986. As a result other aberrations can be expected. Perhaps because they knew they could count on a sympathetic hearing, the homosexual lobby decided to take its case to the government.

THE HOMOSEXUAL LOBBY TAKES ITS CASE TO THE GOVERNMENT

On April 25, a certain Mathew Kuefler writing on behalf of Dignity Edmonton Dignité characterized *Our Family* as "hate literature" to Don Piragoff of the Department of Justice in Ottawa. In his letter Kuefler contends that Anchell's article "encourage[s] an attitude of hatred toward homosexuals." "What reactions," Kuefler wonders, "will be caused by the article, whose author himself states 'the first natural reaction of the normal person towards the pervert is one of disgust' and advocates the destruction of such 'perversion'?"

Is it illegal to advocate the destruction of perversion? Judging from his letter, Kuefler evidently thinks so. "Our laws protect us from such persons who would seek to isolate one group in society and scapegoat it," he writes, although he must have been aware that sexual orientation is not a protected class under the

Saskatchewan civil rights code.

By the end of his letter, Kuefler gets down to business. Anchell may be an American and, therefore, beyond Canadian jurisdiction, but he wonders if the government can do anything about the editor of the magazine, Father Albert Lalonde. The homosexual lobby decided to strike back at the messenger that brought the bad news. "Can some measure," Kuefler wonders, "be taken against the editor of this magazine (Albert Lalonde, O.M.I.)? When contacted by us, this man showed no regret for having published the article, nor would he print a retraction for even the obvious lies in it. [Kuefler, like the rest of the homosexual lobby, never gets around to specifying what the lies are.] The lack of knowledge displayed in the statements, as well as the ease with which truth on the matter may be found, combined with the danger to his readers who may gullibly believe what was written, make his perhaps a criminal negligence, we feel."

THE SASKATCHEWAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION EXPRESSES CONCERN

In a sensible society, such letters would have been laughed into the trash can. However, Canada is not a sensible society. It has bought into the homosexualist agenda. Not only that, it has established administrative means whereby the homosexual lobby can make its claims stick, entities like the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, which contacted Father Lalonde by letter on April 23 "to express its concern" over the Anchell article. The Saskatchewan government was now going to tell Father Lalonde what he could or could not object to in his magazine, even though, as the commissioner admitted in his letter, "sexual orientation is not presently a prohibited ground of discrimination under *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*." Ronald Kruzeniski, Chief Commissioner and author of the letter, allowed that "*Our Family* magazine has every right to publish its views on issues of sexual morality, and specifically has the right to express its view regarding the morality of homosexual activity. However, *Our Family* magazine has a moral, if not a legal duty, to so express itself without degrading the dignity of gay people and people suffering from AIDS."

Kruzeniski feels that his mandate is "to further public policy in Saskatchewan that every person is free and equal in dignity and rights and to discourage and eliminate discrimination." Thus, judging from Commissioner Kruzeniski's interpretation of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code (which, again, does not include sexual orientation), we are to infer that people who stick their tongues into other people's anuses are every bit as dignified as, say, people who go to Church on Sunday or compose sonnets or whatever. We are to infer that any statement which ridicules groups of people is immoral, if not illegal. Is it, one wonders, illegal to say that fools are ridiculous in Saskatchewan?

It's hard not to see how the same line of thinking doesn't apply to homosexuals. Is perversion disgusting or isn't it? Is it illegal to say that the practice of sticking the tongue in someone's anus is disgusting? What other word is one to use? Now remember, we are not talking about specific people here. Dr. Anchell did not write in his article that John Doe was a pervert; he wrote that homosexuals were perverts, a statement which seems more of a tautology than anything else. He said that homosexuals regularly engaged in actions which were disgusting. He then went on to list those actions. Kruzeniski, like the homosexual lobby, quarrels with neither the major nor minor premise of the article. He does not dispute that some homosexuals do what Anchell says that they do. He offers no clue as to whether he thinks such actions are disgusting or not. Instead, acting with complete disregard of the fact that sexual orientation is not on the books yet in Saskatchewan, he attacks the article's "tone" and in so doing merely echoes the main judgment of the homosexual lobby, that the article and magazine are "hate literature." "The content and tone of the above-noted article," he writes,

depicts [sic] gay people and people physically disabled by AIDS in hateful terms, and in ways calculated to arouse in the reader feelings of revulsion and disgust. Few would question the impropriety of such an article if the subject matter related to a person's religion or marital status. It is equally reprehensible to attack the dignity of persons on the basis of their sexual orientation or on the basis of their physical disability.

Kruzeniski's letter raises a number of questions. First of all, did Anchell depict homosexuals truthfully or not? If he was being truthful in describing what they do—and Kruzeniski is not claiming that he wasn't—then revulsion and disgust are the correct response when confronted with what homosexuals do to each other. Or is Commissioner Kruzeniski saying that it is illegal in Saskatchewan to feel revulsion and disgust? The actions arouse revulsion and disgust, not the description. Is Kruzeniski saying that homosexuals don't do such things? Secondly, Kruzeniski is telling a

Roman Catholic priest that perversion is on the same level as "a person's religion or marital status," and that he must treat it as such or suffer the consequences of the law. Finally, he claims that the article attacks the dignity of a class of people, who by their own admission engage in perverted and disgusting behavior.

The real attack on human dignity is launched by the people who commit those actions themselves. They can be pitied; they deserve our prayers that they might be delivered from this demonic bondage. But the Christian can no more say that sodomy is dignified than he can say that black is white or that the sun rises in the west. Just what is a priest to do in such a situation? Is he to say that sodomy and marriage are morally equivalent? If he did, he would be making the faith he professes into a lie. If he is a Christian and a Catholic, he can only say one thing: sodomy is evil; marriage is not. There is no other alternative.

RIGHTS DIVORCED FROM NATURE

The whole incident points out, among other things, the fundamental absurdity of dealing with rights as if they had nothing to do with the truth about human nature. As things stand on the books now in Ontario and Quebec, and as things are interpreted in Saskatchewan, the charter of human rights is on a collision course with itself. It is impossible to say one cannot discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation and religion, because the two are at odds with each other. The Catholic Church says clearly that sodomy is evil. The sodomites, in less explicit fashion, feel the same way about the Catholic Church or any other entity which would curtail their sexual license. When all is said and done, the final result of this absurd contradiction is that, in the name of nondiscrimination, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission punished Father Lalonde because he gave expression to his religious beliefs. Commissioner Kruzeniski, you have probably guessed by now, is a Roman Catholic. Copies of the letter were sent to Father Lalonde's superior and the local bishop.



