

The Domestic Church

A Journal of Catholic Family Spirituality + Vol. X, No. 1, 2004

The Nation We Live In

How did our nation, so proud of its heritage, so convicted in its goals and so dedicated to liberty and justice for its people come to be divided against itself, as it is today? The pivotal point, as guest writer Fr. Paul Duffner outlines so skillfully in our “Philosophy for Beginners” column is: whether or not the nation adheres to its belief in God.

It is God the “Creator” who, as stated in our Declaration of Independence endowed all men with certain inalienable rights. It follows that if God doesn’t really exist, then He did not endow men with inalienable rights. If no God exists, that is *in the eyes of men* (for truly He does!), then our rights become relative (not absolute), subject to laws that are *manmade*. Without our recognition of God as the great equalizer, men of power attempt to replace Him, and will ultimately attempt to determine what rights you and I do or do not have. Then we are no longer equal as people, contrary to what God and the founding fathers of our nation willed us to be!

Without God, we are no longer free, and yet we are led to believe by secular leaders that belief in God inhibits our freedom! We are told the opposite of what is true, and the paradox is just too much for most people.

Freedom comes to be associated with moral license, and sadly “the secularist follows the rule that whatever is legal is moral.” (Fr. Duffner) But again, if we are to adhere to our belief in God, then a universal moral law is understood to come *from Him* and to be binding on all of us, His people. It is not law that is intended to burden us, but rather it is law that protects the innocent and the vulnerable; it is law that promotes the common good of the nation. It is law that does not inhibit, but rather advances our rights to life, to liberty, and to the pursuit of happiness.

Although God is hidden in Mystery, He still seeks the ultimate faith and allegiance of our nation. Because He respects our free will, He will never act like a despot.

Ruth Andreas

Editor



Philosophy for Beginners

Fourth of July Sermon

by Fr. Paul Duffner

Fr. Paul Duffner is a retired priest from the Western Dominican Province. This sermon was written for Independence Day. Its timeless quality with regard to the Faith and philosophy of our founding fathers make it particularly relevant to the current historical moment.

This July 4th, we celebrated the birthday of our country. 228 years later, we can see problems (some of them serious ones), but we can also count our blessings, especially when we look at other countries in various parts of the world and see turmoil, lack of freedom, etc. The various problems that we find in our country do *not* come from the Constitution given us by our Founding Fathers, but rather from a *departure from* or misinterpretation of the basic principles it contains.

We have often expressed the truth of the gospel—that freedom is based on truth. As Our Lord put it, “The truth will make you free”, the truth given us by the Creator. And we might say that the truth contained in our Declaration of Independence and our Constitution will insure freedom—if it is truly understood, adhered to and applied; for it is but an expression of some of the most fundamental truths of Christianity.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

(Declaration of Independence, 2nd paragraph)

As we celebrate the recurrence

of Independence Day each year, we should offer thanks to God for the freedom we still enjoy, and prayers of petition that those liberties will be preserved. We can be proud and thankful, too for the Bill of Rights, those amendments to the Constitution, especially the first, which grants freedom of religion. “Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, prohibiting the free exercise thereof...” (Bill of Rights)

The philosophy of a universal moral law, coming from God and binding on all people was placed as the foundation of the new nation by our Founding Fathers. Only when our Constitution is interpreted in keeping with that philosophy will there be preserved those basic rights referred to, and the freedom they bring.

This basic philosophy was not the invention of those Founding Fathers. They borrowed it from those principles underlying Western Civilization, which had its origins in Greco-Roman philosophy, and was further guided and improved by Judeo-Christian religious traditions.

So the religious philosophy of our Founding Fathers is based on belief in a personal God who is intimately concerned with the affairs of men and who intervenes in human history on their behalf. This religious philosophy is called THEISM. (*Theos* is the Greek

word for God.) Theism accepts Divine Revelation, but as a *philosophy* it develops what *reason* says concerning our relationship with God, rather than what Divine Revelation has to say.

In 1952, a U.S. Supreme Court decision was handed down by a majority of 6 to 3 declaring in part these words: “We are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being.” It was part of the ruling that public schools were right in cooperating with “release time” religious education efforts. Three times prior to that date, the same thing had been decreed: in the years 1815, 1892 and 1931.

