
Women and the Bishops

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I

*Tell me, my daughters —
Since now we will divest us both of rule,
Interest of territory, cares of state —
Which of you shall we say doth love us most,
That we our largest bounty may extend
Where nature doth with merit challenge?*

— *King Lear*

Poor, sad, proud, too tender Lear: the old man who loves to be loved; the prince embarrassed by the scope of his authority, yet jealous of royalty's perquisites; the ruler willing to give away his lawful prerogatives in order to hear—if just for a moment—that sweet gush of feminine gratitude; the vain old duffer whose need for affection makes him oblivious of its counterfeit, whose hunger welcomes a Goneril's flattery and spurns the candor of a Cordelia.

The tragedy of Lear has recently been transposed into middling farce and gruesomely replayed before us. The occasion is the publication of the second draft of a pastoral letter composed under the auspices of a committee of American bishops charged with women's issues. The first draft, titled "Partners in the Mystery of Redemption," appeared in the autumn of 1988, and caused an entirely predictable stir by repenting, in the name of the Church, the "sin of sexism," which was to be understood along conventional feminist lines. Another attempt was called for, and the result is a document named "One in Christ Jesus."¹

Like its predecessor, the second draft is subtitled, "A Pastoral Response to the Concerns of Women for Church and Society," and the authors are almost pathetically eager to assure us that their effort was the product of listening, rather than a patriarchal alarmism: "We were asked repeatedly not to write this pastoral as if women were the problem, but to focus solely on the sources of discrimination against women in church and society."^[4] Such repetition was wholly unnecessary, as the authors demonstrate emphatically and at painful length; they were more than happy to cooperate.

The listening session (if I may without flippancy so name it) with which Lear began his own downfall was staged by him as an act of humility; yet in truth it was an exercise in senile vanity and fatuous, even willful, self-deception. Lear's counterpart in the contemporary Church is a certain segment of clergymen which has made it a practice to vindicate its prejudices by affecting to consult with the faithful, to listen to their concerns, only to announce with astonishment that God's Little Ones are pleading for precisely those changes for which the Listeners themselves have a deep and discerning sympathy. These are men who, for the most part, came of age in the '60s and who were infected by the enthusiasms of that time; men for whom social and political concerns are of more moment than narrowly doctrinal ones; men who attained positions of trust in the Church on the strength of pastoral abilities; men grown impatient of theology and baffled by the attention

paid by a younger generation of churchmen to sources of traditional wisdom.

But most of all they are weary men. Bone weary. King Lear weary. The authors of "One in Christ Jesus," several of whom belong to this party, exhibit this weariness at every turn. They write with the edgy impatience that comes not from an excess of energy but from fatigue. There is no other way to account for the peevish tone of the letter, its thorough-going theological obtuseness, and its alarming rhetorical tumbles into crude emotivism:

We feel a sense of urgency to do whatever must be done to show that we take women's concerns seriously. We believe what one woman said: "The church is a powerful witness in the world. The world will watch how she treats all her children...rather than listen to a dusty document." [170]²

These are sentiments which we will be asked to believe have come from the pens of Catholic bishops. To dismiss the attention due the Church's written instruction as "listening to a dusty document" is inane, more the language of a high school manifesto than an episcopal council, and especially perverse given the purpose and history of the magisterial office. But the authors are not sophomores, and their Grand Simplification suggests the last ditch appeal of a would-be avant-garde which is watching the future slip out of its grasp. There is a touch of theatricality in the authors' peculiar self-regard: they commit themselves to "whatever must be done to show that we take women's concerns seriously," not, e.g., "whatever might be done to help women." Consequently, we begin to suspect that what is called "urgency" is more accurately a panic at the prospect of being left behind by History. Such an anxiety does not lend itself to great precision of thought:

In our efforts to listen to extensive consultations in dialogue with the word of God and to be authentic teachers of the faith, we have had to advance arguments not always acceptable to some segments of the Christian community nor to a number of respected Catholic scholars. Study and dialogue are essential...Transformation is a slow and at times a painful process, but in the end it is a more fruitful and a more

Christian exercise to research, to debate, to invite and to persuade than it is to declare and stand by a position that has not been exposed to this kind of scrutiny. [12]

