

COMMENTARY

Newsroom: (541) 346-5511
Room 300, Erb Memorial Union
P.O. Box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403
E-mail: editor@dailymerald.com
Online Edition:
www.dailymerald.com

Editor in Chief:
Jessica Blanchard
Managing Editor:
Jeremy Lang
Editorial Editor:
Julie Lauderbaugh
Assistant Editorial Editor:
Jacquelyn Lewis

Thursday, February 14, 2002

Editorial Church must perform act of contrition for abuse

(U-WIRE) COLUMBUS, Ohio —

Charges of child molestation within the Catholic Church have been popping up in the news with increasing frequency. In Massachusetts two weeks ago, Catholic priests across the Archdiocese of Boston read from their pulpits, as ordered, a letter of admission and apology from Cardinal Bernard F. Law, the archbishop of Boston.

The letter was forced from Law amid outrage in Massachusetts over the revelations that a priest of the archdiocese, the Rev. John Geoghan, had allegedly committed acts of sexual abuse against dozens of boys entrusted to his pastoral care over decades. Geoghan was defrocked in 1998 and two weeks ago convicted of indecent assault and battery against a 10-year-old boy.

This outrage has been covered extensively in The Boston Globe, that Law, his predecessor, Cardinal Humberto S. Medeiros, and dozens of other church officials had for decades ignored and/or minimized compelling evidence against Geoghan.

The church officials discouraged parents of molested boys from taking action, pursued secret out-of-court settlements — and allowed Geoghan to remain, his true nature hidden by his superiors, in pastoral positions.

This is one example of a widespread and very serious problem. Over several decades, high church officials have been increasingly aware that priests under their control were using their offices to sexually assault boys in their care.

These church officials have covered up the truth and refused to report known offenders to authorities. They have repeatedly allowed priests they knew to be molesters to continue in careers of pastoral care that brought them into contact with children.

Allegations of sexual misconduct span beyond the Catholic Church. Many leaders within various religious communities have been asked to address concerns about complaints of child abuse.

This is a travesty that must be addressed out in the open.

Efforts to continually suppress information and avoid dealing with problems by recirculating known abusers is entirely inappropriate and unacceptable. Federal governmental officials long ago endured the consequences of an attempted cover-up. The result: It blows up in your face.

In the case of the Catholic Church, we recommend swift action and public condemnation.

This editorial is printed courtesy of the Ohio State University newspaper, The Lantern.

Letters to the Editor and Guest Commentaries Policy

commentaries are encouraged. Letters are limited to 250 words and guest commentaries to 550 words. Please include contact information. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.

Don't SHOOT the messenger!

Valentine's Day: Little pink hearts, fluffy stuffed animals and frou-frou greeting cards. It's all so cute — it makes you want to vomit, right? Apparently, you're not alone. Everyone I talk to seems to think that Valentine's Day sucks. Being forced to listen to their cynical outbursts is so exasperating, I might just throw my conversation hearts at the next



Jacquelyn
Lewis
Assistant Editorial
Editor

person who says it. After that point, I can't be held responsible for my actions. Trendy anti-Valentine's Day sentiments have become just as bothersome and cliché as that "annoying" cupid. I know, I know. Valentine's Day seems like it was created to make single people feel like failures. Believe me, I've spent my share of them alone — and yes, I did feel like a loser. But the holiday can be fun for people without significant others. Why not go to a party or a bar? Singles can go with other unattached friends, and there will be plenty of others there, feeling equally desperate (oh-la-la). Or, if you must wallow in your singleness, write some sappy love poems.

It's not just lonely people who abhor the "Day of Love," either. Others say their partners should do special things for them every day, not just on Valentine's Day. I agree. Isn't it great to have a day that actually reminds us to do these things and gives us a chance to be mushy, without our love interest looking at us like we're crazy? Sure, being considerate and showing your significant other that you care about them is important to do every single day, but I'm not passing up a chance for free candy, either.

