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Published: March 15, 2007

Bongos, Dancers, and Father-Mother God

Richard Rohr's Mass at the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress

At the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress on Saturday evening, March 3, Franciscan Father Richard Rohr celebrated a "general liturgy" in a ballroom at the Anaheim Convention Center. Father Rohr is a founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, New Mexico and a Congress presenter.

The processional hymn was "Christ Be Our Light," accompanied by bongo drums. Liturgical dancers carried large, flowing banners down each of the aisles in the ballroom. Reaching the front of the ballroom, the dancers stood along either side of the podium, twirling the giant banners.



Rohr, making no sign of the cross as he began the liturgy, said to the assembly, "as a fellow member of the Body of Christ, I thank you for allowing me to speak in your name. The Eucharist is always set in the form of a dialogue. First of all, I recognize the presence in you, and you return the compliment, and then the body is born."

Following the readings, Rohr, commenting on the Gospel where Jesus urges His disciples to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them, talked about the forgiveness shown by the Amish community following the October murders of five young schoolgirls and our inability to extend similar forgiveness without God's help.

While the intercessions were read, several people, standing on each aisle of the ballroom, were making choreographed hand movements. Several audience members joined in mimicking the movements.

The offertory procession began with two women waving banners, followed by two liturgical dancers, carrying a white tablecloth, sashaying up to the podium where Rohr sat waiting. They were followed by others who carried the hosts in large wicker breadbaskets and the wine in glass and plastic pitchers.

Rohr prayed over the gifts, "...make sure this people is hungry and ready to eat. Make sure we are not so filled with ourselves that there is not room for another person within us. Loving God, make sure this people is very hungry."

Rohr changed some of the prayers of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Opening the preface, he prayed, "Father and Mother God..." Before the consecration of the host, he said, "before he was given up to death, a death he said 'Yes' to..." And before the consecration of the wine, Rohr prayed, "when supper was ended, he gave you thanks and praise, gave the cup to his beloved..." Following the consecration, Rohr said the Christ's blood "will be poured out for you, and for all, so you will know your sins are forgiven." In praying for the departed, he referred to them as "especially your own beloved who are already with the Lord."

Rohr prefaced the Our Father, by saying, "and now, knowing we are more one than we are many, though we come from different places and races, we all share the same Father-Mother God. We call upon our God, together, in the words that Jesus gave us: Our Father, Who art in Heaven..."

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Posted Thursday, March 15, 2007 6:23 AM By FireBurns

The Greco Institute for adult education and the diocesan directress of liturgy and catechetics in the diocese of Shreveport, LA, need to see this. Maybe then they will stop using Richard Rohr's materials for their classes and stop using the LA Congress's list of presenters as their own potential speakers invitation list. Only wishful thinking, I'm sure. They think they "know better" and can preach their own "different gospel" (Gal 1:7). This is the legacy left by their now retired bishop and his remaining appointees. However, "Fire burns and when it rains the earth gets wet" -- there are consequences!

Posted Thursday, March 15, 2007 6:42 AM By Terry Carlino

It appears to me that Father Rohr needs to read in detail the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, Redemptionis Sacramentum and the Holy Father's latest Exhortation SACRAMENTUM CARITATIS. I'll be praying for him.

Posted Thursday, March 15, 2007 7:19 AM By Brian S.

Bongos! How with it can you get!! Was Maynard G. Krebs in attendance?

Posted Thursday, March 15, 2007 7:25 AM By Ferde Rombola

Someone ought to write Cardinal Arinze a long letter immediately, signed by the witnesses.

Posted Thursday, March 15, 2007 9:30 AM By Andrew

Just by reading the article, I can guess that Fr. Rohr was not celebrating the Holy Eucharist of the Roman Catholic Church. He was conducting his own version of whatsoever "liturgy" he is subscribing. Maybe he should cease and desist in calling himself a Catholic and Franciscan priest. Celebration or lurgies of this kind has no place in the church. The CDF must investigate this kind of heretic actions.

Posted Thursday, March 15, 2007 9:45 AM By Frank Munoz

Our Lord, Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, the Son of Man, called our Creator, Father. If there's anyone who knows what to call our Creator, it's Jesus, our Savior. How dare, Father Richard Rohr, say he knows more than our Lord, the Son of God. Thank you. God bless you.

Posted Thursday, March 15, 2007 10:31 AM By Kevin

Outrageous. There should be an Order of Liturgical policemen sent out to control this sort of abuse. I think at one time, there was something such. Who were they? Oh, yes, the Dominicans.

