

Thomas Groome's and Fr. Robert Drinan's impact on the consciousness of Catholics

By [Eamonn Keane](#)

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In my book *A Generation Betrayed* (Hatherleigh Press, New York, 2002), I sought to demonstrate how Professor Thomas Groome and Professor Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza had contributed in a significant way to the deconstruction of Catholic education in the English-speaking world. Groome is a Professor of Theology and Religious Education at Boston College and Fiorenza a Professor of Divinity at the Harvard Divinity School.

Groome has responded to *A Generation Betrayed* (hereafter *GB*) in a lengthy essay titled *Truth Betrayed* (hereafter *TB*), which at the time of writing (May 3, 2010) is available on his Boston College website. Among other things, he charges me with calumny, detraction and of "falsely" accusing him of being a dissenter. If time permits, I will in the future write a lengthy response to *TB*. I limit myself in this article to responding to misrepresentations by Groome in *TB* of comments regarding abortion made by myself in *GB* and by the late Monsignor Michael J. Wrenn in his foreword to the book. I will also respond to Groome's attempt in *TB* to justify his ongoing public dissent from the Church's definitive teaching regarding the reservation of the ministerial priesthood to men alone.

Abortion

In regard to the behavior of the late Fr. Robert Drinan, SJ, who over his ten year stint as a member of the U.S. Congress notched up a consistent record of public support for legalized abortion, Msgr. Wrenn in his *Foreword* to *GB* said:

Sad and sorry to say that Fr. Robert Drinan, S.J., who finally was instructed by his Jesuit superiors with the acquiescence of the Holy See, to terminate his tenure in the Congress of the United States of America, is touted by Thomas Groome as a suitable model for a Grade 8 student research task on someone who is a "good Christian and citizen." One wonders why Groome chose, in a Sadlier teacher's manual, to weave a myth around this former member of the legislative

branch of the Government of the United States. Would not Groome have known that Fr. Drinan consistently voted in favor of abortion legislation in this lower house of Congress. While a member of this body, this Jesuit priest did more to cripple the Right to Life movement in my country than most pro-abortion politicians. Out of office, Fr. Drinan saw fit to express approval for President Clinton's atrocious veto of a Bill that would have prohibited partial birth abortions. As my revered Archbishop John Cardinal O' Connor wrote, and I quote: "I am deeply sorry, Fr. Drinan, but you're wrong. Dead wrong...you could have raised your formidable voice for life; you have raised it for death. Hardly the role of a lawyer. Surely not the role of a priest." The Archdiocesan paper of record of Fr. Drinan's Jesuit Province in New England, the *Boston Pilot*, called his stance, "shocking, schizophrenic, and even scandalous." *O Tempora, O Mores!* (GB xx-xxi).

In *TB* Groome states that he is opposed to partial-birth abortion and that he favors the repeal of 1971 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade* which effectively gave the US abortion on demand (cf. *TB* 17). At the same time, in responding to Msgr. Wrenn's comments quoted above, Groome says:

Guilt by implication and association around abortion begins in the Foreword by Msgr. Michael Wrenn...he points to an example in a teacher's guide that accompanied an 8th Grade student text within the *God With Us* religion series (W. H. Sadlier, 1984). First of all, though I am the primary author of the student text, I had no part in writing the teachers guide; the latter was created by a team of authors. Apparently the guide refers to Fr. Robert Drinan SJ, former member of the US Congress, as an example of Christian citizenship. Msgr. Wrenn then dwells at length on how Fr. Drinan "consistently voted in favor of abortion legislation," even supporting partial birth abortion (GB XXI). Whether this fairly represents Fr. Drinan's position, I doubt. The false implication which Msgr. Wrenn draws is that I support abortion. It's like claiming that someone is a family relative because their cat passes through your yard. (*TB* 17-18).

In a shorter response to GB published in Australia, Groome gave a somewhat different account of Msgr. Wrenn's comments on abortion in his *Foreword* to GB. He said:

Keane cites the fact that in a teacher's manual that serves a [sic] student text book I wrote, Fr Robert Drinan SJ is cited as an example of Christian witness — and since Drinan is in favor of abortion, Groome must be so as well. First this is a distortion of Drinan's position (former US congressman). Then I had nothing to do with writing the teacher's guide; my name doesn't appear on it. A total manipulation and guilt by association (*Catholic Life*, Newspaper of the Diocese of Sale, Victoria, Australia, July 2006, p.7)

In the passage quoted above, Groome contradicts the facts on three points which are:

- i. In GB, it was Msgr. Wrenn and not I who drew attention to the teachers' manual.
- ii. Msgr. Wrenn accurately described the nature of Fr. Drinan's support for legalized abortion.
- iii. Groome's name did appear very prominently on the teachers' manual in question. I attach images of the relevant pages of this publication.

