

Catholics United for the Faith

Playing Dirty Pool

As of March 17, 2008, we've reached a new low in Catholic relationships. You might have thought that the admittance of "politically correct" speech was confined to the world of politicians and cultural elites. Think again. Over in Catholic blog world, "politically correct" has taken on a whole new dimension – little tin gods who, at the depression of a key stroke, can whisk their opponents and their arguments out of cyber existence, apparently so that they can live undisturbed in a dream world of their own making.

Of whom do I speak? No less than *Catholics United for the Faith*. CUF, relatively new to blog world, has decided that running a blog means, despite the fact that you invite any and all people to make comments on a certain topic, it not only reserves the right to edit your response (which we would expect in cases of abusive language) but it also reserves the right to eliminate your comments from existence after their assigned censor decides that, for purely ideological reasons, you don't deserve to be heard.

And which topic of discussion merits this untoward action? Why, Robert Sungenis and those who might defend him, of course. Sparing no comment designed to ruin my reputation and make me into a proverbial boogeyman to tar and feather at their own whim, CUF and the ideologues who now influence it, have made it their goal to edit and excise the other side of the story so that you can't know the whole truth. Smearing someone's reputation seems to be more important than allowing all sides to be heard so that the public can make their own judgment.

Last month, February 28, at the website of *Catholics United for the Faith*, (www.cuf.org) a blog was started by Leon Suprenant regarding the controversy I am having with the USCCB, Bishop Rhoades, *et al.*, whether the Old Covenant is revoked and superseded by the New Covenant. About a half dozen or so of Mr. Suprenant's ideological supporters made derisive comments about me, but then two people added supportive comments, taking Mr. Suprenant to task in ways that I'm sure he wasn't expecting. Mr. Suprenant then made a final set of comments and the thread seemed to be coming to a close.

Someone alerted me to the thread and, after reading Mr. Suprenant's rash and judgmental comments about me, I thought it best to send a response to the blog, hoping to clear up the confusion and defend myself against the false accusations. The message I sent was fair and conciliatory. Instead of denigrating Mr. Suprenant, I often complemented him, yet also admonished him when it was necessary, but in the spirit of brotherhood. I sent my response late on Thursday, March 13. I hoped that my response would be posted the next day.

Instead of posting my response, CUF decided to take down the whole thread. The thread was absent from the CUF blog from Friday, March 14, until Monday, March 17, when, instead of returning the whole thread, CUF decided to eliminate a few of the posted defenses of me, as well

as deciding that my 10-page response would not see the light of day on the CUF blog. You can see for yourself at <http://www.cufblog.org/?p=273>

This is par for the course for these ideological defenders of their own version of Catholicism. Whenever defenses of me are posted by either myself or someone else, they are either twisted or distorted until you can hardly recognize them, or they are just ignored altogether. Recently, my good friend and colleague, Fr. Brian Harrison has also become the victim of guilt by association. Because Fr. Harrison has staunchly defended me in the face of a plethora of false charges and exaggerations by my opponents, he has been threatened with “adverse consequences” and “negative impacts” on his own work if he continues. This isn’t surprising for we have seen throughout history how such ideological bullies use pressure tactics and smear campaigns to accomplish their goals. It’s just sad to see it used by those purporting to be Catholic Christians. Fr. Harrison probably knows me personally and intellectually better than any Catholic today. We have virtually traveled the world together over the last ten years or so. We have had countless talks about life and the Church, and we see eye to eye on almost everything. So it is really sad to see this man of integrity now take pot shots and threats from those who have spent six years doing it to me. Please send Fr. Harrison your love and support at materdei82@hotmail.com.

And what’s my latest crime that precipitates all this wringing of the hands and gnashing of teeth against me? Writing an article for *Culture Wars* that proves, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the Old Covenant no longer remains valid for the Jews; that it has been revoked and superseded by the New Testament; that the Jews are no longer the Chosen People of God but are on the same level as everyone else in the world, and they are invited to receive salvation in the only covenant that exists today between God and man, the New Covenant in Jesus Christ. I also list all the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish individuals and groups who either don’t accept these truths or water them down and cause confusion among God’s people, including the USCCB’s catechism, Bishop Rhoades of Harrisburg, and other clerics and laymen who should be staunchly defending the revocation of the Old Covenant instead of caving into Jewish interest groups.

First, I have copied and pasted all the blog entries of my defenders, Mr. Rick Delano and Dr. Ed Suter, some of which CUF removed from the thread as of March 17. After that, I add the 10-page response I wrote to Leon Suprenant that never made it to the CUF blog at all.

11. *Jane Kosco* Says:

[March 1st, 2008 at 8:30 pm](#)

I am very sorry about this whole sorry affair. Much prayer and fasting is needed. The devil most certainly has a hand in this. Divide and conquer.

12. *Cary Klivan* Says:

[March 3rd, 2008 at 4:50 pm](#)

To Bruno, I say, AMEN brother. Your words brought tears to my eyes. You are so right. To Jane, I have said for years that the Devil has so obviously attacked, and continues to, in two places— the Jews (Gods chosen) and the Church (God’s Bride). It seems so obvious throughout history.

13. *Rick DeLano* Says:

[March 7th, 2008 at 4:11 pm](#)

With all due respect, the following quote from Bishop Rhoads constitutes a shocking dereliction of his duty to defend the Catholic faith against heresy. The quote in question, from page 131 of the US Adult Catechism, explicitly states that “the covenant God made with the Jews through Moses remains eternally valid for them”. Any seventh grade Catholic with a rudimentary Catechism, or anyone who has bothered to read the New Testament, knows that the above statement is a lie and an heresy. Just to remove any doubt:

2 Cor 3:11, 14 (citations could be multiplied by the dozens, needless to say): “11 For if what faded away came with splendor, what is permanent must have much more splendor.... 14 But their minds were hardened; for to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away.”

For Bishop Rhoades to respond to the explicitly heretical falsehood on page 131 of the Catechism as he does below, is a shocking dereliction of his duty to defend the faith:

“Bishop Rhoades: I do not interpret anything on page 131 of the U.S. Catechism for Adults to mean that the Jewish people (or any group) have their own independent saving path to God, outside of Jesus Christ. I can see how the one statement that “the covenant that God made with the Jewish people through Moses remains eternally valid for them” might be misunderstood. I would interpret it to mean that the Jewish people retain a special relationship to God because of the Old Covenant, but I would not interpret it to mean that the Jewish people can be saved through the Old Covenant apart from Christ.”

He “does not interpret it”? He “interprets it to mean?” He “can see how the statement....might be misunderstood?” This Bishop is a shocking example of everything that has gone wrong with our episcopacy since the advent of the beaureacrats’ nightmare USCCB Shame on you, Bishop Rhoades.

May God bless Robert Sungenis who upholds the Catholic faith against all who would sell it out for a mess of pottage.