Posted Thursday, March 15, 2007 11:06 AM By Margie

Good argument to return to the Latin Mass.

Posted Thursday, March 15, 2007 12:30 PM By Ann cinquina

Father Rohr is protesting the True Catholic Church by allowing these performances to desecrate the Eucharist. He should take is act to Las Vegas and leave the priesthood immediately. Ann Cinquina

Posted Thursday, March 15, 2007 1:40 PM By papamac

Why does this happen. Was this in Roger Mahoneys back yard. The USCCB tolerates him, Rome tolerates him, he in turn flaunts our Catholic teachings and obviously by this heathen display others just carry it one step further. Yes, witnesses should ONCE AGAIN send Rome their protests, hopefully, soon our cries will not fall on deaf ears. PRAY FOR THESE WAYWARD SOULS

Posted Thursday, March 15, 2007 2:23 PM By Kenneth M. Fisher

I remind you that Rohr was actually reprimanded (slapped on the wrist) for taking part in a heretical joining together of two practicing Lesbians! Even his very liberal Archbishop had to at least take that action. You can actually see some of these abominations at our Website: crcoa.com. Kenneth M. Fisher, Founder & Chairman Concerned Roman Catholics of America, Inc.

Posted Thursday, March 15, 2007 4:11 PM By Fr. J

If he did this in my diocese he would be in the bishops office the next day and might not be a priest when he came out. The silliness needs to end. Just do the red and say the black, at least then you would be sure that the Mass would be valid

Posted Thursday, March 15, 2007 10:01 PM By Jim Moriarty

This freak show by "fr." Rohr is exactly why I left the Novus Ordo "Mess" 10 years ago and returned to the Traditional Latin Mass at my SSPX Chapel in Detroit.

Don't waste your time writing anybody. Leave the heresy and let it collapse upon itself. If you can't see that this is NOT Catholic, then there is no hope for you. Liberalism/Modernism rules the Church since Vatican II and is condemned by about 12 Papal Encyclicals of the last 200 years.

We have been warned by previous Popes, especially Pius X in Pascendi. Read them and follow their advice. We are witnesses to the modern day equal to the Arian heresy of 400 A.D. Cardinal Mahony is the modern day equal to Arius. I'll bet this never makes it to your newspaper.

Posted Thursday, March 15, 2007 11:15 PM By Patrick

And Fr J, which of the possible handful (at best) of bishops would you be referring to, for it would be a most rare action to be taken by ANY hierarchical member!

Posted Friday, March 16, 2007 3:20 AM By Fr. G

As a fellow Franciscan, I am appalled at the behavior of friars like Brother Richard Rohr. Francis commanded that we be obedient to Pope Honorius and all his successors canonically elected. Wait! I get it now! Brother Richard is really a Sede Vacantist!

Posted Friday, March 16, 2007 9:16 AM By Christopher Zehnder

Mr. Moriarty, Since you say you attend a Pius X Society chapel, I wondered if it bothered you that Pius X priests hear confessions and witness marriages when they have no faculties to do so?

Posted Friday, March 16, 2007 10:06 AM By Larry

AHH The fruits of Vatican 11

Posted Friday, March 16, 2007 1:18 PM By Jake

I wonder if the early Christians had red to follow and black to say. I suspect that they made a lot up as they went along. I think I would have enjoyed Fr. Rohr's liturgy and been very inspired.

Posted Friday, March 16, 2007 3:48 PM By Katie

Jake: Actually, when looking at the historical record, we find that the early Christians stuck very closely to the accepted ritual.

Posted Friday, March 16, 2007 5:01 PM By A.S.

As a young adult Catholic, I am appalled and disgusted by this. It's enough to make you want to vomit. Thank goodness he is not my diocese and teaching this to the youth and college age Catholics.



Posted Friday, March 16, 2007 6:24 PM By Fr. J

Jake, We actually have some of the texts they used. In fact the Roman Canon goes back to the 4th century. I don't remember any referring to a mother god. They would not have enjoyed that and would have excommunicated the offending priest. Oh and back then penances were very very severe. Fr. Rohr would have spent many years in the order of penitents. Now there is something we might consider bringing back.

