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DIOCESAN CIRCULAR – September 2011

Of blessing, breaking and abundance

A biblical reflection from Father Doug Hayman

Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. John 6:4-6 NKJV

Some years ago, I had been asked to take a mid-week Communion service for a colleague. Saying yes to the request also meant participating in a Bible study beforehand and lunch afterwards. The former focused on the lections for the upcoming Sunday, and that particular Sunday's Gospel was from the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel: the feeding of the 5,000.

Now, by that time in the week I had a few days' reflection under my belt, so in the study time I marvelled aloud at God's desire to bless His people abundantly, beyond their most basic needs, filling them to overflowing. However, one of the other participants, a man I'd known for years, a serious Christian, responded tactfully, "Yes, I agree with what you're saying, but I wonder how we reconcile that with the reality of people starving and suffering in our world. If God really desires to bless and fill, what about them?"

Now, I must confess that I really cannot remember anything of what I said in response, except for the last inspiration that came. Conscious that most of our answers flounder against this age-old question, I suggested that what we really needed to do was to bring it into worship and offer it up to our Lord. Where better to confess our inadequacy and His sufficiency than in the Holy Communion?

Whatever help that was to other members of that Bible study group, it drove me back to the Scriptures and prayer. I could not preach without wrestling with the questions raised; and what a gift of the Spirit followed, as He opened my eyes to see what had eluded me for years.

Jesus said to Philip, ***"Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"*** Why had it never struck me before? As St. John recalls it, *Jesus* was the One who pointed out the need.

Now I don't know if the significance of that strikes you as it did me that day. The number one argument against believing in a loving God is that there is suffering in the world. Sceptics behave as though they had just uncovered the skeleton in God's closet, damning evidence that believers have been trying to hide for millennia. Of course, some of us have been quick to respond that the saints have never denied, but rather agonized perpetually over the broken state of the world and the problem of suffering — and such luminaries as C.S. Lewis have even observed that suffering is only really a problem if one *does* believe in a loving God; otherwise, why should it be any other way? Now, as I read St. John's account, it struck me that, rather than hiding the problem, our Lord is the One who draws our attention to it. First our eyes, then our hearts are open to the need, not in spite of but *because of* our Lord. What we attend to of suffering in our world is not an indictment against God's loving concern; it is rather evidence of that love. It is the Holy Spirit moving in us who opens our eyes and our hearts, stirring us to respond in compassion — sometimes even in anger! — to what we see.

Someone may wish to challenge me here, noting that even unbelievers are moved by these things; am I arguing that the Holy Spirit is working in their lives too? Certainly! How could anyone come to faith unless the Spirit were at work in him or her? The indwelling of the Spirit, as in a temple, is a promise to those who are re-born of water and the Spirit, but none of God's creatures, especially those made in His image, is beyond being moved by His Spirit.

Wonderfully, the rest of St. John's account, especially when supplemented by the parallel in Mark 6:34-44, both echoes what we most often experience in the face of overwhelming need and presents our Lord's direction on how we are to respond faithfully.

Jesus highlights the need and raises the question of how it will be met. His disciples are overwhelmed. ***“Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.”*** The need is beyond them, even as it is so often beyond us. Where does one start, when six or seven months' wages would hardly suffice?

I suspect that Jesus might well have commended them in that reaction, allowing that there is no better starting point than the acknowledgement that we cannot do it on our own. I imagine the dialogue, beginning with Jesus asking them what they do have. They reply, "Nothing, Lord; the need is so great, we can't begin to meet it,..." He interrupts, "No, I'm asking for what you DO have, not what you wish you had, or think you need. What *do you have*, however small, however inadequate you imagine it to be; bring it to Me." ***“There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, [no more than his own lunch!] but what are they among so many?”*** Jesus responds, "Bring them to Me."