Catholic politicians who support legislative moves to legalize abortion, or who support moves to further liberalize existing pro-abortion legislation or to extend the availability of abortion services, contravene Catholic moral doctrine and give public scandal. By so acting they undermine the most fundamental building block of civilized society which is the right to life of all innocent human beings. The same type of scandal is caused by Catholic educators and others who give public endorsement to legislative moves to extend abortion services. In this regard, Bishop Lawrence E. Brandt from the Diocese of Greenburg in Pennsylvania set a very good example for his fellow bishops by banning the Sisters of St Joseph in his diocese from advertising their vocation recruitment events in his diocesan newspaper. The Sisters signed a statement supporting President Obama's Health Reform Bill, despite the fact that the US Conference of Catholic Bishops condemned the Bill on grounds it would expand the availability of government funded abortion services.

Neither Monsignor Wrenn nor I accused Groome of personally supporting abortion. What Msgr. Wrenn did do was point to the woeful nature of much of Groome's catechetical work, epitomized in this instance by the scandalous

exercise in a book carrying his name. I wonder how many thousands of Catholic children who were asked to complete this exercise have subsequently gone on to vote for pro-abortion members of Congress.

In *TB* I did not seek to imply that Groome supports abortion. I did however point out that while Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza was well known for her strident support for *Roe v. Wade*, this did not deter Groome from referring to her in his published works as "the great Scripture scholar" (*Educating for Life*, 1998, p.185).

In *TB*, Groome is critical of comments I made in *GB* regarding Fiorenza's attitude to adoption as a moral alternative to abortion. There I pointed out how in her 1993 book *Discipleship of Equals*, Fiorenza used an ideologically-laden paraphrase of passages from St Matthew's Gospel as introductory material to a section of the book in which she sought to justify her approval of *Roe v. Wade* (cf. *Discipleship of Equals*, pages 50-52). In particular, I stated that "Fiorenza is opposed to adoption as an alternative to abortion" and I provided substantiating quotations from her book illustrating this fact (cf. *GB*, p. 212). In criticizing me in *TB* for stating these facts about Fiorenza's pro-abortion ideas, Groome says:

Then, by constantly associating me with Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, while lamenting her "trenchant support for abortion on demand" (*GB* 4), Mr. Keane infers that I support abortion as well. He even claims that Dr. Schüssler Fiorenza opposes adoption as an alternative to abortion (*GB* 212). I find this hard to believe, and having experienced Mr. Keane's ability to manipulate and misrepresent my own work, he has likely done the same to hers (*TB*, p.17).

Fiorenza's comments on abortion and adoption appeared as the third of four recommendations she was making as to how the University of Notre Dame could in its campus ministry program adopt a better approach to counseling in the area of sexual behavior and pregnancy. After stating that she was speaking in favor of an approach that would take greater cognizance of "the 'weightier matters of the law' — justice, mercy, and faith" (p. 51), she went to add:

Third, we must stop advocating adoption as the moral solution to the problem of abortion. The adoption business of bartering 'white

babies' is morally more offensive than the termination of pregnancy in the first weeks of abortion. In many cases, the trauma of adoption is as great as, if not greater than, that of early abortion (*Discipleship of Equals*, p. 52).

While it is true that adoption can frequently cause great trauma for the mother or father of a child who for various reasons feel compelled to give it up for adoption, nevertheless it is abhorrent to assert that because of this we should stop advocating adoption as a moral alternative to abortion.

Ordination of Women and Same-Sex Marriage

In his introductory comments to *TB*, Groome in referring to *GB* says:

[B]y misrepresentation and manipulation of my writings, couched in a collage of false accusations, innuendo, and guilt by association, he [Keane] makes a calumnious attack on my character, falsely accusing me of being "a dissenter" from the dogmas and doctrines of my Catholic faith (*TB*, p.)

