

“Religion & Civility”, the Book

[From the dust jacket]

“The past is filled with future lessons; experience can teach us if we let it. Good Earth and good faith are burdened with rubble and ruin, the waste of religion and civility.

“Conventional politeness aside RELIGION & CIVILITY puts religion and politics upfront and close — in the center of the conversation — and repents history’s calamity of lies.

“Sensitively, but firmly RELIGION & CIVILITY calls for an end to church complicity in deceitful cover-ups — an end to the parody that calls irreligion “religion”, and calls incivility “civility”.

The Call / The Cross / The Glory

“Youthful good will is quick to respond to **The Call of Altruism**, particularly when the experience of child in family and community is the experience of altruism. Too soon the fervor of family devotion chills when the child comes in contact with wider circles of experience. In these wider circles the experience of altruism is confronted by ambiguous and opposite experiences that question altruism’s good faith upbringing.

“The experience of The Cross becomes the experience of maturity. The call of selfish interest challenges altruism and asserts itself as an alternative. Competing internal motivations challenge one’s entire adult life. The **Call of the Cross** is an imperative for discernment between values of self-serving and values of holistic well-being—ultimately the quest of personal / communal “glory”.

“Glory in the vision of selfishness is very different from **The Glory Vision of altruism**. Religion and civility—motivated in causes of well-being—can and should portray a vision of glory that corresponds to the vision of altruism.

“When personal conscience prevails in social upbringing so do the common causes of religion and civility, of harmonized communal living. Harmonized religion (faith) and civility (reason) give birth to harmonized civilization. Harmony of faith and reason in personal living harmonizes religion and civility in communal living—the glory-exemplification on Earth of Trinity in Heaven.

Excerpt from the AFTERWORD

“Why dredge up now the Counter-Reformation history of the Catholic Church? Because it seems very clear that lines are now drawn for a **new cultural war** within Roman Catholicism **between the ecclesiologies of Vatican I and Vatican II**. That this is true, is documented in a new book “Evolving Visions of the Priesthood” by Dean R. Hoge and Jacqueline E. Wenger, Liturgical Press, ISBN 0814628052, reviewed by Katarina Schuth in AMERICA, A Jesuit Magazine, Vol. 190 No 4, Whole No. 4639, February 9, 2004, Pp 26-27.

“Reviewer Schuth quotes Jesuit John A. Coleman to the effect “that seminaries have the responsibility to provide proper theological formation in order to prevent future priests

from adopting a pre-Vatican II posture: rigid, clerical and close-minded.” **The disjunction between younger priests and older priests clearly exists**, and it is persistent, destructive and unacceptable.

The reviewer quotes the book as to the contrasting views of younger priests for older priests and of older priests for younger priests: **“Younger priests called the older priests liberals, leftist fringe, secularized, anti-establishment, a ‘lost generation,’ and priests with a social work model.” “Older priests referred to the young men as inflexible, divisive, liturgically conservative, institutional, hierarchical, and believers in cultic priesthood.”**

“The catholic priesthood is already in crisis and **a new clerical war** within the church between conflicting ecclesiologies **can only deepen the crises, aggravate lay distrust and render the priesthood more irrelevant than it already is**. The crisis caused by the seventeenth century Counter-Reformation history of Roman Catholicism is a cautionary tale that young priests need to understand and take seriously.

This threatening new war, like the old, roots in conflicting worldviews. Vatican II, in view of modern evolutionary consciousness, rightly calls for new theological analysis and synthesis that get beyond the dead and destructive absolutisms of theological centrism and staticism.

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