Posted Friday, March 16, 2007 7:43 PM By Dan

The Holy Mass led by celebrant Fr. Richard Rohr sounds wonderful. Certainly it is a step in the right direction. Thank goodness for the documents Sacrosanctum Concilium and Dignitatis Humanae of Vatican II

Posted Friday, March 16, 2007 7:54 PM By gravey

Who wrote this article? Has anyone corroborated the information? Otherwise...

Posted Friday, March 16, 2007 7:59 PM By michiganlady

Jake, You obviously don't know much history. They would have thrown Fr. Rohr out for entertaining dancing girls and calling God Mommie.

Posted Saturday, March 17, 2007 8:26 AM By Ygnacia

"Loving God, make sure this people is very hungry." I'm hungry alright, hungry for a real Catholic Mass...and my now former Bishop (thank you Lord) had this man's articles in the Diocene newspaper every month, a newspaper that supposedly was to 'evangelize'. Evangelize to what religion???

Posted Saturday, March 17, 2007 9:24 AM By Fr. Gregori

This is a perfect example of why no True Orthodox, which I happen to be, would ever seriously consider reuniting with Rome. "Fr." Rohr's display goes well beyond being offensive. Can you say sacreligious?

Posted Saturday, March 17, 2007 4:36 PM By Julie

I don't think the disdain for Vatican II or the Novus Ordo is called for here. I DO think that this priest should be hauled in by his earlobes and called down on the carpet for such a display. Will that happen? Probably not. But it is not legitimate to attack the Holy Catholic Church as a whole as this is the exception, not the rule. Even if this were being celebrated as a Tridentine Mass, these jokers would make up their own stuff. The only difference being that we wouldn't know that they're making up stuff. So let's keep to the topic at hand which is the debauchery and blasphemy of this "mass" (I refuse to capitalize the word in relation to this travesty). What I find really ironic is that St. Pius X was the FIRST to start speaking for reform 150 years prior to the 2nd Vatican Council. Look what he started. Now we have a bunch of brothers and sisters who didn't get the memo and they left the Church entirely and now brand the Novus Ordo Mass across the board as similar to the tragedy described.

Posted Sunday, March 18, 2007 12:35 PM By Dan

What a scandal! Jesus referred to God as "Abba". Roughly translated, it means "daddy"!

Posted Sunday, March 18, 2007 7:23 PM By Bill

The early church was wonderful with diversity. In the Eucharist which Rohr conducted, there was lively participation, people were involved and the gospel was proclaimed, What a shame that we get all out of sorts because someone expresses their love for God differently than us. We have a big tent. Love, mercy and understanding is the message of Jesus, not Constantinian domination.

Posted Monday, March 19, 2007 2:26 PM By Fr. J

Bill, You haven't read the Fathers. There would have been no room in the tent for Fr. Rohr. The message of Jesus is contained in the Mass. If you alter the Mass you alter the message. We get the Rohr message instead. Rohr is the one doing the "domination". He imposes his will on everyone else in a personal way. We need Jesus not Rohr. If he doesn't like how the Catholic Church expresses its love in our Mass then Fr. Rohr can go elsewhere.

Posted Tuesday, March 20, 2007 6:03 PM By Jean Charles

Richard Rohr has been preaching heresies since 1970 (his ordination year). I was appalled when I discovered one of his books in the then "Lay Ministry" program in Vermont. He is supported in this by catholic Colleges and some bishops. What has the Vatican done? Nothing. When I blew the whistle, I got expelled from the so called Lay Ministry program. This will continue until the faithful starts a revolution...

Posted Wednesday, March 21, 2007 6:02 AM By Fr. F

Obviously Fr. Rohr is no longer Catholic. He has placed himself outside of the fold by blatant disobedience. Also, the Archbishop - Cardinal of LA knows what is happening and if he does not get rebuked by the CDF, he will by the Lord Jesus Christ!

Posted Wednesday, March 21, 2007 1:02 PM By Allyson Smith

To view video clips of Richard Rohr's "liturgy," visit http://romancatholicblog.typepad.com/roman_catholic_blog/2007/03/mahonyfest_2007_2.html.

Posted Thursday, April 05, 2007 3:29 PM By Henry

I am a practicing Catholic and have raised my children that way. I have been active in Renew, Marriage Encounter, Cursillo, Just Faith (Catholic Social Justice), and various parish ministries. Having heard Richard Rohr, among others, in the "Crisis of Faith Series," I want to tell you that my faith has taken a huge leap in maturity. I wish I could have participated in this Mass.