14. *Leon Suprenant* Says:

[March 7th, 2008 at 8:13 pm](#)

Rick, with all due respect, you’re betting on the wrong horse here. So, in your estimation, the quoted passage from page 131 of the United States Adult Catechism is “a lie and an [sic] heresy.” Who kidnapped the Magisterium and put you in charge? Bishop Rhoades provided a reasonable, orthodox interpretation of the quote from p. 131. Apparently, to satisfy you, he needed to adopt and make his own your (i.e., Bob Sungenis’) misinterpretation of the quoted passage as being what our supposedly wicked shepherds actually intended—and after doing so accuse these wicked shepherds of teaching heresy. Shame on you, Rick.

15. *Rick DeLano* Says:

[March 10th, 2008 at 3:36 pm](#)

Leon: Rick, with all due respect, you’re betting on the wrong horse here.

>>Leon, with all due respect, I don't bet horses, and I don't congratulate Bishops who equivocate instead of condemning damnable heresies from the deepest pit of hell. An example of such an heresy, Leon, is the heretical and disgraceful lie found on page 131 of the USCCB Adult Catechism, the heretical lie that "the covenant God made with the Jews through Moses remains eternally valid for them."

Leon: So, in your estimation, the quoted passage from page 131 of the United States Adult Catechism is "a lie and an [sic] heresy." Who kidnapped the Magisterium and put you in charge?

The magisterium, Leon, has already expressed the infallible truth which you, your shameful website, and the shameful Bishop have failed to uphold. If you have a shred of integrity left, then read this and post your sincere repentance:

Pope Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, para. 29: "...the New Testament took the place of the Old Law which had been abolished...but on the gibbet of His death Jesus made void the Law with its decrees fastened the handwriting of the Old Testament to the Cross";

- The Catechism of the Council of Trent: "...the people, aware of the abrogation of the Mosaic Law...";
- Council of Florence: "that the matter pertaining to the law of the Old Testament, of the Mosaic law...although they were suited to the divine worship at that time, after our Lord's coming had been signified by them, ceased, and the sacraments of the New Testament began";
- Council of Trent: "but not even the Jews by the very letter of the law of Moses were able to be liberated or to rise therefrom";

Now, Leon, that is the Catholic magisterium. If I were you, Leon, I would stop betting the ponies and start defending the Faith.

Leon: Bishop Rhoades provided a reasonable, orthodox interpretation of the quote from p. 131.

No, Leon. Bishop Phoades told us that he interprets the sentence "therefore the covenant God made with the Jews through Moses remains eternally valid for them", to mean the covenant God made with the Jews through Moses does not remain eternally valid for them. This is a shameful form of political backside-covering. Those who read the actual magisterial statements above, along with the New Testament citations below, will see that the statement on page 131 of the USCCB Adult Catechism is a lie, an heresy, and a scandalous outrage against the Catholic Faith.

Hebrews 7:18: "On the one hand, a former commandment is annulled because of its weakness and uselessness...";

- Hebrews 10:9: "Then he says, 'Behold, I come to do your will.' He takes away the first [covenant] to establish the second [covenant]...";

- 2 Corinthians 3:14: “For to this day when they [the Jews] read the Old Covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away”;
- Hebrews 8:7: “For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another”;
- Colossians 2:14: “Having canceled the written code, with its decrees, that was against us and stood opposed to us; He took it away nailing it to the cross”;

Leon: Apparently, to satisfy you, he needed to adopt and make his own your (i.e., Bob Sungenis’) misinterpretation of the quoted passage.

There is no use trying to wiggle off the hook here, Leon. Everyone who has read the citations knows the statement is a damnable lie and heresy, and not all of your shameful tap-dancing is going to prevent those of us who understand the stakes to continue to expose both the heretical statement on page 131, and Bsihop Rhoades’ shameful equivocatrions upon it.

Leon: as being what our supposedly wicked shepherds actually intended—and after doing so accuse these wicked shepherds of teaching heresy.

>>Any Bishop, priest, layman, laywoman, consecrated religious, or catechumen who holds and teaches that the Mosaic covenant remains eternally valid, is guilty of holding an heretical and false perversion of the Catholic faith, and therefore all faithful Catholics will attempt to bring them back to the TYrue faith, as outlined exhaustively by the very capable Dr. Sungenis in his paper, and as summarized by me above.

Leon: Shame on you, Rick.

>>>Leon, I suggest you change bookies.

16. *Leon Suprenant* Says:
 March 10th, 2008 at 5:23 pm

For the sake of others who might be reading this, you should know that Mr. DeLano is a devoted Sungenis follower who considers Sungenis to be “a true Catholic hero.”
<http://weblog.xanga.com/weblogitem.aspx?user=bellarminforum&uid=639193632#1404259727>

He feels justified in publicly condemning a successor to the Apostles for not criticizing this sentence of the USCCA when, where, and how he deems necessary. We see no evidence of any reflection at all by Mr. DeLano on the context of Bishop Rhoades statement, the circumstances, and legitimate reasons why His Excellency might have responded as he did. It’s simply a rush to absolute, unreserved condemnation, and shame heaped upon Bishop Rhoades (and those who come to his defense), apparently in an attempt to defend his friend, Robert Sungenis. Unfortunately, it appears that he is following the example of Sungenis himself in all this.

As Mr. DeLano clearly has no hesitation about publicly expressing his condemnation of even a successor to the Apostles, where may we find his criticisms of all the scandal and harm caused by Mr. Sungenis over the last six years? It would seem they are nowhere to be found. In fact, in this very same comment at Sungenis' website, Mr. DeLano says that "Bob Sungenis is not the problem. His teaching is not evil."

Many other people disagree, including Bob Sungenis' ordinary, Bishop Rhoades. In addition, others of you may be aware that that Bob Sungenis published a lengthy rebuttal in response to Bishop Rhoades' statements. The remainder of this comment is an email I sent to someone who forwarded me this rebuttal shortly after it was published:

Dear _____,

Thank you for forwarding a link to Bob Sungenis' response to Bishop Rhoades. A friend of Bob's wrote me a couple days ago, concerned that Bob was writing a document that was going to attack the bishop, as well as the USCCB and CUF. He asked me what he should say to Bob to try to stop him from doing that. Here's what I said:

"I honestly don't know what I could add to your commitment to pray for him and your plea that he submit to his bishop in this matter. You're absolutely right—if he changes his tune it would be a most edifying example to all the faithful, especially those who have followed Bob's career as an apologist.

Let's pray for that.

"Rest assured that I personally have no axe to grind with Bob. He is a very bright man and a prolific writer. God bless him." Despite the efforts of this friend and perhaps others to dissuade Bob from continuing down this road, he's gone ahead and published this response. Maybe this type of "apologetics" is commonplace in some quarters, but I still found it very offensive. I'm accused of being his enemy or opponent, dripping with hatred, jealousy, and malice, and seeking his destruction. He also calls me a liar—not only through his reference to "slanderous" things on various blogs, but more specifically in this paragraph:

"The interview of the bishop was recently advertised on the website of Catholics United for the Faith, with its president, Leon Suprenant, as the interlocutor. Although Mr. Suprenant begins his remarks by making some personal charges against me, I will simply ignore them. All I will say is that they are untrue, all of them. I will only address the theological assertions that Mr. Suprenant presents from Bishop Rhoades."

