

“Evil, Be Thou My Good”:

Homosexuality, Therapy, and the Church

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The greater part of what my neighbors call good I believe in my soul to be bad, and if I repent of anything, it is very likely to be my good behavior. What demon possessed me that I behaved so well?

- Thoreau -

Subscribers with long memories may recollect that in the August 31, 2010 number of *The Remnant*, I alluded to the perversions of the Australian “Catholic” therapist Ronald Conway, who had died the previous year after a life devoted to preaching the homosexual gospel, and who on his death – in spite, or because, of this preaching – was eulogized on the highest episcopal authority. This article was, to compare small things with great, the antipodean counterpart to *The Black Book of Communism*. The only possible responses to its marshaling of hard and unfashionable facts were (i) admission, however reluctant, of the article’s veracity, (ii) pretending the article did not exist, (iii) attributing to me reprehensible motives, or (iv) a self-proclaimed inability to comprehend what the article actually said.

Of these responses, (iii) was made by none; (i) was made by the majority of readers who responded; (ii) was presumably made by the majority of readers who did not respond, as well as by the Australian mass media; (iv) was confined to certain personnel in the Melbourne Archdiocese. On the following October 21, Melbourne’s Auxiliary Bishop Les Tomlinson wrote: “I am confident that the Archbishop [Denis Hart] had no reason to question the moral integrity of Mr. Conway at the time of his death and funeral.” Considering that in the 1990s even Australia’s Protestants had heard of Conway’s tastes, this conclusion suggests unsuspected talents in the field of stand-up comedy.

What I did not realize at the time I wrote the piece was Conway’s role in diagnosing perfectly sane Catholic women as “paranoid-schizophrenic”, merely because their husbands wanted to dump them, and then ensuring that the women in question underwent the full honors – this in the pre-anesthetic era – of electroshock treatment, with all the memory damage inseparable from such treatment. In arranging for electroshock Conway acted *ultra vires* even by the loose ethical standards of the head trades, since it is illegal in Australia for this procedure to be prescribed by anyone but a qualified medical practitioner. And Conway had not

a single medical qualification to his name.

London-based James Bogle, whose work often appears in this publication, wrote in an E-mail to me on September 17 the following response to my piece:

Everyone knew Conway was a dissenter and many suspected (or even knew) more. And yet, shockingly, the bishops still sent their candidates to him. Now we are struggling here in Britain to fend off accusations that the Church did nothing to stop child abuse. All too often the accusations are true. But, with astonishing chutzpah, the main offenders like Weakland and Mahony, have tried to blame the Pope!

From the Australian-born Fr. Brian Harrison (also familiar to this magazine’s readers), I learned the following, also sent via E-mail:

Way back in 1976, I took my first steps toward a priestly vocation with the Confraternity of Christ the Priest, founded by the late Fr. John Whiting ... Like so many other candidates for the priesthood in Melbourne, I was sent for a psychological evaluation to Ronald Conway. ... He seemed to be probing for a reason to say that my admitted lack of sexual experience (which I assumed should have been a ‘plus’ for a young man interested in the priesthood) was more of a ‘minus’ – evidence of ‘fearfulness’ or ‘inhibitions’ of some sort on my part. I remember him making some offhand remark using the phrase ‘the Church’s attitude toward sex’ – in a way which suggested that he himself didn’t share that ‘attitude’.

During that one face-to-face encounter with Conway I didn’t pick up anything that suggested homosexuality; but shortly after that I met a Melbourne man who had been one of his school pupils some years previously. He told me he didn’t know whether Conway was ‘one of them’ himself, but had learned from classroom experience that his teacher was certainly very sympathetic to the homosexuals’ plight as ‘victims’, their ‘liberation’ agenda, and so forth.

Now, in the light of that long background, the public post-mortem revelations that he had sexually exploited some of his male clients/patients does not seem quite so surprising...

I remember quite a few things he used to say in *The Advocate* [a Melbourne Catholic periodical, now defunct] would be sound and perceptive, but after my personal experience I never trusted him.

Years later, after my ordination, when I was in Puerto Rico, I had some personal correspondence with him – I criticized some theological opinion he had expressed in print. It became apparent from what he said in a private letter that he held at least one heretical

opinion – in the strict sense of the word. For in one letter he openly dismissed the defined Vatican Edogma of papal infallibility; and to my ensuing remonstrance that he should in all honesty stop professing to be a Roman Catholic, given that he did not accept solemnly defined core teaching, he replied nonchalantly that ‘the Church is more open and flexible these days’, no longer requiring us to assent to all of her dogmas. (Unfortunately, that of course has all too often been the de facto, though not of course de jure situation in the post-conciliar Church.) At that time (mid-’90s) Conway was still active and prestigious in the Melbourne church scene – and it seems from what you say about the tributes expressed at his funeral in St. Pat’s that this continued pretty much up to his death.