In the notion of "dialogue with the word of God" we have a theological surd; in the expression "listening to consultations in dialogue" we have a windy tautology that adds up to no idea at all; in the statement that "transformation is a slow and at times painful process" we have a platitude too vague to be instructive, since transformation is also a rapid and at times painless process. To assert that debate and persuasion are "a more Christian exercise" than simple declaration is vacuous if the Christ the authors have in mind is Jesus the Nazorean, since the best reports we have credit him with precious little in the way of either. Of course, the whole question of whether bishops discharge their office more faithfully by persuasion or by edict turns entirely on the nature of the positions under dispute, but such niceties are beyond the scope of this letter. The drafters seem less concerned to teach than to give evidence of politically correct attitudes, and the call for study and dialogue is simply one of the poses which must be assumed. By the end of the document this stance is forgotten, and with a rather lofty indignation we are warned not to seek asylum in the library:

Having heard the Word, having seen Love hanging on a cross, we cannot take refuge in safety zones of discourse and debate. [167]

But how do we let go of discourse and debate, if we are to embrace them as a "more Christian exercise" than simple assertion? Or how do we commit ourselves to study and research, without giving substantial weight to dusty documents? To press such questions is to miss the point of this letter, in which "caring" counts for more than consistency. As in those UNICEF cards which come out at Christmas, glaring and eternal contradictories are to be sunk in the face of a brightly crayoned expression of juvenile bonhomie.

II

*O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!
Keep me in temper; I would not be mad!*

The prime obstacle to a just assessment of the thought of this letter is its own language; on any reckoning, it is an unbelievably bad piece of writing. The diction is trite; syntax is often muddled beyond repair. It is pointlessly, relentlessly repetitious, and the reader has the curious sensation of being trapped by a lost cab driver trying to bluff his way through town, while the same three or four ideological landmarks keep reappearing with no cogency of method or presentation.

The vocabulary is fundamentally that of the Sharing Group, laced with the clumsy jargon of the Caring Professions, thus: "Quality time spent together in recreation, prayer and other restorative activities may be sacrificed for business concerns." "To nurture children is to experience one of the closest relationships a person can hope to know." "Violence against children by parents and other adults (?) is the antithesis of Christian parenting." True perhaps, but banal beyond our deserts. So too we feel something less than the full blast of the Pauline *kerygma* when we read, "Single Christians share a unique calling in the church to witness to the life of Jesus of Nazareth, who was God and Savior and single." Or again, the authors favorably quote a woman who complains, "My most recent expression of oppression (occurred) when I was told outright that since I was single...the parish had not much to offer." Such a reading of "oppression" is doubly inept. It both trivializes the sufferings of victims of real injustice—those who are denied fundamental human goods without cause—and it makes us skeptical of how seriously we should take the document's other pet bogeys. If the lack of a parish bridge club for singles, say, counts as oppression, how are we to interpret the "injustice in church structures" which is so roundly deplored?

In other places, a phobia of seeming "exclusive" traps the authors into endless *catenae* of

qualification. Whole paragraphs seem to have been built by amendment:

As long as fruitful love is present, the witness of married love remains effective even when children are not forthcoming. Provided a couple's pledge of love prevails, marriage between Catholics or between Catholics and other Christians or members of other faith traditions as well as non-believers can be seen as a great blessing.[51]

We do well not to inquire too closely, in the case of marriage to a non-believer, what the witness of married love is witness to.

This air of whimsy or arbitrariness is not simply a literary blemish that more careful editing could remedy. It points to a defect in radice: the complete lack of an intellectually coherent framework in which the issues—which are serious issues—can be discussed. The authors maintain the same sententious baritone throughout their rudderless tour, and any sense of proportion is accordingly lost. In paragraph #55, for example, spouse abuse and a "master-slave pattern" in marriage are condemned. Yet in the following paragraph we read,

With little or no assistance from their husbands, some women who work outside the home may be forced to expend many other hours on household chores, child care and myriad other tasks from nursing to chauffeuring with minimal cooperation from the "man of the house." This inexcusable insensitivity magnifies when husbands retain total control of money and refuse to let their wives know anything about common finances.

The bathos is unfortunate, but in paragraph #56 the subject of psychological abuse and physical violence is taken up again, with no clue that beating one's wife and, e.g., failing to help with the dishes might call for different kinds of episcopal censure. Such a collapse of perspective in only comprehensible in light of the deeper allegiances of the drafting committee.

III

What shall Cordelia speak? Love, and be silent.

...

Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave

My heart into my mouth. I love your Majesty

According to my bond, no more nor less.