Later on in *TB*, and in regard to the Catholic Church's definitively proclaimed teaching on the impossibility of conferring the ministerial priesthood on women, Groome says:

Sharing Faith was published in 1991. Since the publication of *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* in 1994, I have not published my position as favoring the ordination of women. This being said, Mr. Keane claims that the denial of ordination to women is an infallible aspect of Catholic faith; in company with many respected Catholic theologians, of left, right, and center, I claim that this has not been taught as infallible, though *OS* states that the Church's "judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful." On the other hand, *OS* was not issued by the Pope as an *ex cathedra* statement, and as such cannot be considered infallible. However, should the Catholic Church ever explicitly state its position on women's ordination as infallible, and the conditions for infallibility are fulfilled, then of course, I will embrace its teaching, precisely because I accept and respect the teaching *magisterium* of my Church (*TB*, p. 25).

On his Boston College website, Groome has *Sharing Faith* on offer for purchase. Above the 'purchase' icon he has a promotional blurb stating: "A comprehensive approach to religious education and pastoral ministry; offers the definitive statement on a shared Christian praxis approach."

Sharing Faith contains one of the worst attacks on Catholic doctrine regarding the origin and nature of the ministerial priesthood that I have ever come across. Here is a sampling of passages from it:

"The Catholic Church made 'priesthood' exclusive by requiring that its candidates be male and celibate" (*Sharing Faith*, p. 319).

"Confining ordained ministry to men is rightly challenged as the creation of a patriarchal culture and without biblical warrant... It seems that the exclusion of women from ordained ministry is the result of a patriarchal mind-set and culture and is not of Christian faith. The injustice of excluding women from priesthood debilitates the church's sacramentality in the world; and is a countersign to God's reign" (*Sharing Faith*, 328)

"I am convinced that the exclusion of women from ordination reflects injustice in at least three significant ways. (1) It is an injustice to women who recognize themselves as gifted and called by God to serve the church in ordained ministry; (2) it is an injustice to the church and its people, who could be served so significantly by ordained women; and (3) such exclusion functions as a legitimating sign for patriarchy and sexism — thus doing spiritual and moral harm to society" (*Sharing Faith*, p.517 note 114).

After asserting in *Sharing Faith* that the "equating" of "apostle with sacerdotal function" is not "in the first century," and in regard to what he reductively calls "the traditional Catholic notion that the apostles were commissioned at the Last Supper to preside at Eucharist," Groome goes on in *Sharing Faith* to quote with apparent approval Kenan B. Osborne where he says:

In spite of the long tradition of this view, contemporary scholars find no basis for such an interpretation. In other words, Jesus did not ordain the apostles (disciples) at this final supper to be 'priests,'

giving them thereby the power to celebrate the eucharist (*Sharing Faith*, pp. 314, 512n. 27).

A point to note in regard to the date of publication of *Sharing Faith* is that the Church's received doctrine on the male-only ministerial priesthood had been reaffirmed many times by the magisterium in the decades prior to 1991 as the following examples show: i) Pope Paul VI, *Response to His Grace the Most Reverend DR F.D Coggan, Archbishop of Canterbury, Concerning the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood*, 1975; ii) *Inter Insigniores*, Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1976; iii) Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* (n. 26), 1988; iv) Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* (n. 51), 1988.

In *Sharing Faith*, Groome documents how in one parish where he conducted an adult education course, he used the *Shared Christian Praxis* process to change the position of attendees from that of support for the Church's doctrine on the impossibility of ordaining women to one of opposition to it. He says: "In a six-week Lenten program with the Altar Society of a Catholic parish, the participants had chosen the generative theme of Women in the Church with a particular focus on the issue of women's ordination" (*Sharing Faith*, p. 247). He adds that apart from himself, "the group was of women who were senior members of the congregation," and that "it became evident in the opening movements that they agreed, and I disagreed, with our church's official position of refusing ordination to women" (*ibid.*) He continues by saying that he "presented the historical praxis of Jesus as a radical critique of the sexist mores of his time, highlighting his commitment to a 'discipleship of equals'" (*ibid.*) Groome went on to recount how the evening concluded by saying:

[O]ne of the oldest members finally announced, 'I'm going to write to my granddaughter in California and tell her that I think the church is sexist in many ways, and we must all work together to see to it that women are fully included in every aspect of Church life, including ordination'. Many others seemed to generally agree, but her intervention was a catalyst, and many suggestions emerged about what needs to be changed and how they could help to make the changes. Finally, a group decided to each write a letter to some young woman about whose faith they cared deeply (granddaughter, grandniece,

neighbor's child, etc), telling her of their new hopes for and commitments to an inclusive church (*Sharing Faith*, 282) .

