



ARCC Light

ARCC celebrates twenty-five years: 1980-2005

Newsletter of
the Association
for the Rights of
Catholics in
the Church

Volume 27, Number 6

November/December 2005

A KÜNG HAPPENING

The Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church was created 25 years ago, in 1980, in response to the attempted silencing of the theologian Hans Küng by the revocation of his licence to teach as a Vatican approved Catholic theologian. Küng was not silenced: he went on to teach Catholic theology at Tübingen and published numerous books which are among the most influential theological works of our time.

In like manner, ARCC was also busy, producing a *Charter of the Rights of Catholics in the Church*, a *Proposed Catholic Constitution*, and significant works on the Doctrine of Reception, Divorce and Remarriage, and the Rights of Parishes, as well as creating three websites of resources for Catholics, and a number of initiatives and advocacy programs.

The Küng Event, as we have dubbed our recent two-day celebration in Philadelphia, was a rousing success, a joyful gathering and celebration of Hans Küng and all that he and ARCC stand for. So much was packed into these two days that we will show and describe the events over several issues of *ARCC Light*. In this issue, we'll deal with Day One, November 16, the Banquet and Award Presentation.

The evening's festivities began with a cocktail party at the Diamond Club at Temple University at 5:30, followed by the Banquet at 6:30. Pictures of attendees at both events, as well as pictures of the award and award certificates themselves, taken by our Vice President and roving photographer, Ingrid Shafer, can be seen at atarcc-catholic-rights.net/kung_award_pictures.htm. After a delicious dinner, ARCC President Len Swidler began the proceedings, which were sponsored jointly by ARCC and *JES*, *The Journal of Ecumenical Studies*. After a moving prayer by Michael Kogan, Chair of Philosophy and Religion, Montclair State University, and welcoming remarks by Richard Englert, Deputy Provost and Dean of the University College of Temple University (both members of the *JES* Board of Directors), Ingrid Shafer, wearing one of her multiple hats as *JES* Web-Editor, read the text of the *JES* Certificate of Award, and Caridad Inda of the ARCC Board of Directors read the text of the ARCC



Hans Küng and Leonard Swidler



Caridad Inda

Certificate of Award. Finally, Harry Halloran of the *JES* Board of Directors and Mary Louise Hartman, past president of ARCC, presented Dr. Küng with the combined "*JES* Religions in Dialogue and ARCC Rights of Catholics in the Church Award" –an original yarn painting depicting an indigenous priest blessing the earth by Mexican artist Civilo Bautista Cervantes, in a beech wood frame, custom-designed and hand-made for the occasion by Cecil Lee, Regents Professor of Art at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma.

After he had been honored, Dr. Küng made a presentation which was of great interest to those assembled. He began by commenting on the unexpectedly liberating effect of his removal from the teaching of dogmatic Catholic theology. This allowed him to broaden his theological inquiries and interests, especially into the fields of world religions, interreligious dialogue, and global ethics. As he quite pointedly remarked, without globalization we are not completely human, and this globalization requires both peace among religions and a global ethic. This is the future toward which we are moving and for which we must prepare.

Dr. Küng then said that he had been asked to discuss his opinion of and relationship with Pope Benedict XVI, and that theme formed the



rest of his remarks for the evening. Küng's analyses of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI, his discussion of Ratzinger the Theologian and Teacher, his thoughts on the seeming change in direction of Ratzinger's theology, and his discussion of his four hour visit with Benedict XVI at Castel Gondolfo are too rich and interesting to be rapidly summarized here. They will be discussed at more length in a future issue of *ARCC Light*. Suffice it to say that for this writer, who has been reading Küng's work and following his career for 40 years, beginning in 1965 with a semester course at Manhattanville titled "Küng on Barth," which examined the doctrine of justification by faith through the prism of Küng's dissertation, these after-dinner remarks and those at a less formal lunch the next day were memorable.

Christine M. Roussel

Presidential Reflections: REFORM FROM BELOW

Habemus papam novam this year. Joseph Ratzinger, a.k.a. Benedict XVI, was probably the worst nightmare come true for most ARCC and other Vatican II Catholics around the world. However, so far he has confused, and bemused, many with actions such as his four hour meeting with ARCC's Patron Hans Küng, drafting in his own hand a positive joint communique. Nevertheless, we cannot look for reform from above. Even if Benedict were to revert—*mirabile dictu!*—to the progressive attitude he had as a *peritus* at Vatican II, and as a friend and colleague of Küng at the University of Tübingen—almost all the bishops in place today are appointees of John Paul II, most of whom were chosen because they were genetically opposed to progress and democracy. In brief, Reform must come from below.