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LALONDE'S REACTION

Lalonde's reaction to the letter was swift and understandable. He had been found guilty without even knowing that he had been on trial and wanted some things clarified, specifically who had judged the magazine "hate literature" and how had they arrived at their conclusion. Lalonde goes on in his letter to enumerate a number of questions: "Exactly what terminology was judged to be hateful? What objective criteria were used and how were they applied to judge these terms hateful? By what process did you arrive at determining what the author's intention was? If this article is judged by your commission to be hate literature, have you shown respect for the due process of law by condemning an author and his writing without giving him a hearing or without investigating to see whether there is a legitimate defense for publishing such material?" "I have no intention of having the magazine I edit slandered as a purveyor of hate literature," Father Lalonde continued, and concluded his letter by asking for specific response to his questions.

KRUZENISKI'S RESPONSE

Kruzeniski's response came six weeks later. It was one paragraph long and didn't respond to any of the questions raised by Father Lalonde. "Our letter," Kruzeniski wrote disingenuously, "should be read as one of concern and nothing more should be read into it. Your magazine has not been 'slandered as a purveyor of hate literature.' Our statement of concern is in no way slanderous, and was expressed to you and your publisher in a private communication."

The fact that sending the letter to Lalonde's superior and the local bishop had taken the letter out of the realm of private communication seems not to have occurred to Kruzeniski. It did occur to Father Lalonde, though, since he was the one most damaged by these now-you-see-them-now-you-don't type of charges. The fact that he received an official communication accusing him of disseminating hate literature was not ameliorated by the fact that Kruzeniski virtually withdrew the claim when Lalonde asked him to substantiate it. By that time the damage had already been done. "It is of concern to me," Lalonde wrote in a follow-up letter, "that you should take this out of the realm of private communication by sending copies of your letters to Gerald Wiesner, O.M.I., and Bishop Blaise Morand. That puts the documents in question out of my control and yours."

JUDGE, JURY, AND EXECUTIONER

Playing judge, jury and executioner seems to be standard operating procedure for Kruzeniski and the Human Rights Commission. In the July 14, 1986 issue of *Western Report*, Saskatoon MLA John Young accuses the "high-minded commission" of being "guilty of

unfair play for publishing in its 1985 annual report the names of those merely suspected of sexual harassment or racial discrimination." The names of two pizzeria managers were published as guilty of "sexual harassment of a verbal nature" before the commission had even held its quasi-judicial hearing on the case. The name of a former owner of a shoe store was published as being guilty of racial discrimination because he refused to accept the personal check of an Indian who wanted to buy a pair of shoes.

THE NEW AGENDA

If the Oblate order were in order, they would have laughed the whole thing off the way that the justice department should have so many weeks ago. However, Kruzeniski's attack, wittingly or not, hit Father Lalonde when he was already under pressure from certain elements within his own order. The Oblates are no different from most of the orders within the Church. They are divided between those who accept the authentic Catholic faith and those who would like to change it to suit either their own predilections or those of the Zeitgeist. Those who are interested in the latter tend to describe their agenda as "renewal." Even while he was editor, perhaps because he was editor, "renewal" was a constant threat held over the head of Father Lalonde. In the spring of 1986 he was given a set of directives, guidelines for reorienting *Our Family* in a direction more congenial to the wishes of the renewers. Just what renewal meant in this instance can be gleaned from the guidelines.

Our Family, as a national Catholic family magazine, needs to be written for family (both in content and style), but not narrowly limiting itself to family matters (such as husband/wife relationships, raising children, teen problems, pro-life, anti-abortion, sexuality, etc.). Therefore the magazine has to teach *less about family and more about church*.

Under the heading "Beyond a Church of the past," Father Lalonde is given the following directions:

Our Family needs to be committed to a multi-faced [sic] church, but above all to one that is highly characterized by *change, transition and in renewal*, to a church that is perhaps more *yet to be* rather than to an experience of *church that has been*, to the static and the past.

We see this as a church that is essentially community; that is in solidarity with the poor with their many faces; that admits to weakness within, but that is forgiving and seeking to become more whole as part of the kingdom of God; that constantly strives to do away with injustices, first within itself, and also in society; a church that fearlessly denounces arms buildups and inflated military budgets; that is active for church unity; a church that calls forth ministry from all who are baptized; that is particularly sensitive to more equitable roles of women within the church and searches both for images of God and structures of church that more fully integrate the feminine; and a church that celebrates as prayerful people.

BUZZWORDS

Just what denouncing arms buildups and inflated military budgets has to do with a Catholic family magazine, the author of this document never gets around to saying. However, the document seems more concerned with buzzwords than with thinking things through anyway. It even degenerates into just that, a list of buzzwords that are presumably to appear throughout articles appearing in the renewed *Our Family*.

Though difficult to define precisely, especially in traditional terms, some expression of the contextual tone might be: openness, relational and communal, faith journey, pluralism and diversity, paradox, searching, process (rather than substance), interdependence (rather than independence), non-patriarchal, integral (rather than dualistic), social (rather than individual), the here and now as personal and localized (rather than abstract), the incarnational, the holistic and human; and also, a perspective of creation and the world more as blessing and redeemed, and less as fallen.

Somewhat negatively stated, another way of attempting to describe the contextual flavor of *Our Family* is that it *counter the predominance and consequences of dualism* in much of Catholic spirituality past and present. Some of the effects of this dualism are: the body as lower, dispensable and sinful; the world as fallen and even evil; individualism and independence; privatized salvation ("save my soul"); spirit v.s. [sic] flesh; antagonism, between self and world, self and others (that which is different is a threat); excessive moralism, legalism and authoritarianism; denial and *repression of sexuality and passion*; perfection (through elimination of evil) rather than wholeness; and so forth.

The document even suggests specific articles in the renewed *Our Family* style, things like "justice and poverty consciousness (Latin America, liberation theology, South Africa, family violence, suburban natives, etc.); liturgy and worship; current sacramentology; role of women; scripture; single parent concerns; military-based economics, etc."

According to Andras Tahn, assistant editor of the magazine, and fired along with Father Lalonde, the document was written by a Father Glenn Zimmer, O.M.I., currently director of Queen's House, the Oblate retreat center in Saskatoon. When asked if he had written the document, Zimmer at first said that it was issued by the entire provincial team, of which he is a member, but later added, "I think I submitted a draft to the council."

THE OBLATES APOLOGIZE FOR OUR FAMILY

Zimmer is not the only member of the Oblate order who was unhappy with the editorial direction of *Our Family*. In the December 7, 1986 issue of *Catholic New Times*, the Canadian equivalent of *The National Catholic Reporter*, a Brother Rudy Mumm, O.M.I., felt called upon to apologize for the magazine's stand on homosexuality. "I am grateful," he writes:

because Ms. Baxter is courageous to take a public stand alongside lesbian women and gay men who are victimized by certain segments of the church.

As an Oblate I deeply lament the insensitivity of some of our brother Oblates towards those among us who are gay, and the resulting pain inflicted upon family and friends.

I assure Ms. Baxter that *Our Family* does not represent the convictions of all Oblates.

