

Papal Bull

George De Stefano (February 06, 2009)



A Tale of Two Priests and Vatican Hypocrisy



Marcial Maciel Degollado and Richard Williamson might not seem to have much in common besides their both being conservative Roman Catholic priests. Maciel, the founder of the Legionaries of Christ, was Mexican, and has been dead for a year. Williamson, a bishop in the ultra-conservative, and until very recently, schismatic St. Pius X Society, is British and alive.

What links the two of them, besides being conservative priests, is the outrageous hypocrisy, fraudulent moralism, and reactionary politics of the Roman Catholic Church and its CEO, Joseph Ratzinger aka The Pope.

First, let's look at Father Maciel Degollado. The founder of the Legionaries of Christ – a right-wing outfit with an appropriately militaristic name – was forced to leave his ministry by the current pope after more than a dozen men said he had molested them when they were students. This week it was revealed that Maciel preyed on both teams, so to speak – he had an affair with a woman and fathered a daughter with her.

But the sins of the Legionarie in Chief weren't only carnal. Maciel fostered a cult of personality, and was a high-living cult leader at that.

"Father Maciel was this mythical hero who was put on a pedestal and had all the answers," according to Stephen Fichter, a former Legionarie interviewed by the New York Times. "To hear he's been having this double life on the side, I just don't see how they're going to continue."

Fichter, once the Legionaries' chief financial officer, told the Times that he blew the whistle on Maciel three years ago. He said he informed the Vatican that when Maciel left Rome to travel, "I always had to give him \$10,000 in cash -- \$5,000 in American dollars and \$5,000 in the currency of wherever he was going."

"As Legionaries, we were taught a very strict poverty," Fichter said. "If I went out of town and bought a Bic pen and a chocolate bar, I would have to turn in the receipts. And yet for Father Maciel there was never any accounting. It was always cash, never any paper trail. And because he was this incredible hero to us, we never even questioned it for a second."

Maciel was a favorite of the ultra-conservative Karol Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II), which may help explain why he escaped Vatican scrutiny for so long. (Maciel founded the Legionaries in 1941.) The head of the Legionaries of Christ, an order devoted to chastity and poverty, probably would've continued his polysexual, profligate ways had not the global scandal over priestly sexual abuse forced the hand of John Paul's successor Joseph Ratzinger, aka Benedict XVI.

Richard Williamson made the news when the pope announced that he was revoking the excommunications of four bishops, including Williamson, who belong to the renegade St. Pius X Society. The sect, founded in 1969 by the "traditionalist" priest Marcel Lefebvre, rejects the reforms of Vatican II. But the P-Xers, as I'll call them, don't oppose only Vatican II's liturgical changes. They also reject the document issued by the Second Vatican Council "absolving" Jews of guilt for the crucifixion of Jesus.

The "Christ-killer" canard has been, over the centuries, a cornerstone of anti-Semitism. I can recall hearing Italian Americans use the delightful term "mazzacrist" when I was growing up.

But Williamson's Jewish problem has more recent roots. He declared in an interview on Swedish TV that "I believe that the historical evidence is largely against, is hugely against six million Jews having been deliberately gassed in gas chambers as a deliberate policy of Adolf Hitler...I believe there were no gas chambers."



And that's not all. Besides engaging in Holocaust denial, Williamson believes in the authenticity of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, the notorious document forged in Czarist Russia that purports to depict a Jewish conspiracy to rule the world. Williamson has added his own fuel to old anti-Semitic fires, having written, quite dementedly, of what he called "the false messianic vocation of Jewish world-dominion, to prepare the Anti-Christ's throne in Jerusalem."

Outrage over Ratzinger's "welcome back" to Williamson has come from many quarters – Jewish individuals and organizations, liberal Catholics, newspaper editorialists, and the Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, who took the extraordinary step of blasting the pope, her conational, for his embrace of Williamson. Forced to do damage control, the Vatican now has demanded that the British prelate recant his noxious views. Since Williamson isn't the only professed anti-Semite among the four schismatics, presumably all will have to recant to be re-admitted as full members of the Roman men's club.

The Vatican says that the pope's lifting of the excommunication order against Williamson and the other P-Xers was an attempt to heal a breach in the Roman Catholic Church. But why is it that Ratzinger only wants to reconcile with reactionaries and anti-Semites? He evidently finds them more palatable than say, left-wing liberation theologians or Catholic feminists, and certainly more so than gay people, whom he continues to demonize in language as lunatic as Williamson's Jew-baiting.

To sample the wit and wisdom of Bishop Richard Williamson, go to:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6C9BuXe2RM> [2]

And then check out <http://jloughnan.tripod.com/sparwill.htm> [3]



and http://angelqueen.org/articles/06-10_bp_williamson.shtml [4]

At the latter, you will find that Williamson doesn't only dislike Jews - he also condemns Catholics who support Vatican II as "Conciliar Romans" - to him, they're not even Roman Catholics. Let's see how Ratzinger finesses that.

Source URL: <http://iltaly.org/magazine/focus/op-eds/article/papal-bull>

Links

[1] <http://iltaly.org/files/williamson1234140390.jpg>

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