Then He tells them to get the people to sit down, effectively preparing a climate of faith, anticipating God's action in their midst. Next, He takes, blesses and breaks the loaves, giving thanks to the Father. Now, here you might notice that St. John recalls the thanksgiving, but doesn't mention the breaking, although St. Mark does. I am inclined to draw it in here because I think it is an essential element in our really letting go into our Lord's hands. That is, He can bless our gifts while yet we hold them in our hands: ours before, ours after; never really released, just enhanced. The best example I can think of is my guitar. I can quite lightly bring it before Him to be blessed that I might use it "for His glory", but when I release it into His hands and He snaps it over His knee, I despair. Now it cannot be of any use to me, except by the miracle of His redeeming grace. However, if I do not receive it as His instrument, entrusted to my care, rather than my possession made available to Him, I have not really given it over, and the abundance of His blessing will not be realized.

(Amazingly, the first time I used that example, it dawned on me that it had been my firsthand experience. Once upon a Good Friday, (1996 in fact), my guitar fell over and the neck broke. I was devastated, and had to borrow a guitar from my brother for Easter services (I had no organist in the parish, so I employed my instrument of 12 strings, cf. *Psalm 33:2; 92:3; 144: 9* only 2 strings better!). I had little hope of the damage being repaired, but at the shop the guitar technician said, "No problem. I'm sure that I can fix that." and when it was done, he assured me that the neck was stronger than it had ever been! Taken from me, I now consider it to be God's instrument entrusted to my hands).

So we witness a miracle at the hands of Jesus, a wondrous multiplication of loaves and fish; yet it is not by His hands that the administration takes place, ***He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.*** (Granted, most modern translations work from a Greek text that does not include these words, but they are consistent with Mark 6:41, so I think we may be confident that they reflect how things transpired). He works through His own to minister His mercy and further, He requires of them an accounting, ***“Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.”*** We are not simply sent off to do our best apart from Him. He calls to our attention the need; stirs in us the question of how to respond; exhorts us to bring all of our resources to Him, however small and inadequate they often seem to be — sometimes no more than our tears, our grief, our broken hearts, but often more than we imagined we possessed — to let go of them into His hands, that He might do what He alone can do; yet further to wait on His direction and His supply as we respond. At each step, through to the final accounting, we are to minister with the Lord, by His grace, ***...who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us... Ephesians 3:20***

What difference does it make, as we gaze in anguish at a world so wracked by suffering and despair, to realize

that it is the One who loved the world so much that He laid down His life for its redemption, Who opens our eyes and moves our hearts? May we truly let go into His hands, for the blessing, the breaking, and the abundance which He alone can bring.

When they had seen the sign that Jesus did, (they) said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.”

Father Doug+

(Bible quotations are from the New King James Version: NKJV)



(From Dean Shane Janzen, OSG – a remembrance of Fr Jim Corps, who died in mid July)

The Reverend James Alfred Corps

THE Reverend James Alfred Corps, ‘Father Jim’, was born on October 30, 1923 in Aldershot, England, where he was raised along with his three siblings, Bertram, Mary, and Donald (deceased). His devotion to the Church was evident from an early age, and he joined the local choir as a young boy – music being one of his life-long passions. Later he would meet his intended, Hettie, singing in the choir at Holy Trinity Church, Lamborbey, Kent. With the outbreak of World War II, Jim served in the Royal Air Force. Following the War, he and Hettie were married on April 12, 1947. Shortly after their wedding, the newly weds emigrated to Canada and took up residence in Vancouver. It was there that they raised their three sons, Peter, Stephen, and Michael. Jim worked at Reed Shaw Stenhouse until his retirement in 1987. He and Hettie were active members of St. James Anglican Church, and later St. Clements Church, where Jim was a member of the choir, and Hettie served on the Altar Guild. With the doctrinal and moral decline of the Anglican Church of Canada, Jim and Hettie left St. Clements Parish, Lynn Valley in 1980, and joined the newly formed traditional Anglican parish of St. Mary and Martha of Bethany (later to be part of the Anglican Catholic Church of Canada), established by Canon Edward Gale in Kerrisdale, subsequently moved to Burnaby, B.C., where Jim was Lay Reader & Rector’s Warden, and Hettie served on the Altar Guild.

