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The Silence of the Protesting Anglicans Packing for Rome

Ken Briggs | Apr. 6, 2010 NCR Today

Is it just me, or have those Anglicans in exodus to the Catholic church been awfully quiet lately?

This is the band of wanderers who declared their principled indignation at the ordination of women and gays and the presence of gay bishops in the Episcopal church and set sail for Rome. Their appeals were heard by Rome and the harbor was opened with the straight faced assurance that this wasn't done to wreck ecumenism but to show compassion for the morally distressed.

The mechanisms are in place for the union of these righteous ones with the Catholic church. The immigration rules are mostly in place and if all things were equal you'd expect tears of gratitude for imminent arrival in the promised land.

But suddenly it seems the promised land hasn't done a very good job keeping its promises.

A baseball metaphor may be forgiven during this opening week of the season. There are always players who believe they are too good or too classy for the teams they play for. The city is too small, the people too parochial, their teammates disreputable,the team rules too lax, the manager too much of a rube, and they set their sights on the dream team where things are done in style and the tradition is what winning is all about.

Their chance comes and as they prepare to jump to the "big time," their glamorous new teammates get embroiled in a steroids scandal and a corrupt investment scheme. What's an embarrassed outfielder to do but keep quiet and hope it blows over?

It's unlikely that any amount of disillusion or repulsion will lead many disgruntled Anglicans to think twice about changing uniforms. But it might strike at least some that they are bolting the Episcoapal church because it made decisions about acceptance of gays and women's ordination through a normal, open governing process whereas the child abuse scandal and it's coverup by Catholic bishops is a covert religious and civil crime.

Wouldn't that call for second thoughts? Maybe, if the rationale among the fleeing Anglicans weren't so entrenched and the human tendency toward defensiveness so powerful.

Under such shameful conditions, I suspect the emigrants will stand up for the pope and all officials efforts to stonewall the full story. Those who have purported to show such high minded concern for the purity of the truth seem to be struck dumb. Or is it just me?

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