Posted Monday, April 23, 2007 6:48 AM By Lissette

He was here in Rochester New York A huge Mess! Sad! Speaking to us Ministers and promoting his New Age Church. Yet, the Holy Spirit, I trust! He is working! Jesus said, our Church will prevail. They would love to get rid of our Traditions, Mass, Adoration, Hierarchy, Authority but God is in charge. He will allow but so much! His will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. We are called to be and seek holiness and they laugh at us faithful flock of God. I don't even believe our Bishop knew or was aware of all this. This is sad. The faithful should stand together instead of being divided as they are. This group and that group, I am holy and Orthodox. Well, where has this taken us? There is death all over us, our Catholic Schools closed, our Catholic Churches being sold, kneelers taken out, we have to worship in no freedom. Our Bishop desires reconciliation and he is blamed for everything and yet, it sounds like the people are the reason for much of this mess. Division is not of God and it does not work. They are spreading, don't go to this Church or that Church but, don't go to our Cathedral and yet, the Bishop allowed Adoration, Benediction and Procession, even the Eucharistic Miracles of the world from the Vatican, people failing to realize and I must say they are the blind faithful, that fail in believing that "Jesus is in all the Tabernacles of the world. He is the High Priest at all the "Table of Sacrifice". So, see, gossip that separates and stops God's work and open the many open doors for great opportunities to worship God in Spirit & Truth! Father Rohr desires to get rid of our old Church Traditions and Rituals, Hierarchy, Authority etc. Sad! He is going around with his workshops. The evil one is so tiny, compare to our Almighty God! We must embrace our Mother Church, persecuted, beautiful, militant and suffering Mother Church, Triumphant!!! Lissette / Rochester In Spirit and Truth In St. Dominic & St. Catherine Of Siena

Posted Saturday, May 05, 2007 8:20 AM By Johannim

As a resident of Southern California in the fiefdom of tod brown and roger mahoney, abuses mentioned above are the norm in both these diocese & archdiocese. tod brown had no qualms in the past in humiliating a faithful Catholic women who wished to kneel to recieve her G-D by yelling at her and pulling her to her feet physically. mahoney is up to his cossack in hideing pedophile predator priests in his long and revisionist career as chief poobah & potentate of Los Angelar and a history of pedophile protecting going back to his days as bishop of Stockton California. It seems Rome (the Vatican) WILL NOT do anything about these heterodox prelates but if the Attorney General of California has his way the laws of California will take care of men like mahoney where the Vatican refuses to do so.

Posted Tuesday, May 08, 2007 7:20 AM By Matthew Fradd

To me the beauty of the Mass is that it doesn't need new words or actions, as if by doing so would increase it's meaning and relevancy. The Mass is a ritual. Having said that I have read many comments of this page which have sounded to me to be very hateful. Let us pray we do not justify our hate and pride in the name of Yahweh who is love and loves you and I and Richard despite ourselves and our best attempts to remain unloveable

Posted Monday, May 14, 2007 12:57 PM By Rod Harwood

Jesus got the same sort of criticism from the religious. "Your not doing it right way." The real test should be does what is taught bring life or death. Does it focus on nuturing a relationship with the Living Christ or just making sure we are following the rules. We men get confussed when our spouses are upset with us. We think we are sucessfully following all the rules of having a good respectable, Christian Marriage. Yet we forget to actually pursue loving our wives. We can be successful in maintaining the institution of marriage, but not be in love. I believe Richard Rohr is trying to help us recognize the need to fall in love again.

Posted Friday, June 01, 2007 2:21 AM By Maryann

I used to teach catechism back in the 60's just as all the new changes were coming into the Church. Goodbye to the old Baltimore Catechism!! Oh wow! It was exciting! We had lots more kids being enrolled in the new classes. Kids were having fun making banners and singing along in the guitar Mass....Kumba ya. At first it seemed that there was a resurgence of the faith, but then it ran out of gas and the kids didn't learn their prayers, never mind the traditions and real teachings of the Church. It was Godspell without God. It was too much of a hippie mentality that burned out fast and the flock was lost in the end. Only the kids whose families were firmly rooted in the faith and "forced" them to learn what it is to be Catholic remained. Not that all the kids who were forced to learn and attend Mass remained in the Church once they were on their own, but more of them came back because they had the deeper roots in the faith. We don't need bongos and ballads. We need the fullness of the faith. There's nothing more beautiful than a Mass that is celebrated in its most sacred and correct form, whether it is in Latin or in the vernacular. That is what truly feeds my soul. I'm blessed to be in a parish with a very pious and devote pastor. He has been bringing back some of the forgotten practices and devotions. He got rid of the crystal chalices and brought out the gold ones. The music is Catholic and traditional. He even brought back the chimes and we can hear them proclaiming the presence of our Lord at the Consecration. In the 2 years he has been here he has had his battles with the new agers and those who don't like the changes he's made to our parish. Some have threatened to go to other parishes, but we have more people coming to our parish, so if they leave, well, someone else will be sitting in their pew. God bless priests like my pastor!