Another member of the order who was clearly unhappy with the direction *Our Family* was taking was Sylvester Lewans, O.M.I., of Regina. Lewans was provincial of the St. Mary's province before Gerald Wiesner, the current provincial, took the job. Wiesner is the one technically responsible for firing Father Lalonde. As provincial, Lewans' contribution to renewal in the order was sending one priest to San Antonio for what that priest called "brainwashing." The priest, unused to the extremely warm climate and probably weakened by the fact that he was only getting five meals a week as part of his updating regimen, eventually got sick and had to return to Saskatchewan before the session was over. In a letter which appeared in the January issue of *Our Family*, Lewans gets to the crux of the issue. The reason that *Our Family* is unacceptable is because of its position opposing homosexuality and feminism:

The *Our Family* has chose rather to judge and summarily condemn homosexuals and feminists. Which group of hurting people are next on the hit list of the *Our Family*? You won't have to search long to find additional vulnerable groups: the welfare recipients, the unemployed, immigrants, drug and alcohol addicts, the widows, the orphans. In fact, we're all fair game if faultfinding continues to be the focus of the magazine.

It seems to me that the articles on homosexuality and feminism underline what we have observed happening to the *Our Family* under present editorship: a swing to religious fundamentalism, an approach incompatible with the Post-Vatican II Church.

Much more to Father Lewans' journalistic tastes is the diocesan *Prairie Messenger* (*St. Peter's Messenger* in a previous incarnation), a Catholic paper which bestowed its "Prairie Messenger Churchperson of 1986" award on Archbishop Hunthausen of Seattle because, among other reasons, he "had the audacity to question America's militarization, its growing dependence on nuclear arms, its official understanding of communism as being so evil and dangerous that anything opposed to it was morally justified."

In his letter to the *Prairie Messenger* of December 16, Lewans praises "PM's commitment to the prophetic mission of the church." Specifically, "The [November 24] editorial on an Advent Church receiving homosexuals is terrific because it is truly catholic. Unlike the fundamentalists [a common cuss word in Saskatchewan] who restrict and confine the word, your editorial analysis opens and frees the word to the wider context of revelation and humanity." As a token of his

gratitude, Father Lewans generously donated \$100 of presumably either his order's or his parishoners' money to the Prairie Messenger Development Fund. "Really it's not a donation," he said, closing his effusive letter, "rather, we are indebted to you beyond what a cheque can convey."

THE PRAIRIE MESSENGER ON SODOMY

The editorial in question dealt with Cardinal Ratzinger's recent letter on homosexuality. As you may have already guessed, the *Prairie Messenger* was not pleased with the letter, especially the parts that saw homosexual orientation as an "objective disorder," a "strong tendency ordered toward an intrinsic moral evil."

"The Church," intoned the *Prairie Messenger* gravely,

in making such declarations must acknowledge the inherent dangers in such moves. There is a great danger that many languishing out in the wilderness will see only a harsh church that does not understand their weakness. Even more dangerous, this seeming lack of compassion can effectively shield them from a Lord who was not afraid to be found with prostitutes.

"A Lord," the PM editorial concludes, "who could be at home with prostitutes will also be at home with homosexuals."

THE PROVINCIAL COUNCIL

Both Lewans and Zimmer are powerful men in the St. Mary's Province of the Oblate order. Lewans is the former provincial; Zimmer is currently a member of the provincial council and, according to many, the real power behind the throne. In a letter to the provincial council protesting the firing of Father Lalonde, Rev. Bernard M. Hermann, O.M.I., gives some indication of the real distribution of power on the council. Gerald Wiesner, the provincial, is characterized as "orthodox"; however, "you have one problem and you have perhaps inadvertently admitted it and that is that you tend to be a 'leaner' and a placater, you just don't like waves." Hermann then relates an incident that supports his point about Wiesner. "Some years ago as Superior in Edmonton you were questioned about certain things that were going on, things that bothered a number of us. After an attempt at explanation you admitted to your questioners that you really didn't like it yourself, but what could you do about it? Well, you were the lawfully appointed authority and much as it might have disturbed things it was your duty to do something about it."

Father Hermann then gives the provincial a bit of fraternal advice. "So my suggestion is to stiffen the backbone, and if you must lean, find a better leaning post than Glenn [Zimmer] whom many of us feel is the actual provincial in any case. I feel, as many others do, that he wants to be provincial so much he can taste

it. . . . But although he might deserve it as punishment, we don't deserve him."

Between the Zimmer-inspired guidelines for "renewal" of *Our Family* and Lewans' letters to the editor, it is easy to figure out the type of magazine *Our Family* was to become and why it was necessary to get rid of Father Lalonde to make it that way. He had become a major roadblock, but before he could be removed he had to be found guilty of something serious. Homophobia was a good start, especially since it was backed up by documentation from the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission. In religious circles the charge could be formulated as being "insensitive" to the plight of hurting minorities. Lewans' letter to *Our Family* is a good example of how the accusation gets translated into the type of jargon that makes character assassination palatable to provincial councils. In addition to pressure within the order, there was pressure from without. According to Andras Tahn, Peter Millard (the already-mentioned English professor from Saskatoon) was applying pressure on Wiesner to get rid of Lalonde. Also, according to Tahn and Lalonde, Kruseniski was also putting pressure on Wiesner through Archbishop Halpin of Regina.

OCTOBER, THE CRUCIAL MONTH

By the early fall of '86, Lalonde's job was hanging by a thread. October was to prove to be the crucial month. It was then that the critical forces in the whole dispute came together and created the configuration that led to Lalonde's downfall. Oblate Provincial Gerald Wiesner, not a particularly strong man to begin with, finally buckled under the pressure he was getting from the homosexual lobby and apologized publicly for the Anghell article in the October issue. "We apologize," Wiesner wrote,

for the overall tone of the article, for its one-sided compassion, and for its occasional crude and unaesthetic quality.

Especially, we feel the need to apologize for a number of statements within the article which, if left as they are, easily lead to distortion of fact and potentially foster hatred and discrimination.

The article states that "from a psychoanalytic standpoint the homosexual is the sickest of all perverts." It insinuates that the homosexual has a propensity for pediophilia [sic], that no homosexual can truly love his sexual partner nor be faithful within a relationship, that virtually all homosexuals are given over to masochism, that all homosexuals have psychopathic personalities, that all homosexuals are the product of a homosexual seduction, and that homosexuals in general strive for positions within society which give them access to young boys.