Upon retiring in 1987, they moved from Vancouver to a new house in Saltair (Ladysmith) on Vancouver Island. Here they enjoyed their gardens, and were active members of Holy Cross Parish (Anglican Catholic Church of Canada). Responding to the call to the ordained ministry, Jim undertook studies under the tutelage of Bishop Robert Crawley and the then Archpriest Canon Peter Wilkinson. He was ordained deacon in 1989, and subsequently ordained to the priesthood on Easter Saturday, April 9, 1994; and was licensed by the Bishop as an Assistant Curate at Holy Cross, Nanaimo. Father Jim and Hettie were both founding members of the Anglican Catholic Church of Canada (Traditional Anglican Communion), and together attended almost every Synod and clerical gathering, Fr. Jim serving as Clerical Secretary to Synod for a number of years. In July 2009, Fr. Jim and Hettie sold their house in Saltair and moved down to Victoria, where Fr. Jim was appointed an honorary assistant curate at the Cathedral Church of Saint John the Evangelist (ACCC).

After a brief battle with cancer, Father Jim Corps passed into eternal life on July 12, 2011, in Victoria, B.C., having received the Last Rites of Holy Church. He will be sorely missed by his beloved wife of 64 years; their three sons, and two grandchildren, Joshua and Olivia; his brother, sister, and sister-in-law; as well as friends, and fellow parishioners at St. John the Evangelist Cathedral Church, and across the Anglican Catholic Church of Canada.

*“Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.”
May he rest in peace and rise in glory!*



(From Canon Edward Gale – a remembrance of Anne Anderson, who also died in July)

Anne Charlotte Anderson, a member of the Vancouver parish since 1985, died in hospital on July 24th. In the absence of Father Shier, Canon Michael Birch was able to administer the Last Rites on the 23rd.

I first knew Anne when I was a young priest at S. James Church, Vancouver. I think it was fitting that she died on the Eve of S. James and two days before the Feast of S. Anne.

Anne was a dedicated member of the parish of S. Mary and S. Martha of Bethany (now S. Peter and S. Paul). She was always present at services at the church and at Pax House, very active on the parish Vestry, a generous contributor to parish finances and special projects, and half of the expert Altar Guild. She was quietly and unobtrusively involved with all aspects of parish life.

She worked for many years at Eaton's, responsible for administering the pension fund for all of the employees and advising those who were retiring. She was highly regarded by management and staff.

Throughout her adult life, Anne ministered to the needs of four generations of her family; in particular, when her ailing mother was in hospital or nursing home for many months, Anne would go all the way home after work, prepare a dinner for her mother, and drive some distance to the nursing home to feed her; she also did this on week-ends. Anne made herself available to all who needed her, despite the acute pain she endured from her own health problems in recent years.

She was very competent, conscientious, compassionate and generous in everything and toward everyone.

"Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates" (Prov. 31.31)

* * * * *



It's official! This fall's 40 Days for Life will be a record-setter ... and YOU are invited to help make history!



Here's a quick rundown on the largest 40 Days for Life campaign yet, which will be conducted from September 28 to November 6:

- **291** locations (the most ever, and this number may still go up by a few as we work through a few final application details!)
- **48 US states** — plus Washington, DC and Puerto Rico
- **7 Canadian provinces**

- **Australia, England, Spain** and — for the first time — **Germany** and **Argentina**
- Many NEW cities ... **46 first-time campaigns**

The full list of locations for the 40 Days for Life campaign has just been posted at:

<http://www.40daysforlife.com/location.cfm>

This fall's campaign, from September 28 – November 6, will be the largest and longest internationally coordinated pro-life mobilization in history ... and you can help save lives by getting involved TODAY!