Further to the points made above, Groome shows a certain forgetfulness in regard to the content of his own work and public statements when he says: "Since the publication of *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* in 1994, I have not published my position as favoring the ordination of women" (*TB*, p. 25).

In 1995, a year after *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* was issued, Groome published a book entitled *Language for a 'catholic Church'* (Revised Edition) in which he stated that "the continued exclusion of women from ordained ministry in the Catholic Church is seen by fair-minded scholars as without theological or biblical warrant" (p. 31). Having said this, he went on to add:

Official Catholic statements usually offer three arguments against the ordination of women: 1) that there were no women among 'the twelve,' 2) that it would be contrary to the tradition; 3) that to represent Jesus, a priest must be male (the 'iconic argument'). For a fine, balanced and scholarly refutation of these arguments, see, for example, Rahner, *Concern for the Church, Chapter 3 (Language for a 'catholic' Church': A Program of Study, Revised and Expanded Edition, Sheed and Ward, Kansas City 1995, p. 70).*

In regard to the question of the reservation of the ministerial priesthood to men alone, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, published in English in 1994 stated:

Only a baptized man (*vir*) validly receives sacred ordination. The Lord Jesus chose men (*vir*) to form the college of the twelve apostles, and the apostles did the same when they chose collaborators to succeed them in their ministry. The college of bishops, with whom the priests are united in the priesthood, makes the college of the twelve an ever-present and ever-active reality until Christ's return. The Church recognizes herself to be bound by this choice made by the Lord himself. For this reason the ordination of women is not possible (n. 1577).

Groome's error over the question of infallible teaching lies in the fact that he overlooks the fact that the infallible teaching of the Church is given expression not just by way of solemn *ex cathedra* definitions of a pope, but

also as Vatican II reminds us in *Lumen Gentium* 25 by way of the teaching of the ordinary universal magisterium.

In 1995, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (hereafter CDF), whose role is to assist the pope in safeguarding Catholic doctrine on faith and morals throughout the world, issued a 'Response' to a question regarding the binding nature of the doctrine taught by Pope John Paul II in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*. Approved by Pope John Paul II and signed by Cardinal Ratzinger, this 'Response' said:

This teaching requires definitive assent, since, founded on the written word of God and from the beginning constantly preserved and applied in the Tradition of the Church, it has been set forth infallibly by the ordinary and universal magisterium (cf. Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 25.2). Thus, in the present circumstances, the Roman pontiff, exercising his proper office of confirming the brethren (cf. Lk. 22:32), has handed on this same teaching by a formal declaration explicitly stating what is to be held always, everywhere, and by all as belonging to the deposit of faith.

In 1998, the CDF issued the *Doctrinal Commentary on the Concluding Formula of the Professio Fidei* (Profession of Faith) signed by Cardinal Ratzinger which stated that those who deny truths such as the "doctrine that priestly ordination is reserved only to men" are "rejecting a truth of Catholic doctrine," in consequence of which they would "no longer be in full communion with the Catholic Church" (nn. 6, 11). In the same year as this *Doctrinal Commentary* was issued, Groome publicly berated Pope John Paul II for issuing his Apostolic Letter *Ad Tuendam Fidem* ("To Protect the Faith"). In this document Pope John Paul II promulgated changes to Canon Law which he said were necessary to protect the Catholic Church against errors emanating from dissident theologians. When asked to comment on *Ad Tuendam Fidem* in the July 2, 1998 edition of the *Boston Globe*, Groome said it was "a pretentious attempt by the present pope to stifle conversation and dialogue," adding, "I read the blessed thing and without being too melodramatic, I was on the verge of tears. It is a very sad day."

In his 1998 book *Educating for Life*, Groome asserted that the Catholic Church must be concerned with eradicating "sexism and patriarchy" in its structures, adding that the way to do this was for the Church to make way

"for the full inclusion of women in every aspect of its mission and ministry" (p. 411). Since women can never have the "ministry" of the ordained priesthood conferred on them, what Groome is here implying, albeit in coded language, is that as long as the Catholic Church refuses to ordain women, it remains but an antiquated fossil weighed down by "sexism and patriarchy."

In 2002 Groome seized upon the clerical sexual abuse scandals in the U.S. to advance his deconstructionist agenda for the Catholic Church. In an April 23, 2002 interview with BBC 4 World Forum, he criticized the handling of clerical sex-abuse scandals in the US by what he termed an "enfeebled Pope" and stated that the question of the ordination of women had to be "rethought."