THE FACTS

As Kruseniski did before him, Wiesner accepts at face value the claims of the homosexual lobby that the

above-mentioned statements are false. He treats Lalonde as if he had just denied something as obvious to reason as the multiplication table or as essential to faith as the Apostles' Creed. However, the issue remains as it did before. Are the above-mentioned claims false? Is it somehow false to say that homosexuals are perverts? That they have a propensity to pedophilia? To claim that no homosexual can truly love his sexual partner is at least a debatable proposition. The recent Ratzinger letter on homosexuality says something similar. It is surely something that should be allowed to be discussed in any country which claims to have freedom of the press. That homosexuals are not faithful in sexual relationships is statistically a fact, substantiated by any number of studies on homosexuality. In their book *Homosexualities* Bell and Weinberg document that only 9 percent of homosexual males had fewer than 25 different sex partners. Thirty-two percent had between 100 and 500; 15 percent between 500 and 1,000, while fully 28 percent reported over 1,000 different sexual partners. Homosexuals in lifelong monogamous relationships constituted less than 1 percent of the homosexuals surveyed. According to the same book, 70 percent of homosexuals confined their sex to impersonal one-night stands, and the same percentage expressed no desire to associate socially with the people they had sex with. Just how is one to characterize the personalities of people who engage in such behavior? Is "psychopathic" all that inaccurate?

All of the other statements are at least debatable, but Father Wiesner apologizes for them all. "It is not our desire here," he says drawing his apology to a conclusion,

to debate the issues involved, neither to condemn nor to condone. Our desire, as publishers, is to publicly state our disagreement with the above-noted statements and to apologize to all for whatever hurt may have occurred because of them.

NEWS TO ST. PAUL

The last statement is the most remarkable of the whole letter. Here we have a Roman Catholic priest stating publicly that when it comes to the issue of homosexuality it is not his job to condemn or condone. This must be news to St. Paul, who not only condemned homosexuality but also said that God would condemn homosexuals. According to the Ratzinger document, St. Paul states clearly in I Corinthians 6:9 that "those who behave in a homosexual fashion... shall not enter the kingdom of God." According to the same document,

Paul uses homosexual behavior as an example of the blindness which has overcome humankind. Instead of the original harmony between Creator and creatures, the acute distortion of idolatry has led to all kinds of moral excess. Paul is at a loss to find a clearer example of this disharmony than homosexual relations. Finally

I Timothy 1, in full continuity with the biblical position, singles out those who spread wrong doctrine and in verse 10 explicitly names as sinners those who engage in homosexual acts.

So what does Father Wiesner mean when he tells us that it is his desire "neither to condemn nor condone"? The Christian has no choice in the matter. He must condemn homosexuality; he may not condone it.

LEVEL-HEADED LAITY

The laity, it would seem, have a clearer understanding of Christian teaching than the clergy. In the same issue (the next letter to the editor, as a matter of fact, a fact that would be held against Father Lalonde later) Wendy Gaudet of Fort McMurray, Alberta, cited the above-mentioned scriptural passages as well as others cited by Cardinal Ratzinger and went on to give a much more level-headed assessment of the situation:

As Christians, we must have charity to all mankind (homosexual or otherwise), but this doesn't mean we have to compromise the moral standards God has set for us. We must love the sinner, but hate the sin.

Homosexuality is an abomination in the sight of God. Scripture, unless perversely twisted, clearly defines homosexuality as unlawful sexual relations.... As to whether or not AIDS is a curse from God, I think it not impossible. The Scriptures show us that in the past, God has dealt with people who continue to live abominable lifestyles by sending floods, fires and pestilences. It is man's choice to submit and serve God or do otherwise. If one chooses the latter then they alone are held accountable for their actions—homosexual or heterosexual alike.

Gaudet concludes her letter with a fear that by now must have occurred to others as well. "What concerns me is that the homosexual society is moving into the church...."

THE FINAL NAIL

The October issue proved to be the final nail in Father Lalonde's coffin. In addition to printing the Gaudet letter in devastating proximity to Wiesner's apology, Father Lalonde ran a radical critique of feminism by Louise Shanahan. How radical was it? Well, if you want a good idea, read the December 1985 issue of *Fidelity*. Shanahan lifted virtually her entire article from articles by me and Donna Steichen which appeared in that issue. If the editorial staff of *Our Family* can be faulted for anything, it is in not being as observant as they should have. Andras Tahn was to say later that he had no idea that Shanahan had, shall we say, borrowed so heavily from *Fidelity*, even though he had been familiar with *Fidelity* for some time. It is the sort of thing that happens sometimes. If anyone is at fault, it is Shanahan herself for not stating her sources more openly.

Perhaps because of the botched job she did in writing her article, Shanahan's dynamite exposé blew up

in her own face. When the letters rolled in, no one believed her. The effect for Father Lalonde was predictable. In the space of less than one year he had offended two of the liberals' most sacred cows, feminism and homosexuality. Not only was he "insensitive" to sodomites, he printed articles which came out against witchcraft too. More significantly, he was making more and more enemies in that loose or not-so-loose coalition of homosexuals, feminists, and left-wing ideologues that can be found in the Church's social justice establishment. Lalonde now had too many people in too many influential positions against him. His demise was merely a matter of time. The forces on the provincial council who had wanted him out all along now had all the ammunition they needed. On November 19, 1986, Keith Philander, head of the Social Action Department of the Archdiocese of Regina (where none other than Human Rights Commissioner Kruzeniski is on his parish social justice commission and Archbishop Halpin is ordinary), along with fourteen other ecclesiastical bureaucrats and religious, sent a letter to Wiesner and all the other members of the provincial council suggesting "a reconsideration by your congregation of how and by whom articles are selected for publication." The message was clear: Lalonde had to go.

The letter used the same tactics that the homosexuals had already used. They claimed that the articles were "inflammatory, biased, and ill-informed," but never got around to substantiating any of their claims. "The tone of both articles," Philander and Co. write, "is offensive and the author has clearly manipulated information for apparently biased ends—to divide people even further on the issue of women's spirituality."

ONCE AGAIN, THE OBVIOUS QUESTIONS

Well, once again we are forced to ask the obvious questions. Is witchcraft a legitimate expression of "women's spirituality" for Catholics? Do they deny that many feminists are involved in lesbianism and witchcraft? Do they deny that educators at Catholic institutions are involved in both? Do they deny that such groups have quasi-official endorsement—which is to say the endorsement of the Canadian Catholic bureaucracy? If anyone has any doubts on the matter, he should read the bibliography of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' Kit on Women. (See "Blueprint for a Revolution," *Fidelity*, April, 1986. The bishops may or may not have known what was in the kit they endorsed, but the bureaucrats certainly did.) Do they deny that the symposium which took place on October 25 at Mankato State University in Mankato, Minnesota, featuring the self-professed witch Starhawk and Rosemary Ruether (whose book *Sexism and God-talk* was included in the already-mentioned bibliography of recommended readings) was not an open celebration of witchcraft?

The answer to all of the above questions is no. The

objections in the letter were to things like tone, expressed with a vigor of moral indignation that led one to believe that such things could not possibly be true.