In that it purports to be a "response" to the concerns of a diverse group of Catholic women, "One in Christ Jesus" is remarkable for its near-total exclusion of the ideas of non-feminists; Cordelia's silence is one of the loudest messages of this document. While the authors tersely acknowledge that a variety of opinions exists, the methods and attitudes which they bring to their task are derived ultimately from feminist criticism. A consequence of this approach is a severe reductivism which transposes all religious activity into the terms of political progress and setbacks. In writing of "women publicly consecrated to virginity," they say,

Their witness stands out precisely because many achieved a certain autonomy with respect to men, a certain "emancipation" and a self-direction in pursuit of the spiritual life, advanced studies and apostolic works.[106]

In this view, the witness of holy virgins is not witness to Christ; they are not to be esteemed because they followed Jesus more closely or heroically, but because they were "emancipated," because they effected a political good. More painful still:

Women contribute beyond measure to carrying forward Christ's redemptive mission in the world. Witness their efforts to preserve and enhance the earth and the earth's resources, to take action against oppression, to demand human rights, just treatment for all and an end to war.[158]

Setting aside the tendentious tone of this passage and its frankly silly level of generalization, it disappoints most in its instantiation of Christ's redemptive mission: no mention of sin, no suffer-

ing, no atonement. Redemption, it would seem, is effected by a kind of Green Party activism. Of course, any single statement, even in the most carefully written document, stands to lose by being wrenched out of context. But surely we have learned from the history of doctrinal controversy that such expressions are wrenched out of context and are used by the unscrupulous to cause great harm; for this reason it is not captious to insist that the sentences of a pastoral letter have a *prima facie* orthodoxy even in isolation. Throughout the letter, key terms such as "patriarchy"³ and "sexism" are glossed in a narrowly feminist sense, without indication that the bishops might consider such definitions inadequate. In fact, it is in a footnote [n.18] that the authors come closest to revealing the epistemological foundations of their critique. Here we learn that a psycho-therapist named Anne Wilson Schaefer has found the roots of patriarchal sexism in what she calls the "White Male System," and we are referred to Ms. Schaefer's monograph on the subject.⁴ As a (reasonably white) male myself, I accepted our pastors' suggestion to look to Ms. Schaefer's book in order to better understand the roots of systemic sinfulness. It turns out that the Great Divide occurs over the notion of truth:

The levels of truth concept poses a serious challenge to the belief that there is *one real truth* about any issue. If each level of truth is in itself real, then the process of moving toward greater (different) truths must be one of expanding awareness (as in the Female System) rather than that of merely seeking a goal (as in the White Male System).⁵

The merits of this revolutionary system are not obvious on its own terms. Happily, Ms. Schaefer gives us an example of the levels of truth in action:

As a pre-teen I was unaware and did not care that many women shaved their legs (Level 1). When I became more sophisticated, I shaved my legs and underarms like most women of my generation (Level 2). When I started getting involved in the women's movement, I let the hair under my arms and on my legs grow (Level 3) as a political statement that women (and I in particular) were just fine the way they were naturally. Then, as I became aware that I did not want a movement to dictate to me any more than I wanted the

White Male System to, I started shaving my legs and underarms again (Level 4). Today, I find that I like to let the hair on my legs and on my arms grow during the winter—it makes me feel warmer—and shave it during the summer to feel cooler and sunnier (Level 5).⁶

It would be a relief to know that the Schaefer Approach was a fluke which slipped past the Committee and got itself buried in the footnotes. In that case we would be justified taxing the authors with recklessness; it is not too much to ask of a writer (or the signatory of another's document) that he be acquainted with his own references.

[Ed. note — reference to Ms. Schaefer does not appear in the third draft. However, feminist theologian Margaret Farley is cited in footnote 8 as a source for the pastoral's use of the term 'sexism'. Footnote 57 cites the "pioneering scholarship" of Adela Collins, Elizabeth Schussler-Fiorenza, and Letty Russell, all of whom apply the feminist "hermeneutic of suspicion" to biblical texts, and are among the best known of radical feminist theologians. Thus, although the players are changed, the univocal feminist perspective is maintained.]