After first commenting on why he believed the Church should change its discipline on priestly celibacy, Groome in an article he had published in the April 28, 2002 edition of *Boston Globe* went on to add:

Likewise, the presence of women as priests and bishops would be an extraordinary gift to the life of the Catholic Church. What a loss it is when ordained ministry is limited to men, excluding the consciousness and gifts of women; at best we benefit from only half our priestly resources. To ordain women would surely hasten the demise of clericalism — the antithesis to priesthood as servant leadership — and catalyze a renewed ministry of "holy order."

After stating in his 2002 book *What Makes Us Catholic* (WMUC hereafter) that "Catholic Christians have a 'right' to the Eucharist," Groome goes on to say: "It would appear that the Western church is insisting upon celibacy and maleness for priesthood at the expense of people's access to Eucharist — so central to Catholic identity and spirituality" (pp. 102-103). Having said this, he goes on to ridicule the Church's doctrine on the reservation of the ministerial priesthood to men alone by saying:

There can be problems in making an argument from *nature* to favor society or social arrangements. For example, there has been much gender and racial bias in how the dominant culture has interpreted 'nature.' As late as 1880, the Massachusetts Medical Society argued that women were unsuited 'by nature' to be physicians. This is not

unlike the argument that the Catholic church still makes against women becoming priests (WMUC, p. 104).

Groome proceeds in WMUC to lampoon Catholics who assent to the teaching of the magisterium. He says:

Catholics can have an air of know-it-all, acting as if ours is the only and completely true faith, replete with all the answers. Surely, this is more the sin of pride than a truly *catholic* spirituality. Some of the hubris is encouraged by a teaching magisterium that typically sounds absolutely certain in its pronouncements, as if faith is no longer a 'leap' and all can be assured. The joke rings true that when the Catholic church finally agrees to ordain women, the pronouncement will begin with, 'As we have always taught.'... (WMUC, 263)

There never will be a time when the Catholic Church "agrees to ordain women." As I noted earlier, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that "the ordination of women is not possible" (n. 1577). In referring to the doctrinal value of the *Catechism*, Pope John Paul II said: "The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*...is a statement of the Church's faith and of catholic doctrine, attested to or illumined by Sacred Scripture, the Apostolic Tradition and the Church's Magisterium. I declare it to be a sure norm for teaching the faith and thus a valid and legitimate instrument for ecclesial communion" (*Apostolic Constitution Fidei Depositum*, n. 3).

In light of the foregoing, it is clear that Groome's contradiction of the doctrinal teaching of the Catholic Church on the question of women's ordination is a clear example of "dissent" and as such is a source of scandal. Those who take him seriously may be led to conclude that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is not a sure norm of doctrine, but rather something that needs to be regarded with suspicion.

A deplorable example of Groome's public undermining the Church's doctrine on the male-only priesthood was the way he answered a question put to him on the issue of same-sex marriage by the *Boston Globe* in 2003. Before recounting the details of this, I will first give some points on the Church's teaching regarding same-sex marriage.

In 1996, a statement on "Same-Sex Marriage" was issued by the US Bishops

opposing the granting of the status of "marriage" to homosexual couples. In November 2002, the CDF issued with the approval of Pope John Paul II a *Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Involving the Participation of Catholics in Political Life*. It stated that there existed "fundamental and inalienable ethical demands" that obliged Christians to seek to safeguard the family "based on monogamous marriage between a man and a woman," adding that "in no way can other forms of cohabitation be placed on the same level as marriage, nor can they receive legal recognition as such." In 2003, another CDF document approved by Pope John Paul II titled *Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons* stated that allowing children to be adopted into same-sex unions is "gravely immoral" and "would actually mean doing violence to those children" (n. 7).

In May 2003, the Massachusetts Legislature's Judiciary Committee was considering a *Marriage Affirmation and Protection Amendment* which stated that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts understands "marriage" to be a union of one man and one woman. The amendment's purpose was to pre-empt a possible favorable judgment by the Supreme Court of Massachusetts in regard to an application before it seeking to have marriage licenses granted to homosexual couples. On 28 May 2003, the Catholic Bishops of Massachusetts issued a joint statement calling on Catholics to support the *Marriage Affirmation and Protection Amendment*. The bishops' statement said that any judgment by the Supreme Court redefining marriage so as to include homosexual couples "would have devastating consequences."

