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CATHOLICISM

The Roman Catholic Church has itself on the horns of a dilemma. Two of them actually. It seeks to acknowledge and honor some who disagree with its moral positions and doctrines, including and especially President Barack Obama. In addition, it continues to allow communion, the fellowship and blessing of the church to those who openly and politically contradict and work against those Catholic moral positions. Notre Dame for example, through its President Fr. John Jenkins has invited President Obama to speak at commencement at which time he will receive an honorary degree from this great institution. Fr. Jenkins has ordained these actions even though they fly in the face and are a direct violation of the 2004 Declaration from American Bishops that Catholic colleges should not give “awards, honors or platforms” to pro-choice politicians.

The way of the world today, is it not? Do whatever you want, whatever you think is right. No matter the teachings of the church.

There is a man one Seamus McCaffrey, none other than a Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, himself a staunch Roman Catholic who will be honored by the alumni association of Northeast Catholic High School at its 80th Annual Memorial Mass and Communion Breakfast. But for true Catholics, there is a problem. Justice McCaffrey is a validly pro-choice, pro-abortion. No matter, the honor will be bestowed anyway. That led one alumnus to say:

“Any Catholic institution that honors someone that believes killing children is okay is a terrible contradiction. Mr. McCaffrey is a bad example bringing shame on our beloved school.”

True Catholics, real Catholics, stand-up and consistent Catholics protest and disagree.

Then there is one Robert Casey, Jr., none other than the Democratic United States Senator from Pennsylvania. Mr. Casey himself is a strong Roman Catholic. He has been invited by Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, a Catholic college of course, to give the commencement address. Mr. Casey at best has a mixed record on the right to life and other moral and social issues dear to the heart of the Catholic Church. He has voted in a way that the Mexico City Policy which for bad Federal money to be invested in abortion-making entities would be reversed and as much as \$450 million of American Foreign Aid will go to organization, as a result of that decision, that are militant and aggressive in promoting abortion as a method of population control. True Roman Catholics in Pennsylvania and elsewhere are incensed.

And more. Then there is Nancy Pelosi, another supposedly strong Roman Catholic, she the very, speaker of the House of Representatives from the great State of California who just recently was granted a private audience with Pope Benedict XVI at the Vatican in Rome. No matter, it seemed, when the audience was granted that Ms. Pelosi is aggressively pro-abortion, for gay marriage, for embryonic stem cell research and euthanasia among other social issues and positions. No matter all of that, for Pope Benedict XVI nonetheless saw fit to grant her a private audience in Rome. What, Catholics the world over are saying does all this mean? How can the Pope, Notre Dame, Saint Vincent's and Catholic High Schools in Philadelphia honor people who aggressively and avowedly deny and disagree with the fundamental teachings of the Catholic Church?

Then there is Senator Ted Kennedy, he of Massachusetts, another supposedly Roman Catholic who has lived a life and pursued a political career championing so much of what the Roman Catholic Church does NOT teach or believe. He continues to be offered communion nonetheless.

What then of the credibility of the church? How can the Roman Catholic Church demand and require its members to believe a certain way, proclaim fundamental moral doctrines and truths, and then act another, or at least send signals that there is moral accommodation and compromise with opposing points of view? That surely is the message it is sending. Conservative, true, real Roman Catholics are stunned and dismayed. Frankly, so am I. And many other conservative Protestants.

All such incidents and accommodation for such individuals are rarely common-place examples of the compromise which exists today. Values are relative. Morality is grey. Nothing it seems is black and white, but everything is subject to interpretation. What the individual thinks and believes is more important than any absolute truth. In fact, there is little if any absolute truth today, anywhere. Many wonder indeed whether or not that may be true with the once monolithic and morally consistent Roman Catholic Church.

It is the duty, the calling of this church and in fact any church to stand strong, proclaim truth and refuse to compromise. We live in a world morally adrift, values compromised and lost every day. There is indeed fundamental CHANGE coming to America and in fact much of it already here. We see vividly the consequences of this change politically and socially, and certainly we see it in disastrous ways economically. We are and we will be a different society, a fundamentally different nation in the years to come. But perhaps no one could predict the impact of this so-called fundamental change on the world of religion and spirituality. The church, the Christian church of all stripes is on the wane. Morals and values are subject to incredible attack. Membership declines, and witness and testimony with that decline. The power of the Gospel for all Christians is less powerful than ever. There is a constant erosion, a drumbeat of criticism. Secularism intrudes at every level. The Sabbath is no longer kept holy. So much of the Ten Commandments is virtually ignored. Any belief is accepted and anything goes. Signs the prophets say of the last days. If not the end of times, it could surely be the end of the witness and influence of a vital and vibrant church.

I for one, though not Catholic, can only hope and pray that the Catholic Church returns to its roots and values. And the same for all Christian churches founded upon the one and only Jesus Christ. There is, my friends, universal and absolute truth, there really is. We who are Christian believe that and believe it cannot be compromised. Properly understood, it is not subject to interpretation or individual belief. That truth is ETERNAL, binding on the believer and not subject to compromise of any kind.

The Christ of Glory is the way, the truth and the life. That Christ is the one and only, so sayeth the Scriptures. In much of this world, you and I can believe exactly as we wish. We can believe some, all or not at all. But if you call yourself Christian, Roman Catholic, Baptist or whatever, then believe and practice what you believe. If you call yourself Roman Catholic, believe as the Roman Catholic Church does. If you call yourself Christian, follow the precepts, standards and eternal values of Christianity. Shun compromise of any kind. Otherwise, you or I would live the life of a hypocrite, which so many do today. It is a day and age where Christians, true Christians must stand up and be counted. Time is short. Do the right thing and live the right way.