Unfortunately, during the latter part of the twentieth century the Constitution has been interpreted by principles that are foreign to the philosophy and convictions of our Founding Fathers, who brought it into existence. Because of this, the Constitution is at times distorted as a tool to destroy the very rights it was intended to protect. In the past generation, the philosophy which has dominated the thinking of the judges of the Supreme Court has not been the Theism of our Founding Fathers, but rather one that can be summed up in the term SECULARISM. (*Saeculum* is the Latin word meaning generation, life-span, age, spirit of the age.) This Secularism is an attitude of life that concerns itself

only with this world, this life. It is not interested in what religion might say about God or the next life. In practice, it differs little from Atheism, for it acts as if God does not exist. The Secularist is too dominated by things of this world to think about the next.

In regard to things pertaining to law, the Secularist follows the rule: whatever is legal is moral. There are no objective absolute norms. What the law allows is right. Nothing is right or wrong in itself. All moral truth is relative.

The person who has had more influence than any other on legal thinking in the twentieth century, both in general and on the decisions of the Supreme Court is Justice Oliver W. Holmes (1902-1932). He has had a great impact on the American juridical system through his interpretations of the U.S. Constitution. Being a non-believer-- a Secularist--he denied the existence of absolute standards of truth in law and spiritual values. Many of his decisions were sound *because* he was interpreting laws that had been developed over the centuries of Christian civilization. Yet, he rejected the philosophy of the Founding Fathers, putting forth his own interpretation of the Constitution and opening the door for the secular mentality of the Court that would see anything that favored religion as contrary to the first amendment of the Constitution. It would interpret the Constitution as merely barring the establishment of a state religion (a negative definition significantly reducing the intent of its original writers); its mentality would eventually deny the right to life to the unborn, although guaranteed by the Constitution.

Between the effect of Justice

Holmes in the field of law, and the philosophy of the educator John Dewey-- his Secular Humanism in the field of education--the great heritage handed down to us by the Founding Fathers is being eroded by a system of moral principles in which all truth is relative. Yet, America is still a nation where the majority believe in God.

The philosophy
of a universal
moral law, coming
from God and
binding on all
people was placed
as the foundation
of the new nation
by our Founding
Fathers.

A well-known atheist Madelyn Murray O'Hare once referred to the Founding Fathers as Deists, men for whom religion paid no important role in their lives. There were several types of DEISTS. In general, they all accepted the idea of a Creator to explain the existence and design of the universe. (At the time the Constitution was written, the idea of evolution was not yet popular). Some Deists held that, beyond the idea of the Creator, the Supreme Being exercises no care of man or universe. Such would be a purely Natural Religion and would reject Revelation and divine intervention in any form. However, there were

other Deists who believed in a personal God, in the future life with its rewards and punishments, in God's Providence over men and nations, and so on. A reading of the Founding Fathers clearly shows that they belonged to this second category of Deist, or essentially Theist who, in addition accepted God's *full* Revelation to man. So the claims of Madelyn Murray O'Hare were utterly false.

In concluding this review of what has happened to our Constitution after two plus centuries, we might ask ourselves a few questions: has our great progress in material wealth and prosperity (with the greed and pleasure-seeking it often generates) blinded our nation as to those fundamental truths needed to safeguard our natural human rights? Are we putting up any resistance to this secularization of our society, or are we just riding with the tide?

We should use this renewal of the anniversary of our Independence to offer fervent prayers to the Immaculate Mother of God, Patroness of these United States to plead with her Son to help us secure for our country: leaders, jurists and congressmen who will fight to reverse the trend of secularization, and restore those inalienable rights granted, not by the Constitution but by the Creator, that this country of ours might truly remain "the Land of the free."

Spiritual Fatherhood

by Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers

Human Sexuality and Marriage

Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical letter *Evangelium Vitae*, states that “human life, as a gift of God, is sacred and inviolable...The meaning of life is found in giving and receiving love, and, in this light human sexuality and procreation reach their true and full significance.” (no.81) This deeply profound and pregnant insight represents a compendium of the Church’s teaching on human sexuality and sacramental marriage.

