



Boston Catholic Journal



NIHIL NISI IESUM

Dedicated to Mary, Mother of God

Salus Animarum Suprema Lex Esto (Canon Law 175)

The Salvation of Souls is the Supreme Law in the Church

Catholicism as *Art*

“The ‘ART’ of Accompaniment”?

“Hello. You are my project and I am your artist.”

You are the “medium” of my art — much as paint is to some artists and clay to others — and I will fashion you into something of my liking. Is that okay with you? You will admire my finesse and I’ve had lots of practice. Did I tell you that I

went to school for this? No kidding; I got a BA in Art with a specialty in “accompaniment.” Never heard of it? It’s new. Very fashionable in Rome. I will follow you around and teach you some things to make you *appear* to be Catholic and okay with God; kinda smooth out the rough edges of the “sin”-thing so that you will be comfortable with it now and *appear* to do what other Catholics do who — unlike you — are not in a state of Mortal Sin.

Of course they are sinners, too, but *at the moment* they are not **sinning by living in adultery** as you now are in your second (or is this your third?) “marriage”. No big deal. Like Francis said, who are we to judge anyway? What is more, the pope has recently concluded that *we cannot really be sure about sin in any event* because of what he calls the “Internal Forum” — your conscience really. It may be telling you that something is *not* a sin *for you* — even if the 10 Commandments say it *is* before God and for everyone else, unless, of course, *their* “internal Forum” tells them it’s okay for them, too. Got it?

AMORIS LÆTITIA:

“In life, shades of gray predominate,” Francis told us, so nothing is clear and there is no need to beat yourself up for something that may, in fact, be “good” and “wholesome” and “positive” according to Francis— despite appearances and

connotations to the contrary. Clear on that? The thing is, I've got to accompany you and show you that what you may *think* is wrong really isn't any more, especially if it's making you uncomfortable or feel guilty.

Of course, as an **ARTIST** of ACCOMPANIMENT, in order to have the "stuff" of my art to work with, you will have to tell me some, well, deeply private things, possibly salacious things, but hey, that's art. I am NOT a voyeur. I am an **ARTIST!** As one Dominican journal gushes,

"Pope Francis describes **the bedside manner** needed in the art of accompaniment as "steady and reassuring, **reflecting our closeness,**" and as having a "**compassionate gaze**" (*EG*, 169). Some refer to this bedside manner, practiced within welcoming and loving communities" ¹

With a Sigh ...

Conservative Catholics do not understand this. They are into the manly work of evangelization and conversion; not accompaniment, compassionate gazes, and certainly not "*this art of accompaniment which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other.*" They simply do not anticipate that they,

like Moses, will have to veil their faces because they will radiate the *lumen gloriae* of the adulterous and the sacrilegious subsequent to “accompanying” them ... *after*, of course, removing their sandals before these demigods in accordance with non-existent *canons of the Art of Accompaniment* that we can find in no college curriculum (see Exodus 3.5 which *Francis* invokes and 34.33-35 that *we* invoke).

The ... shall we say, *delicate* ... language of “art” leaves them — that is to say, conservative and traditional Catholics — understandably uncomfortable, especially in the wake of the last 30 years of pervasive pederasty in the Church. And who, we wonder, will *teach us to learn to make* “compassionate gazes” and how will we be graded on our performance? Will such “gazes” be accompanied with a sigh? Is that also in *Performance 101*?

If they hope to gain any traction in the “modern” Church they need to be slick like us, saying things no one really grasps and using ambiguous words which have no substance.

Francis and Kasper are “Artists” to be sure ... Conservatives just don’t have the “stuff” to be artists. Too few theta waves. Indeed, does the Church need more “Artists” as Francis insists? :

“The Church will have to initiate *everyone*—priests, religious and laity—into this ‘art of accompaniment’ which teaches us to remove our sandals before **the sacred ground of the other (cf. Ex 3:5).”**

(Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 169)

For every Catholic, an Artist

The Church already has an abundance of “*Ministries*” (*extraordinary* Eucharistic Ministers, Music Ministers, Youth Ministers, Hospitality Ministers, Community Service Ministers — to say nothing of the lesser “ministries” of Shawl-Makers (since most Catholics use Jewish Tallits during prayer ... or do they?) Greeters, Lectors, Soloists — virtually *every activity* at church accords one the coveted title of “Minister” — upper or lower case).

And now a *superabundance* of “Artists”? Will we all be organized by a new Bureau of Ministry?

After all, according to Francis, each of us will have to be “initiated” — not into a Sacrament, but **into an Art**. We will practice art, and therefore be — *practitioners!*

Not necessarily of the Dark Arts, but of the Gray Arts!

Every Catholic an “Artist” and a Practitioner of the Art — yet another new, but now *universal* Ministry!

No More Sheep ...

Is this our new vocation? If we are all Practitioners chasing the lost, who are the remaining sheep? Are they not Practitioners, too?

Did you just think “circular”? Did you just visualize a dog chasing its own tail?

The Church needs more sanctity — and sanity — not artists. More priests and fewer ministers. More Catholics and fewer Practitioners. Especially of the Dark Gray Arts.

“**Ecce enim regnum Dei intra vos est!**” (Saint Luke 17.21)

1 <http://www.dominicanajournal.org/the-art-of-accompaniment/>

Geoffrey K. Mondello
Editor
Boston Catholic Journal



Copyright © 2004 - 2023 Boston Catholic Journal. All rights reserved.