The only "fact" he asserts about me is that I'm president of Catholics United for the Faith, which is false, because I stepped down from that position last year. Then he characterizes my comments as "personal charges" and summarily says that they are all untrue. This from the guy who on the previous page cited canon 220 of the Code of Canon Law: "No one is permitted to harm illegitimately the good reputation which a person possesses nor to injure the right of any person to protect his or her own privacy."

I'm surely a sinner, but I am an honest man of integrity who has devoted much of his adult life to the service of the Church. And in this particular instance, I was defending a successor

of the Apostles whom Bob has unjustly attacked and to whose legitimate jurisdiction Bob will not submit. He obviously doesn't like what I had to say, so he attacks my character and good reputation. Further, he seems to treat that as a minor matter, as something he chooses to "ignore" (once it's publicly asserted). I don't think that's how Christians—even apologetics gunslingers—should treat others. My own grievance pales in comparison to Bishop Rhoades' (and the U.S. bishops'), so I guess I'm in good company. I also find it absurd that Bishop Rhoades, the USCCB, and CUF need to respond to his gauntlet of challenges or we're "suspect of heresy." Give me a break! I care very much about Bob and I pray that he is able to peaceably work things out with his bishop. At the same time, my busy world does not revolve around Bob, and I just don't have the time and inclination to pursue the matter further with him, especially given the manner in which he chooses to "dialogue."

Sincerely in Christ,

Leon Suprenant

17. *Rick DeLano Says:*
[March 10th, 2008 at 9:56 pm](#)

LS: For the sake of others who might be reading this, you should know that Mr. DeLano is a devoted Sungenis follower who considers Sungenis to be "a true Catholic hero."

>>Leon, why would you consider it necessary to descend to the argumentum ad hominem? Is it because you cannot respond to my valid citations from Catholic magisterial sources and Scripture, above?

You see, Leon, one does not gain any brownie points merely by practicing the odious and transparent tactic of "guilt by association", when the issue here is not Robert Sungenis, but rather the heretical, false and outrageous scandal perpetrated in the USCCB Adult Catechism.

<http://weblog.xanga.com/weblogitem.aspx?user=bellarminforum&uid=639193632#1404259727>

But now that you mention it, I am happy to confirm that I consider Dr. Sungenis' work against the awful spread of the "Mosaic Covenant is eternally valid" mega-heresy to be splendid in its scholarship, thoroughness, and most importantly, Catholic orthodoxy.

LS: He feels justified in publicly condemning a successor to the Apostles for not criticizing this sentence of the USCCA when, where, and how he deems necessary.

>>Actually, Leon, you are just digging yourself a deeper hole here, since the fair-minded observer can read above my citation of successors of the Apostles who unanimously confirm the explicit teaching of Scripture, Councils, Popes, and Doctors, to the effect that the Mosaic Covenant is superseded and replaced by the New Covenant.

It were an act of ignoble dereliction for any Catholic to fail to support the true successors of the Apostles- the Popes, Councils, and Doctors of the Church of all ages- who have

repeatedly, explicitly, and infallibly assured us that the statement on page 131 of the USCCB Adult Catechism represents a scandal, an outrage, an heresy, and a blight upon that body.

It is a great shame that Bishop Rhoades decided to play “I choose to interpret this to mean...” Instead of condemning the heresy.

LS:We see no evidence of any reflection at all by Mr. DeLano on the context of Bishop Rhoades statement,

>>But the mere fact that you do not see something, constitutes no evidence at all that it is not there. In fact, I have been in extensive correspondence with my Bishop for over a year on this question, and have informed him that I reject the statement as heretical, that if anyone attempts to teach the heresy in my hearing I will resist them to their face, and that there is no possibility whatsoever that I will allow my children to be taught such an evil and foul heresy.

I have not been admonished, silenced, or otherwise reprimanded, and therefore I am perfectly within my Christian liberties to call this heresy exactly what it is: an heresy.

LS:the circumstances, and legitimate reasons why His Excellency might have responded as he did.

>>His Excellency has decided that the appropriate response to a damned lie and heresy, is to “choose to interpret it” as if it did not say what it in fact says.

In truth, Leon, words have meanings, and Bishops are called to defend the faithful against false teaching. Make no mistake, Leon. “The Mosaic covenant remains eternally valid” is a FALSE TEACHING. Shame on the Bishop for not saying so clearly. Shame on him.

LS:It’s simply a rush to absolute, unreserved condemnation, and shame heaped upon Bishop Rhoades (and those who come to his defense), apparently in an attempt to defend his friend, Robert Sungenis. Unfortunately, it appears that he is following the example of Sungenis himself in all this.

>>You do me too much honor, but I thank you for saying so. Bob has done a truly marvellous job against the Eugene Fischers of this world on this specific scandal, and I am proud to hear you say that I am with him. On this crucially important question, I most certainly am.

LS:As Mr. DeLano clearly has no hesitation about publicly expressing his condemnation of even a successor to the Apostles,

>>Excuse me, Leon. Look up at my last post, and you will find that I quoted the actual successors of the Apostles, as well as the APOSTLES THEMSELVES.

It is Bishop Rhoades and other Bishop-supporters and/or equivocators of the “Mosaic covenant remain valid” mega-heresy who have failed in their duty to obey the magisterium of the Catholic Church in this regard. It is up to the laity, in any such case, to stand with the

true magisterium (Lumen Gentium #25). The USCCB is not granted any authority whatsoever to reverse the authoritative teaching of Scripture, as unanimously interpreted by the Fathers, Doctors, Popes, and Councils of the Church. Therefore, our duty is to cry out to the very heavens against this evil heresy, and to insist that the shepherds cease equivocations and excise this heresy from public distribution.

18. *E Suter Says:*

March 11th, 2008 at 11:36 am

Unfortunately, as Dr. Sungenis has pointed out, Bp. Rhoades' answers are carefully crafted so as to avoid a clear assent to the perennial infallible doctrine of supersession and a clear rejection of the prevalent Double Covenant heresy.

<http://www.catholicintl.com/articles/My%20Response%20to%20Bishop%20Rhoades%20Re%20Old%20Covenant.pdf>

Messrs. Suprenant, Forrest, Sippo, and all the rest of Dr. Sungenis's detractors, I ask you a simple question. Do you wholeheartedly embrace the definitions of the infallible dogmatic Council of Florence that the Mosaic Covenant has been superseded?

“§ 712 It [the Holy Catholic Church] firmly believes, professes, and teaches that the matter pertaining to the law of the Old Testament, of the Mosaic law, which are divided into ceremonies, sacred rites, sacrifices, and sacraments, because they were established to signify something in the future, although they were suited to Divine worship at that time, after our Lord's coming had been signified by them, ceased, and the Sacraments of the New Testament began; and that whoever, even after the passion, placed hope in these matters of law and submitted himself to them as necessary for salvation, as if faith in Christ could not save without them, sinned mortally. Yet it does not deny that after the passion of Christ up to the promulgation of the Gospel they could have been observed until they were believed to be in no way necessary for salvation; but after the promulgation of the Gospel it asserts they cannot be observed without the loss of eternal salvation. All, therefore, who after that time observe circumcision and the Sabbath and the other requirements of the law, it declares alien to the Christian faith and not in the least fit to participate in eternal salvation, unless someday they recover from these errors....