According to Andras Tahn, recently hired and even more recently fired assistant editor of *Our Family*, "what did Father Albert [Lalonde] in... was the article against the women's kit.... That's what did it, because that's when the flurry of activity started, and it was right after that that the meeting was held, and it was right after that that we were axed." Tahn mentioned the letter from Philander and Co. from the social justice lobby in Regina, as well as pressure from Social Rights Commissioner Kruzeniski on Archbishop Halpin, as significant factors. He also saw the influence of Glenn Zimmer through Marikay Falby, an employee of St. Mary's Province who assists Zimmer at retreats at Queen's House. Falby wrote a "scathing" letter to the editor which echoed many of the charges the provincial council was to lodge against Father Lalonde in the meeting when they fired him, e.g., the "letter immediately following his refuting what he had said," and hostility toward the Oblates of St. Mary's Province Mission Statement of 1986, which "stresses... a particular sensitivity to justice toward women in the Church."

TAHN'S MEETING WITH ZIMMER

On November 18, 1986 Andy Tahn met with Glenn Zimmer at Queen's House in Saskatoon. Tahn behaved like anyone new on the job. He wanted to talk to the people he was associated with and find out what they believed and give them some sense of where he stood. The feeling is understandable, if a bit naive in a polarized situation like the one in the St. Mary's Province of the Oblate order. Lalonde had warned him not to be so open about his beliefs with other members of the order, specifically Provincial Wiesner.

"Father Lalonde warned me, 'Don't tell him you are fond of reading *Fidelity* magazine and the *Wanderer*, because if they find out you are in that ballgame, you're going to be in trouble.' Of course, you know, innocent that I am, and because these are likable gentlemen here, I did tell them that."

During the Queen's House meeting, Zimmer also wanted to know what Tahn thought of *The Ratzinger Report*.

"I said I thought it was great; I thought it was right on. [Then] I said 'What do you think?'—because he sort of gave me this wry smile [while I was talking]. His response was, 'Well, there are some things there in which Cardinal Ratzinger is all right, but there's the other things which I don't agree with.' Our conversation always ran toward things like [that]. What I never understood is how can a priest, who has taken a vow of obedience, not be obedient to the Vatican? To me that's an absurdity."

As the conversation heated up, however, Zimmer became more forthcoming with his views.

"YESTERDAY'S HERETICS ARE TODAY'S SAINTS"

"He said in his meeting that 'yesterday's heretics are today's saints.' And it just floored me, and I tried to pursue that. I said, 'What the hell do you mean by that?' And he went on and talked about how in the old days there were people who were condemned by the Church and later approved, and one of the examples he used—which is absurd, of course, absolutely absurd—was Galileo. And I thought, 'my God, he doesn't actually believe I'm that stupid.' And he used the example of people like Catherine of Siena, who opposed the Pope and later were vindicated. But that's a whole different [thing]. . . . [Then] I said to him—right to his face, like it was a friendly meeting, it wasn't an angry meeting at all; he's an incredibly wonderful guy to get along with, palsy-walsy to the *nth* degree, you know—I said, 'Look, you're a feminist. You have a feminist agenda, for goodness sakes.' He did not deny it."

During the meeting Zimmer gave some indication of why the provincial council had allowed Father Lalonde to hire an assistant in the first place. According to Tahn, the council was hoping that the assistant editor would be an "ameliorating force" on Lalonde.

"We were hoping," said Tahn quoting Father Zimmer, "that Father Albert Lalonde would hire an assistant editor who would be able to challenge him." And I didn't say anything to that, because I think the way he meant it is not the way that I would have taken that. In other words, he wanted someone to *oppose* Father Albert Lalonde and not to challenge him in the way that I perhaps might challenge him."

By the time the meeting was over, it must have been clear to Zimmer that Tahn wasn't the man they had supposed him to be. Nor would it be possible to work one member of the editorial staff against the other. They were too united in purpose. Given that situation, there was only one alternative. According to Tahn, Zimmer said rather ominously, "I'm really glad that I've had this meeting with you. I'm really glad that you're there because now I can go with a more clear conscience to our provincial meeting." The meeting was to take place the following week.

"Clear conscience to do what?" I asked Tahn. "Get rid of you?"

"HOLY HATRED"

"He didn't say. Now, I took it in the context of our discussion that he was relieved that I was there because he was very angry. I'll tell you some of the names he called Father Lalonde. He characterized Father LaLonde as being filled with holy hatred, lumping him with fundamentalists like Jerry Falwell. He waved a copy of *Our Family* in the air and said, 'We will not tolerate it any longer,' and threw it down."

When I asked Zimmer if that were true, he answered, "That's Andy Tahn you're quoting, isn't it?"

"Yeah, that's right," I replied.

"And you know, Andy was the guy that used the expression on me. That's how things get distorted. In the discussion I had with Andy he said we have to have a holy hatred, and that was picked up out of one of the letters to the editor in the December issue, eh? Where one of the writers had used that expression. And I said, 'Andy, can you buy that?' And he said, 'Yes, we've got to have a holy hatred.' I said, 'Andy, it doesn't go. It doesn't go. You cannot combine holy and hatred in my book, see.'"

"Well, what about loving the sinner and hating the sin?" I asked.

"Well, sure."

"Can't we hate sin?" I persisted.

"Huh?" Father Zimmer seemed to be taken off guard.

"Are we allowed to hate sin? Isn't that a holy hatred, hating sin?"

"That's not the same as hatred at all, I think."

"It isn't?"

"No."

"Well, what was the context? [Tahn] said you said that Father Lalonde was full of holy hatred."

"I never said that," Zimmer responded.

In a subsequent conversation, Tahn stood by his statement. His response to Zimmer's denial was blunt and to the point.

"He's lying," Tahn said.

OTHER DENIALS

The issue of holy hatred was only one of many denials Zimmer was to make during our conversation. He also denied that Father Lalonde had been fired.

"Father Lalonde wasn't fired," he stated categorically.

"Well, he says he was," I responded. Both LaLonde and Tahn claim they were fired. Father LaLonde said the reason given at the meeting was the articles he published on homosexuality and Wicca.

"Well, that's not the truth, okay."

According to Father Zimmer, Father Lalonde "was given a new obedience."

"Like what's the story," Zimmer continued, "about an Oblate being changed in his editorship? What's the story in that? Did you do an interview when he replaced Father Materi? Or when Father Materi replaced [the previous editor]?"

According to Zimmer, Lalonde's stand against homosexuality and feminism had nothing to do with his being fired, or, as he would have it, having his obedience changed.

"That's not what's at stake here. We're talking about a certain view of Church that's at stake here."

THE REAL CAUSE: HIS MODEL OF CHURCH

Lalonde's removal, to use a neutral word, came as a result of his model of the Church.