Here's what to do:

1. Go to the list of 40 Days for Life locations: <http://www.40daysforlife.com/location.cfm>
2. Using the map, or the list of locations, click on the site that is closest to where you live
3. You will be redirected to the web page for that local 40 Days for Life campaign
4. On that local web page, SIGN UP with your name and e-mail address to get involved and help save lives

That's it!

You will then receive information on the plans for your nearby 40 Days for Life campaign, and how you can help make an impact locally.

Here's a quick list of the blessings that God has provided through 40 Days for Life campaigns over just the last four years:

- 400,000 have joined to pray and fast for an end to abortion
- 13,000 church congregations have participated in the 40 Days for Life campaigns
- 4,313 lives reported as spared from abortion — and those are just the ones we know about
- Women have been spared from the effects of abortion, including a lifetime of regrets
- 53 abortion workers have quit their jobs and walked away from the abortion industry
- 14 abortion facilities completely shut down following local 40 Days for Life campaigns
- Women and men with past abortion experiences have begun post-abortion healing and recovery
- 1,500 news stories have been featured in radio shows, newspapers, magazines and TV programs
- After 38 years of legalized abortion, people of faith are experiencing a renewed sense of HOPE!

I'm excited and am really looking forward to what God will do this campaign ... and I'm personally inviting YOU to be part of it!

Blessings,

Shawn Carney
 Campaign Director
 40 Days for Life (US)

In Canada the list of cities is:

| | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| <i>Victoria</i> | <i>Vancouver</i> | <i>Edmonton</i> | <i>Calgary</i> | <i>Winnipeg</i> |
| <i>Guelph</i> | <i>London</i> | <i>Oakville</i> | <i>Sudbury</i> | <i>Ottawa</i> |
| <i>Montréal</i> | <i>Québec City</i> | <i>Fredericton</i> | <i>Moncton</i> | <i>Halifax</i> |



The Barbarians Inside Britain's Gates

All the young rioters will have had long experience with the justice system's efforts to confer impunity upon law breakers.

By THEODORE DALRYMPLE

The youth of Britain have long placed a de facto curfew on the old, who in most places would no more think of venturing forth after dark than would peasants in Bram Stoker's Transylvania. Indeed, well before the riots last week, respectable persons would not venture into the centers of most British cities or towns on Friday and Saturday nights, for fear-and in the certainty-of encountering drunken and aggressive youngsters. In Britain nowadays, the difference between ordinary social life and riot is only a matter of degree, not of type.

A short time ago, I gave a talk in a school in an exquisite market town, deep in the countryside. Came Friday night, however, and the inhabitants locked themselves into their houses against the invasion of the barbarians. In my own little market town of Bridgnorth, in Shropshire, where not long ago a man was nearly beaten to death 20 yards from my house, drunken young people often rampage down one of its lovely little streets, causing much damage and preventing sleep. No one, of course, dares ask them to stop. The Shropshire council has dealt with the problem by granting a licence for a pub in the town to open until 4 a.m., as if what the town needed was the opportunity for yet more and later drunkenness.

If the authorities show neither the will nor the capacity to deal with such an easily solved problem-and willfully do all they can to worsen it-is it any wonder that they exhibit, in the face of more difficult problems, all the courage and determination of frightened rabbits?

The rioters in the news last week had a thwarted sense of entitlement that has been assiduously cultivated by an alliance of intellectuals, governments and bureaucrats. "We're fed up with being broke," one rioter was reported as having said, as if having enough money to satisfy one's desires were a human right rather than something to be earned.

"There are people here with nothing," this rioter continued: nothing, that is, except an education that has cost \$80,000, a roof over their head, clothes on their back and shoes on their feet, food in their stomachs, a cellphone, a flat-screen TV, a refrigerator, an electric stove, heating and lighting, hot and cold running water, a guaranteed income, free medical care, and all of the same for any of the children that they might care to propagate.