After these revelations, gentle reader, would you be altogether astonished to learn that Conway retained an absolute belief in the evidentiary merits of the Kinsey Report? And that he was still defending that malignant tripe against all comers (while continuing to live on the archdiocesan bounty) not just in 1951, not just in 1961, but in the literary periodical *Overland* as late as 1971?

In view of all this it is not surprising that precisely one individual – identifying himself purely as “Mike” – attempted a defense of Conway, and that his effort did his hero’s reputation about as much good as the exertion by Oscar Wilde’s brother William to endorse his sibling’s morals. William insisted that “you can trust him [Oscar] with a woman anywhere.” According to “Mike”:

I lived with Ronald Conway for over twenty years and I can say that he was the kindest man I have ever known, who never refused help to those who needed it. You weren’t there to see him get out of bed at midnight to counsel any number of troubled souls who had no one else to turn to. You weren’t there to see the enormous workload of a largely pro-bono nature completed by him in the course of his vocation or the number of ex-students who recount fondly remembered tales of him as a superb teacher. Nor were you there to see his love of animals and the poor to whom he contributed financially.

Alas, poor “Mike”! Actual Catholics will be no more moved by his labor to salvage something from the wreck of Conway’s reputation, than we would be by eyewitnesses’ heartfelt assertions that John Wayne Gacy had good table manners or that Lavrenti Beria was kind to stray puppies. The uncomfortable reality remains that Conway was a contumacious heretic who openly (in both books and articles) defied infallible Church doctrine on sexual morals, and that this factor alone should have debarred him from any sort of Catholic employment, quite apart from his



“I used to think that everyone had potential, that given enough love and care, they’d be fine. I now, through years of experience, really think there are people among us who are just cockroaches. They are just evil.”

...Psychologist Toby Green,
Herald Sun, Aug. 9, 2010

conspicuous failure to differentiate between the roles of therapist and onanist. When a man spends decades demanding increased erotic liberation in theory, why should anyone be startled when he carries it out in practice?

Of course, anyone who wishes to fight the League of Sodom and win must endure the accusation of being “homophobic”, a charge no less frequent for being (like “fascist”) literally devoid of meaning. Truth forces me to reveal that throughout my own school and university days, far from fearing homosexuals, I probably gave less than 10 minutes’ thought to them. They were simply a phenomenon at once uncommon, unpleasant and uninteresting, like flat-earthers, nudists, Protocols of the Elders of Zion devotees, or mildewed underclothes left inside a locker-room. Nor once can I recall considerations of homosexuality affecting either my respect for Tolstoy’s, Somerset Maugham’s, and Terence Rattigan’s art, or my aversion to Lytton Strachey’s, Allen Ginsberg’s, and James Baldwin’s.

I was born in 1961; Harvey Milk’s Calvary occurred in 1978; but not till the mid-1980s did sodomites, newly emboldened by AIDS-derived status, actually spit in Australian society’s face. Gone were the unctuous, shabby, and usually middle-aged homosexual males from my boyhood, whose advances could usually be deflected through a policeman’s arrival. Taking their place was a ravaging and ululating army of professional victims, their appetite for taxpayer subsidy having made them “welfare queens” in the strict sense of that phrase, and their actual creed (I forget their ostensible slogan) being “Long live death!”. In short, they represented the

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same existential threat in the cultural sphere as did Communism in the geopolitical sphere. They, no less than communists, flourished thanks to hordes of useful idiots. And they, again no less than communists, were quite clearly unstoppable through any punishment less drastic than the imposition of unconditional surrender.

When a colleague of mine telephoned me in tears to say that her closest friend had committed suicide – overcome by her shame at having contracted AIDS innocently, through a transfusion of corrupt blood – I discerned at once what my reference above to Harvey Milk implies, and what Australian neocon journalists such as Andrew Bolt and Chris Berg still dare not concede even twenty-five years on: that homosexuality, once more like communism, was not just a “grave moral disorder” but a parallel church, with its own sacred texts, its own martyrs, and (above all) its capacity – rivaled in our time only by Islam – for forcing upon its adherents the dogma “extra ecclesiam nullus salus.” The AIDS-infected sodomite who (in Australia and France and Japan, to say nothing of other countries) cynically offered infected blood, as a donor, had no more regard for the innocents he thereby doomed than he had for a dung-beetle’s destiny. If he thought about such innocents in any sense, he did so in the spirit of “Kill ‘em all, let God sort ‘em out.”