"It was based," Zimmer said, "on an overall review of the magazine and consultations that we had on the magazine that indicated that it wasn't doing what we wanted it to do, that the magazine had specifically taken a different turn from what it had traditionally been doing, and we weren't pleased with the turn it was taking. The position it was taking, the overall model of the Church it was communicating, is certainly a valid one to communicate—there's no doubt about that—it's a valid view, eh? But we did not feel as publishers we wanted to perpetuate or to further that particular view of Church. Essentially what's involved here is quite a fundamentalistic [that word again] view of Church. That's not a view of Church that fits in with the Oblate charism, that fits in with the Vatican II documents. And we in conscience just said, while that view is, you know, it's valid to propagate that view, we did not want to propagate that view ourselves. The magazine had definitely taken a different turn in the last four to five years, and we had to make a judgment if we wanted to continue to support a magazine with that particular editorial stance."

Given Zimmer's stand against *Our Family* and the "model of Church" it represented, it seemed fair to ask just which views the Oblates do want to propagate. In order to present some concrete options, I read a passage from the book of another Oblate. The book is called *The Sexual Creators* (University Press of America, 1986). It is written by Rev. Andre Guindon, O.M.I., a member of the Oblate order in Canada who teaches moral theology at St. Paul's University in Ottawa. The chapter I cited from is entitled "Gay Fecundity or Liberating Sexuality." The passage I read to Father Zimmer states:

Does a gay's moral dilemma consist in choosing between being a gay (the immoral choice) and not being gay (the moral choice)? Is this a reasonable choice for one who is irreversibly a homosexual? There are enough gay bibliographies nowadays to convince anyone who is not incurably prejudiced that for many persons gayness is the only sane choice.

"Do you think that's more in keeping with the charism of the Oblate order?" I asked Father Zimmer.

"Oh, I could not make a statement on that," he replied.

THE OBLATES' DOUBLE STANDARD

The fact is that, when it comes to homosexuality, the Oblate order practices a double standard in favor of the homosexual and to the detriment of those who stand up and defend the teaching of the Catholic Church. At around the same time that the wheels were turning which would lead to the firing of Father Lalonde, two Oblate priests, Andre Guindon and Gerry

Morris, vice provincial of St. Peter's Province, were scheduled to speak at a Dignity conference held in Montreal on May 16-19, 1986. By now it is common knowledge that Dignity does not support the teaching of the Catholic Church on homosexuality. Rather, it sees itself as a group within the Church whose goal is to change the teaching of the Church to the position where homosexual activity is an acceptable alternative. In an article appearing in the Canadian prolife newspaper *The Interim*, Father Alphonse de Valk cites one Dignity spokesman in Canada as saying, "Our ultimate goal is to alter the Church's stand on homosexuality."

Father de Valk also has a good deal to say about episcopal support for homosexual groups and their theologian sympathizers in Canada.

At the end of April 1986, Human Life International (HLI) from Washington, U.S.A., held a much needed and high-powered symposium in Montreal, on various aspects of modern sexuality. Its speakers were known experts in their fields, as well as Catholics who accept the Church's teaching on sexual morality without mental reservations or public disclaimers. Its director is the energetic Fr. Paul Marx, who, it should be said, is also quite outspoken and occasionally annoys people.

In his regular circular to his priests, Bishop Leonard Crowley informed them that he had declined to give the opening prayer at the Symposium. Stated the Bishop: "I am unable... to associate myself with HLI, as I cannot support the objectives and the manner in which its organization operates. There has been an evident lack of respect toward persons and their right to their reputation; also I cannot agree with the *limited perspective* taken by the organization on the whole area of human life."

Three weeks after his refusal to say a prayer at the HLI symposium, Bishop Crowley celebrated Mass at the Canadian Convention of Dignity, an organization of homosexual Catholics.

Father Albert Lalonde, O.M.I., published an article critical of homosexuality; Father Andre Guindon, O.M.I., spoke at the national Dignity convention in Montreal. Father Lalonde was fired for his stand on homosexuality; Father Guindon is still teaching at St. Paul's. In fact, in spite of repeated requests from Rome that something be done, the Oblates have gone out of their way to protect Father Guindon.

GAY FECUNDITY

A look through Guindon's book *The Sexual Creators*, especially his chapter on homosexuality, "Gay Fecundity or Liberating Sexuality," will give some indication of why he needs protection. Unlike Charles Curran, who merely condones homosexuality, Guindon offers it as a role model for heterosexuals, for the Church, and indeed for the entire North American continent.

Nongays, we are told, have much to learn from the life experience of homosexuals. "If gay fecundity is something other than a second rate, defective replica of

heterosexual fecundity, if it is an original source of humanization on its own terms in our society, then it should bring to the human sexual concert novel tonalities which enrich the quality of everyone's performance" (p. 163).

As Guindon works up his thesis, he becomes less and less hypothetical about these "novel tonalities."

This gratuitous celebration of love is characteristic of gay sexuality. More than any other group, practicing gays and lesbians come face to face with their sensuality because same-sex attraction has no other source than mutual attraction. A woman does not make love to another woman or a man to another man because that is what is expected of everyone; or because that is what must be done to get a provider or a homemaker; or, again, because that is how babies are made (p.165).

Unlike heteroxsexuals, sodomites have no such base ulterior motives when they engage in sexual activity. As a result, according to Father Guindon, the Oblate moral theologian, we all can learn from their example. "Gays and lesbians can play a special role in helping the whole community rediscover sensuousness. They remind us to reclaim our sensual bodies and to learn from them who we are and how to act humanly" (p. 165). In other words, we can all learn to act humanly by imitating the people who stick their tongues, penises, light bulbs, etc. etc. into each other's anuses.

"GAY MALES HAVE A SPECIAL VOCATION"

Homosexuals, according to Professor Guindon, are called to teach the Christian community how to act. What used to be a perversion is now a vocation. "Gay males," he writes,

have a special vocation, in this respect, to teach North American males how to experience the quickening of loving feelings and how to let the sexual action flow from that experience of the other's sensuous and amorous indwelling.... Gay males who are attentive to their own sexual experience and work at humanizing their sensuality through their tenderness can be of

great help in this common quest to discover who we are as sexual selves (pp. 166-67).

By golly, they sure can! But not in the way that Father Guindon suspects.

Sodomites, according to Father Guindon, are even going to liberate Christianity:

Partnered gay persons have the opportunity to deepen the sensuous experience and to liberate sensuality from the shame which weighs upon it. In so doing, they help the Christian community discover how the word, in order to live among us, is made flesh. God's glory is not seen otherwise nor is love rightly sought through other mediations.

It's hard to find something associated with homosexuality that Father Guindon doesn't have a good word to say for. "Critics of the gay bars," he tells us, "too easily overlook their positive function and offer lesbians and gays no realistic alternatives." "Research data," he informs us solemnly, "confirm the fact that, oftentimes, gay partners picked up in cruising are involved in more interaction than mere impersonal sex" (p. 177).