Ultimately we have two choices: fight or quit. Either we continue to struggle for the Reform of our Church in the spirit of Vatican II and beyond, or resign, physically or psychologically. Each must, of course, follow her/his own conscience, but my understanding of Jesus is that he was not a quitter, and so I urge each of us to follow not only our own consciences, but also his example in this, as in everything else.

So, what does struggling for “Reform From Below” mean in 2005? Here’s what I think it includes, starting at the minimum and moving toward the maximum:

1. **Stay steadfast** as an active member of ARCC (and other reform organizations), keeping yourself informed, and informing the rest—and beyond, recruit new ARCC members, for, besides your experience, we also need new energy.
2. **Make concrete use** of the ideas and suggestions sent you via *ARCC Light* and the *ARCC Spotlights*, which all of you with e-mail receive every fortnight (if you are not on the ARCC Members E-group, send your e-mail to rschutz1@prodigy.net)—and let us know what you have done (written a letter to the editor, to your pastor, bishop, organized a local ARCC meeting, spoken on Reform at a meeting, promoted Reform at your parish council.... use your creative imagination to develop more Reform activities!).
3. **Inform yourself** constantly—and then everyone you can reach. Catholic Church Reform is first of all a matter of a “change of consciousness.” ARCC is launching an *Annotated Catholic Reform Bibliography*. Read everything on it! And get others to!! Then act on it!!!
4. **Network with other Reform organizations**—e.g., *Call To Action (CTA)*, *Future Church (FC)*, *Voice of the Faithful (VOTF)*.... “United we stand, divided—we don’t get anywhere!” Again, share with us your networking, so we can share. Knowledge is power.
5. **Work for a *Parish Constitution* and a *Non-Profit Organization*.** Ultimately this is the surest way to work for *Reform From Below*. For specifics on putting this project into action, see the essay elsewhere in this issue of *ARCC Light*.



We have a new papacy and an imminent New Year. Let us take heart together and strive to work for **Reform From Below!**

Leonard Swidler, President

From the Editor:

DOES THE SECOND PERSON OF THE BLESSED TRINITY NEED A BUNCH OF BISHOPS AS BODYGUARDS?

It's not easy but the Synod of Bishops has done it again - managed to be unscriptural, untheological, unchristian, cruelly coercive and laughable all at the same time. Christ said "Come to me all you who are burdened" but these "shepherds" have erected barricades around the tabernacle, Christ's tent pitched in his Church, and gathered there all the hoops through which the divorced and remarried must jump to be admitted to the Eucharistic Banquet.

Full participation in the Eucharistic celebration, with the reception of Communion, is one of or perhaps the most precious birthright of every Catholic - a union with the Godhead that is Jesus' unique gift to his followers. It is also perhaps his tenderest gift to us, to become our food and drink, the humblest and most basic sustenance of our very lives. The only other experience to match its closeness is our gestation in our mothers' wombs, when we are literally fed by another's body. But beyond that to even become something else, at least outwardly, to hide his glory and become our food, is nothing short of mind-boggling. It shows a love, a tender desire for intimacy that is an exquisite individual gift to each of us. Having experienced it, we never forget it.

And yet this exquisite and personal gift to each of us is being withheld from many and even used as a bludgeon to force obedience and submission to control by warped, misogynous, self-righteous hierarchs who purport to know the mind of God and of every individual Catholic. If it were not so tragic it would be ludicrous. Indeed, it is ludicrous, but the joke's on us because we allow it to continue.

The very idea of establishing categories of who may and may not receive within the community of the baptized is a blasphemy, for it is allocating to men a judgment which can only be made by God in Heaven and in each individual's soul and conscience. Not even the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity did that. Did Jesus set pre-conditions to his friendship or to sitting down at a meal? Did he tell Matthew "Stop your sinful profession and when I am convinced you have repented and will never do it again, we'll talk"? Did he refuse to engage in life-giving conversation with the woman at the well because she had had 5 husbands and was living with a "significant other"? Did he grill each of the Apostles before the Last Supper?

What was one of the first and most shocking accusations the Pharisees had toward Jesus? "He eats and drinks with sinners." How proudly the popes, bishops and theologians have taken up that mantle of the Pharisees! With what pride in their own righteousness they set the standards for "the people." It might conceivably have some validity if the People of God had prayerfully picked these religious arbiters based on their



goodness, holiness and learning. But the only people who have picked them are themselves. The clergy and the hierarchy are self-coopting continuums totally beyond the review of the people. The main requirements for admission to those hallowed ranks seem to be unquestioning loyalty to the institution and a proven intention not to "rock the boat."

