

The Pope's New Plan

By Don Havis (havis@att.net)

April 19, 2005

Have you heard? The new Catholic Pope, Benedict XVI, AKA ex Hitler Youth, Joseph Ratzinger, vows that he is going to get busy immediately on one of the most critical societal problems that the church faces. Helping the growing poor? Allowing priests to marry? Revising anti-birth control edicts? Cracking down on pedophile priests? Of course not! The greatest threat facing the Catholic Church today is its rapidly decreasing numbers of young men opting to give up the “things of this world” to become priests. The Catholic Church has a huge recruitment problem, not unlike the problem the U.S. federal government has in recruiting more cannon fodder for its latest war on the infidels in Iraq. The prospects in both cases are proving to be a very hard sell.

This situation leads directly to the important “inside information” I have to share with you. According to my secret sources inside the Vatican (Yes, we atheists have our spies too), the new Pope Benedict XVI is making plans to greatly enhance the desirability of the priesthood for young men—well, certain young men. The good Pope is preparing a new encyclical to be announced and implemented very soon. Taking a leaf from one of many of G. W Bush’s successful P.R. campaigns, Pope Benedict XVI has come up with a catchy name for this new bit of canon law. It will be known as the “Leave No Child’s Behind Alone” law. The thinking of the Pope and his advisors is that, unfortunately, the increasingly negative social pressures on pedophiles—the traditional source of recruits for the priesthood—has made that calling less and less attractive. The new conservative but brilliant Pope figures that church punishments such as pulling priests off the job for “pretend rehabilitation” has not been a productive procedure since it only reduces the much needed frontline troops. Taking a page from the U.S. military, where punishment for those military personnel who engage in sexual harassment is almost unheard of, the Pope proposes to take an even bolder approach by increasing the opportunities for the sexually frustrated neophyte priest. “Double your pleasure; double your fun” will be the new advertising mantra as the Pope’s new law calls for at least doubling the number of altar boys at each and every Catholic Church in the world. To sweeten the pot, poor families will be offered a generous stipend for each young male, eight to thirteen years old, that they register to be altar boys. My spies tell me there will be the small matter of a “confidentiality agreement” clause for both the parent(s) and the boy to sign...something about “death by stoning” for squealers, but probably nothing to be concerned about.

My spies tell me that the whole effort will be headed up by one of the former Pope John Paul II’s favorites, Cardinal Bernard Law, of the Boston area Catholic diocese fame. My sources have also told me that Cardinal Law is already working with a Madison Avenue advertising firm to devise a catchy acronym for the worldwide movement to double altar boy stock. Rumor has it that the name of the new Catholic unit to handle both the recruitment effort and to implement the Leave No Child’s Behind Alone law will be the United Priests (space) for a Youth Opportunities Union of Religious Seminarians. Should be a winner!