But while the rioters have been maintained in a condition of near-permanent unemployment by government subvention augmented by criminal activity, Britain was importing labour to man its service industries. You can travel up and down the country and you can be sure that all the decent hotels and restaurants will be manned overwhelmingly by young foreigners; not a young Briton in sight (thank God).

The reason for this is clear: The young unemployed Britons not only have the wrong attitude to work, for example regarding fixed hours as a form of oppression, but they are also dramatically badly educated. Within six months of arrival in the country, the average young Pole speaks better, more cultivated English than they do.

The icing on the cake, as it were, is that social charges on labour and the minimum wage are so high that no employer can possibly extract from the young unemployed Briton anything like the value of what it costs to employ him. And thus we have the paradox of high youth unemployment at the very same time that we suck in young workers from abroad.

The culture in which the young unemployed have immersed themselves is not one that is likely to promote virtues such as self-discipline, honesty and diligence. Four lines from the most famous lyric of the late and unlamentable Amy Winehouse should establish the point:

I didn't get a lot in class
But I know it don't come in a shot glass
They tried to make me go to rehab
But I said 'no, no, no'

This message is not quite the same as, for example, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise."

Furthermore, all the young rioters will have had long experience of the prodigious efforts of the British criminal justice system to confer impunity upon law breakers. First the police are far too busy with their paperwork to catch the criminals; but if by some chance-hardly more than one in 20-they do catch them, the courts oblige by inflicting ludicrously lenient sentences.

A single example will suffice, but one among many. A woman got into an argument with someone in a supermarket. She called her boyfriend, a violent habitual criminal, "to come and sort him out." The boyfriend was already on bail on another charge and wore an electronic tag because of another conviction. (Incidentally, research shows that a third of all crimes in Scotland are committed by people on bail, and there is no reason England should be any different.)

The boyfriend arrived in the supermarket and struck a man a heavy blow to the head. He fell to the ground and died of his head injury. When told that he had got the "wrong" man, the assailant said he would have attacked the "right" one had he not been restrained. He was sentenced to serve not more than 30 months in prison. Since punishments must be in proportion to the seriousness of the crime, a sentence like this exerts tremendous downward pressure on sentences for lesser, but still serious, crimes.

So several things need to be done, among them the reform and even dismantlement of the educational and social-security systems, the liberalization of the labour laws, and the much firmer repression of crime.

David Cameron is not the man for the job.

Theodore Dalrymple is the pen name of the physician Anthony Daniels.



DIOCESAN NOTES AND NEWS

- On Sunday, July 24th, the Cathedral Parish of St John the Evangelist in Victoria held its summer party "aboard" H.M.C.S. Malahat, the "stone frigate" that houses the local naval reserve unit, overlooking the entrance to the Inner Harbour. Parishioners and guests enjoyed barbequing in the sunshine and watching boats and seaplanes come and go. Invited guests included Bishop Richard Gagnon, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Victoria.
- On Sunday, August 21 the three Ottawa valley parishes of Annunciation (Ottawa), Holy Nativity (Barrhaven), and St Barnabas (Spencerville) enjoyed a collective picnic at the bishop suffragan and his wife's home in North Gower. By happy coincidence, Bp Wilkinson was in Ottawa for the weekend for, among other things, to visit his central Canada cathedral, and was delighted to join the three parishes.
- To confirm an "ordinariate" note sent to our parishes in early August, we are asking all parishes across the country to begin the Evangelium Course in September: <http://www.cenacle.co.uk/content/Evangelium.htm> "I think the course is absolutely excellent" - Fr Tim Finigan, Sidcup. "An excellent project" - Fr John Saward, Oxford University.