“§714 The Most Holy Roman Church firmly believes, professes and preaches that none of those existing outside the Catholic Church, not only pagans, but also Jews, and heretics, and schismatics, can ever be partakers of eternal life, but that they are to go into the eternal fire 'which was prepared for the devil, and his angels,' (Matthew 25:41) unless before death they are joined with Her; and that so important is the unity of this Ecclesiastical Body, that only those remaining within this unity can profit from the sacraments of the Church unto salvation, and that they alone can receive an eternal recompense for their fasts, alms deeds, and other works of Christian piety and duties of a Christian soldier. No one, let his almsgiving be as great as it may, no one, even if he pour out his blood for the Name of Christ, can be saved unless they abide within the bosom and unity of the Catholic Church.”
—Cantate Domino, from the infallible ecumenical Council of Florence under His Holiness Pope Eugene IV defining the Solemn Doctrine: *Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus*, promulgated by papal bull, February 4, 1444 [Florentine calendar] in Denziger *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, § 712-714

19. *E Suter* Says:

March 11th, 2008 at 11:54 am

It is very revealing that, when confronted with Magisterium, you revert to *ad hominem* against Mr. DeLano and all others who challenge you. Self-laudatory subjectivity and personality play are your stock in trade, not at all marks of Catholicism.

20. *Leon Suprenant* Says:

March 12th, 2008 at 10:10 am

A few additional comments and clarifications:

(1) Let's not forget the original context of this post:

"These statements have arisen in the context of Sungenis' writings concerning Judaism and the Jewish people, which many, including Bishop Rhoades, have found to be hostile, uncharitable, and un-Christian in their tone and erroneous in their content. Further, such writings, while purporting to present authentic Catholic teaching, do not follow the teaching and approach of the Second Vatican Council, Pope John Paul II, and Pope Benedict XVI on this subject."

(2) The concerns regarding Bob Sungenis' material did not pertain to Bob's interpretation of p. 131 of the U.S. Adult Catechism. This is a red herring that simply deflects attention away from Bob's unwillingness to accept the authority of his bishop.

(3) The approach of the Second Vatican Council was to affirm elements of truth—and the possibility of salvation—wherever they could be found. That does not mean that other churches or religions are separate "means of salvation," but rather, it means that those who have not knowingly rejected Christ and who have remained faithful to the truth that they have been given can be saved, through Christ, the one savior of the world.

(4) There have been exaggerations of this view, specifically with regard to Judaism, that are inimical to the Catholic faith. Sometimes this is referred to as the "dual covenant" theory—that Christians have their covenant and the Jews have theirs. Under this view, there is no apparent need for Jews to convert, because they have their own saving covenant.

(5) The U.S. Adult Catechism, in its treatment of this issue, should have been more clear, especially in light of the concern set forth in the preceding paragraph. It is to be earnestly hoped that the sentence on p. 131 regarding the "eternal validity" of the Mosaic covenant will eventually be amended and clarified so as to affirm the abrogation of the Mosaic Law with the advent of its New Covenant fulfillment.

(6) In the meantime, page 131 of the U.S. Adult Catechism should be interpreted in a favorable light, without assuming heresy or ill motives. Indeed, it would be sinful to do otherwise (see Catechism, nos. 2477-78). Further, it should be interpreted in light of everything else we know to be true by virtue of our faith.

(7) Further, and in keeping with the principles just set forth, Bishop Rhoades has offered a fully orthodox interpretation of p. 131 of the Adult Catechism, even though he admits that as worded the disputed passage may be misunderstood. Bishop Rhoades' christocentric interpretation sounds strikingly similar to Pope Benedict's revised Good Friday prayer.

(8) Orthodox Catholics are rightly concerned about inter-religious "dialogue" and statements regarding Catholic-Jewish relations which lean toward a "dual covenant" approach. However, those legitimate concerns will be lost in the shuffle if Bob Sungenis becomes their spokesman, given his long track record of problematic statements concerning the Jewish people, not to mention his unwillingness to accept the authority of his own bishop.

(9) Let us pray for Bob's reconciliation with his bishop, as we also pray, in keeping with Romans 11 and Vatican II's *Nostra Aetate*, for the Jews, that their eyes may be opened to see that Jesus Christ is truly the awaited Messiah and the Savior of all mankind.

21. *E Suter Says: Your comment is awaiting moderation.*

[March 14th, 2008 at 6:02 pm](#)

Leon, Since you recognize the problem, namely that you "earnestly hoped that the sentence on p. 131 regarding the "eternal validity" of the Mosaic covenant will eventually be amended and clarified so as to affirm the abrogation of the Mosaic Law with the advent of its New Covenant fulfillment," your Catholic duty objectively behooves you to:

- 1) obey the same CCC § 2477-78 that you invoke against Dr. Sungenis,
- 2) give Dr. Sungenis a fair forum on CUF to defend himself and his reputation (including exposure of the unjust treatment that Dr. Sungenis has received at the hands of Bishop Rhoades and the USCCB, treatment that he has described to you and copied to me),
- 3) cease publicizing and help to end Michael Forrest's vendetta against Dr. Sungenis, especially Forrest's continuing criticism of statements for which Dr. Sungenis has apologized, and
- 4) that, if you have any ink left after all the poison pen spent against Dr. Sungenis, you do more than "earnestly hope," that you write a charitable letter to the USCCB calling their attention to the problem that you admit.

An end to the personal attacks against Dr. Sungenis is long overdue. Equally overdue is an effort to correct the problem you recognize, a problem that Dr. Sungenis has heroically called to our attention in the face of considerable injustice. To do less would be patent hypocrisy. We are Catholics, not Pharisees, are we not?

My Response to Leon Suprenant

I will now show the statements Mr. Suprenant put on the blog on March 12 (cited above), and the responses to them that I sent to the CUF blog on March 13, but that were never posted on the CUF blog.

Mr. Suprenant wrote:

A few additional comments and clarifications:

(1) Let's not forget the original context of this post:

“These statements have arisen in the context of Sungenis’ writings concerning Judaism and the Jewish people, which many, including Bishop Rhoades, have found to be hostile, uncharitable, and un-Christian in their tone and erroneous in their content. Further, such writings, while purporting to present authentic Catholic teaching, do not follow the teaching and approach of the Second Vatican Council, Pope John Paul II, and Pope Benedict XVI on this subject.”

R. Sungenis: Leon, because you are the head of a recognized and respected Catholic organization and seem at least somewhat conciliatory in this present post, I’m going to break my own rules and respond to this present blog.

The truth is, I already obeyed Bishop Rhoades, and was willing to do even more to accommodate him, at least until he double-crossed me. My first instance of obedience was to voluntarily take down my “writings concerning Judaism and the Jewish people” in order to change them, as he desired, to the correct “tone.” The vicar general, speaking, as he assured me, “for the bishop,” stated profusely to me that I could still write on Judaism and the Jews as long as the “tone” was changed. Then, after I obeyed the bishop, I put up a final article on our website about the Jews and Judaism and I made sure it was said with the proper “tone.” Among the comments I made in the article were the following: (a) that the Old Covenant has been revoked and superseded by the New Covenant; (b) that the Jews were no longer the Chosen People; the Church was the Chosen People, and the Jews are invited to enter the new people of God; (c) that the Jews are not entitled to land in Israel by divine mandate and that God has fulfilled all his promises to the Jews, etc.

