

On this, Nienstedt is Right

Michael Sean Winters | Oct. 8, 2010 Distinctly Catholic

Archbishop John Nienstedt is not my favorite bishop. In 2006, he wrote an article in the diocesan newspaper in New Ulm where he was the bishop at the time about the movie *‘Brokeback Mountain,’* which he described thusly: *‘The story is about two lonely cowboys herding sheep up on a mountain range. One night after a drinking binge, one man makes a pass at the other and within seconds the latter mounts the former in an act of wanton anal sex.’* Funny, I never expected to find the words *‘wanton anal sex’* in my diocesan newspaper. And, when he retires, Nienstedt should not try his hand at penning movie reviews.

But, in his decision to deny communion to a group protesting Nienstedt’s stance on gay rights issues *‘and specifically his decision to send DVDs opposing same sex marriage to Catholics throughout his archdiocese’* Nienstedt was exactly right. The communion rail is no place for a political protest of any sort and appeals to Jurgen Moltmann will not persuade me otherwise.

Of course, what is good for the parishioner is good for the pastor. Just as the Rainbow Sash movement should not be permitted to politicize the Eucharist, neither should those prelates like Archbishop Raymond Burke who think they should deny communion to certain politicians. Whatever else it is, communion is an act by which all who participate transcend political *‘and other - differences.* Those who try to use the great sacrament of unity to sow division are wrong, no matter which side of the altar rail they are standing on.

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