FROM MAGGIE'S KITCHEN



The year's turned round yet again to September, a sort of threshold month. For families of school-age children, it's a month of beginnings, of mixed joy and tears, of picture-taking on the doorstep before the youngsters head off to new grades and new teachers. At the same time, for us aging gardeners, September is a month of endings. Gone are the warblers and the long, warm days; the harvest is nearly complete, the flowers in their last flush of glory. We cannot help but be reminded of our own mortality.

Is it a matter of joy or of regret? When I was younger, I viewed death with a sense of adventure. Now that death is more *probable*, and less merely *possible*, something more is required of me than mere daring. For one thing, I have more invested in this life -- children, grandchildren, even a great-grandchild, friendships, a new home and new undertakings, a greater love for the natural world around me -- more to let go of, more to leave behind.

Do I regret this, even while I have faith that Christ will bring me into eternal life? Shall I remain on the threshold, turning now to the City ahead, now to the city behind, like Lot's wife, who turned into a pillar of salt? "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out" (1 Tim 6:7).

Temptations to regret flee when I read the account of the trial and martyrdom of one of the September saints, Cyprian of Carthage at age 58, in A.D. 258. The eyewitness record is one of the treasures of the Church, and so one of my treasures as well. The proconsul Paternus, having declared to Cyprian the necessity of his acknowledging the deity of the emperor Valerian, demanded, "What do you answer me?" To which Cyprian replied, "I am a Christian and a bishop. I know no other gods but the one and true God who made Heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them. This God we Christians serve; to Him we pray day and night, for ourselves and for all men and for the safety of the emperors themselves."

For his obstinacy, Cyprian was sent into exile. A new proconsul, Galerius Maximus, recalled him:

Maximus: "You are the father (*papa*) of these sacrilegious men [the Christian brethren]?"

Cyprian: "Yes."

Maximus: "The most sacred emperors order you to sacrifice."

Cyprian: "I will not sacrifice."

Maximus: "Think about it."

Cyprian: "Do what is required of you; there is no room for reflection in so clear a matter."

Maximus (after consultation): "Thascius Cyprianus shall be put to death by the sword."

Cyprian: "Thanks be to God."

The assembled brethren: "Let us be beheaded with him."

This is the confident response of love to Love. It is not faith as a series of propositions, but faith in the Person of Christ, in whom all those propositions are found to be true. I would not leave the world behind for the sake of mere ideas, but like Cyprian, I would for the love of Christ, once I have known him, the Only-Begotten of the one and true God who made Heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them. So why regret? Why cling to the creature, and not rather to the Creator?

Which brings me to a request: Will you, with mixed tears and joy, take *my* picture when I'm ready to set off for my "new school year"?

For September, a treat which is described in *The Joy of Cooking* as "the cakes St. Peter gives little children at the Gates of Heaven, to get them over the first pangs of homesickness." You might slip a couple into your child's lunchbox. Adults: Eat at your own risk. Over-indulgence could precipitate an earlier entry into the life to come than God intended.

ANGEL SLICES

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cream 1/2 cup butter with 1/4 cup sugar; beat in 1 egg. Combine 1-1/4 cups flour and 1/8 tsp salt; blend into butter mixture with 1/2 tsp vanilla. Pat evenly into an 8x12 or 9x13-inch pan. Bake about 15 minutes. Spread with a mixture of 2 beaten eggs, 1-1/2 cups brown sugar, 1/2 cup flaked coconut, 1 cup chopped pecans, 2 tbsp flour, 1/2 tsp baking powder, 1/2 tsp salt, and 1 tsp vanilla. Bake for about 25 minutes. Ice when cool with 1-1/2 cups powdered sugar thinned with lemon juice. Cut into 48 1x2-inch bars.

☆☆☆☆☆☆

Don't hate me because I'm right

*By Christopher Stefanick **

Relativism is the philosophy that there is no objective reality, but that truth is relative to what each person thinks. We've all encountered relativism in statements like, "Jesus is God for me, while Vishnu is God for someone else," "You have your truth, and I have mine," or, in regard to issues like the abortion debate, "You can't impose your morality on another person."

