



ECHO

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SORRY, I SAID "WE" NOT "I" SO YOUR BAPTISM IS INVALID

A row has blown up in Phoenix, Arizona, after it emerged that a Roman Catholic priest had been baptising babies for decades but changing one word in the baptism liturgy.

The Rev Andres Arango has served as a priest for over 20 years, and during that time, he has always said "We baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," and not "I baptise you..."

Because of this, every baptism performed by Father Arango in Phoenix, and previously in Brazil and San Diego has been ruled to have been "invalid" by the Diocese of Phoenix.

Owing to the Catholic Church regarding baptism as the first of the Three Sacraments of Initiation (followed by Confirmation and Receiving the Eucharist), this means that any Catholic whose baptism is now considered invalid in the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church may no longer receive Communion until a new baptism ceremony can be arranged.

In addition, it calls into question the validity of Roman Catholic marriages where one of the couple was baptised 'incorrectly' by Father Arango.

Theologians are already starting to discuss the wider implications of this ruling - for example where a baby baptised by Father Arango went on to become a Roman Catholic priest themselves and has baptised other babies, absolved other people's sins in confession or conducted weddings.

Father Arango has baptised thousands of babies during his time in ministry.

The Diocese of Phoenix has opened a special web page to support people affected by these events.

Meanwhile, Father Arango has submitted his resignation from his parish of St Gregory in Phoenix and has published a letter of apology.



ECO comment:

"We are very sorry to hear of so much heartache arising from the changing of a single word in the baptismal liturgy. As an Ecumenical Worshipping Community, ECO do not normally offer baptisms but we believe that God's Communion Table should be open to all. We will offer prayers for Healing and also of committal at the funeral of any of God's people, and will also say prayers of Blessing at a ceremony following any marriage which is recognised as valid under French Law."



SO HERE'S THE DEAL. YOU STOP THE CATS SLEEPING UNDERNEATH THE BIRD CAGES AND I TELL YOU WHERE THE LAND IS.



ADVICE UPON SETTING OUT FOR A SYNOD

Clive Billenness, having recently returned from a 3 day meeting of the General Synod of the Church of England, is sharing the (very tongue-in-cheek) advice sent to him by his "Uncle Eustace" otherwise know as the Reverend Dr Gary Bowness, retired Vicar of Henbury (near Macclesfield)

My dear Nephew Clive

I am glad you enjoyed your Synod, but please do not be deluded into thinking that such events are there to teach you anything. Synods exist to provide another entry on your CV, to give you time off while flattering yourself that you are working, and to make the person leading it feel that their life is not wholly pointless.

As it happened, I was also invited to one, which featured a session entitled 'Learning how to say no.' But I refused to attend, thereby proving that I didn't need it anyway.

There are certain useful points you need to learn for Synods.

First, about half the attendees will have been together only the previous week attending another church conference in another part of the country. They will be eager, enthusiastic, and overflowing with management platitudes. Avoid them at all costs. Should one of them say to you: 'expect the unexpected' you have my permission to hurl a custard pie at them. They won't have expected that!

Secondly, when you are all asked to go through that ghastly process of introducing yourselves to everyone else, make it up. I think the last time I was obliged to do this, I became a butcher specialising in exporting ostrich offal to Iceland.

All your fellow Synod members will then panic that they have turned up for the wrong session and the leader will make sure that you are not asked another single question throughout the event.

Both outcomes are satisfying.

Thirdly, do realise that when you are asked to divide into small discussion groups, it means that the leader has run out of ideas about what to do next.

Do not, at all costs, volunteer to be spokesperson. It only means that when you have to report back – and if the leaders use the word 'plenary', then by all means contemplate strangling them also – you will be involved in sticking sheets of paper on to walls, which will then rip off the wallpaper when you try to remove them.

You will also have the embarrassment of finding that every felt tip pen you try to use will be empty, and what you thought were the conclusions your group had arrived at will be volubly contradicted by all the other members.

When the opportunity comes to speak in debate, always stand up slightly later than your colleagues so that the Chair never calls you but you are always seen as having issues you wanted to raise. If you are ever actually called, just say "The previous speaker expressed my point better than I ever could have". That buys you at least one friend in the bar that night and you can sit down again.

No, if you are ever obliged to attend another Synod, take a good book, and start taking an experimental medication which requires you to have a hot drink regularly in the coffee bar while complaining that one of the side effects is drowsiness so you can take a nap.

If you enter the bar in the evening and nod your head wisely at everything your fellow Synod members say as you sip a glass of Chablis, you will be regarded as a valuable contributor.

You will leave having learned as much on whatever the topics were as your colleagues, but you will return refreshed and eager to attend the next one.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

Church Mice

Karl Zorowski