By 1988 it had become perfectly obvious to me that I was bound to become a Catholic. Accordingly, I waited. And waited. And waited. I waited for the Vatican to issue one, merely one, explicit condemnation and threat of hellfire regarding unnatural vices which, as we now know, held the visible Church to ransom more ruthlessly than even the most bitter pessimists, in John Paul II’s lifetime, imagined. Naturally no such condemnation was afforded us.

With the Cold War’s end between 1989 and 1991, the Australian situation became complicated by the advent of a bizarre species known as the “conservative homosexual”, a notion which, with AIDS still rampaging, was as ludicrous an oxymoron as a “vegetarian cannibal”, a “noble savage”, or a “moral victory”. The practical alliance between such “conservative homosexuals” (in several cases erstwhile druggies) and the newly empowered Raving Left – the Left which had obtained its whole erotomaniacal theology from Frankfurt School Marxism, and which no longer had a Soviet Union to feel defensive about – gradually destroyed, as the 1990s wore on, my own alleged career. Come the early twenty-first century, I had undergone grossly delayed Catholic baptism, and, not coincidentally, my career hopes had become no more than a vague remembrance, save to myself. The useful idiots beheld this latter outcome with their accustomed apathy, or (less often) with yells of Schadenfreude.

Well, since then, as Duke Ellington would have put it, “there’ve been some changes made.” Specifically, there have been the seemingly endless homosexual abuse outrages which dominated world headlines in 2010, and which Remnant contributor Robert Singgenis (February 5, 2011) said “may well be the worst scandal in the Church’s entire 2,000-year history.”

I should like to think that those “Sunday Catholics” who would have calumniated me if my censure of Conway had appeared in 2009, were in 2010 moved by sheer embarrassment into staying their hands. This, I suppose, should inspire in me some satisfaction: much as historian Robert Conquest felt when, on discovering that newly uncovered Soviet archives confirmed everything he had ever written about Stalin’s body-count, he observed: “I told you so, you [expletive deleted] fools.” It actually gives me no satisfaction whatsoever, since for Sunday Catholics, as for sodomites, no purely secular defeat is ever final. (Confront a Sunday Catholic with the total solar eclipse of Fatima, and she will simply blame it on insufficient United Nations funding to combat climate change.)

The question which Bishop Tomlinson, Archbishop Hart, and, for that matter, all other Australian Catholic hierarchs remain completely unwilling to answer is this: regardless of whatever ecclesial rulings are in effect to put a brake on clerical abuse, what has been done to ensure that laymen like Conway will not burgeon in the future, and to stop latter-day Conways homosexualizing priestly formation right now? From this silence, I take the correct response to be: “zilch.” Through a process familiar from Madison Avenue, the actions once known to catechumens as Sins That Cry To Heaven For Vengeance have now been “rebranded” as Sins We Can Do Business With.

In this hellish spiritual landscape I see no prospects of improvement except one: the long-overdue community awareness that the sex-criminal clerics whose deeds disgraced the Church during 2010 did so with the active collusion of therapists in general. The average ten-year-old boy now appreciates what the Therapeutic State’s minions industriously and angrily denied during the 1970s and 1980s: that pedophilia is, humanly speaking, incurable without chemical castration; and that “retreats”, “rest cures”, “talking treatments”, and the other rigmarole so long lavished on pedophiles are not only unavailing but disastrous, since they give the pedophile credit for a moral courage of which he has always been incapable. With the pedophile, and scarcely less with the homosexual whose partners are adult, we have the syndrome which Milton once described in unforgettable verse:

So farewell hope, and with hope,
farewell fear;
Farewell remorse: all good to me is lost.
Evil, be thou my good.

Better late than never: more than sixty years after Fulton Sheen, in his great book *Peace of Soul*, disclosed for all time the hubristic mendacity of Freud (he could equally well have exposed the driveling reductionism of England’s William Sargant), all kinds of analyses querying the therapy culture per se are today making it into the mainstream, as they certainly would not have done ten years back. On March 1, 2010, in no less an organ of fashionable opinion than *The New Yorker*, columnist Louis Menand tore strips off the whole idea of psychiatry being a science. And the

cockroaches. They are just evil.”

The wretched “Mike”, and all those inhabiting the Australian Catholic bureaucracies’ darker recesses who think (or rather, since they cannot think, who feel) the way “Mike” does, can best be dealt with, in conclusion, by a variant of Lord Macaulay’s famous philippic against Bertrand Barère, the Jacobin gangster. As Macaulay wrote of Barère, so it may be written of Ronald Conway:

Something more we had to say about him. But let him go. We did not seek him out, and will not keep him longer. If those who call themselves his friends had not forced him on our notice we should never have vouchsafed to him more than a passing word of scorn and abhorrence. By attempting to enshrine this ... carrion, he [Barère’s apologist] has forced us to gibbet it, and we venture to say that, from the eminence of infamy on which we have placed it, he will not easily take it down.