This "agree never to disagree" philosophy is considered necessary to guarantee peace, tolerance and equality in a pluralistic world. Conversely, people who think we can know the truth in moral or religious issues are considered intolerant, bigoted and maybe even downright dangerous.

In defence of those who have the audacity to claim to know the truth about who God is or how we're supposed to live, myself included, I have to point out that nothing could be further from the truth. Some of the most intolerant people in history were not believers, but relativists!

Benito Mussolini, the fascist dictator of Italy, is one clear-cut example. Early in his political career, he wrote:

“Everything I have said and done in these last years is relativism, by intuition. From the fact that all ideologies are of equal value, that all ideologies are mere fictions, the modern relativist infers that everybody has the right to create for himself his own ideology, and to attempt to enforce it with all the energy of which he is capable. If relativism signifies contempt for fixed categories and men who claim to be the bearers of an objective immortal truth, then there is nothing more relativistic than fascism (“Diuturna”).”

Since Mussolini didn't recognize any objective reality—moral or religious—to which he should conform, he invented his own moral code and enforced it on everyone he could. If truth is really relative, why not?!

And while it might seem that if we could just “imagine there's no heaven ... no hell below us ... no religion, too,” then we could “live life in peace.” The 20th-century proved John Lennon's dream wrong time and again. People in the 20th-century who imagined that there was no “objective immortal truth”—no heaven, hell and no religion—made many of the crimes committed in the name of faith look like child's play.

Take communism, for instance, with its strong commitment to atheism. In one small communist country alone, Cambodia, 1.7 million people died at the hands of the government from 1975 to 1979, with entire families, including infants, being put to death by the tens of thousands if they were a perceived threat to the Communist Party.

To be fair, the average relativist wouldn't go as far as Mussolini or the communists of Cambodia, but the modern world is increasingly full of examples of relativist intolerance toward those who believe in objective truth. Take, for example:

- Regular lawsuits backed by the ACLU to forcibly squash any mention of God out of the public square to cater to a few intolerant atheists.
- The college student in California who was threatened with expulsion after she said a prayer for a sick teacher on campus with his consent.
- A civil rights organization that protested a statue of Jesus found on the floor of the ocean.
- The Christian print-shop owner in Toronto who was fined for choosing not to print promotional materials for a gay and lesbian group.
- The attacks on conscientious objection rights that currently allow Catholic doctors and hospitals to refuse to participate in providing abortions.

It seems that a new relativist inquisition is picking up steam. And, of course, it is being carried out in the name of “tolerance”!

Contrast these examples of intolerance with a “religious absolutist” whom most people remember: Mother Teresa. She believed beyond the shadow of a doubt that she was right and other faiths were wrong when it came to the divinity of Jesus Christ. But could you imagine new videos being found and released on YouTube of her kneeling a poor Indian in the face because he didn't accept the message of Christianity? The idea is ridiculous. Her faith motivated her to a life of service to everyone regardless of creed or lifestyle—from feeding Hindus living in the slums of Kolkata to starting New York City's first AIDS hospice and much more.

I'm not trying to rewrite history with this brief article. Atrocities have been committed by people of faith too. But an honest look at history shows that religious and moral absolutism doesn't necessarily make a person intolerant, nor does a lack thereof. It depends on what a person believes, not if he believes.

So to all who would use the rod of “tolerance” to beat the faithful into submission for claiming truth, I make this humble request: please tolerate me.

** Christopher Stefanick is director of Youth, Young Adult and Campus Ministry for the Archdiocese of Denver. His personal website can be found at www.chris-stefanick.com.*



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(403) 625-3392

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The Rev. Howard Patterson
Home: (403) 580-1935
Church Tel.: (403) 526-0957

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Matsqui Village -
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Lower Shinimicas -
St. Francis' Mission
Contact: Mr. Charles C. Hubbard
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