NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

God May Work In Mysterious Ways But Not So Much the Vatican

Ken Briggs | Jul. 3, 2012 NCR Today

It's understandable that beleaguered nuns and their ardent supporters would look for a silver lining in Benedict XVI's naming of **Bishop Gerhard Ludwig Muller** [1] as his next attorney general with privileges.

To many of us outside the circle it seems like an exercise in denial but within the church it may be deemed necessary for survival as Catholics.

The straw is that Muller is said to be buddies with Gustavo Gutierrez. So maybe, just maybe he's a closet liberation theologian who's about to assert his real identity.

Plenty of opposites sip tea together. Ted Kennedy supped with Orrin Hatch. Bill Buckley schmoozed with John Kenneth Galbreath. For all I know, George Custer smoked the peace pipe with Sitting Bull's brother.

The intrigue in such cases stems from the difference, not in conversion of one by the other. Gutierrez may have wooed Muller into the liberation camp without our knowledge, but where would we find evidence?

What we do know is that Muller wants to stamp out the impulse toward ordaining women. That just happens to be the irritant that perhaps more than any other put the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in hot water with the Congregation that Muller is now going to run. In a fanciful world in which hope abides that the white hats will come to the rescue, it may be imagined that Muller will reverse his field, defy the pope and quash the indictment against LCWR. In the press of a papal agenda, however, he'll do the job for which he's recommended himself.

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