

A Tapestry of Blessings

By Bishop Victor Galeone

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My dear Friends in Christ,

In the last issue of this diocesan publication, several readers expressed their disappointment with my response to **pro-abortion Catholic politicians**, who wish to receive Holy Communion: “I would hope that those candidates who consistently vote in support of abortion have the integrity to willingly exclude themselves from receiving the Eucharist.” Let me complete the picture. While at the Bishops’ June meeting in Denver, I contacted the editor of our magazine, requesting that she delete the following paragraph from my message, which was already at the printer’s:

“Then you would leave the matter of receiving Holy Communion for the candidates to decide for themselves?” Not entirely. I could not allow their lack of integrity to compromise mine. I would discreetly inform them that if they should attempt to receive Communion in my diocese without first relinquishing their pro-abortion stance, they would be refused.

Later in the summer, I sent a letter via FedEx to Mary Beth Cahill, Senator Kerry’s campaign manager. In that letter, I enclosed a copy of my message, including the deleted paragraph. I asked her to please bring my message to the senator’s attention, in the event that he planned to make a weekend appearance in the Jacksonville area before the general election. I received no response from her office, nor did I expect one. I chose this less confrontational approach to address this matter.

Next, I want to tell you of the marvelous experience I had at Camp St. John the weekend of Oct. 1-3. I made a Cursillo. I admit that I was less than enthusiastic about participating in this event, due to the many pressing demands on my agenda. But as the bus rolled off the campgrounds on Sunday evening, I realized that the Cursillo was one of the best religious experiences of my life. Bear in mind that my relationship with the Lord was pretty much the same after the Cursillo as it was before. Why, then, all the enthusiasm? Because I witnessed firsthand the love and dedication of our laity for the Lord and his church. The testimony of those Cursillo lay leaders moved me profoundly. I found myself repeatedly asking, “If I were married and had a family to support, would I be risking my job to defend my faith like that?”

The Cursillo movement is an excellent way to form lay leaders, as the documents of Vatican II challenge us to do. The Vatican II document, *Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People (Apostolicam actuositatem*, Nov. 18, 1965), pointed out that in a secular society, which continues to lose its moral bearings, it’s the role of the laity to act as a leavening in the decadent atmosphere of our age. The laity can enter where priests and sisters have no access. By their witness and example, they can make the gospel an appealing message to their neighbors, coworkers, and fellow students, who might never cross the threshold of a church.

Some ten years ago, a Lutheran pastor wrote a book in which he compared the Catholic Church to a sleeping giant. He opined that if Catholics should ever awaken to the fullness of the truth and beauty that is their heritage, they would bring about the greatest religious revival our nation has ever known. I am personally convinced that the Cursillo movement is one of the most effective means to revitalize our lay people to assume the role that is rightfully theirs by reason of their faith and baptism. So if someone should invite you to participate in the next scheduled Cursillo weekend, please say, “Yes.” You’ll be spiritually the richer for it, and so will the church.