I then got another letter from the vicar general telling me to take down my article, otherwise the bishop will order me to remove the name “Catholic” from my website. This came as quite a shock to me. The bishop, through his vicar general, was now changing his position in midstream and demanding that I obey it without any consultation with him whatsoever. Obviously, the vicar general’s order is not based on my being “hostile or uncharitable or un-Christian in their tone,” as Leon claims, because previously the bishop and the vicar already agreed that I could write on these issues just as long as the “tone” was charitable. Rather, the bishop now wants outright censorship of me.

When I write back to the vicar general in a 15-page letter: (a) I offered to meet with Bishop Rhoades to discuss the issue, as we did the last time; (b) I defended the article by showing how it agreed with Catholic tradition, the magisterium, Scripture, and even Vatican II and John Paul II’s

writings (a letter very similar to the article I recently wrote for *Culture Wars* titled “Is the Old Covenant Revoked or Not Revoked?”); (c) I told the bishop if he chooses not to meet with me, or give the reasons for his attempt at complete censorship, I will still recognize his authority, but he will now have to exercise it by means of a canonical trial, which is my right according to Canon Law. Canon 221.1: “The Christian faithful can legitimately vindicate and defend the rights which they possess in the Church in the competent ecclesiastical forum according to the norm of law.” Canon 221.3: “The Christian faithful have the right not to be punished with canonical penalties except according to the norm of law.” Canon 1476: “Anyone, whether baptized or not, can bring action in a trial; however, a party legitimately summoned must respond.” I received no response from either Bishop Rhoades, or Fr. King or Fr. Massa, to whom I sent copies, and who were at the original August 2007 meeting with me.

So here we have the bishop and his vicar turning the tables on me, changing their position from no censorship with proper “tone” to complete censorship regardless of tone, and the apparent reason is that I insist that the Old Covenant is revoked and the Jewish people are just like everyone else in the world. With his abrupt change in policy toward me, neither the bishop nor his vicar cite any instance in my article where I, according to Leon’s above words, “do not follow the teaching and approach of the Second Vatican Council, Pope John Paul II, and Pope Benedict XVI on this subject.” I am censored because they simply did not like what I had to say, and I am given no recourse to defend myself, since the bishop will not answer my letter, and it has been seven months since I wrote it. Yet Bishop Rhoades recently responded, and quite quickly, I might add, to Michael Forrest in a two-page letter over this same issue, which included accusations against me. Hence, the bishop chooses to air his complaints against me in public, but won’t give me the courtesy of any private communication to settle our differences.

I must also mention that Bishop Rhoades’ ill treatment of me is serial. In every instance where I have sought his help, he has put up road blocks spanning the last four years. As I said above, another instance occurred in late 2006 when Bishop Rhoades decided not to grant an imprimatur for my book, *The Apocalypse of St. John*. In his December 2006 letter denying the imprimatur, after accusing me of “not following the Church’s teaching on the Jews and Judaism,” Bishop Rhoades did not give me the courtesy of providing even one example from my 544-page book where I violated Church teaching. Furthermore, in what I judge as being uncharitable, the Bishop then states in his letter that he is “not open to further consideration of this work for an imprimatur.”

I don’t think it is hard to see that I was: (a) accused by the bishop of not following Church teaching without him providing any evidence to support his claim, and (b) the bishop summarily refused to even discuss the issue once he made his unsubstantiated accusation. Now, do I as a Catholic have the right to contest such treatment from the man who is supposed to act as my shepherd? Yes, canon law gives me that right. Canon law says that no penalties can be imposed upon me without due process, and that if I am being unjustly treated, I have the right to defend myself in a canonical forum, and that is precisely what I told Bishop Rhoades, but he did not respond to me.

Leon writes:

(2) The concerns regarding Bob Sungenis' material did not pertain to Bob's interpretation of p. 131 of the U.S. Adult Catechism. This is a red herring that simply deflects attention away from Bob's unwillingness to accept the authority of his bishop.

R. Sungenis: As I stated above, neither Bishop Rhoades nor his vicar general gave me any example of where I violated Church doctrine on the Jews or Judaism. Moreover, page 131 of the US Adult Catechism certainly was a prominent issue, because when the subject of the Old Covenant was brought up at the meeting at the bishop's office in August 2007, his vicar general, who said he was speaking for the bishop, stated that he did not believe in supersessionism – the doctrine that the Old Covenant has been superseded by the New Covenant. Lo and behold, that is the same position that is being advocated by page 131 of the US Adult catechism, since it says, quite plainly, that the Mosaic covenant remains valid for the Jews. Now, call me presumptuous if you want to, but I have enough brains to figure out that something doesn't smell right about this.

Leon writes:

(3) The approach of the Second Vatican Council was to affirm elements of truth—and the possibility of salvation—wherever they could be found. That does not mean that other churches or religions are separate “means of salvation,” but rather, it means that those who have not knowingly rejected Christ and who have remained faithful to the truth that they have been given can be saved, through Christ, the one savior of the world.

R. Sungenis: I have no argument with Leon's assessment of the Second Vatican Council. I hold to everything Vatican II teaches as doctrine.

Leon writes:

(4) There have been exaggerations of this view, specifically with regard to Judaism, that are inimical to the Catholic faith. Sometimes this is referred to as the “dual covenant” theory—that Christians have their covenant and the Jews have theirs. Under this view, there is no apparent need for Jews to convert, because they have their own saving covenant.

(5) The U.S. Adult Catechism, in its treatment of this issue, should have been more clear, especially in light of the concern set forth in the preceding paragraph. It is to be earnestly hoped that the sentence on p. 131 regarding the “eternal validity” of the Mosaic covenant will eventually be amended and clarified so as to affirm the abrogation of the Mosaic Law with the advent of its New Covenant fulfillment.

R. Sungenis: Here is what I see. Leon Suprenant and CUF have now stated in public that they agree that the Mosaic covenant has been abrogated and replaced by the New Covenant. I also believe that the Mosaic covenant has been abrogated and replaced by the New Covenant. Leon and I both see that the US Adult Catechism says just the opposite. Leon “earnestly hopes” that the US Catechism “will eventually be amended and clarified,” as I do.

But, as I have done, is Leon concerned enough to write to the USCCB to tell them that they have made a gross error in Catholic teaching? If not, why not? Is not CUF an organization that stands

for “Catholics United for the Faith”? How “united” can we be if we are teaching different things about salvation? Does not CUF print magazines (e.g., *Lay Witness*) that defend the Catholic faith against false ideas? If so, then it behooves CUF to take action by telling the USCCB they have made a blatant error and not rest until that error is excised from the catechism. In fact, according to Canon 212, 2-3, Leon has the “duty” to tell the USCCB their error. Until then, many unsuspecting Catholics are reading page 131 believing that the Mosaic covenant remains valid for the Jews. According to Catholic tradition, magisterium and scripture, to believe and practice such is cause for eternal damnation, so say the Councils of Florence and Trent, and St. Paul in Galatians 3-5. Yes, this is very serious business.