Yet there is also evidence that disgust for a White Male System represents the considered opinion of the drafters. For the fact is that they seldom stray far from the ideological terrain wherein "patriarchy" is the sin of sins, wherein all injustice has its roots in some form of masculine domination. The usual ploy is to impute to women, as women, a profound concern for justice and charity, with the implication that the failings, whether systemic or individual, are largely to be attributed to the ways of the male. For example, "the women's movement supports sisterly mutuality as distinct from relationships based on rank;"[127] or, "women have made and will continue to make exemplary contributions to care for the poor, to the peace and pro-life movements, to legal and political causes requiring their leadership;" [158] or yet again, among the "themes" of women's religious experience are, "valuing intimacy with God and friendship with others over individualism; risking change rather than settling for the rigidity of worn-out institutional structures; offering prophetic witness in the face of

social injustice." [129] Though the language here reflects the staple rhetoric of a petulant feminism, there is a novelty in that it was composed to be put into the mouths of the Catholic episcopacy. And it is hard to ignore the irony in the fact that, once the jargon is decoded, we will have found that one of the "worn-out institutional structures" mentioned above provides precisely that platform from which a bishop is entitled to speak at all. This subject requires a discussion of its own.

IV

FOOL: Thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gav'st thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so.

*Fools had ne'er less grace in a year,
For wise men are grown foppish,
And know not how their wits to wear,
Their manners are so apish.*

LEAR: When were you so wont to be full of songs, sirrah?

FOOL: I have used it, nuncle, e'er since thou mad'st thy daughters thy mothers; for when thou gav'st them the rod, and put'st down thine own breeches,

*Then they for sudden joy did weep,
And I for sorrow sung,
That such a king should play bo-peep
And go the fools among.*

The authors are insistent that "sexism" be treated as a sin, and morbidly insistent that this sin be attributed to the very structure of the Church, a disease of the marrow, not of the skin. It is very nearly an *idée fixe*:

The corrosive power of the sin of sexism has seeped into the fabric of our civilization, invading economic and govern-

mental systems as well as social and ecclesiastical structures. [34]

Again:

For too long we have stumbled in a blindness that has kept us from recognizing the evil of sexism affecting our lives, our relationships, our social and ecclesiastical structures. [42]

And again:

When men strive to change the structures and patterns of social and ecclesial life that account for the persistent oppression of women, true progress will be made. [124]

To appreciate the full depth of the authors' preoccupation with this subject it should be noted that all of the passages just cited fall outside of the chapter headed, "Injustice in Church Structures," which devotes six full paragraphs to the issue. This prompts the question, what exactly is meant by an ecclesiastical structure, if it can be both wholly pernicious and subject to alteration? Remarkably, in proportion to their exuberance in damning Church structures, the authors are correspondingly reticent in telling us which structures they have in mind.

Of course, it really isn't remarkable at all. The "structure" the authors are too bashful to name is that which keeps in place an all-male priesthood; as bishops, they cannot throw their support behind the ordination of women in so many words. The result is a curious hybrid: the drafters include a clear and well-reasoned statement which unambiguously upholds the Church's practice [113-121], elsewhere indicating by winks and nudges that, while their hands are tied, their hearts are with the Enlightened. They make a show of repentance and indignation about unjust ecclesiastical structures without condescending to specifics, knowing full well that the commentators will be able to pounce on the contradiction with glee.

For the contradiction has been "built in" to this letter. "One in Christ Jesus," like *Roe v. Wade* in Justice O'Connor's phrase, is on a collision course with itself. There is a difference, however. In *Roe v. Wade* the flaw was an inadvertent blunder; in

our document the drafting committee goes to great lengths to ensure that not even the dullest journalist or Director of Religious Education can fail to pick up the hint:

Christians must reject *all* prejudicial attitudes that persist toward women, *all* structures and stereotypes that subtly or overtly perpetuate injustices, *all* practices that make women feel as if they are not accepted. [152]⁷

It is nonsense to maintain that the Church could adapt her practices, even if she desired, to accommodate the feelings of any population, however defined. As with any other population, women as a group exhibit a wide spectrum of sentiment on a given topic; which woman's feeling will be taken as normative? As with any other population, the feelings of one and the same woman change over time; which emotion is the one that counts? The authors are absolutely right to condemn injustice; yet they lay the foundations of their critique not on the rock of a scripturally based moral theology but on the sand of political sentiment.

The tragedy, however, lies not in the logical naiveté on the surface of such a claim, but in the deeper vision of the Church which undergirds it. In this view, the "practices"⁸ of the Church have no intrinsic connection to her mission; they are tools, not truths. They may have served a purpose once, but were never themselves part of the purpose, and hence they can be replaced by more effective implements. Once dogma is conceived as radically distinct from revelation—not a focusing of the teaching of the Gospel but rather the product of ordinary politics—of course it will be viewed as expressing, not God's will, but the partisan interests of successful disputants at any given historical moment. And once ecclesiastical "practices" are construed as fossilized remnants of a purely political culture, there is no reason why contemporary politics can't change them to fit a newer agenda.

