

COLUMNISTS

New society seeks to end bishop reassignments

Cardinal James John, titular archbishop of Urbiventosa ("windy city"), a cluster of sand dunes in northern Africa, has founded a new society of priests and brothers dedicated to the restoration of the teaching of the Councils of Nicaea (325) and Chalcedon (451).

The society is concerned with the two councils' lesser known teaching that bishops are not to be transferred from one diocese to another. Nicaea's canon 15, reaffirmed by the Council of Chalcedon, made it clear that if "anyone shall attempt such a thing, or shall lend himself to such a proceeding, the arrangement shall be totally annulled, and he shall be restored to the church of which he was ordained bishop...."

For more than 800 years, no one was elected as bishop of Rome (and, therefore, as pope) who was at the time the bishop of another diocese. Not until 882, that is.

In that year the clergy and laity of Rome (no College of Cardinals then) elected Marinus, a former prominent member of the Roman clergy, even though he was already the bishop of Caere in Etruria — a clear violation of the conciliar canons. There is no record of anyone raising a question about it at the time.



essays in theology

BY FATHER RICHARD P. MCBRIEN

Marinus served as pope for only a year and a half. His successor, Stephen V, was not yet a bishop. The problem seemed to have quickly corrected itself. But not for long.

Stephen's successor, who had consecrated him as bishop of Rome, was Formosus, the bishop of Porto.

Formosus had an outstanding ecclesiastical career before becoming pope. Two years after his election as bishop of Porto in 864, he was sent as a missionary to Bulgaria, where he performed so brilliantly that King Boros I urged two popes, Nicholas I and Hadrian II, to appoint him as metropolitan of the country. Significantly, both popes refused because of the canonical prohibition against moving a bishop from one diocese to another.

Formosus passed through a stormy patch thereafter, running afoul of Pope John VIII, who excommunicated and deposed him for deserting his diocese. After Formosus admitted his guilt and promised not to return from exile, he was restored to communion with the church. John VIII's successor, Marinus I, recalled him from exile and reinstated him as bishop of Porto.

Formosus was unanimously elected at age 76 to succeed Marinus as pope. Once again, there is no record of anyone raising a question about violations of the canons of Nicaea and Chalcedon.

Those were troubled times in the history of the church. Enemies played for keeps. John VIII had been assassinated, probably by close associates, and the body of Formosus was dug up nine months after his death by order of his successor, Stephen VI, and placed on trial.

Among the charges against Formosus was that he had violated the canons of Nicaea and Chalcedon in accepting election as bishop of Rome while serving as bishop of another diocese. He was found guilty, three fingers were cut off from the hand he used for blessings and for signing documents, and all of his ordinations and other official acts were de-

clared invalid.

Stephen VI had a method in his madness. Formosus had appointed him bishop of Anagni. If Formosus' official acts as pope were invalid, Stephen was not a bishop at the time he was elected bishop of Rome. His own election, therefore, would not have violated the canons.

The new religious society's motto is "Instaurare observantiam legis" ("To restore respect for law") and is under the patronage of Stephen VI, the pope who presided over the so-called "cadaver synod." The only wonder is that, given his extraordinary devotion to the laws of the church, Stephen VI has not yet even been beatified. The newly founded society hopes to correct that oversight.

Stephen, by the way, had a rather sad end. The people of Rome were so outraged by his desecration of Formosus that he was deposed from office, imprisoned, and strangled to death.

In the meantime, bishops have been transferred by the thousands from diocese to diocese all over the world, Rome included. Perhaps the Society of Stephen VI will succeed where so many others have failed.

...

Father McBrien is a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame.

More difficult to serve than to shout 'Hosanna!'

Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday) (April 16): (R3) Mark 14:1-39. (R1) Isaiah 50:4-7. (R2) Philippians 2:6-11.

As a kid, did you ever take a spoon and bang it on the lid of a kitchen pan as you marched around the kitchen? Most kids have. Everybody likes a parade.