The urgency of Leon’s responsibility is heightened by all the erroneous statements made by various Catholic cardinals, bishops and priests (Cardinal Kasper, Cardinal Keeler, *et al*) and USCCB spokesmen (e.g., Eugene Fisher, James Massa, Monsignor Kutys, *et al*), in addition to Jewish organizations and individuals (e.g., the ADL, Rabbi David Rosen, Stephen Katz, Amy Jill Levine, *et al*), who have indicated they believe the Old Covenant remains valid for the Jews and has not been superseded by the New Covenant. If Leon really wants to defend the Catholic faith, here is a golden opportunity, since there now exists a virtual onslaught of false teaching on the Old Covenant never before seen in Catholic history.

It is not sufficient for Leon to sit back and “hope” that these people change their mind. If he is a dedicated teacher of the Christian gospel, he has a responsibility to condemn these false teachings just as much as he condemns other false teachings in his *Lay Witness* magazine (or just as much as he condemns me in full public view on his website).

In reality, Leon has an obligation to support people such as myself who are the pioneers in pointing out the erroneous ideas being taught today concerning the Old Covenant, rather than issuing constant attacks against me when I seek to protect Catholic people from these kinds of falsehoods. This also means that Leon has a responsibility to monitor this blog for statements made about me that are either falsehoods or misrepresentations so that my theological message is not sabotaged by someone’s malfeasance. To be fair, he has a responsibility to inquire for my side of the story in cases where various individuals make certain accusations against me, instead of allowing detractors to pile on with impunity.

For example, in this blog, Mr. Forrest seeks, once again, to stir up public animus against me by resurrecting some statements I made several years ago about the Jews. But these are statements which I have disavowed and apologized for as anyone can plainly see if they read our website QA board. Furthermore, all the statements he cites were removed from our BTF website more than seven months ago, in compliance with my bishop, no less. Mr. Forrest knows I have done all these things because he daily sifts through my website with a fine-toothed comb, yet he still parades these disavowed statements in full public view to incite people against me. I think his agenda is obvious, don’t you?

Tell me, Leon, if you told someone you were sorry for saying something, and you removed the statements from public view, what would you think of the person who not only kept throwing these statements back in your face but invited the world to keep viewing them over and over again, even after he has been told to stop? Would it not be reasonable to assume that Mr. Forrest

doesn't really have any intention of being fair and reasonable about this matter, but has every intention of creating a smear campaign designed to denigrate me in the public eye? This is a clear violation of Christian principles, Canon law, and the Catechism, the same Catechism that Leon will cite below.

Leon writes:

(6) In the meantime, page 131 of the U.S. Adult Catechism should be interpreted in a favorable light, without assuming heresy or ill motives. Indeed, it would be sinful to do otherwise (see Catechism, nos. 2477-78). Further, it should be interpreted in light of everything else we know to be true by virtue of our faith.

R. Sungenis: OK, let's take Leon's admonition to heart. Earlier Leon admitted that the USCCB Catechism made an erroneous statement when it said on page 131 that the Mosaic covenant remains valid for the Jews (Leon's exact admission was: "the sentence on p. 131 regarding the "eternal validity" of the Mosaic covenant will eventually be amended and clarified so as to affirm the abrogation of the Mosaic Law"). So, if Leon has already admitted that page 131 is erroneous, how is he then going to see it in a more "favorable" light? Leon has already made a critical judgment against the USCCB catechism by saying that it needed to be amended because of its error. There is no turning back. The only other favor he might extend now is that the USCCB didn't intend to make an error but that it was just a slip of the pen, as it were. But Leon wouldn't know it was an inadvertent mistake unless he contacted the USCCB, an action Leon hasn't done, since, as he said above, he is merely "hoping" that they correct their error without indicating he will contact them to find out if the error is accidental or deliberate, or if they will even correct it.

Now, since Leon quoted from John Paul II's catechism, paragraph 2477-78, let's see what it really says. Paragraph 2478 states:

Every good Christian ought to be more ready to give a favorable interpretation to another's statement than to condemn it. But if he cannot do so, let him ask how the other understands it.

Did you do this, Leon? I don't think so. Without contacting the USCCB for a clarification, Leon concluded that the USCCB catechism needed to be amended in order to clarify that the Mosaic covenant has been abrogated and is not eternally valid for the Jews. Everyone who reads the CUF blog will now see that the USCCB made an error in its catechism. Hence, according to para. 2478, Leon "condemned" the USCCB statement by concluding that its statement, because it needed to be amended, is in error. There are only two choices: (a) "favorable interpretation" or (b) "condemn it." A "favorable interpretation" must say there is no error and no cause for amending it (similar to what Bishop Rhoades did with page 131). But Leon chose option (b) and "condemned" it, and therefore violated the due process required from paragraph 2478 of the Vatican's catechism.

Did I obey paragraph 2478? Let's look at the evidence. In a meeting with the vicar general of the Harrisburg diocese, Fr. William King, and the Secretary of the USCCB for Interreligious Affairs,

the Reverend James Massa, it was affirmed that they believe the Old Covenant has not been superseded, and there has been no statement from them to the contrary. Eugene Fisher, Associate Director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs at the USCCB, stated to me in an email that he believed the Old Covenant was not revoked, and he believes that the Jews should not be presented with the Christian gospel. Other representatives of the USCCB, including William Cardinal Keeler and Francis Cardinal George, have stated in public that they do not believe the Old Covenant has been revoked. I sent a letter to Cardinal Levada with a copy to the USCCB representatives, stating that page 131 contained an error in Catholic doctrine regarding the Old Covenant. Cardinal Levada's secretary, Archbishop Amato, acknowledged my letter, but the USCCB representatives did not give me a response. Hence, I have a lot of evidence that the USCCB representatives believe exactly as page 131 says, that is, that the Mosaic covenant remains valid for the Jews. So how, in light of all this evidence, could I be "more ready" to give a "favorable interpretation" to page 131 of the USCCA? I did my homework on this issue before I reached my conclusion. Leon apparently did not.

Now let's look at the next statement of paragraph 2478:

And if the latter understands it badly, let the former correct him with love. If that does not suffice, let the Christian try all suitable ways to bring the other to a correct interpretation so that he may be saved.

Again, Leon already admitted above that the USCCA made an error on page 131 that needs to be amended. The USCCA says the Mosaic covenant remains valid. Leon says the Mosaic covenant has been abrogated. These are as opposite as opposite can be. As such, Leon has an obligation to correct the USCCA, with love. And if they do not answer his kind letters, Leon then has an obligation to "try all suitable ways" to bring the USCCA to its senses, perhaps by writing an article in *Lay Witness* and getting other Catholic theologians and clerics to speak out on the issue, or visiting the USCCB in Washington, admonishing with love for the USCCA to correct its error.

And note that paragraph 2478 says that Leon is to do all this "so that he [the USCCB editors] may be saved." Yes, this is a matter of salvation, because if the USCCA is teaching a heresy about the Old Covenant, then not only is the USCCA putting the salvation of the Jews in jeopardy, it is also putting its own salvation in jeopardy.