The vocabulary gives the game away: "We must undertake an examination of practices, possessions, power structures and lifestyles found within our own house that prevent the proper

advancement of women.” [153] Power structures, quotha?

V

Death, traitor! Nothing could have subdued nature

To such a lowness but his unkind daughters.

Is it the fashion that discarded fathers

Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?

It must not be imagined that the compromise struck by the authors of “One in Christ Jesus” was distasteful only to the orthodox. The more combative Catholic feminists, for whom the unconditional surrender of patriarchy necessarily includes the ordination of women, have rejected the document out-of-hand. Msgr. Thomas Herron of Philadelphia has pierced to the core of the matter in arguing, “No episcopal document can be expected to satisfy those who reject the right of bishops to speak on this issue on the first place.”⁹ Rembert Weakland, the Archbishop of Milwaukee, has likewise urged in a column in his diocesan newspaper that the pastoral should be dropped.¹⁰ In a revealing, if infelicitous, turn-of-phrase, Weakland complains, “the section in the new draft on the ordination of women comes as an even more chilling cold shower.” Elsewhere in the same article, the Archbishop expresses sympathy for “the bind the authors are in,” but taxes them for not going further.

Such candor is to be applauded. Weakland makes explicit the confession at which the authors themselves balk: that they uphold the Catholic teaching on the priesthood under constraint, and for no other reason. Further, he makes it clear that the ardors which were dampened by this document (and which we may presume he shares) are not going to be appeased by halfway measures such as calls for inclusive language, altar girls, or diocesan “commissions on the rights of women.” The story

has been told before, but the moral bears repeating: you can never really dialogue with a Goneril, you can only trade places; and *Reganomics* make no provision for buying esteem on the cheap. “One in Christ Jesus” might well stand as an object lesson on how not to compose an episcopal document, but the happiest outcome is that it be gently steered into a tardy but well-deserved oblivion. Lear’s folly does not play well as theological vaudeville. Souls are at stake.

VI

Come, come, I am a king; masters, know you that?

Some scholars of more sanguine temperament have maintained that there is no great cause for concern about this pastoral letter, since it will be “saved from significance” by its bulk and sheer unreadability. Yet the fact that it was produced at all points to some trends whose import is not so lightly dismissed. Shortly before his death, the Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar remarked, “The decentralization of the Roman Curia has led directly to the curialization of the diocese.”¹¹ Concomitant with this shift has been a huge increase in the bureaucratic size and complexity of national episcopal conferences (the US Catholic Conference and National Conference of Catholic Bishops employ 292 people in the central headquarters) and a corresponding swell of documentation. In the time from 1982 through 1988, the NCCB published 226 papers—44 in the last year alone.

There is at present a dispute among Catholic theologians about the theological status of episcopal conferences. The key question is: to what extent can a body of bishops assembled on the basis of political geography claim to speak with the doctrinal authority of the Church? I do not propose to offer an opinion on the subject, but it should be stressed that, whatever the right answer should be, its solution must assume that the bish-

ops in question are able to read those propositions which they will be required to endorse. Yet how many of the nearly three-hundred US bishops could have read more than a fraction of the 44 papers issued in their name in 1988? The basis for making a particular judgment is not here at issue; the question is whether it is humanly possible for a bishop to know what he is asked to say Yes to.

Is there a substantive sense in which the US bishops, as a body, still have control over the theology which is taught in their name? Before answering in the affirmative, there are several considerations which should give us pause.

First, the number and size of the documents which the bishops have taken upon themselves to produce make it impossible that more than a small percentage of them should have an active hand in the writing of any single paper; since the bishops delegated to a given project recruit writers of diverse ability to help them, results at the committee level are often shaky. Still, a bishop may reluctantly consent to a bad paper because the alternative scenarios are even worse.

Second, the complexities of single projects are magnified exponentially at the level of national consideration, where several documents are up for approval at the same time. Two factors are at work here. On one hand, the tiny ratio of actual time for debate to the number of pages under discussion makes adequate analysis impossible. There is no way an American bishop can study the sentences he is asked to endorse the way the bishops gathered at Nicaea could study the formulas of the Creed. On the other hand, the fact that the bishops have chosen to speak on issues of immediate topical interest increases the pressure for a hasty decision, rather than lengthy and sober scrutiny.