Posted Thursday, June 14, 2007 11:26 PM By Richard Raw

Dualistic thinking –stinking thinking – divides everything into categories and labels. Liberal and conservative, gay and straight, Catholic and non-Catholic. To show you just how hard it is for us to move away from this kind of thinking, I am going to label and divide people into those who have been transformed and those who have yet to do so. Allow me to enlighten you. Those who have been transformed, whatever their creed or culture, see with "the third eye". I refer here to the wisdom that comes from union with God in contemplation. In Him we live and move and breathe. Think of the term used by the Jewish Scriptures for the spirit of Yahweh: Ruah – breath. And when you say the divine name "Yahweh" itself, you don't close your mouth on a sound, you just inhale and exhale. From our first breath outside the womb until our last gulp of air – we are in tune with the God who is gifted to us. We, however, are broken earthenware containers who limit that gift with our dualistic thinking and polemic about rightness and wrongness, about principles and non-contradiction. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord your God in vain!" And yet we think that we can control God by naming Him and putting labels on Him. Dualistic thinking! The third eye is not preoccupied with which container is right or wrong. My god is God but your god is not. I am pure but you are not. Let things be. There is no place here for the ego-centric affirmation that my container of divinely revealed truths is better than your container of favourite scriptural expressions. I mean, that would be like me saying that your spirituality is infantile and my spirituality is adult, or that your dualistic thinking is lower and my third eye contemplation higher! Actually, that's exactly what I've been saying but it would be wrong of you to criticise me for doing so. You see, people accuse me of all manner of things that I didn't say. Instead of seeing things the way they are, they see things the way they are. Those who are into competitive thinking will react violently with polemic. They treat me with sarcasm and say that Heidegger got as much mysticism out of Meister Eckhart as I do. If I am deliberately amb

Posted Monday, June 18, 2007 1:32 PM By Annika

Fr. Richard Rohr is a very poor excuse for a Catholic priest, but a very good example of a New Age Theosophist whose real ideology stems from Joseph Campbell and Madame Blavatsky rather than the Scriptures or the Magesterium. He wants to "mythologize" and "syncretize" religion to find the lowest common denominator of belief which he calls unity of consciousness. He wants to "evolve" that consciousness to a new planetary level to create a mass of energy linked to his Cosmic mother(goddess)-father/son(victim sacrifice) god. He needs the Catholic Church because he needs the audience. His mysticism is about this evolution. Its phoney. Authentic mysticism exists in the Sacraments, properly liturgized, according to the rubrics of the Church. If the Eucharist is not protected from the new age ideology of Rohr than the Church is harboring and abetting another Matthew Fox who at least had the civility to leave the priesthood and the Church after silencing by his community. What say you Fransiscans? Will you silence Rohr for a year as the Dominicans did Fox?

Posted Sunday, July 08, 2007 3:26 PM By Mark

I have spent the past week listening to several of Fr. Rohr's retreats and talks on CDs. I would suggest that before one comments, condemns or supports Rohr that they read his material. Read in a positive light. Try looking for what is good instead of bad. If we all practiced the true Gospel Meaning of Jesus Christ these comments would not appear. The great hypocrisy of those of us who practice orthodox catholicism is the that laws and tradition obscure true love and forgiveness. If you do not care for Fr. Rohrs beliefs avoid him. If you cannot find anything more productive in your lives than condemning people of any race, religion or way of life I suggest you open the news paper tomorrow morning and find a true cause, poverty, illness, homeless, anything. If what he says is phoney then take what is good and leave the rest. At the age of 51 I have stopped judging and condemning what is different and new. I also have a brain and the ability to reason. I also look at our world and country and wonder if all the energy people spent trying to be right was used for the good of the whole things might be different. Say your novenas and feel good about yourself...there are people starving not far from your home, and Christ is not present to feed them, he is only present in each of us, for us to feed them. Close your mouth, open your heart, with an open heart only the good in all can be seen.

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