The conclusion of Guindon's book seems inescapable: homosexuals are morally superior. They are a race of moral titans. And the sooner the heterosexual population comes down off its high horse and admits this the better off it will be. "Married people may indeed learn something from them in terms of sharing as equal persons" (p. 172). Father Guindon is not shy in calling on sodomites to assume their role as moral educators. "Now is perhaps the best time," he writes, "for lesbians and gays to reflect on the meaning of human limitations and boldly teach a North America, which has lost its 'good reputation' in the face of Nations and is reacting with overwhelming fear to its loss of innocence, how to become peacefully 'just human' when the dice are no longer loaded to one's advantage" (p. 185).

Given such effusions, it only seemed fair to ask Father Guindon a few straight questions. After all, I didn't want to quote him out of context.



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ARE HOMOSEXUAL ACTIONS STILL WRONG?

"Well, the question is," I said getting right down to brass tacks, "are homosexual actions still wrong?"

"Well," Guindon responded, "in the official teaching that comes from Rome, this is what is still held."

"Do you hold that position?"

"I could not answer yes or no."

At another point in the course of our conversation, Father Guindon gave a hypothetical example that gives better insight into his theology. He cited "the case of 17-year-old Peter, who suddenly has a homosexual adventure with another chum of his during a weekend. Maybe in those circumstances, Peter, who had been up to that point completely enclosed, completely unable to communicate, finds himself in a situation where for the first time in his life he really opens up to somebody. How will you argue that this was enclosing for him, that this was not loving, that this was not good for him?" the Oblate theologian asked.

"Do you agree with the new letter [Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons issued by the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith] that came out of Rome?"

"No, I disagree."

"What particularly do you disagree with?" I wondered.

"I disagree with everything from the title to the last line."

"Well, that just about covers it," I said.

"It's a very bad document."

A HOMOPHOBIC DOCUMENT

Guindon added that a book was in preparation by a number of North American theologians who felt the same way he did about the document. He characterized the Vatican document as "homophobic," but stopped short of characterizing Cardinal Ratzinger himself as homophobic "because I don't know who wrote this document."

"The rationale, the way they treat scripture is in the mind of most theological scholars right now, most biblical scholars, unacceptable. The methodology is unacceptable."

I then wondered what effect Guindon's public dissent might have on young seminarians.

"First of all, when you say young seminarians you are having a fantasy. We don't have young seminarians."

"Well, then, seminarians no matter what their age."

"We are not dealing with babies," Guindon responded. "Faculties of theology are not schools of indoctrination; they are university faculties, and university faculties are supposed to exercise critical functions."

"Do you think that someone with homosexual inclinations would be more likely to act them out if he felt that homosexual activity wasn't wrong?"

Father Guindon hesitated for a moment.

"Yeah," he finally answered, "but I think that what is ambiguous in your question is unqualified homosexuality. There is homosexual activity and homosexual activity. There are criteria for exercising sexuality in a way which is moral, both for heterosexual and homosexual."

"Do you mean that the act of sodomy can be moral sometimes?"

"Well, in my opinion, I hold the position personally that not all homosexual acts are intrinsically evil. But this is commonly held by a lot of Catholic theologians."

"Well, when would a homosexual act be evil and when would it not be evil?"

"In the same position as when a heterosexual act would be evil and when it would not be evil."

"Well, it's only not evil when it's within marriage. Isn't that right?"

"That's your opinion," said Father Guindon.

NOT A VERY INTRICATE ETHICS

"Isn't that the teaching of the Church?"

"Well, are you asking me about the teaching of the Church, or what the theological community is trying to do? The teaching of the Church right now on sexual ethics is based on an understanding of sexuality that most theologians today do not hold. So it's very easy to see the official teaching of the Church: everything which is not procreative is wrong, period. You can make this speech, and it takes five minutes. Sexuality can be activated in one instance, and it is when you do not exclude openness to the transmission of life. Therefore, artificial contraceptives are wrong; therefore, masturbation is wrong; therefore, people who are outside marriage and have not created the environment to bring up a kid is wrong; therefore, extramarital marriage [sic] is wrong; therefore, homosexuals are—and so forth. So it's not a very intricate ethics; everybody knows this is what the Catholic Church, on its official level, still holds."

"Well, then you're saying that you don't accept the teaching of the Church."

"I DON'T ACCEPT THIS CONSTRUCTION"

"I don't accept this construction. I have just written a book in 1986 saying I don't agree with this. It's called *The Sexual Creators*."

"Have you had any trouble with the Vatican as a result of taking these positions?"

Again Father Guindon hesitated before answering.

"Well, this is a very complex question," he said. "I don't want to make a statement."

"Okay," I replied, but it seemed that Father Guindon wanted to make a statement after all.

"Because Rome kind of leaves you more or less quiet until you begin to take them on publicly on these kinds of issues."

"I see."

"Why should I hang my own neck?" Guindon added a bit unidiomatically, laughing at the same time. "Why should I cut my own..."

... throat, Father? Guindon did not finish his sentence.

I then asked him if the positions he took on homosexuality caused him any difficulty with his own order, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

"I have been defended by the general every time," Guindon responded. "He was very supportive."

According to one source in the order, the Vatican asked Guindon's superior at the time, Rev. Fernand Jetté, O.M.I., to do something about Guindon, but the superior declined to act.

"The Holy See went after him about Guindon," said the source, "and he simply referred them to the authorities of the university. Yet the Oblates are named by their religious superiors to these positions, but they refused to intervene."

According to the same source, "the Guindon case is not active at Rome" now. Jette now claims that "Archbishop Plourde, Chancellor of St. Paul's University, agreed to assume responsibility." According to Guindon's current superior, Father Henri Goudreault, O.M.I., Guindon has been cleared. Given his books and utterances, it's hard to understand why or how.

A CLEAR PATTERN

In light of the foregoing evidence, a certain clear pattern begins to emerge. When asked by Rome to bring dissidents into line, the Oblate order closes ranks and defends people like Father Andre Guindon as one of their own, even though he makes no bones about his contempt for the teaching of the Church on issues like homosexuality. When, on the other hand, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission and a handful of feminists and homosexuals object to an Oblate who supports the teaching of the Catholic Church on homosexuality, the order reacts by caving in to pressure and firing Father Lalonde. The conclusion seems inescapable: the Oblates are more concerned with pleasing Caesar than with following God's moral law.

In a way, it's not hard to understand why. The bureaucrats in Regina are a lot closer than the curia in Rome. But the explanation goes deeper than that. It has to do with compassion run amok, with compassion divorced from the objective norms of the Catholic Church.