Another excuse, especially for college students, is not having enough money to pay for dates or buy gifts on Valentine's Day. People in this situation still have plenty of options. They can take their date out to look at the stars or make them a valentine. Last year, I made my boyfriend a collage, using old magazines. It sounds



Steve Baggs Emerald

cheesy, but it actually turned out to be really special.

For those who have exhausted all excuses, yet still hate Valentine's Day, there's an attractive option of the anti-Valentine's Day party. You can get drunk or eat chocolate, or both, until you puke, all while spewing forth obscenities expressing how much you hate Feb. 14. As a bonus, the other party guests will share in your misery.

Those who complain about Valentine's Day should also remember one thing: They don't have to celebrate. But at least they have the option to participate in the holiday if they want to, without the risk of violence or punishment. Imagine living in a country where officials confiscate that bouquet of roses before you can deliver it to your sweetie. This actually happens in certain parts of China. Picture conservative protesters vandalizing stores that sell Valentine's Day merchandise — small

groups in India tried that two years ago. Indian right-wing leaders also pushed for a ban on the increasingly popular "indecent" holiday.

So, if we're griping about anything, it should be more consequential than a few pink hearts and flowers. Maybe we should complain that there are still places where citizens must put themselves in danger to observe the holidays they choose to celebrate. After all, what's wrong with love?

If people still can't get over how terrible Valentine's Day is, they should just be grumpy in silence and let the rest of us enjoy it. No one is forcing them to celebrate.

So happy Valentine's Day. The world needs all the love it can get right now. And I need all the chocolate I can get.

E-mail assistant editorial editor Jacquelyn Lewis at jacquelynlewis@dailymerald.com. Her opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Emerald.

Letters to the editor

Pilliod and Buzbee outshine other candidates

With an extremely large number of tickets for the ASUO Executive positions, it can be difficult to distinguish between all the candidates' qualifications and platforms. My complete support for Rachel Pilliod and Ben Buzbee is summed up in two words: experience and vision.

Rachel and Ben's combined experience has put them through almost all avenues of campus life, as well as the representation of students on a state and national level. From the ASUO to the Student Senate, the EMU Board to Constitution Court, Rachel and Ben are knowledgeable about all issues that affect students. Not only are they both adequately qualified, they have a vision for the coming year that will positively benefit all students, not just a select few.

They will be committed to working on a leadership development program, health care access and education on campus as well as in the government, voter registration and education, as well as lobbying in

Salem for student rights. Furthermore, they wish to continue the campaigns of the current ASUO Executive, such as the housing code, the energy fee and issues concerning social inequality.

My endorsement of Rachel and Ben for ASUO Executive also stems from a certainty that they are deeply committed to the campus and its entire community. I believe they will work for students tirelessly and have the knowledge and experience to do so effectively. They have my absolute confidence, and I hope the rest of the campus community would also support them on election day.

Jessica Southwick
sophomore
political science and Spanish

Invest in a housing code

I am a first-year student at the University, living away from home for the first time. I was shocked when I first heard Eugene was the largest city on the West Coast without a housing code, and as a freshman, this has many implications for me.

As we approach spring term, I, as well as thousands of fellow freshmen, will be

looking for off-campus housing for the next school year. For the majority of us, it will be our first time renting and looking for suitable living arrangements. I have no doubt it is something we are all capable of accomplishing. I just wonder how our choices will be made and where we can go when we have questions or problems concerning housing issues.

The students here at the University are making a big impact in the school's, as well as the community's economy. The University is Lane County's largest employer, and each year students spend more than \$93 million locally. By deciding to come to the University, we have decided to invest in Eugene. Don't you think it's time for Eugene to invest a little in us?

I would like to invite the city of Eugene to work with us in heading toward the direction of a housing standard. This is not just a student issue. A housing standard would be beneficial to the community as a whole.

Kendra Wessels
freshman
pre-psychology