Love is a constant theme in modern culture. Modern music, cinema, newspapers, radio and television constantly assault our senses with stories and features about love. Unfortunately, the attributes of authentic human love, that is, the values of fidelity, exclusiveness, dependability, stability, childbearing, the establishing of a nuclear family and love of children are downgraded, while the values of sexual compatibility, amorous passion and emotional ecstasy are given special attention.

In modern parlance, the term “making love” has come to mean having sexual intercourse, and its value is measured solely in terms of erotic intensity and sexual climax. This understanding of “lovemaking” makes no attempt to characterize sexual intercourse as an expression of genuine self-giving and sharing of life. It completely ignores the fact that sexual love forms bonds of

communion with others in caring, faithful, and lifelong relationships based upon selflessness, sincerity, and fidelity.

foundation of God’s Divine love, and it is this love which will allow humanity to “recognize the voice of God which urges him ‘to do what is good and avoid what is evil’.” (CCC#1706)

Humankind must return to its senses. In order to develop a proper understanding of human sexuality, we must first develop an appreciation of the dignity of the human person which “is rooted in his creation in the image and likeness of God.” (CCC

#1700) Since this

divine image is present in every man and woman, “the human person participates in the light and power of the divine Spirit.” (CCC #1704) The Spirit fills man’s soul and permeates his intellect and will. By virtue of our soul and our spiritual powers of intellect and will, we are endowed with authentic freedom and innate ability to direct our lives toward our Ultimate Good. In short, we find perfection in seeking and loving what is true, good and beautiful. (cf. CCC #1704-1705 and *Gaudium et Spes*, no.15)

The attributes of authentic human love:
the value of fidelity,
exclusiveness,
dependability,
stability,
childbearing,
the establishing of a nuclear family and
love of children!

Contemporary society has, in essence separated love from sex, thus creating a chasm of moral ambiguity from which emerges a plethora of disordered sexual desires and carnal appetites. The restoration of a true and proper sense of sexual expression must begin by reuniting human love and sexuality so that the unity between sex and faithful lifelong love, the unity between sex and procreation, and the unity between sex and marriage between one man and one woman, are revived. Sex then will be rooted in the solid

As the image of God, men and women are created for love, and this love is profoundly manifest in consecrated sexual intimacy.

Pope John Paul II's approach to human love and sexuality envisions sex not as something purely biological, but as a component of the innermost being of the human person. He sees sexuality as a physical giving of oneself to another which reaches its true and full meaning when it expresses itself in the intimate communion of persons through the sacramental sign of marriage.

Love is a gift of God, nourished by and expressed in the encounter of man and woman. Love is thus a positive force directed towards their growth and maturity as persons. Love is also a precious source for the self-giving which all men and women are called to make for their own self-realization and happiness. In fact, man is called to love as an incarnate spirit, that is, soul and body in the unity of the person. Human love hence embraces the body, and the body also expresses spiritual love...realized in a truly human way only if it is an integral part of the love by which a man and a woman commit themselves totally to one another until death. (Familiaris Consortio, no.11)

To the Holy Father, sexuality is a fundamental component of personality, that is, one of its means of expressing and of living out human love. This gift of love is transformed through the power of Christ's redeeming grace, and we become partakers in His divine nature: "as an incarnate spirit, that is, a soul which expresses itself in a body and a body informed by an immortal spirit; man is called to love in his unified totality. Love includes the human body, and the body is made a sharer in spiritual love." (*Familiaris Consortio*, no.11) Sexuality has love as its intrinsic end and its meaning must be understood in light of Christian revelation: "Sexuality characterizes man and woman not only on the physical level, but also on the psychological and spiritual, making its mark on each of their expressions..." (The Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality: Guidelines for Education within the Family*, no.13) When love is lived out in marriage, both spouses "through this union experience the meaning of their oneness and attain to it with growing perfection day by day." (*Gaudium et Spes*, no.48) Love between a man and a woman is achieved when they give themselves totally to each other in the marriage covenant where God

has willed that human life is to be conceived, nurtured and developed. This expression of self-giving love in the conjugal act has two inseparable aspects: union and procreation. As Pope John Paul II states:

By its intimate structure, the conjugal act, while most closely uniting husband and wife, capacitates them for the generation of new lives, according to the laws inscribed in the very being of man and of woman. By safeguarding both these essential aspects, the unitive and the procreative, the conjugal act preserves in its fullness the sense of true mutual love and its ordination towards man's most high calling to parenthood. (John Paul II, The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan, p.432)

Sacred Scripture provides keen insights into the nature of human sexuality:

Leviticus 20:11, 17, 21;
Romans 1:18; 6:12-14; 1
Corinthians 6:9-11; 2
Corinthians 7:1;
Galatians 5: 16-23;
Ephesians 4:17-24; 5:3-13;
Colossians 3:5-8; 1
Thessalonians 4:1-18;
1 Timothy 1:8-11; 4:12; and
2 Peter 1:4

...and its proper ordering in the sacrament of marriage:

Genesis 1:27-28; 2:18;
Genesis 4:1-2; 5:1-2;
Matthew 5:27-28; 9:15; 19:3ff;
Mark 2:11-20; 10:2ff;
Luke 5:34-35; John 3:29. cf.
2 Corinthians 11:2;
Ephesians 5:27 and
Revelation 19:7-8

Pope John Paul II's approach to human love and sexuality envisions sex not as something purely biological, but as a component of the innermost being of the human person.

It provides the foundation for the Church's teaching on sexual intimacy: "The biblical Word of God several times urges the betrothed and the married to nourish and develop their wedlock by pure conjugal love and undivided affection." (*Gaudium et Spes*, no.49)

The 'contraceptive mentality' which permeates much of modern society, undermines the intrinsic unity of sacramental marriage. Contraceptives separate sexual intercourse from its inherent openness to life-giving love, and increase the propensity and the temptation to separate sex from fidelity, permanence and exclusive relationship. In essence, contraceptives facilitate the separation of sex from love. Vatican II reminds us that "harmonizing married love with the responsible transmission of life, which respects the total meaning of mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love, is possible only in the virtue of married chastity." (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 51) Pope Paul VI confirms this in *Humanae Vitae* and is a constant theme in the teaching of Pope John Paul II.

The truth of the language of sexuality is also missing in sexual relationships between people of the same gender. Homosexual acts themselves, not the person with a homosexual orientation are objectively and gravely immoral because there is no communion of body and spirit with facilitates openness to the procreation of new life. Homosexuality undermines the truth, fullness and wholeness of sexual communion. This has always been the clear teaching of the Church and is rooted in Sacred Scripture. (see especially Genesis

19:1-19; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 6:10; 1 Timothy 1:10)

The Church's teaching on homosexuality is often misunderstood or misrepresented by many in society. Catholics are often accused of discrimination

against people of homosexual orientation. The truth is that the Church recognizes the dignity of every human person and condemns social discrimination in all its forms. However, when these efforts place homosexual relationships in complete social, legal and moral parity with heterosexual relationships, the Church reiterates that "the deliberate use of the sexual faculty, for whatever reason, outside of marriage is essentially contrary to its purpose". (CCC #2352)

Homosexuality occurs outside of the sexual relationship which is demanded by the moral order, and in which the total meaning of mutual self-giving and human procreation are achieved. Consequently, homosexual persons are called to chastity, and it is the Church's sincere hope that "by virtue of self-mastery (and) by prayer and sacramental grace they can and should gradually and resolutely approach Christian perfection." (CCC #2359)

