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Corapi and hypocrisy

Heidi Schlumpf | Jul. 6, 2011 NCR Today

The Catholic blogosphere was busy yesterday dissecting and discussing more news about the controversial Father John Corapi, a former EWTN media star who recently announced he is leaving the priesthood after allegations of improper activity.

Many of his supporters have continued to defend him, in part because Corapi has denied all the allegations (and made a few allegations of his own about the accuser). Now, his religious community, the Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity, has released details about its investigation. According to a press release on the SOLT website [1], the Society found that Corapi:

> did have sexual relations and years of cohabitation (in California and Montana) with a woman known to him, when the relationship began, as a prostitute; He repeatedly abused alcohol and drugs; He has recently engaged in sexting activity with one or more women in Montana; He holds legal title to over $1 million in real estate, numerous luxury vehicles, motorcycles, an ATV, a boat dock, and several motor boats, which is a serious violation of his promise of poverty as a perpetually professed member of the Society.

The press release notes that it is unusual to comment on personnel matters, but implies that it is necessary to alert fans who intend to follow Corapi, who is now ministering as ?Black Sheep Dog? on his own. Given Corapi?s propensity to sue those who make allegations against him, I would assume the Society has covered its legal bases before releasing such information, although the press release does not go into details with evidence about the allegations against him.

There is a temptation to gloat when a high-profile person who has publicly criticized more progressive Catholics falls so far and so publicly. That would be wrong, not to mention unchristian. News of serious misconduct by priests and other church leaders is always tragic, not only for victims of that misconduct but for the church as a whole. The recent removal [2] of Jesuit Father J. Glenn Murray for allegations of sexual abuse of a minor, for example, is sad all around.

But there is a level of hypocrisy when it is revealed that a person who had publicly decried such behavior is found to be guilty of it. That?s why it?s disappointing that Democratic presidential candidate John Edwards cheated on his wife, but even more despicable when a more conservative ?family values? politician does.

The allegations about Corapi follow similar revelations earlier this year about Father Thomas Euteneuer [3], former president of Human Life International who admitted to ?violating the boundaries of chastity with an adult female who was under my spiritual care? and the Legionaries of Christ?s final admission of the guilt [4] of their founder, Father Marcial Maciel, who sexually abused seminarians and fathered at least one child.

Note to conservatives: If you?re going to focus on sexual sin, you might want to make sure your own house is in order. The same goes for progressives who decry social sin. Don?t get caught driving a BMW to your summer home. Sadly, Corapi may have been guilty of both.

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Links:
[1] http://soltnews.blogspot.com/2011/07/press-release-concerning-fr-john-corapi.html
[2] http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2011-06-23/news/bs-md-jesuit-priest-abuse-20110623_1_catholic-priest-credible-allegation-jesuit-officials
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