Returning to Groome, in June 2003 he prevaricated about the need for legislation to defend the meaning of marriage as a union of one man and one woman. In an interview with the *Boston Globe* on 26 June 2003, he was asked the following question: "That official (church) voice recently was used in the Massachusetts bishops' letter regarding gay marriage. Catholics by a majority have told pollsters they don't think homosexual behavior is immoral. What's your position?" In reply, Groome said:

I think the bishops are entitled to speak out on issues of public morality. There will always be a distinction between what is moral and what is legal. I don't know where I come down on whether or not the law before the Massachusetts Legislature (that would define marriage as heterosexual only) is wise.

In this response Groome wasted a valuable opportunity to explain to a large audience the reasonableness of the Massachusetts bishops' call to legislators to defend the true meaning of marriage. Groome went on in this interview to compromise and discredit Catholic teaching further. When asked by the *Globe* "how independent can Catholic teachers be from church orthodoxy?," he answered:

It all depends what we mean by orthodoxy. I don't know of any Catholic theologian who doesn't want to teach what is orthodox Catholic faith. The difficulty is that the official church at the moment has a narrower view of what is orthodoxy than I have. Take an issue like ordination of married men, the notion of optional celibacy. The present church's legislation requires celibacy, and many of the bishops and the present pope would see that as close to being divinely inspired. That wouldn't be my sentiment at all. I think it's a human regulation that we should dispense with. It should be optional. I would have a similar sentiment on the ordination of women.

Doctrinally speaking, Groome has here placed two questions on the same plane which should not be treated as such. While the Church is committed to maintaining mandatory clerical celibacy for ordained priests in the Latin Rite, something for which there are very good reasons, the question of the Church's doctrine on the male-only ministerial priesthood however pertains to something instituted by Christ over which the Church has no power. In his statement, Groome is basically depriving "orthodoxy" of its concrete content: the "official church," by which he means the teaching of the magisterium, is no longer seen by him as authoritative.

In view of the social and political advancement of the gay agenda in recent decades, it is ironic that Groome — who holds a Professorship in Theology and Religious Education at a Jesuit-run Catholic university — could not in a statement to the media give unequivocal support to the value of adopting legislation that would defend the true meaning of marriage as the a union between one man and one woman. Groome's response in this instance should not however surprise us, given the fact that Boston College allows gay activists to teach courses in its theology and pastoral ministry department.

During July/August of 2007 and 2008, Boston College's Institute of Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry, which had Groome as its director,

ran several courses on Pastoral Ministry which included a subject titled "Introduction to Pastoral Care and Counseling." The teacher of the course was Dr John McDargh, who is a Professor in the theology department at Boston College. When the Supreme Court of Massachusetts sanctioned same-sex marriage in 2004, Professor McDargh was one of the first to take advantage of the change in the law by 'marrying' his gay partner, Tim Dunn. According to an article authored by McDargh and published on the website of MassEquality, an organization promoting equal marriage rights for same-sex couples, Dunn and McDargh have a son they adopted from Russia.

Dissent as 'White-anting' of the Catholic Church

White-anting is an Australian term which in its original usage referred to the activity of termites that gain entry to a wooden structure. Overtime the ants invisibly eat away at the structure's timber, thereby bringing about its inner decomposition and collapse. In more general parlance, white-anting is taken to refer to the activities of those who set out through stealth or otherwise to undermine or sabotage an enterprise.

In terms of its destructive impact, dissent within the educational institutions of the Catholic Church can be likened to white-anting. Dissidents work within the Church's institutions undermining allegiance to the teaching of the magisterium. They relativize and corrupt the Church's doctrine and lead those in their charge into error, thereby rendering them less capable of teaching the faith to others and of imbuing the temporal order with the light of the Gospel.

In 2001, the U.S dioceses of Peoria and Pittsburgh refused to fund teachers wishing to attend the National Catholic Educational Association Convention on grounds that it involved "objectionable speakers." Peoria's Bishop John Myers indicated that he objected to the presence of Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister as a keynote speaker. In her writings and lectures, Sister Joan is frequently critical of the Church's teaching on topics such as the ordination of women and homosexuality (cf. *AD2000, Journal of Religious Opinion, April 2001*, p. 4). This action by Bishop Myers (now Archbishop of Newark) illustrates that defending Catholic students from error must of necessity involve doing all in one's power to shield them from the influence of dissenters. The Jesuit authorities who run Boston College would do well to

follow the example of Archbishop Myers.

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