Third, the structure of majority consent breeds among the bishops a "dynamic of collegial dialogue"—in plain English: cutting deals. A man may feel compelled to approve three documents he finds defective in exchange for a vote for one project which he believes more important. Since most documents are approved or rejected in toto,

this greatly increases the chance of bad doctrine winning episcopal sanction.

Finally, the semi-public nature of the drafting process and the fact that documents are released prior to voting means that the true impact of the bishops' theology may be considerably different from what they intend. Few people will deny that the secular media can grossly distort the Church's message by arbitrary distribution of emphasis, yet the procedure now in place ensures that any journalist who wishes has the opportunity to do just that. This is bad enough for those documents which the bishops decide to approve; it is *a fortiori* harmful in the case of those they don't.

In short, the picture does not inspire confidence. The bureaucracy of the USCC was conceived as a tool which would help the bishops spread their teaching; it has burgeoned into a policy-making machine with its own ideas of what the Church should be saying and which the bishops have found progressively difficult to control. Similarly, the decision to speak as bishops in the public sphere on issues of technical controversy and partisan dispute was intended to increase the contribution of the Church's wisdom to civil discourse, yet it is arguable that the major political parties have changed the beliefs of Catholics more profoundly in the past twenty years than the Church has changed the beliefs of either. Several bishops have had to promulgate independent statements in the past few years precisely to counteract those of the USCC; Vatican interventions to rescue the bishops from theological solecism are increasingly frequent.

"One in Christ Jesus" should stand as proof positive to the American episcopacy that corporate direction of its own teaching has been all but broken by the strategy of the past two decades. After seven years, two drafts, and several changes of committee, we are presented with a pastoral letter on the concerns of Catholic women wherein Mother Teresa's gift to the Church does not earn a mention, while the social analysis of Anne Wilson Schaef does.* And, significantly, the only public

call for scrapping the piece has been made by an archbishop of feminist sympathies on the grounds that it didn't go far enough.

* [Ed. note: Although Ms. Schaef did not appear in the third draft, the author's point remains valid. Twenty-four radical femiist organizations have called for the scuttling of the third draft; but they also demanded that "dialogue process" continue.]

Doctrinal control can be salvaged, provided the resolve necessary to make some major changes is quickened. "One in Christ Jesus" is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the regnant philosophy of management, and its flaws are so glaring that they point the way out of the morass: less Pop Psych, more of the Gospel; less paper, more scrutiny; fewer words, and those more carefully chosen. The course ahead requires discipline, imagination, and spine. We may hope that our pastors will find it worth the effort.

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Footnotes

1 Published in *Origins*, Vol. 19, No. 44, April 5, 1990. Hereinafter, numbers in brackets [] refer to paragraphs as numbered in this edition.

2 Ellipsis in original. In obedience (we may presume) to some canon of feminist orthography, the authors consistently render "the [Catholic] church" with a lower case "c." I have preserved their usage in quotation.

3 In a footnote that repays scrutiny we are directed to the work of Anne Carr in order to understand patriarchy. According to a sidenote in this same issue of *Origins*, Sr. Carr had been named a consultant to the draft committee in 1984, only to resign after signing a pro-choice newspaper advertisement. The oblique inclusion of her thought says much about the ideological soil out of which this letter was produced.

4 *Women's Reality: An Emerging Female System in the White Male Society*. (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1981)

5 Schaef, *op cit.*, p. 158. Emphasis in original.

6 *Ibid.*

7 Emphasis highly original.

8 Lest the point be lost, this letter refers to the reservation of the priesthood to males as the "church's practice" twice [115, 118]

9 Personal communication.

10 *Catholic Herald* (Archdiocese of Milwaukee), May 4, 1990.

11 Cited by Lucio Brunelli and Gianni Cardinale in "And the Word was made Paper," *30 Days*, July-August, 1989.

Father Mankowski is a Jesuit priest and biblical scholar from Cambridge, Massachusetts. This essay was excerpted in First Things in November, 1991, and section VI appeared in Women for Faith & Family's Commentary on the Second Draft Pastoral, September 1, 1990, but it has never before been published in its entirety. Although it was written in response to the second draft (thus citations and references are to that version of the pastoral), his critical appraisal remains valid for the third draft, as well as for the entire project.