The great middle of the road in orders like the Oblates, people like St. Mary's Provincial Gerald Wiesner, evidently feel that not hurting the homosexuals'

feelings is more important than denouncing their sin. How else could Wiesner say that it is not his duty to "condemn or condone"? People like Wiesner have been intellectually disarmed by the rhetoric of compassion as it is wielded by people like Andre Guindon. "To speak a sexual language in which hostility is conveyed to persons whose sexual orientation is not one's own is the epitome of sexual sinfulness," writes Guindon in his book, and we must sorrowfully conclude that the great spineless middle of the road in the Oblate order has accepted his explanation as the only viable possibility. Homophobia is now the real sin; sodomy is merely a peccadillo—if not, as Guindon claims, something we would all do well to imitate.

Lest we mistake him for a liberal, it should be said that Father Guindon is not adverse to pointing fingers and saying who is to blame for all of the evil in the world. "Problem number one is the heterosexual male and his patriarchal rights and so forth," he told me in the course of our conversation. "They are a bunch of aggressive bastards, and nobody addresses this. We make them into sexual aggressors and little macho guys that will make it to the top by stepping on the heads of all the weaklings, including women and children."

"This should be quoted," says Father Guindon trying to convince one or the other of us of something. "If you quote one thing from me, this is what you should quote."

DARKER POSSIBILITIES

There are darker possibilities as well. Given the fact that theologians like Guindon are counseling and teaching seminarians, it is not inconceivable that relatively large numbers of homosexuals are being ordained. One must also consider the fact that those who are already priests and who have homosexual inclinations and who read things like Guindon's book would be more inclined to act out their fantasies. Once these two groups get confirmed in their bad habits, they form a fifth column within the Church and use their influence to wield power just as much as the homosexual lobby wields political power in secular society.

The evidence is becoming more disturbing every day. More and more cases of priests molesting altar boys are coming to light. (In one of the tragicomic ironies of this story, the Bishop of Gatineau-Hull, Adolphe Proulx, called an inquiry into cases of sexual abuse of children by priests in his diocese and appointed—you guessed it—Andre Guindon to chair the commission. Guindon lost no time in making an ass out of himself in the press. In the *Ottawa Citizen* of June 7, 1986, Guindon goes on record as saying that "traditional Catholic church ethics are fixated on sex, and it isn't healthy." "You could kill your neighbor and that was a sin, but *real* sin was sexual," said the Oblate theologian. "As soon as someone touched his wee wee, God almighty would fall right down.")

A MAJOR HOMOSEXUAL SCANDAL

In her book *The Desolate City* Anne Roche Muggeridge mentions a major homosexual scandal at St. Augustine's in Toronto, the major English-speaking seminary in Canada, where, according to her, "the theory and practice of homosexuality were openly tolerated."

In the spring of 1984, several students at the University of Toronto, where seminarians attend classes at the ecumenical Toronto School of Theology, complained that they had been sexually propositioned by seminarians. Amid warnings of expulsion if they talked, non-homosexual seminarians tried to interest influential Catholics to make representations to the Archbishop about correcting the situation.

If such a situation goes uncorrected long enough, the homosexuals begin to set an agenda for the Church. Theologians like Andre Guindon praise homosexuality as an authentic form of liberation; bishops like Bishop Leonard Crowley of Montreal give tacit approval to homosexual organizations like Dignity and what they stand for by saying Mass for them; superiors of orders like Gerald Wiesner feel that out of compassion they should not "condemn or condone" homosexuality; the government lends an aura of respectability to sodomy by passing gay rights legislation, and out of all this a certain code is formed. Its existence is really only acknowledged when someone like Father Lalonde has the courage to transgress it and stand up for the teaching of the Church; and even then, as the testimony of Father Zimmer and Commissioner Kruzeniski shows, denials abound.

A NUMBER OF LESSONS

The story has a number of lessons, both political and ecclesiastical. It's important to remember that sexual orientation is not even a protected class under the Saskatchewan human rights bill. One can only wonder what would have happened to Father Lalonde if it had been. For all we know, he might have ended up in jail for publishing an article critical of homosexuality. According to Anne Roche Muggeridge, the idea isn't all that far-fetched.

"It's going to be illegal to refuse to have a homosexual professor or student at the seminary," she said, commenting on the recently passed sexual orientation bill in Ontario. "Well, this is where the bishops will have to go to jail. It surprised us very much that they fought this, you know. Their letter was very good. They said they found the bill unacceptable. I'm just about to write to the Ontario bishops praising them for their letter, which they really got hammered for in the press and everywhere. It was shocking. We have an extremely punitive and far-reaching human rights code. It's quite totalitarian. We really have just about put in totalitarian structures into our constitution. As you say, it's on a collision course, and somebody is going to go to jail over this, and it isn't going to be the homosexuals."

Perhaps Western Canada will wake up and stop the

homosexual juggernaut before it's too late, but the signs are not good. As one Canadian writer said, "what happens [in Ontario] is usually reflected in the other courts of the English provinces." On December 11, 1986, a little over a week after the gay rights bill passed in Ontario, Commissioner Kruzeniski was quoted in the *Regina Leader-Post* as calling for "expanded rights legislation." One of the rights he wants included in the Saskatchewan Code is sexual orientation.

REACTION

Not everyone in Canada, however, has succumbed to the siren song of the sodomites. In fact, there is evidence that a reaction is setting in. Barbara Amiel, writing in the December 8, 1986 issue of *Macleans*, is struck by the conflicting attitudes toward AIDS in England and Canada. "In England, where the percentage of those suffering from AIDS is one-quarter that of Canada, there is a full-scale public health crisis alert." In Canada, however, right next door to the major center of AIDS in the Western world, "the major question . . . seems not to be how we can prevent this awful disease from spreading and how we can protect the uninfected. Rather, it is how can we prevent Canadians from in any way discriminating against those people who are walking about with a fatal disease that can be communicated through bodily fluids and for which there is absolutely no cure."

There is also evidence that a reaction is setting in in the Church. In his letter to the provincial council of the St. Mary's province of the Oblate order, Father Bernard Hermann, O.M.I., indicates that a good number of Oblates are fed up with the way the order is being run. The firing of Father Lalonde was the spark that set off the explosion. "This really is the first time I have seen someone fired for being too orthodox . . . I would suggest that the orthodoxy of the 'firers' desperately needs examination and recommend it. Along with a goodly number of others in the Province, I am convinced that a good house cleaning is over due, and I hope I am not going to be the only one who writes about it. And the cleaning needs to be started right at the top with Provincial Council, some to shape up and some to resign immediately."

Whether the orthodox Oblates have enough clout to clean house remains to be seen. Father Hermann, for one, seems to be determined enough to make something happen. "I am sure," he writes in the same letter, "your actions do not meet with the approval of the majority of the members of the province. In fact, if it did, I would have to look elsewhere for a new home."

It's time for the Oblates to decide just who it is that should be looking for a new home or a new job. Does the order stand with Albert Lalonde or with Andre Guindon? It's time for the Oblates to decide where they stand. □