



# Boston Catholic Journal

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## A Queer State of Affairs

**If Women  
can be Priests ...**



**... then Men  
can be Nuns**

**Priests** are supposed to be *other Christs* in the world.

Nuns are supposed to be *other Marys* in the world — we call them the *Brides of Christ*.

There are few, I suggest, who would contend this point.

It does, however, present something of a problem in the egalitarian world of correctitude which prevails in many women Religious Orders in America — and has become a point of rupture in the increasingly radicalized Episcopal Church. It is, we are encouraged to believe, a matter of "justice", of "equality". It is "the American Way". And it has been exported, with typical American industry, to other countries and other continents, although, in all fairness, the ability to fly in the face of reason is not a particularly American institution. Absurdity as the product of "progressive" social agenda finds common ground wherever there are, well, uncommon interests.

Let us look at this issue of "justice" from a more sober point of view; in fact, from the disinterested point of view of logic. While this is not the paradigm of the academic *modus ponens*, it nevertheless provides us with some logical relief. If gender, as it is argued, is not a determining factor in the ordination of women as priests, then by that same argument, gender should not preclude the Consecration of men as Cloistered Nuns. Agreed?

Above is a photo of an Episcopal woman "priest". If this does not strike you as odd, even incongruous, then neither should the accompanying picture of a male Nun. I agree that it is a rather "campy" notion, but the logic of the argument, and its conclusion, is inescapable.

I suggest that serious, even insurmountable, obstacles would exist were a man to make application to a Cloistered community of Nuns. At least on the planet Earth.

## The Blushing Bride?

The point is that it has very much to do with a matter of gender. What is more, I think it extremely unlikely that a man would be entirely comfortable understanding himself as a (blushing?) "Bride of Christ". Depending on the man, of course:



"Greet one another with a holy kiss"? (*but not too deeply*)

I would ask the many "progressive" women Religious Orders that proliferate — especially here in America — if they are prepared, on the premise of gender neutrality, to accept male novices and postulants into their Orders — and if they have a ceremony of "clothing" at all (which is extremely unlikely) by which a Nun receives her distinctive religious habit, if they are prepared to attire him with a veil.

*If they are not* — that is to say, if the "progressive" Religious Orders that stridently demand that women be ordained priests, arguing that the failure to do so is evidential of "sexism" and a breach of equal opportunity, of justice, that impugns the dignity of women — then they would be all the more guilty of the very "discrimination" that they find so abhorrent in the Catholic Church's reserving the ordination of priests — to say nothing of bishops — to men alone.

Unless your "sexual persuasion" is of the most militant sort, it would be as ludicrous — and absurd — to see a man dressed as a Nun in a habit as it is to see a woman dressed in the clerical suit of a priest or the flowing robes of a bishop.

Perhaps we should petition the **Leadership Conference of Women Religious** — among the most vociferous in promoting the ordination of women— in the United States and elsewhere to be at least consistent in their stridency and agitate to allow men to become Sisters and Nuns as much as they do to allow women to become priests and bishops. Why not? If the premises are not faulty, then neither is the conclusion.

## **The Fields are Pink to Harvest ...**

Does the **LCWR** fear that there are too many effeminate men and that the numbers would strain their already diminished convents and monasteries (if any remain, given that many "Sisters" live quite comfortably in their own apartments apart from the virtual — as opposed to real — "Community" to which they profess themselves to belong)? Or do they fear that the effeminate men would outnumber the women, making them a minority in women's Religious Orders? But that is discriminatory based on sex. In other words, the dreaded word "sexism" would be predicated of those — who most deplore "sexism" in the Church.

Despite their clearly articulated and much vaunted "enlightenment" and correctitude that leaves no room for distinction between sexes — does it come down to the banality of fearing to share "the same facilities" as the new candidates? Open lids are, to be sure, a nuisance ...

What a skewed understanding of "justice", of "equality", of sexism!

Well, **LCWR**? We are awaiting your ... in a manner of speaking, "redressing" ... this injustice by opening your communities to future male postulants. The fields are pink to harvest ... what are you waiting for? Or does your willingness in the matter ... your "justice" ... extend only so far ...?

Of course, you can always disagree, and if you wish to call a three-sided figure, the sum of whose angles equal 180 degrees, a circle, you are perfectly within your right. In fact, you can even agitate to legislate that it is so. What you cannot do is roll it down the street.

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**Church of England bishops 'will be allowed to become nuns',  
according to Synod source**



Male bishops could become Anglican nuns, under Synod proposals

I thought this was a spoof at first, but it seems not: a General Synod working party is exploring whether the Church of England's male bishops can join religious orders previously reserved for women. In other words, become Anglican nuns.

As usual, the Synod's topsy-turvy ecclesiology is a mystery to me, but I gather that the idea is that bishops would be entitled to take vows in orders of nuns so that they can provide special episcopal oversight to the sisters. It's a typically ingenious Anglican response to the forthcoming ordination of women bishops. "There will be jokes about bishops in wimples, but having bishop-nuns would introduce a degree of mutual cooperation that could make the introduction of women bishops much smoother," says my Synod source.

And just when I thought things couldn't get any weirder, I learn the identity of the bishop who is rumoured to have volunteered to take nun's vows: the Rt Rev Nick Baines, Bishop of Croydon, often spoken of as a successor to Rowan Williams as Archbishop of Canterbury. Says my informant: "Nick is a big fan of Sister Act, and we knew he was keen to 'get ahead,' as it were, so he was the obvious person to ask. And apparently he was delighted, because he's all about challenging gender stereotypes."

<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/news/damianthompson/100047249/church-of-england-bishops-will-be-allowed-to-become-nuns-according-to-synod-source/>



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