But, say these well-meaning guardians of orthodoxy, what of unworthy reception of the Sacrament? What of sacrilege? Certainly, we are morally obligated to try to avoid obvious, overt sacrilege. What of covert sacrilege? That is a straw horse. Sin requires intent. The old Baltimore Catechism said serious (mortal) sin requires "a serious matter, sufficient reflection and full consent of the will." How often are people going to receive Communion with the intention of sinning by doing so? And, should anyone want to do so, being told by the clergy not to is not going to have a great deal of effect.

No, this is not what our clerical friends are worried about. They are worried about divorced and remarried, perhaps wounded, Catholics who wish with all their hearts to receive Jesus in Communion at Mass because they are Catholics and want to be Catholics in union with Jesus and their fellows. If they are in good conscience, who are we or the clergy to say that they are not? The gift of reading hearts is God's, not man's. The Eucharist is not a reward for good behavior: it is the Food of Life to nourish us on the journey of our lives. It is Jesus' own body and life, given to each of us in love, in free gift. There are no strings attached, save that we try to love him and one another. If we didn't love him in some dim way, we wouldn't be there.

If our lives need reforming, and they all do, that is only another reason to receive Communion. It is Jesus who will change us and help us as we struggle to follow him.

The sacraments are for us, we are not for the sacraments, although the clergy and hierarchy seem to have it backwards. Knowing how essential the Eucharist is to the Christian spiritual life, withholding it and building a theology of threats around that withholding is the most powerful weapon of control the clergy have. It is a distortion of Christ and Christianity.

Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament doesn't want or need protection from sinners who want to touch him, cling to him, be with him physically as well as spiritually. He sought them out and gathered them around him all his life and set up a means of perpetuating that special contact. Why would he stop now?

Christine M. Roussel

AWARD NOMINATIONS SOUGHT!

ARCC seeks nominations for its 2006 "Hans Kung Rights of Catholics in the Church" Candidates for the award must have demonstrated outstanding and ongoing defense of one or more of the rights defined in ARCC's Charter of Rights and by their lives shown a unquestioned commitment to these rights. Nominations should consist of a brief paragraph highlighting the contribution of the nominee and/or rationale for the selection.

Please e-mail to Nomination Committee: Sonya Quitslund at kvissleby@iinet.com or Patrick Collins at collinspw@yahoo.com no later than Feb. 15, 2006, or mail directly to Sonya Quitslund at 14012 Sunrise Dr. N.E., Bainbridge Island, WA 98110.

Sample nomination:

Hans Küng (recipient of 2005 award whose name all future awards will bear) lost his credentials to teach as a Catholic theologian in 1979. Despite this injustice, he remained in the church, actively working to raise awareness of the rights of Catholics to express loyal dissent, promoted inter-religious dialog, and helped define a global ethic as a means to deeper understanding of humankind and human rights.

In case you feel very generous!

Information on Temporary Tax Incentive for Charitable Giving

In response to the Hurricane Katrina disaster, Congress has enacted temporary tax legislation to encourage charitable gifts through December 31, 2005 (the Katrina Emergency Tax Relief Act of 2005, "KETRA"). Although this measure was enacted initially to aid victims of Katrina and the other natural disasters that have affected the world, leaders in Washington wanted to be certain that such a measure was broadly written so that other charitable organizations would also benefit and not experience a "trade off" of giving.

Essentially, the bill provides an opportunity for individuals to deduct up to 100% of their income in outright charitable gifts made before year end.

Individual application of the legislation will depend upon your circumstances. We encourage you to consult your attorney or tax advisor for specific advice.

There is a 2 page summary of main points relating to the legislation prepared by Haverford College available at www.admin.haverford.edu/plannedgiving/katrina.pdf .

A technical explanation prepared by the Joint Committee on Taxation is available at <http://www.house.gov/jct/x-69-05.pdf> . ARCC is a 501(c)(3) corporation eligible to receive such charitable gifts.

ARCC Light is published six times per year by the Association for the Rights of Catholics in the Church. For membership information, contact ARCC, 3150 Newgate Drive, Florissant, MO 63033, send email to arcc@arccsites.org, or visit our website, <http://arccsites.org/>. Suggested dues are \$25.00 per year, and include a subscription to ARCC Light and a copy of ARCC's "Charter of Catholic Rights."
Editor, ARCC Light: Christine M. Roussel, PhD
Email: rsvpcmr@juno.com
Layout and Design: Ingrid H. Shafer, PhD
Email: ihs@ionet.net



You can be an ARCC Angel and help us publish an issue of ARCC Light by making a \$500 donation. This can be done by an individual or a group, and it can be as a memorial or a tribute that will be acknowledged on this page. Please contact Bob Schutzius (rschutz1@prodigy.net) for details.