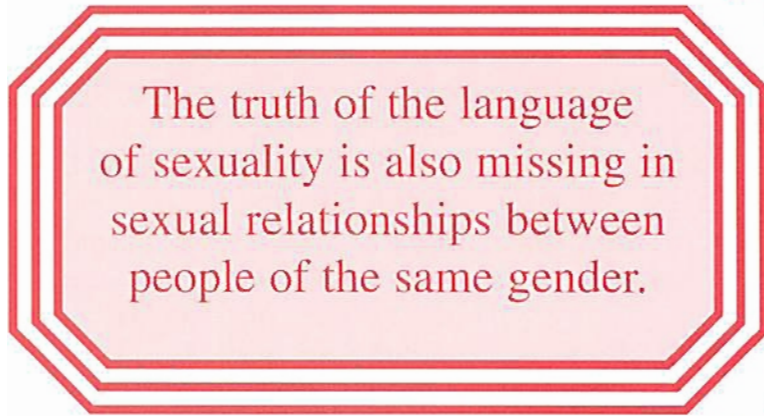
Modern society, with its

secular humanist tendencies often views the supreme expression of communion between man and woman in the sexual act as something casual and trivial. The true meaning of human sexuality must be rooted in the objective

good which seeks to perfect humankind in its totality. It must also be properly ordered to a n d sanctified in t h e sacramental bond of marriage,

where the practice of chastity, through which conjugal love finds its fullest expression in mutual self-giving and openness to new life, gives dignity and value to the human person. Human sexuality is both unitive and procreative. Therefore, the disordered sexual expression found in homosexuality undermines the intrinsic nature of human sexuality. Ultimately, human sexuality can never find its full expression apart from the intimate partnership of life and love established by the Creator in marriage, where the husband and wife become one heart and one soul, and together obtain their human perfection. (CCC #2364 and Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, no.9)

Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers is the founder and director of Aurem Cordis, a Christian evangelization and apologetics organization. Visit Harold's website at: www.auremcardis.com



A Pious Perspective

by Fr. Pius X Harding

*The second in a four-part series on the life of St. Joseph, from an original address to seminarians.
Fr. Pius X Harding is a Benedictine monk at Mount Angel Abbey in Oregon.*

A JUST MAN

It says in Saint Matthew's Gospel: "Before they came together, Mary was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and Joseph her husband, being a *just man* and unwilling to shame her, decided to put her away quietly (1:18-19)."

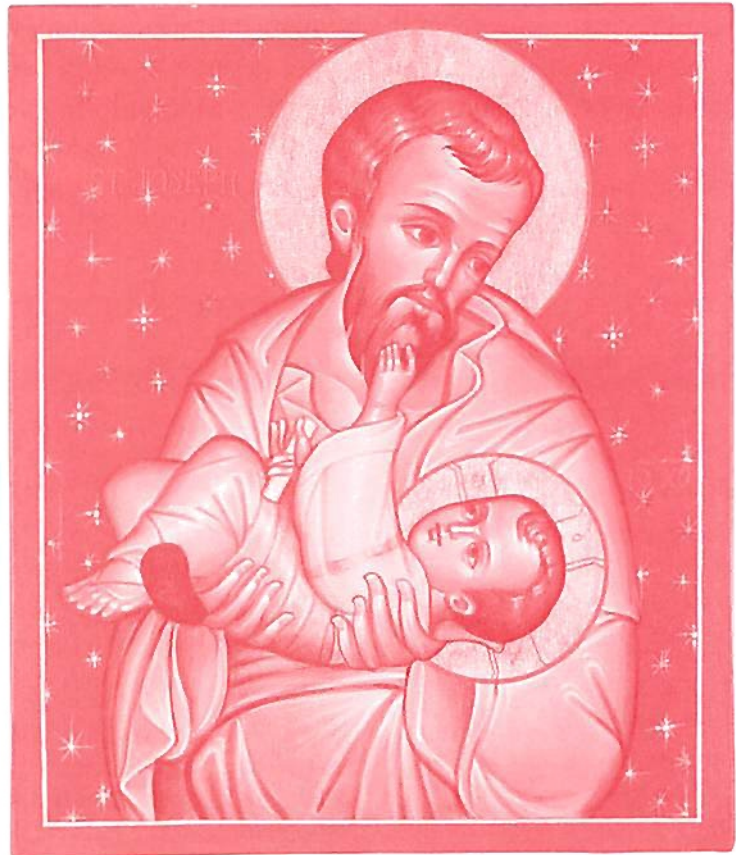
A spiritual father by definition is "just". Children look for discernable boundaries and consistency in their administration. Man naturally desires good order. Law gives security and maintains peace. A spiritual father then does not impose a strict *juris prudencia* on those he loves, but rather interprets law generously, always looking toward the salvation of souls, as is done with the canon law of the Church.