You can see how serious this is becoming. In fact, in regards to salvation, it is even more serious than Leon realizes, because the way in which page 131 is grammatically structured, it implies very strongly that the Mosaic covenant remains valid for the Jews precisely to serve as a means for their salvation! Here is the preceding sentence from page 131:

When God called Abraham out of Ur, he promised to make of him a "great nation." This began the history of God's revealing his divine plan of salvation to a chosen people with whom he made enduring covenants. Thus, the covenant that God made with the Jewish people through Moses remains eternally valid for them.

I believe one can only conclude by the use of the word “Thus” that the USCCB catechism believes the Mosaic covenant remains valid for the Jews because it reveals God’s divine plan of salvation for the Jews. It appears that the USCCA is not only making an erroneous statement that the Mosaic covenant remains valid, but also regarding the Mosaic covenant’s connection with salvation. That being the case, the USCCA has made so gross an error that, in Leon’s own words, it cries out to be “amended.” If Leon wants to follow the prescription of paragraph 2478 that he cited to me, then it behooves him to “try all suitable ways to bring the [USCCB] to a correct interpretation so that he may be saved.”

Leon writes:

(7) Further, and in keeping with the principles just set forth, Bishop Rhoades has offered a fully orthodox interpretation of p. 131 of the Adult Catechism, even though he admits that as worded the disputed passage may be misunderstood. Bishop Rhoades’ christocentric interpretation sounds strikingly similar to Pope Benedict’s revised Good Friday prayer.

R. Sungenis: It remains to be seen whether Bishop Rhoades “has offered a fully orthodox interpretation of page 131 of the Adult Catechism.” I find it puzzling that Leon can clearly see that page 131 needs to be “amended” so that it teaches the “Mosaic covenant has been abrogated,” but we find nothing from Bishop Rhoades about the need for an “amending” or the need to say the Mosaic covenant was “abrogated.” Unfortunately, in his hasty attempt to exonerate Bishop Rhoades from error, Mr. Forrest never used the words that Leon used in this blog, namely, asking Bishop Rhoades in the interview whether the bishop believes that the Mosaic Covenant has been “abrogated” and superseded by the New Covenant. As I stated in my recent essay, Bishop Rhoades only committed himself to say that “the Old Covenant cannot save the Jews apart from Christ,” which is ambiguous and possibly misleading.

I suggest Mr. Forrest write back to Bishop Rhoades and ask him this question: “Bishop Rhoades, do you believe that the Old Covenant, the Mosaic covenant, no longer remains valid for the Jews and has been abrogated and superseded by the New Covenant?” If the bishop answers in the affirmative, a second question should be asked: “Bishop Rhoades, would you be willing to write to the USCCB and tell them that their statement on the Mosaic covenant on page 131 is in error and should be corrected?” I would also suggest that Mr. Forrest tell Bishop Rhoades that Leon Suprenant of CUF, the person Mr. Forrest sought for support, has stated that page 131 needs to be “amended” because it must make clear that the “Mosaic covenant has been abrogated.” If Mr. Forrest is as eager to find the truth of what Bishop Rhoades really believes, and if he is going to follow the prescription of paragraph 2478 to “ask how the other understands it,” then he is obligated to make this additional inquiry. If Bishop Rhoades answers affirmatively to the “abrogation of the Mosaic covenant,” then he is exonerated, and his next responsibility is to start the ball rolling to correct the error on page 131 of the US Adult catechism, as well as the views of Fr. King and Fr. Massa. If he doesn’t do these things, then he will be derelict in his duty as a shepherd of God.

In regards to Bishop Rhoades, let’s apply paragraphs 2477-2478 to him. When Bishop Rhoades examined my book, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, did he give me a “favorable” reading of the passages about the Jews? No, he read them in the worst possible light and judged that I violated

various Church teachings on relations with the Jews and Judaism. If he had a question concerning whether to give me a “favorable” or “condemnatory” evaluation for my book, did he contact me, as para. 2478 requires, in order to make sure of what I was saying in the book? No, in fact, he told me he would not even allow me to have any discussion with him on the issue. I have dealt with many bishops in my life, and several of them in relation to getting imprimaturs for my books. If they ever had a question or objection they would always contact me, get a clarification, and help me correct whatever needed correcting. Not Bishop Rhoades. He has held out an iron hand to me the whole time I have known him.

Now, there are two very interesting consequences that develop from Bishop Rhoades’ treatment of my book. It shows that the bishop can and will make a definitive doctrinal judgment and condemn a teaching when he wants to. That being the case, why didn’t Bishop Rhoades do the same thing with page 131 of the US Adult catechism? Here we have an instance of a high profile document that thousands of people are going to read for years to come, a document that contains obvious doctrinal error, so much so that even Leon admits that page 131 needs to be amended to teach that the Mosaic covenant has been abrogated and does not remain valid for the Jews, but Bishop Rhoades refuses to make the required doctrinal judgment and will only commit to saying that page 131 “could be misunderstood.” So much does Bishop Rhoades desire to look “favorably” on page 131 that he actually changes the words of the catechism and claims that it only meant to say that the Jews have a “special relationship with God because of the Old Covenant”!

Now stop and think. Isn’t it ironic that Bishop Rhoades makes a doctrinal judgment against my book by specifically citing page 131 of the US Adult catechism as his authoritative source? Isn’t it also a bit ironic that Bishop Rhoades will apparently bend over backwards to excuse the blatant doctrinal error on page 131, saying, essentially, that there is no doctrinal error, and yet (a) says my book violates page 131, (b) gives me no leeway for a “favorable” interpretation; (c) doesn’t give me one example of where I made the alleged violation, and (d) isn’t even willing to discuss the matter to see if he is correctly interpreting me. What’s wrong with this picture, Leon?

What further muddies this picture is that my book, *The Apocalypse of St. John*, does not contain any violations of Church teaching on the Jews or Judaism! And even if it did, I would be more than willing to correct them, if the bishop gave me a chance to do so. I’ve searched the book, and have had others search the book, but no one can find a violation of Church teaching. The best my detractors can do (as I found out on one particular blog) is point to statements I made on page 31-32. Here are those words:

The “coming with the clouds” depicts a scene in which Christ is above the earth such that people must look up to see him. This precise entrance into the world was predicted by the angel to the Apostles in Ac 1:11: “This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” Ap 1:7 stresses that “every” person will see Christ. Similarly, John’s choice of the word “eye” lays stress on the visual component of the reception. The future tense in the clause “and every eye will see him” and the aorist (past) tense of “every one who pierced him” show that the “piercing” occurred in the past, while the “seeing” occurs in the future.

As a subset of “every eye will see him,” two specific groups are mentioned as observing his return, that is, “those who pierced him,” and “all the tribes.” Since “those who pierced him” refers to the past, it must refer to those who were present at the crucifixion of Christ, which means that they must be raised from the dead in order to see Christ coming to earth at the end of the world (cf. 1Th 4:15-17; Jn 5:28-29; 12:48). The “tribes” could refer to the Jews of the first century who at that time were still classed in tribes, including those from the dispersed northern kingdom (cf. Lk 2:36; Rm 11:1; Ac 26:7; Jm 1:1). If the reference to “those who pierced him” is more general, it may refer to Jews living at the Second Coming who represent all the Jews from the past who have disbelieved in Christ. This type of identification has sufficient precedent since, in Mt 23:35, Jesus had cast guilt upon the whole generation of Jews then living for all the blood shed from Abel (Adam’s second son) to Zechariah son of Berechiah in the late history of Israel, even though that particular generation did not actually slay either Abel or Zechariah.