People who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday lined the streets, waved palm branches and shouted "Hosanna!" They were happy to welcome Jesus into their city. They thought he was coming to overthrow the despised Romans. They didn't know he was coming as a man of peace, not to defeat others, but to give his life for others.

People that Palm Sunday were ready for a change. They wanted someone to lead them to a better life. They had high hopes that Jesus was that someone. The problem with their high hopes was that they were short-sighted. They could not see the world from God's perspective. God had a greater plan — a grander plan than they could ever imagine.

When the people along the road saw Jesus riding a colt approaching Jerusalem, they immediately thought that Jesus would enter the city defiantly to smash the established order. This was what they wanted, what they were hoping



a word for sunday

BY FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

for. The "Hosanna!" that rang out everywhere meant "Save us — now!"

Yet Jesus' action was just the opposite of what the people were expecting. He was riding a colt, a symbol of peace, not a horse, the symbol of conquering. Jesus approached Jerusalem in peace as a humble servant and not as a mighty warrior king. But the people were so preoccupied with the notion of political and economic power that they were blind to what was taking place right before them. God was at work, but not in a way that they could see. That's a reminder to us; namely, God is at work even when we can't see him.

Everyone loves a parade. Everyone loves to get excited. Sometimes we, too, get caught up in the excitement of a moment. We are filled with great enthusi-

asm, a fresh burst of energy over a particular project. But unfortunately, our enthusiasm soon fades. We lose interest. It was great while it lasted, but now it's gone. It's easy to shout, but hard to serve. I'm sure you have seen bumper stickers: "Honk if you love Jesus." But have you seen the follow-up? "Tithe if you love Jesus. Anyone can honk."

What the people who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem that day did not realize was that God was offering them an opportunity to join him in doing a new thing. Rather than simply smashing the oppressive government of that day, God was beginning from the bottom to build a new world order. He was starting with a small group of men and women, a ragtag salvation army, that would grow person by person through the ages until it transcended all the governments of this world. That ragtag army now numbers in the millions, and it is still growing. That salvation army is, of course, our church. That is why she lifts up her anthems of praise on Palm Sunday. Christ is alive and he is still leading his ragtag salvation army until that day when oppression is no more, and everyone lives in dignity and peace and freedom together under the Lordship of Christ.

What Jesus wants from us is not that we march around the room making noise with spoon and kitchen pan cover, but that we love others as he has loved us!

...

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

Daily Readings

Monday, April 17

Isaiah 42:1-7; John 12:1-11

Tuesday, April 18

Isaiah 49:1-6; John 13:21-33, 36-38

Wednesday, April 19

Isaiah 50:4-9; Matthew 26:14-25

Thursday, April 20

Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14; 1

Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:—15

Friday, April 21

Isaiah 52:13—53:12; Hebrews 4:14—16, 5:7-9; John 18:1—19:42

Saturday, April 22

Genesis 1:1—2:2; Genesis 22:1-18;

Exodus 14:15—15:1; Isaiah 54:5-14;

Isaiah 55:1-11;

Baruch 3:9-15, 32—4:4;

Ezekiel 36:16-17, 18-28;

Romans 6:3-11; Mark 16:1-7

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE



PASSION SUNDAY, APRIL 16, 11:30 AM
Solemn Blessing of Palms

HOLY THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 7:30 PM
Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper

GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 21, 3:00 PM
(APRIL 21) Solemn Liturgy of the Lord's
Passion Tenebrae 7:30 PM

HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 9:00 PM
Easter Vigil

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 11:30 AM
Solemn Mass with Bishop Clark

SACRED HEART CATHEDRAL

296 Flower City Park • Rochester, NY 14615

Most Rev. Matthew Clark, DD, Bishop of Rochester

Rev. Thomas Mull, Pastor

Sacred Heart Cathedral Choir

Jennifer Pascual, Organist/Choirmaster

Looking for Quality Printing?

Call us for...
Business Cards & Labels

Through a special arrangement between Wayuga Press and the Catholic Courier Graphic's Department, you can now get quality, affordable typesetting and printing.

Give us a call for your next job!

COURIER GRAPHICS • 716-328-4340

WAYUGA PRESS • 315-754-6229