Saint Joseph is called "just" in the Sacred Scriptures because he was a follower of the Law. He is proclaimed "righteous", the supreme Jewish standard of holiness. He teaches us to love the Law of God and to see in Jesus the fulfillment of God's Law of Love.

To be truly just, we must strive to do something most difficult, something certainly beyond us in the natural order: that is to have disinterested love. This means nothing less than loving as God loves, for our Heavenly Father

loves purely for the sake of the other with nothing to gain *but* the other. The spiritual father loves without seeking for himself. He loves the Divine Will and the revealed law which expresses it, in the human order. Saint Joseph so loved the Law of God that he was willing to divorce his beautiful young bride when it appeared that she had transgressed

positivists": making the mistake of equating what might be legal in civil society with what is right in the Kingdom of God. Our first obligation of justice is toward God. A spiritual father is a just man; justice being composed of love, compassion, wisdom and care for souls. The only man who can be entrusted with administering the Law of God is



that Law, and at the same time the "just man" loved so much that he would not expose her to the rigors of the Law as interpreted by his society.

The virtue of justice will prohibit our ever becoming "legal

one who truly loves with justice. Are we then willing to love souls disinterestedly, seeking nothing for ourselves? Can we love as Saint Joseph, caring foremost for the good of the souls entrusted to our care?

Gifts from the Magisterium

As Compiled by Nina Rhea

Catholics who believe in the authentic teaching of moral absolutes of the Magisterium and Biblical Scripture have experienced pressure from dissenting Catholics. Overall, the pressure has been a service to us because it has forced a sharper understanding of the definition of marriage. In a special voter's guide, "Catholic Answers" lists five political issues Catholics cannot vote in favor of: abortion, homosexual "marriage", euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research and human cloning.

Since the question of homosexual "marriage" is related to the natural moral law, the following argument can be addressed to Catholics and to non-believers alike.

"The Church teaches that respect for homosexual persons cannot lead in any way to approval of homosexual behavior or to legal recognition of homosexual unions. The common good requires that laws recognize, promote and protect marriage as the basis of the family, the primary unit of society." (*Considerations Regarding Proposals to give legal recognition to unions between homosexual persons.* Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Approved by John Paul II, Vatican City, 2003)

"The natural truth about marriage was confirmed by Revelation contained in the biblical accounts of creation..." (*Considerations, above*)

"No ideology can erase from the human spirit the certainty that marriage exists solely between a man and a woman...[who] mutually perfect each other in order to cooperate with God in the procreation and upbringing of new human lives." (*Considerations, above*) For More information: www.yourcatholicvoice.org

Nina Rhea is a freelance writer in the Traditional Marriage Movement. She is from Portland, Oregon.

The Family Bulletin Board

Saint Joseph's Board Members:

President: Mark Andreas
Vice President: Frank Dulcich
Secretary: Teri Sykes
Treasurer: Dennis Sykes
Spiritual Director: Fr. Pius X Harding,
Order of St. Benedict

Journal Editor: Ruth Andreas
Layout: Katie Anderson

Mission Statement

Founded in January, 1995, St. Joseph's Center for the Domestic Church is a Catholic apostolate dedicated to serving the family. Our mission is to help families recognize their role as the "domestic church", the Church at home, and to re-establish the home as a sacred refuge.

Visit our Website:
www.domesticchurch.us

Send donations to:
P.O. Box 718
Lafayette, OR 97127

St. Joseph's Center is a non-profit 501-C 3 religious organization. Your generous contributions are tax deductible, and help in the printing and mailing of the journal.

About Mark and Ruth

Mark and Ruth Andreas are married and the parents of six children. They founded St. Joseph's Center for the Domestic Church in 1995. Both had an interest in serving the Church; the result was this effort to serve the Christian family: through the journal before you

and through occasional retreats and other special events in the Pacific Northwest.

Between MAN
and Woman

Questions and Answers
about Marriage and
Same-Sex Unions

A great brochure by
USCCB
<http://www.usccb.org/publishing>
1-800-235-8722