



OPINION | Mon Oct 22, 2012 - 2:07 pm EST

On Gregory Baum - Msgr Foy responds to recent Catholic media fawning over dissident Gregory Baum

Editor's Note: *This article was received unsolicited from famous Canadian priest, canon lawyer, former head of the Toronto archdiocesan marriage tribunal and outspoken defender of the Church's moral teachings, Msgr. Vincent Foy. Recent laudatory, uncritical quoting of Canada's leading dissident former priest, Gregory Baum, in Canadian Catholic media, spurred the Msgr. to write this article and send it to LifeSiteNews. LSN gladly publishes articles from this great, now 96-year-old priest scholar, still writing in defense of the Catholic Church's moral teachings.*

The intention of this article is to protect the faithful from being deceived.

Recently there has been a flurry of references to Gregory Baum, all of them laudatory. An article by Gregory Baum entitled "Vatican II - The Church in dialogue" appeared in the January-February issue of the Scarboro Missions magazine. This article is riddled with false doctrine.



None of these references make mention of the theological errors of Gregory Baum, yet he has done more than any person to harm the Church in Canada in my opinion. His Marxist background and activities are described in detail in a four-page bulletin "Herald of Freedom" April 6, 1974. It is entitled "Rev. Gregory Baum - Canada's Marxist Pope." In 1996, in a failed attempt to prevent his talk at the Newman Centre of the University of Toronto, I compiled a fourteen-page list of some of his errors entitled "Notes on Gregory Baum."

It would take a large book to list and describe the errors and misconduct of Gregory Baum. Here I mention a few of them; there are many others.

Contraception

A focal point of Baum's efforts was in opposition to the teaching of the Church against contraception. In 1964, Herder and Herder published the book "Contraception and Holiness." It was presented as a "balanced perceptive declaration of Christian dissent". Among the contributors were three professors of St. Michael's College in Toronto: Gregory Baum O.S.A., Stanley Kutz C.S.B. (an admitted homosexual who later left the priesthood) and Leslie Dewart, an atheist. An article reporting an interview with Gregory Baum was printed in the Toronto Globe and Mail of April 9, 1966. It was entitled "Catholics May Use Contraceptives Now." A year later Baum said that even if the Pope came out against contraception his decision would be irrelevant (Globe and Mail, 1967).

After the Pope's encyclical *Humanae Vitae* reiterated the Church's condemnation of contraception in 1968, Baum was like a whirling dervish in his hyperactivity against the encyclical. He spoke in Canada and in the United States. On August 1, 1968, the Globe and Mail had a feature article by him "Catholics May Follow their Conscience". In the August 23 issue of the US Catholic Weekly Commonweal magazine, there was his article "The Right to Dissent". The September issue of the Homiletic and Pastoral Review carried his "The New Encyclical on Contraception" where he attacked the Pope for going against the experience of vast numbers of Catholics and the witness of other Christian churches.

Homosexuality

Gregory Baum openly advocated same-sex "marriage". In Commonweal for February 15, 1974, he wrote an article on homosexuality in which he declared that Catholic teaching on homosexuality would change and embrace homosexuality within a few years. Homosexual activists used this article as a handout for almost two decades throughout North America. In speaking to Dignity and other homosexual groups, he encouraged them to remain in the Church but to work for a change in the Church's teaching.

Devotion to Mary

In the early sixties, I attended a dinner at Osgoode Hall under the auspices of the Catholic Lawyers Guild. Gregory Baum spoke on the exaggerated "Cultus" of Mary in the Catholic Church. He stated that there was no evidence of devotion to Mary before the fourth century. At the time, I had been reading a section of the book "Mariology" edited by Juniper Carol, O.F.M. on the "The Origins of Marian Cult". It gave numerous examples of devotion to Mary in the first three centuries. Mary herself proclaims in the Magnificat (Luke 1: 46-55): "All generations will call me blessed." Baum discouraged recitation of the Rosary.

Dissent and Rejection of Authority

Msgr. George Kelly wrote in "The Battle for the American Church" pp. 448-9: "Gregory Baum argued that Rome's grip on the Church can be loosened by careful violation of law. In Baum's view freedom from Rome's law can be obtained by seizing it in the knowledge that violations will go unpunished."

The Priesthood

I conducted about twenty of the first priest-laicization processes for the Archdiocese of Toronto. A number of priests said that they were encouraged to leave the priesthood by Gregory Baum. He promoted the concept of a temporary or “existential” priesthood. In an article printed in the Toronto Star of April 23, 1966, Baum stated that he was not alarmed at the large numbers of priests and religious departing from their vocations. He said “By assigning the laity a higher place in the Christian Church, the whole matter of the role of the clergy has to be re-thought.”

A Report to the Archbishop

I was pastor of St. John’s Church on Kingston Rd in Toronto in 1966. In the parish there was a convent of Notre Dame Sisters. I received a phone call from the Superior of the Notre Dame Sisters, who was in Ottawa. She told me that one of the younger Sisters, studying at St. Michael’s College, was obliged by Gregory Baum to attend a weekend retreat near Orangeville. This was before the mitigation of Friday abstinence. Meat was served on Friday evening. “The Sister said ‘Fr. Baum, this is Friday and you are serving meat’. He replied ‘Sister, here I am Pope. Eat your meat!’ In the course of the weekend, he encouraged immoral familiarities between male and female religious. You must report this to Archbishop Pocock”. I suggested that she report this to the Apostolic Delegate in Ottawa. “No,” she replied “Sister is in your parish and you should report it”.

The next day I made a report on the matter to Archbishop Pocock. He threw up his hands and said “What can I do?” I said he could suspend Baum. He did nothing and allowed Baum to continue teaching at St. Michael’s College for another nine years.

Suspension and Excommunication

When the Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics was issued by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on December 29, 1975, Gregory Baum criticized it severely. He said “The concept of sex only within marriage was no longer adequate. Even if marriage is the ideal, this does not mean there is no responsible context of sexual relations for mature single people, the widowed and the divorced.” In response, Archbishop Pocock suspended Baum from hearing confessions.

In the issue for January 14, 1978, the Catholic Register reported that “Gregory Baum, noted Canadian theologian and outspoken critic of the Church, married a former nun in a private ceremony recently in Montreal... the bride is Shirley Flynn, who left her religious order about fifteen years ago.” According to Canon 2388 of the Code of Canon Law in force at that time, Gregory Baum was automatically excommunicated.

It is difficult to understand why articles by Baum should continue to appear in Catholic periodicals; why he should be praised in others; why he should be invited to speak in Catholic institutions such as St. Paul’s University in Ottawa and why this arch-heretic should be highly praised in an interview given him recently by a Catholic priest currently posted on a website.

More articles by Msgr. Foy:

The betrayal of homosexuals

Canada’s Greatest Defender of Humanae Vitae Calls on Bishops to Reject Dissenting Document

Tragedy at Winnipeg