

The scandalous behaviour and worldly compromise of effete prelates continue to undermine the credibility of the Church and Her Divine mission; mocking the "New Evangelisation" while negating Catholic action in the public square. Further to last month's emphasis on the Eucharistic battle we face, this righteous blast appeared in the *American Spectator* of 19 March 2012: the Feast of St. Joseph, who suffered to protect the Body of Christ. Subtitles ours.

Dereliction of Duty

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"The road to hell is paved with the skulls of bad bishops." That's a slight paraphrase of a line from St. John Chrysostom. The saints of old warned bishops to choose holiness and orthodoxy over the blandishments of the 'world.' Many bishops today in America choose the good opinion of worldly elites over orthodoxy. These cufflinked cardinals worry not about punishment in the next world but slights in this one. They desperately crave the approval of America's movers and shakers and live in dread fear of losing it.

What will the Pretty People think if I withhold Communion from powerful pro-abortion Catholic pols? Will the *Washington Post* editorialize against me? Will I lose my place of honor at posh parties? Will my dissenting priests think ill of me? Will I be scorned at the next USCCB [Conference of Bishops] meeting?

"Wuerl the girl"

These are some of the thoughts that race through the minds of modern prelates. Out of these anxieties comes fiascoes like Cardinal Donald Wuerl's recent one. Wuerl and his surrogates have rebuked a visiting priest from the archdiocese of Moscow for denying Communion to a self-described practicing lesbian at a funeral Mass. That's not our 'policy,' gasped Wuerl's horrified surrogates.

But it is the policy of the Roman Catholic Church. If a person is not in communion with the teachings of the Church, said person should not receive Communion. Period. Canon law makes this explicitly clear. If you don't believe me, ask the head of the Vatican Supreme Court, Cardinal Raymond Burke. Though most of his colleagues seem to ignore his stance, he has said for years that canon law places a grave burden on priests to protect the

sacraments from defiant sinners. According to Burke, canon law is not a whimsical option for hardline eccentric priests but a moral duty which 'obliges the minister of Holy Communion to refuse the Sacrament' to those in 'manifest grave sin.'

Wuerl rejects this authoritative interpretation of canon law. A while back he was asked if he would withhold Communion from the pro-abortion Nancy Pelosi [Minority Democrat Leader of the House of Representatives]. He said no. That style of 'confrontation' makes him uncomfortable, he told a persistent reporter.

I've heard Church insiders call the cardinal 'Wuerl the girl,' a reference to his precious personality. He has many fine qualities. He seems a little less common to me than some of his hackish colleagues. But cufflinks, starched shirts, learning, and reasonably civilized manners do not a good bishop make. Jesus Christ never required that his disciples place roses in his room or mints on his pillow. He walked straight at the decadent elites of his time, denounced them as a 'brood of vipers,' and then called it a day. It didn't take long for these vipers to kill him.

Wuerl can only earn the red of his rich robes through a willingness to endure the blood of Jesus Christ's martyrdom. And the truth is that protecting the sacraments would cost him far less than death. Maybe Joe Biden wouldn't clap him on the back so heartily after that. Maybe he would get an angry letter or two from moneyed donors in the tank for the Dems. But who cares?

This latest episode isn't even a close call. If Cardinal Wuerl doesn't have the guts to deny Communion to an agitprop lesbian Buddhist, he should just close up shop and hand the keys to his chancery over to Obama.

Niederauer capitulation

This ludicrous controversy reminds me of another fiasco, one from 2008. Remember when San Francisco Archbishop George Niederauer, while distributing Communion at a parish in the gay Castro district, handed out the sacred species to two garishly painted and costumed members of the homosexual activist group 'Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.'

News of this sparked furore across the Catholic world, and even the liberal archbishop had to admit he blew it, saying dimly:

Toward the end of the Communion line two strangely dressed persons came to receive Communion. I did not see any mock

religious garb. As I recall, one of them wore a large flowered hat or garland. Afterward it was made clear to me that these two people were members of the organization 'Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence,' who have long made a practice of mocking the Catholic Church in general and religious women in particular. My predecessors, Cardinal William Levada and Archbishop John Quinn, have both denounced this group's abuse of sacred things many times in the past. Only last year, I instructed the Administrator of Most Holy Redeemer Parish to cancel the group's use of the hall on the parish grounds, once I became aware of it...

Although I had often seen photographs of members of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, I had never encountered them in person until October 7th. I did not recognize who these people were when they approached me.

After the event, I realized that they were members of this particular organization and that giving them Holy Communion had been a mistake. I apologize to the Catholics of the Archdiocese of San Francisco and to Catholics at large for doing so...

Get an Apostolic grip!

Of course, the bishop's passive understanding of his duties and his fear of the liberal elite — like Wuerl, Niederauer won't deny Communion to Nancy Pelosi either — invited this outrage. After all, if a bishop announces that he is not a 'gatekeeper,' who can't come up to receive it? Such passivity was an invitation to abuse and the 'Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence' took it. Similarly, the lesbian Buddhist to which Wuerl cravenly apologized seized her chance to stick it to the Church.

The choice that the Wuerls face is clear: either they take seriously the duty enshrined in canon law to protect the sacraments from sacrilege and scandal, or these Communion controversies will multiply without end.

The notion that bishops aren't gatekeepers would come as a surprise to the Church's first ones. The apostles were told by Jesus Christ that the good shepherd watches the gate, lest his flock be eaten. 'Do not give what is holy to dogs,' Jesus warned them.

The Church's position on whether a bishop should stop sacrilege and scandal is not determined by his 'comfort' level, Cardinal Wuerl. It is determined by the clear requirements of canon law. Cardinal Burke has spoken; the case is closed. Either the bishops take control over their own sacraments or the Church's enemies will.