Whatever the precise identification, it cannot be missed that John intends to convey the idea that the Jews, who had disbelieved Christ at his First Coming, and continue to do so in their blindness (Rm 11:7-8), will, on the Last Day, finally see and be forced to accept that the man they crucified was, indeed, the very Son of God. They had accused Christ of being under the influence of the devil (Mt 12:24), and Jesus likewise returned the favor and said that their father was the devil (Jn 8:44). No more intense spiritual hatred could be generated between two opposing forces. Thus the Jews will be beside themselves with grief and vexation when they finally realize that they were totally wrong. But it will be too late, for the Second Coming is the time of judgment, not repentance, and this is the reason they will be “wailing.”

The prophet Zechariah affords additional insight into the identity of “those who pierced him.” First, the original quote regarding “and every will see him, every one who pierced him” is extracted from Zc 12:10-11. In this passage Zechariah is pinpointing the House of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem as those who “pierced” Jesus.

And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of compassion and supplication, so that, when they look on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a first-born. On that day the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo.

The Gospel of John cites the above passage (Zc 12:10) to call attention to those who witnessed the death of Jesus. In Jn 19:34-37 he writes:

But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness – his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth – that you also may believe. For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, “Not a bone of him shall be

broken.” And again another scripture says, “They shall look on him whom they have pierced.”

The phrase in Zc 12:10, “they have pierced,” is plural, and thus the soldier of Jn 19:34 represents both the Romans and the Jews who were involved in the death of Jesus. But though the Romans were involved, it is well known from both Scripture and Catholic commentary that the Roman officials were instigated into the crucifixion because of the hatred the Jewish leaders had against Christ. Thus it is no surprise that the context of Zechariah 12 stresses that the “house of David” is responsible for the piercing. On either side of these references to the “house of David,” there is the prophecy of Zc 11:12-13 which predicts another event of the passion of Christ, that is, the demise of Judas, while Zc 13:7 predicts the arrest of Christ in Gethsemane. It is not without precedent, then, that Ap 1:7’s mention of “those who pierced him” refers specifically to the Jews who led Christ to his crucifixion.

So please tell me. What in these paragraphs violates defined Catholic teaching? Even if someone were to have a question about one or two statements I make above, do they even come close to the level of doctrinal error on page 131 of the US Adult Catechism? How is it that Bishop Rhoades could read my above words and judge that I am “violating Church teaching,” yet read page 131 of the US Adult catechism and excuse it by changing the meaning of its words to “the Jews have a special relationship to God because of the Old Covenant” when the catechism actually says: “Thus the covenant God made with the Jewish people through Moses remains eternally valid for them”? How is it that Bishop Rhoades can judge page 131 of the catechism as something that could be “misunderstood,” yet when it comes to my book, the bishop not only condemns it as violating Church doctrine but refuses even to speak to me about correcting my alleged error so the book could obtain an imprimatur? Why is it that Bishop Rhoades won’t respond to the 15-page letter I wrote to him asking for a private meeting with him to discuss these issues, but as soon as Michael Forrest writes him a letter asking for the bishop’s views on page 131, the bishop responds in a detailed letter?

Needless to say, there is something drastically wrong with this picture, Leon. It is clear to me that Bishop Rhoades is not treating me with any fairness whatsoever.

Leon writes:

(8) Orthodox Catholics are rightly concerned about inter-religious “dialogue” and statements regarding Catholic-Jewish relations which lean toward a “dual covenant” approach. However, those legitimate concerns will be lost in the shuffle if Bob Sungenis becomes their spokesman, given his long track record of problematic statements concerning the Jewish people, not to mention his unwillingness to accept the authority of his own bishop.

R. Sungenis: These derisive comments are typical, but, ironically, they are in violation of the very prescriptions that Leon cited from paragraphs 2477-2478 of the Vatican’s catechism, namely:

“Respect for the reputation of persons forbids every attitude and word likely to cause them unjust injury. He becomes guilty of: rash judgment who, even tacitly, assumes as true, without sufficient foundation, the moral fault of a neighbor.”

“...of calumny who, by remarks contrary to the truth, harms the reputation of others and gives occasion for false judgments concerning them.”

As I noted above, Leon not only makes derisive comments about me throughout this blog, but allows Mr. Forrest to repost statements I’ve made in the past but which I have publically disavowed, apologized for, and have removed from my website, for the express purpose of paving a way to settle the dispute between us!

Further, as I explained in detail above, without knowing the whole story between me and Bishop Rhoades, Leon takes it upon himself to make a judgment about me that is simply untrue (that I am “unwilling to accept the authority of my bishop”).

Moreover, when I am unjustly treated by Bishop Rhoades, I don’t become my own authority. Instead I offered to meet with Bishop Rhoades to discuss the issue, recognizing him as my authority, but he didn’t answer me. In lieu of a discussion, I offered to have the matter adjudicated in a canonical forum, but he did not answer me. I proposed these measures according to the Canon law prescriptions I cited above in matters of dispute.

When Bishop Rhoades denied an imprimatur to my book because he accused me of violating Church teaching on the Jews, I asked him for examples, but he did not answer me, and said he wouldn’t even discuss the issue with me! Yet when someone called his chancellery to ask whether my book had an imprimatur, he willingly allowed it to be advertised to the public that I did not obtain an imprimatur, and did so without providing any evidence why it was rejected or giving me a chance to defend myself against such a public mark. So, I ask, how fair is all that to me?

Leon writes:

(9) Let us pray for Bob’s reconciliation with his bishop, as we also pray, in keeping with Romans 11 and Vatican II’s *Nostra Aetate*, for the Jews, that their eyes may be opened to see that Jesus Christ is truly the awaited Messiah and the Savior of all mankind.

R. Sungenis: Yes, let’s pray, but let’s also stop looking at Bob Sungenis as some kind of Catholic pariah just because he takes a harder line than Leon Suprenant on these issues. Leon can “hope” all he wants that the USCCA is going to “amend” its error, but I do more than hope, I take action. In fact, if it wasn’t for me pointing out the USCCA’s error to the Catholic public (which is my right to do according to Canon Law 212), no one would even know that a gross violation of Catholic doctrine had ever been committed. Obviously, Leon, knowing Catholic doctrine, is forced to agree, and thus he must conclude that the Catechism should be amended to teach that the Mosaic covenant does not remain valid but has been abrogated. Hence, I will be praying that Leon can find it in himself to be fair and balanced about this issue and stop being

persuaded by my ideological enemies who, like Michael Forrest, think nothing of dredging up things from the past that I have already disavowed in an effort to continue the smear campaign and maintain public sentiment against me. The bottom line is: I am not going away. I've proven that to you. You are going to have to deal with me, and do so in a Christian manner. Since you cited paragraphs 2477-2478 of the Vatican's catechism as your guiding principles, Leon, then you should abide by them. I will be praying that you do so. God be with you.

Robert Sungenis